

FROM THE CAMP-FIRES.

A CLEAR, LOGICAL AND DISPASSIONATE
DEFENSE OF THE "MORMON" PEOP-
LE BY A STRANGER.

Editor Deseret News:

The writer of these lines is only a visitor to this famous city, who came here to see and hear everything, if possible, just to be able to judge for himself about the people located here, and their institutions.

For many years I have been connected, by ties of friendship, to some of those who took a prominent part in that ever glorious war of America which liberated millions of human beings from foul slavery. And I have always felt my bosom swell with love and veneration towards those men, who were the instruments in the hands of the Almighty to accomplish this glorious work. Naturally, therefore, I have taken a great interest in the meetings held this week in the city, the "Camp-fires," and I think the remembrance thereof will live, if ever, vanish from my mind. The glowing patriotism, the noble enthusiasm, the overwhelming eloquence, the sparkling wit of the members of the Grand Army of the Republic has shown me that America is indeed the great nation I have always thought her to be. A people of such men and women can never, never be trodden down by the feet of tyrants.

I have, however, found it very strange, that people of this city should have thought proper to convert the camp-fires of those noble soldiers into meetings of political agitation. Night after night speeches have been made against the people of Utah and their institutions. They have been ridiculed—and every fool can ridicule a thing—they have been accused of crimes; they have been shouted against like Paul at Ephesus, where they shouted for two hours without a pause, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Great is Diana of the Ephesians! They have shouted until their voices failed them, and their color changed into that of a boiled lobster, "Down with them!" I do not think the expression, "Crucify them!" was used; but a noble wish of sending the whole Territory to hell has actually been uttered, if I was not mistaken. Now, I cannot help feeling this to be very strange. I had thought that an opportunity like this, when a city is honored by the presence of a great number of the most illustrious sons of the country, would have been much better appreciated, if all local dissensions were forgotten for a moment, and all with one heart had joined in enthusiastic welcomes of the liberators of the great fatherland.

The accusations made these evenings against the people of Utah are very serious. They have been accused of treason to the government, of murder, of perjury, of hypocrisy, of lewdness, of cowardice and then again and above all of treason.

Being a stranger here, I do not wish and I am not in position to give any opinion on the points of difference between the people of this Territory and their fellow citizens of the United States of America. It is for others to do so. But as a visitor to this place in this time of great commotion, I may be allowed, perhaps, to state just what has been impressed upon my mind, by the very same speeches, to which I have been an eager listener.

And then, first of all, let me point out the vast difference between the accusations made and the proofs produced. The accusations of murder, perjury, lewdness and disloyalty are made against the whole people. The Mormons as a whole are accused of these crimes. Their institutions are stained, their communities are pictured as murderous, unchaste and treacherous. And what are the proofs that the people are murderers? This was the proof, that a murder was actually committed by a Mormon and an assault by another. Now I believe that such an argument could never have been used, except for the purpose of painting the devil upon the wall, so as to frighten the soldiers and make them draw their victorious swords in self-defense. Is there any State or Territory in America where murders and assaults have not been made? Is there any denomination that can say we had never a member who committed murder? If not, by the same mode of reasoning, they are all murderers. But no man of sense ever reasons in that way. To my mind, this way of reasoning only carries disgust against the reasoner. Other proofs there must be, if that grave charge shall appear to be more than base slander.

What is said of the charge of murder, applies equally to the charge of perjury. If there are cases of perjury, that does not prove that the people as a people, teach or are taught perjury. And I say more, any woman who deserves that name, and who was dragged before a rough public and there by a stranger, a man, were asked questions, which society deems indecent, any young woman who, under such circumstances, gave way to the temptation of not answering or not knowing, I, for one, would heartily forgive. I should like the soldiers of the Grand Army to fancy their own dear sisters and mothers and daughters in this position, and I feel sure they too would forgive them. Nobody can think perjury otherwise than a sin and a great sin, as every lie is; but sometimes there are such circumstances connected with sin, even with murder, that an impartial jury says not guilty. And I think this may justly be said of some of the cases of perjury alluded to by the speakers this week.

The proof of Unchastity is of course polygamy. And the American people were called upon to come and help against this practice.

Now, I do not want to say a single word in defense of polygamy, nor of monogamy, but this is what came to my mind on hearing the constant denunciations against the Mormon people on account of polygamy. Are the monogamous people of this country after all so much more chaste and pure than the Mormons? Do the women of Utah need protection from their sisters in New York? I heard the offer made by the president of the Women's Relief Society, and their arms and homes should ever be open to any fugitive, and so on. Well, I felt as if I should like to advise the women of Utah a little. There are thousands of poor women right in New York, oppressed by brutes, under the name of husbands. I know not if they ever had this generous offer; but let them first go and be relieved, and when you have seen what reception they get, profit by their examples, if you should ever need protection. Words and phrases cost little.

On the question of polygamy, philosophers may differ. Some may think it a crime, and some may think it a remedy against some of the most prominent evils of monogamistic society. One thing is certain, and that is, that lewdness is not promoted by polygamy any more than chastity is promoted by monogamy. I should think that purity or impurity springs from the heart, not from social institutions. Where the heart is impure no law will ever be able to extinguish its burning fire. Civilized society in our time is the best proof of this. It seems itself to be corrupt in many parts of its body, and it needs a thorough cure before it undertakes to act the physician.

But the great point is, I understand, that polygamy is now prohibited by the laws of the United States, and these laws must be obeyed. I can understand that, but I can not understand that the G. A. R. are to be the guardians of the laws in Utah any more than everywhere else. I have heard that the great cities of America have many crimes to answer for. Houses, where iniquity is exhibited for sale; there are slugs of lust committed secretly by all classes of society, people speak of. Infanticide and similar secret deeds of darkness are said to be fearfully common. Now, I say that it has not occurred to me that it is the duty of the G. A. R. to eradicate all these crimes from American soil. But if it be so, let them commence in the east. Let the cities of New York, of Philadelphia, of Chicago cry out to them: Come over and help us against all these law-breaking Methodists and Lutherans and Presbyterians! Just analogous to what some citizens here have done this week. And let the soldiers begin their work in right earnest. It strikes me that by the time they have accomplished their work in the east, their help in Utah will be needed no longer.

Among the charges brought forth against the people of this Territory, that of treason was the most prominent one, and that which was depended upon as the most effective one. This charge was constantly repeated, and, to "put down treason," to "make them obey the laws" and similar expressions were always sure to be applauded. Now, what were the proofs given to support the charge of treason? This, not the applause, was to me the essential point.

It was stated that Brigham Young, on hearing of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, could not conceal his exultation. But, strange to say, it was not stated what Brigham Young did on that particular occasion. A lawyer ought to know that a bare statement is no proof. What the speaker took for exultation was perhaps not exultation at all, or if it was, perhaps it was over something else, without the least connection with Abraham Lincoln. As a proof this statement is to me worthless.

But another thing was often referred to. It was said that the American flag had been half-masted on the 4th of July, the birthday of the nation. And this was stated, mind you, to prove, that the people of Utah are rebels, that their religion is organized treason and their leaders traitors. If the speakers had been content to lay this fearful charge on those persons, who half-masted the flag only, I should not have wondered so much, but when they on account of that flag-story cry treason against the whole people, why, I say, that is organized treason against all the rules of logic, I know of. First of all, was the half-masting of the flag an act of the people? If so, in what representative assembly had it been resolved to half-mast the flag? If this cannot be shown, I venture to say, that this half-masting of the flag is not to be attributed to the people, nor to their religion. And then, is it quite sure, that this half-masting of the flag was meant to be an insult to the American people? Can it be attributed to no other motive than this? If it can, why not try to give it the best motive, rather than the worst one? I can admit that this half-masting of the beautiful American flag, on that day, must have been a surprising sight, but I cannot admit that it proves disloyalty.

Perhaps it meant sorrow. Perhaps those who were responsible for the often mentioned act, whoever they were, meant in this way to tell America that she has sons and daughters within her boundaries, whose grief is so great that even the day that brings

joy to all her other children can but partly be enjoyed by them.

You speak of the disloyalty of the Mormons. That they consider America and all the world as their enemies. That their children are taught this from infancy.

But it seems to me that the world at large, America included, has compelled the Mormon people to consider it as their enemies. Look at the short history of the Mormons. When fathers have to tell their children of all those bloody deeds of a fanatical mob, headed by ungodly, agitating orators, how can you expect otherwise than that such facts must leave the impression upon their minds, that they are friendless in a land of enemies? Hatred begets hatred, as love begets love. This needs no proof. The Mormons are a highly wronged people. Their history is a continuous chain of wrongs done to them. If they, therefore, sometimes are not so enthusiastic in their exaltation of the American birthday, this accounts for it.

But I have heard it said, that the severe sufferings which this people have experienced, they have brought upon themselves by their own iniquity. It is said, for instance, that Joseph Smith was killed for stealing sheep and horses and for other acts of immorality. Now, I was not at the spot, where these events took place, but one thing I want to say, and that is, if Joseph Smith was able to convert people to his religion by stealing horses and sheep, then he has performed a greater miracle than anybody before his time. Just try it. I want your pastors and clergymen to try it. Put on your ecclesiastical robes and go out stealing, before you deliver your sermons, and if you ever, this being known, convert anybody to your faith, or fill your churches with people, I will make one of your audience. Just give this a fair trial, before you speak of the Mormons having brought their sufferings upon themselves.

Reflecting upon the speeches, delivered this week against the people of this Territory, I have been strongly impressed with the feeling, that some of the orators did not mind at all what they said; that they cared but little, whether their arguments were valid or not; that it was all the same to them, whether their conclusions followed from their premises or not; only they could gain their one point, kept in view throughout the whole proceeding, viz., to arouse the whole American people against this part of it. That and nothing else was clearly the sole object.

Now, whatever attribute this may deserve, I leave to others to say. But I am sure that it is not in accordance with that religion of love, whose founder, instead of crushing his enemies with thunder or fire, prayed for them, and gave his own life to save them.

Are the people of this Territory so fearfully led astray, remember that not hatred, but love will save them. And remember also, that if America should undertake by persecution to crush this people at a breakfast, remember, I say, that, though it cannot be said that persecuted people have always been right, it can be said and it shall be said in the sacred name of liberty, that persecutors are always wrong.

VERITAMICUS.

Salt Lake City, July 31st, 1886.

PIONEER DAY AT PANGUITCH.

PANGUITCH, GARFIELD Co., Utah, July 26th, 1886.

Editor Deseret News:

In accordance with arrangements for the celebration of July 24th, Pioneer Day, in Panguitch, the community were aroused from their peaceful slumber at early dawn of that memorable day, by the firing of canon, and beautiful music discoursed by our string band. At 9 a. m. a signal of nine guns was fired, for the people to assemble at the new Tabernacle, where under the direction of the marshal of the day, Wm. T. Owens, Esq., the following programme was rendered:

Singing by the choir, "Under the Greenwood Tree," which was beautifully rendered.

Prayer by the chaplain, Samuel O. Crosby, Esq.

Choir sang, "Our Native Land." Then followed the oration by the orator, James Houston, who spoke chiefly upon the promises of the Lord, as being the means of gathering the Saints to the valleys of the mountains. Briefly referred to the Constitution of the United States as being inspired of God; also touched upon the liberties and privileges of the Latter-day Saints, as compared with the outside world. Explained the many changes taking place in the earth and verified the same by holy writ.

The string band rendered sweet music.

President J. W. Crosby, Jr., spoke for 15 minutes, exemplifying to the congregation the motive and object in celebrating July 24th. Referred to the Pioneers of that day 1847, and the rising generation of to-day. Alluded to the liberties of the Latter-day Saints being curtailed, and certain ones imprisoned for conscience' sake. Exhorted all present, especially Latter-day Saints, to honor and revere the Constitution, even at the peril of their lives if necessary. Illustrated in a very forcible manner, how the persecution of the Latter-day Saints to-day, was a mere drop in the bucket, so to speak, as compared with that of former day Saints.

Miss Sicy DeLong then recited "Shal-lal Jim."

The band then discoursed beautiful music.

Counselor M. M. Steel addressed the congregation for 15 minutes, upon the early persecution of this people, and their object in gathering to the mountains and fleeing from Babylon, that they might serve God according to the dictates of their own conscience, as granted to all men by that glorious instrument, the Constitution of the United States. Referred to the present administration legislating and enacting special laws against the people called "Mormons," compelling them to renounce and totally deny their religion, to do this or be forever deprived of their franchise. The choir sang "Mighty Sword of Truth." Thomas Houston delivered an impulsive oration in the shape of a stump speech, which was excellent and highly appreciated. Judge David Cameron was the next speaker, he spoke upon the necessity of celebrating Pioneer day, extended his remarks to the early persecution of the Saints, from the assassination of Joseph Smith the Prophet, to the present crusade, etc. The choir sang the "Harvest Glee." Mrs. Mary H. Sevy read an essay upon "woman suffrage," which was well rendered, and the elocution superb. H. Barney, Jr., recited "The Landing of the Pilgrim fathers."

Brother John Steele of Toquerville addressed the assembly upon celebrating Independence and Pioneer days; fully substantiated the rights of American citizens in the "pursuit of life, liberty and happiness;" related incidents relative to the organization of the Mormon Battalion, of which the speaker was a member; his remarks were interesting beyond description.

The choir then sang the anthem entitled, "Mansions in the skies." Benediction by the chaplain.

The afternoon was devoted to amusements of various kinds, including a dance for the children at 3 p. m., horse racing, etc.

The day's celebration was concluded by a grand ball in the evening, where all enjoyed themselves in the merry dance.

Respectfully,
JOHN M. DUNNING.

A reporter, who once "pulled a hand press" on a country weekly, tells this story: One day, while the paper was being worked off, a man from the country came in and walked all around the room, finally stopping near the press and watching the work very earnestly. "Anything I can do for you?" asked the man at the lever, pausing between impressions. "Naw," was the reply. "I don't want nothin'. I jist' come to see you edit."

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June 23rd, 1886.
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