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A DEBT TO UTAH.

(Editorial Correspondence of the Omaha Bee of Aug. 7.)

SALT LAKE CITY, July 31.—The grand organ in the Tabernacle was tastefully draped with national flags and broad bands of red, white and blue hunting encircled the stage and proscenium. The vast auditorium was filled with well dressed, intelligent looking people assembled to witness the ceremonies commemorating the advent of civilized man in Utah. There was no perceptible difference in dress or demeanor as between Mormon and Gentile. The chasm that divides the creeds was, for the time being at least, obliterated by the sentiment of local pride and patriotism that glories in the achievements of the pioneers and celebrates each recurring "Pioneers' day" anniversary as a holiday that ranks with Christmas and the Fourth of July. As the years roll on the achievements of the Mormon pioneers assume greater magnitude. When the little band of emigrants, or rather refugees, under the leadership of Brigham Young, entered Salt Lake valley on the 24th of July, 1847, they found themselves in the heart of a most desolate desert, unfit for habitation by man or beast. In less than a quarter of a century the wilderness was converted into a fertile valley, teeming with an industrious population, supplied with all the comforts and many of the luxuries of modern civilization.

SOME INTERESTING HISTORY.

Without entering into details of the almost unsurmountable obstacles overcome and hardships endured by the first settlers of Utah and the colossal amount of labor they had to perform in subjugating the wilderness and laying the foundations for this beautiful city; it may truthfully be asserted that the American people owe these Utah pioneers an everlasting debt of gratitude for the active and invaluable help rendered by them toward establishing and maintaining telegraphic communication between the Atlantic and Pacific at the most critical period of the nation's history, when the life of the republic was hanging in the balance, and later on for the material aid extended toward the construction of the first transcontinental railroad, which linked the Pacific coast to the union by bands of iron and gave a

mighty impetus to the development of the greater and better half of the American continent. It may not be generally known, but it is nevertheless an historic fact that the projectors of the Pacific telegraph had a most active ally in Brigham Young, without whose friendly aid and co-operation the first wire across the continent could not possibly have been built and kept up. And without this Pacific telegraph it is doubtful whether California, Arizona, Oregon and Nevada could have been kept in touch with the Union. Brigham Young and Edward Creighton were the master spirits in the construction of the Pacific telegraph between Omaha and Salt Lake City, and they remained warm friends to the end of their lives. It is also a matter of history that Thomas C. Durant, the master mind in the construction of the Union Pacific railroad, found a very staunch and active ally in Brigham Young in extending that road west of Laramie. In fact, the Mormons, under the supervision of Brigham Young and Bishop Sharp, built a great part of the road west of old Fort Bridger.

In talking of Utah pioneers and pioneer work, it may be interesting to note that of the brave band of over 300 that crossed the plains with hand-carts and ox teams and located in the valleys of the great Salt Lake forty-seven years ago last Monday, only twenty-seven male members survive. One of these survivors is a colored man. It may not be out of place to mention another fact, that of the fifty-four wives of Brigham Young only nine are now living. One of these, Brigham Young's favorite, Amelia Folsom Young, is remotely related to Mrs. Grover Cleveland.

POLITICS IN THE TERRITORY.

The Mormons are and will for years continue to be the dominant element of Utah's population. The latest estimate credits them with 172,588 out of a total population of about 225,000, but with polygamy practically wiped out, this fact need be no obstacle to her early admission as a state. Whether, as a matter of policy or from a radical difference of opinion on national issues, the Mormons have recently shown a disposition to divide in their political affiliations. This is forcibly shown by the vote cast at the last election for delegate to Congress. At that election, in November, 1892, Rawlins, Democrat,

received 15,211 votes; Cannon, Republican, 12,405, and Allen, Liberal, 8,989, out of a total of 34,605 votes. Just at present there is a very decided disaffection among Democratic Mormons with the way things are managed at Washington. Several leaders, with whom I conversed were pronounced against Cleveland's free trade policy. Brigham Young was a protectionist Democrat, and that fact may exert some influence upon the minds of men who venerate his memory. There is probably another and more potent influence responsible for opposition to free trade among influential Mormons. Many of the most extensive industrial enterprises in this and other Utah cities are carried on by Mormons. Quite apart from the widely known Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, which, in connection with its mammoth retail stores, fabricates boots and shoes, overalls, tinware, harness, etc., the Mormons have established woolen mills at Salt Lake, Provo and Beaver. They operate a beet sugar factory at Lehi, and are operating silk works, soap, broom and match factories, pipe works, wagon and carriage factories, flour and lumber mills in this city.

The impression which I have shared, in common with other people east, that the Mormons are moonbacks, disposed to obstruct rather than push the car of progress, is dissipated by the varied enterprises in which they are the chief factors. They have built, own and operate the Deseret telegraph lines, running from Salt Lake to all parts of the Territory. They own and operate cable, street car and electric motor plants. They have built several railroads out of this city to the region commercially tributary, and they are heavily interested in mining and the development of mineral resources.

But are these Mormons ever going to assimilate with the gentiles? Are they ever going to become loyal American citizens so long as the church of Latter-day Saints remains the church and church militant? These are questions which naturally present themselves. My impression is that the Mormons are in a fair way of becoming assimilated. It will take time, of course, and it depends how the Mormon problem is handled. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. So long as there were martyrs among the Mormons, and so long as they were subject to persecution or prosecution