

THE MORMONS.

In industry, frugality, peacefulness, mutual helpfulness, and abstinence from some of the grosser vices of modern society, the Mormons might serve as models to the age. Idleness, extravagance, gambling, drunkenness, prostitution, and litigation are forbidden by public opinion, and are very rare. Gin-shops are few, and are sustained almost entirely by Gentiles. The use of even tobacco, tea and coffee is discouraged and the consumption is small, perhaps mainly because for a long time the people were too poor to purchase them, though the use of tobacco was forbidden by the articles of faith. There is very little crime among the Mormons. In 1871 there were only five Territorial convicts, or one felon for nineteen thousand inhabitants, while in California, at present, there is more than one felon in the State-prison for each 1,000 inhabitants. It might be suspected that the difference was due to the inefficiency of the courts in Utah; but the peaceful condition of Mormon society refutes such a suspicion. Mormons have as little litigation among themselves as the Quakers, and live together in a spirit similar to that of the rural communities of "Friends." If two saints disagree about property rights, the question is submitted almost invariably to arbitrators, usually church officials. A church rule prohibits lawsuits. When a Mormon loses his property by fire, flood or other disaster, his neighbors do not stop with giving only enough to save him from starvation, but raise liberal contributions to put him, if possible, in as good condition as before. Their readiness to make signal sacrifices for their church, akin to the sacrifices which they make for one another, was shown when there was danger of war in Utah, under the administration of Buchanan. The authorities at Salt Lake ordered the Mormons then living at San Bernardino, California, and owning beautiful farms there, to return without delay. This implied an abandonment of comfortable homes, security, and a genial climate, for poverty, peril and the desert; yet it was promptly obeyed by nearly all the San Bernardino Mormons, who sold out their farms in some cases for one-tenth the price that could have been obtained by a little delay. It is a significant fact that the Mormons alone in the United States have succeeded in living at peace with Indian tribes in their near vicinity.

The management of their Territorial, ecclesiastical, and pecuniary affairs has been very successful. They have no public debts of any kind. It is admitted that their leaders are men of remarkable prudence and sound judgment; and the people support their leaders with a rare confidence. The principle of co-operation is applied very extensively in Mormon business. Money is not abundant among them, and yet they are rich in their way. They have no beggary, abject poverty, or laborers clamoring for employment. Something is found for everybody to do, even little children. They try to produce everything at home, and the spinning-wheel and hand-loom are still preserved among them. It is not strange that with such views and habits, when they were driven into the desert, they converted it into a garden. Starting with nothing, they have provided everything.

The Mormons, while strongly attached to their church, are not intolerant. They seek opportunities for discussion, and have often allowed enemies of their faith to preach in their churches. They believe that Mormonism is to be the dominant religion of the future. Their zealous churchmen try to give a religious tone to Mormon society, and they encourage the reading of Protestant religious publications. The Mormon Sunday schools take many copies of the *Dial*, an evangelical Sunday school paper published in San Francisco. All the children and young men and women attend Sunday school and study the Protestant Bible, but interpret it in their own way.

Political trickery has joined hands with prejudice of various kinds to excite a persecution of the Mormons. The control of the government of Utah would throw much plunder into the hands of their enemies. * * *

It can not be said truly that the women of Utah are satisfied with their situation in life. Some of them hate polygamy, and others dislike their poverty. But, as compared with women in other parts of the United States, they are not discontented. Every disadvantage in their condition has its compensation. As a class they are zealous Mormons, and not envious of

theirsisters in California or Missouri. The Mormon men have shown their confidence in the Mormon women by conferring on them the right of suffrage, mainly as a protection against the Gentile agitators who have no wives in the Territory.—*John S. Hittell, in The West.*

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