

THE TRUTH ABOUT PEOPLE OF UTAH.

A Well Known Non-"Mormon"
Writer Tells Facts of
"Mormonism."

SHE CRITICISES A CRITIC.

Lura Vine Smith Says It Stands for
Honor, Loyalty, Purity, Godliness
And General Progress.

A well-known non-"Mormon" writer, Lura Vine Smith, in a communication to the Minneapolis Progress, has the following interesting article:

Well, if truth, honor, loyalty, purity, godliness and general progress in the right direction, are a menace to the welfare of the country, then—and then only—must we allow "Mormonism" to be called so.

Everybody who has read the last few numbers of "The Housekeeper" knows that there has been running through its columns, a fable, doled out in sections, known as "The Tragedy of the Mormon Woman."

This piece of ill gotten fiction makes quite interesting reading, and, like many doled novels, which find their way into the hands of the general public, it is worth one's while to read it. These missing essentials are truth, logic and common sense. If such a permission, I would not leave a single subject handled by the writer of these unworthy articles unexplored, and I would use fair, simple truth as the explosive.

It is a pity that the contents of the story is an conglomeration of malicious falsehood, eming with just enough truth to be diabolical in its intent. To my mind the most contemptible kind of a lie is one which contains just enough of a truth to convey a negative meaning—as for example—Mrs. A. whippers knowingly to her neighbor that the very night Mrs. B. went away from home, she, Mrs. A., saw Mrs. B. on the street at 11:30 alone with a strange man. Now Mrs. A. forgot to say that the occasion for Mrs. B.'s appearance on the street at that hour was a suddenly sick child and that the strange man with whom she was seen was the doctor.

But Mrs. A. had her little pleasure out of the story, for surely the strict letter of the story was true, but oh, what an inhuman lie was shadowed in that truth! The writer of the "Mormon Tragedy" has also presumably had and is having her benefit from the smoothly told story. In all probability those startling headlines have sold a large number of papers. What do we think of one who has been hospitably entertained by these people—the "Mormons"—has been a guest of theirs all the honor due a guest or friend, entertained in their beautiful city, received trustingly into their homes as an honorable woman, rather than as a spy, who returns to her retreat, and then with a poison pen maliciously slanders them, wholesale, collectively and individually, and would blacken the honor of such a woman?

Some one says, "At any rate one must have queer taste to care to be a plural wife"—well, perhaps, but I don't know that it is criminal to have poor taste.

I have also seen monogamous men with one wife whom it seemed had poor taste in her choice, but that was her affair not mine. I have failed to see wherein polygamy concerns people whose concern it is not. I cannot say that it appears to me personally as being a state of domestic happiness, but to which I would aspire and I am afraid that if God Himself should appear and request or allow me to enter into that relation with my fellow beings, as He did in Bible times, I should refuse—but at the same time if He allowed my neighbors to live in these relations, I would try, I believe, to mind my own business.

Are polygamous families always happy?—Well—are monogamous families always happy? You see we must look the matter squarely in the face. If we dig out the dirt from one corner it must be dug out from the others. I know a good many polygamous families, and every one is a peaceful, happy family. Some one says: "I don't understand how they can be." Well, neither do I from my personal feeling, but neither do I understand how a great many monogamous families, I know, can be happy. Now I do not say that every polygamous family is happy; but would be a foolish statement, for in the first place, I do not know all such which may exist. In the second place they are but human beings. And just look into a few of the homes you know and tell me how many you find that are perfectly happy—where there is not a spark of something marring the home rest, and if you find all serene and happy—then come let us stone the polygamists.

I am not sure what the picture of the little log house, which was produced in the Housekeeper, meant so significantly, but I presume it was to portray the poor and stagnant state of rural Utah. The picture is taken from a souvenir postal card and might or might not be the home of a "Mormon" pioneer. But "Mormon" or Gentile—say God bless and speed the family who built that little log house and filled the soil surrounding it and helped to settle that wild desert west and make it what it is—a garden in the vast wilderness.

IN MATTER OF TITHING.
Regarding tithing—the writer states that every member is compelled to pay his or her tithing, then quotes from Hon. Thomas Kearns, speech before the United States senate: "The original purpose of this vast tithe—was the maintenance of the poor, the building of meetinghouses, and today the tithes are transmitted into cash in the localities where they are paid, and they flow into the treasury of the head of the Church. No account is made of ever has been made of the tithes. The President extends them according to his will and pleasure, and with no examination of his accounts, except by those few men whom he selects for that purpose, and who he rewards for their zeal and secrecy." Now this from Thomas Kearns, who gives to the public as reliable authority, but she forgets, or is she ignorant of the character of the men whom she quotes as reliable? I can best tell something about this man in the words of "Truth": "Truth" is a paper edited and published in Salt Lake City, Utah, by a fair and just man. He is not a "Mormon," nor has any "Mormon" the slightest interest in his paper. But he is a man with a capital M, and here is some truth about Mr. Kearns: "Mr. Kearns is about the worst specimen of society in the United States. He came to Utah from Nebraska, a fugitive from justice, not daring to use his own name, but going under an alias to escape the hangman's noose, and bearing the brand of Cain. Since he has been here he has established a reputation as a libertine, a despoiler of women, a man absolutely without principle in any walk of life, ignorant, uncouth, reckless, with few, if any, redeeming qualities. He killed a man in Nebraska, and a miner in Park City implicated the ex-United States senator in the killing of another man, who owned some mining ground that

day what are we going to do with Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Ekanah, David and Joseph whom the Bible tells us were polygamists?" Church was founded the "Mormons" were persecuted as new religions have been all back through the ages—persecuted because they had new thoughts and ideas; because they were new, not because of polygamy, for it was not even thought of then. They were murdered, mobbed, driven from their homes in these middle eastern states, driven across the plains; their homes burned behind them; their possessions destroyed or stolen, and these mobs, often led by so-called Christians and ministers, driving this new religious body on and on across the plains in the cold and storm of winter. Infants were born and young mothers died, old men and women died, and were buried under a snowy grave along the trail. Young babes gave up their little lives and all suffered from the terrible exposure to blizzards and cold, and yet, when the cautious Christians began their persecutions, they were not thought of among the "Mormon" people, not until they saw the need of peering the wilderness, to which they were driven, with good men and women, to the practice of polygamy and remembering the admonition of Paul to the Corinthians to be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, and their women being as a right, not an obligation, the system of polygamy. They didn't like the rest of the world with it and they didn't want to break the law of the land. And when the law-makers wanted to have something tangible to fight they made a law making it a crime. For at that time to this there have been no plural marriages contracted with the sanction of the Church. There may, however, have been some who have broken the law but not with the sanction of the Church.

SHOWS UP FALSEHOOD.
But you say: "There are men and women still living in polygamy." Yes, and God bless them, they are taking care of the families that are theirs and not a just man or woman who would have those families broken and a happy home broken and children made fatherless and good wives deprived of the protection of faithful husbands.

They are not forgetting the commandment which God gave His people through Moses in Exodus xxi: 10: If he (a man) take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish." The writer tells of the recent plural marriages of the young woman, who acts as guide through the Temple grounds. This is also a wilful falsehood—but somebody told somebody else and so it must be true. This reminds me of one of the resolves of the famous Bunker Brown in the Chicago Tribune; in conclusion he says: "I know people who are just the same as sheep, they follow tradition and do what the leader does and Mrs. Grundy is the Bell sheep. The doctor tells 'em what to believe. Their paper tells 'em how to vote. Why aren't we free?" And so, some malicious enemy tells a falsehood about the "Mormon" people and some ignorant person believes it and tells some money-grafter who would become famous for enlightening the world—but who has no conscience. And Mrs. Grundy knows it's popular to hug the latest sensation and—"Why aren't we free?" Because we are too cowardly to recognize the truth when we see it—and more so to give voice to it when we do recognize it.

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Kearns wanted. The victim was slain, and the dying man, to ease his conscience, confessed that he had committed the murder for money—that it was not so many years ago either." Mr. Kearns dare not deny this.

And this is just a fair example of the reliability of all of the writers of the "Mormon" Church does not undermine the principles of our homes, of our faith, of our schools, of our national government."

It is a pity that some "fair homes" have not the clean foundation, sealing forth as clean, pure and loyal men and women as citizens of the United States as have the "Mormon" homes. And it's a greater pity that our churches have not a practical idea, as has the "Mormon" Church. As some one has said, "the convert to Mormonism may be sure not only of security in the world to come but of security here and now. If he asks for bread he is not given a stone, but a loaf." The "Mormon" carries his religion into his everyday life; makes it a material religion. "Anyone can be good on Sunday. It takes a man to be good on week days."

MAY WAKE UP SOMETIME.

What does it matter if the Mormons have some peculiar beliefs which we cannot see through or believe? Maybe after a while we will wake up and accept some of their ideas as already some of our churches are doing today, though they will not admit it is Mormonism. What do the temple ceremonies matter to us? The writer per-

haps has mingled just enough truth with the vile misrepresentation of the temple ceremonies to make another of those contemptible lies which is branding her deeper and deeper as one unworthy the name of true womanhood. A menace to our schools? This is what Dr. James L. Hughes, noted Canadian educator writing in the Canadian magazine of Toronto for June, 1904, says: "I found, too, that the Mormon people have very advanced educational institutions. No state schools provide a more excellent advanced Normal school than the state Normal school in Salt Lake City."

"I had believed that the Mormon leaders tried to keep their people shut in from the world in order that they might more easily be kept in the faith, I found it to be a cardinal principle of the Church to send the leading young men and women abroad for study and work in order that they may bring back to Utah the most advanced ideas of the highest civilization in all lands. They usually have about 2,000 young people in other lands, and in nearly all cases they have been guided by the Church into the courses of study or work they are pursuing. Most of these young people have been educated in the best of the universities and academies of the world."

"I did not expect to find the Mormon people great students of the Bible, but I found it to be one of the chief texts of their religious instruction."

INVENTOR OF TRAGEDIES.
If our sensational inventor of tragedies were actuated by motives of true beneficence instead of bit news, and a desire to join the unscrupulous in paying upon the insane prejudices of an unthinking populace for revenue, she would point out the defects of this system and offer remedies instead of abusing it. If you would have us believe that by this means the "Mormons" are impoverished and impressed upon I would answer her first by saying that when this principle was introduced among them they were very poor and that now unbiased statistics tell that 90 per cent of them own their homes and 98 per cent are free from debt. Where would you point to a parallel? I could name many intelligent non-"Mormons" who, observing the benefits of this plan, are now paying an honest one-tenth of their fund; indeed you might have read in "Pluck" for June of this year, where Mr. J. C. Geitz of St. Louis ascribes his success in business to the principle of or of William C. Gillette of New York, who started by giving one-tenth of a very meager salary to church work and had millions to dispose of for philanthropic purposes. It might be of interest to you to know, also, that Rev. A. J. Gordon has quite recently published in the Baptist Missionary Magazine, and in pamphlet form for general distribution among the Baptist churches of the east, an article entitled "God's Tenth," in which he urges the heavenly origin and the psychological benefits of tithing. The first Methodist Board of the Epworth League of Los Angeles have been circulating for several months a card containing the following: "God's Financial Plan. Believing that all Christians should systematically and sacrificially set aside a certain portion of their income for the cause of Christ and, furthermore, that it is the plain teaching of God's word, and His financial plan that one-tenth of our income belongs to Him: Therefore, we hereby covenant with God and one another that we will set aside one-tenth of our income, hold it as a sacred trust and give it for the cause of Christ: That we, who make this covenant, by attaching our names hereto, shall be known as members of 'The Tithing Band of the Epworth League.'" Don't you think a crusade for the liberation of the Baptists and Methodists would be timely?

"MORMONS" ARE FREE.
The "Mormon" is not imposed upon, his worship is free; he attends under no financial obligation or perturbation. Their colleges, universities and state academies provided by this means, accredited throughout the United States, easy of access, and thorough in training have brought to their doors the opportunity for higher education and are literally filled with the brightest, happiest, frankest, freest student bodies on earth.

If the original purpose of tithing was the building of meetinghouses, and the maintenance of the poor, and no policy has now been changed, how do you account for obvious fact that they have larger and better schools and are erecting more churches than ever before? Fifteen months ago, about the time this statement was first made, and when the greedy agitation of the east was warming up, the "Mormon" church did not own a foot of land nor a dollar's worth of property in Illinois or Indiana. Today their President holds the title to two splendid churches in the former state, one of which is in the heart of Chicago; and to one in Indiana. The poor are looked after, not by the President of the Church, but by local bishops, and the custom in this respect has not changed an iota. But finally she says: "No account is made, or ever has been made of the tithes." What a shame! But come, listen to common sense. If a corporation composed of religious worshippers creates a fund for charitable and philanthropic distribution, and by "common consent" appoint one of their number "trustee in trust," by the consent of the associate editor of "The Housekeeper" a periodical financial statement, that's their business.

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FUND WISELY HANDLED.
The "Mormon" tithing fund is as wisely provided, as liberally and equitably contributed to and as honestly and beneficially expended as any of any organization of any age. "Without realizing," the "Mormons" have gone to work and realized a practical socialism—if by socialism is meant a community where every individual enjoys the benefit of his labor, and must labor to live; where the weak are not trampled under foot in the struggle, and where the really unfortunate in the battle to build a temple at Nauvoo, Monday, Nov. 1, 1841, the temporary baptismal font in the temple at Nauvoo was dedicated. Wednesday, May 4, 1842, Joseph Smith instructed James Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newell K. Whitney, George Miller, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards in the temple endowment ceremonies, which have never been changed." "Who was murdered, by a bowling ball, June 27, 1844. Wasn't it really consistent that these ceremonies should contain an oath to avenge the blood of Joseph Smith upon the nation—two years before that good man was murdered. It's quite probable he was planning to be murdered."

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If our sensational inventor of tragedies were actuated by motives of true beneficence instead of bit news, and a desire to join the unscrupulous in paying upon the insane prejudices of an unthinking populace for revenue, she would point out the defects of this system and offer remedies instead of abusing it. If you would have us believe that by this means the "Mormons" are impoverished and impressed upon I would answer her first by saying that when this principle was introduced among them they were very poor and that now unbiased statistics tell that 90 per cent of them own their homes and 98 per cent are free from debt. Where would you point to a parallel? I could name many intelligent non-"Mormons" who, observing the benefits of this plan, are now paying an honest one-tenth of their fund; indeed you might have read in "Pluck" for June of this year, where Mr. J. C. Geitz of St. Louis ascribes his success in business to the principle of or of William C. Gillette of New York, who started by giving one-tenth of a very meager salary to church work and had millions to dispose of for philanthropic purposes. It might be of interest to you to know, also, that Rev. A. J. Gordon has quite recently published in the Baptist Missionary Magazine, and in pamphlet form for general distribution among the Baptist churches of the east, an article entitled "God's Tenth," in which he urges the heavenly origin and the psychological benefits of tithing. The first Methodist Board of the Epworth League of Los Angeles have been circulating for several months a card containing the following: "God's Financial Plan. Believing that all Christians should systematically and sacrificially set aside a certain portion of their income for the cause of Christ and, furthermore, that it is the plain teaching of God's word, and His financial plan that one-tenth of our income belongs to Him: Therefore, we hereby covenant with God and one another that we will set aside one-tenth of our income, hold it as a sacred trust and give it for the cause of Christ: That we, who make this covenant, by attaching our names hereto, shall be known as members of 'The Tithing Band of the Epworth League.'" Don't you think a crusade for the liberation of the Baptists and Methodists would be timely?

"MORMONS" ARE FREE.

books in the academies and universities. I know no other people who study the Bible so persistently. The Life of Christ is the history studied most carefully in the university. * * * Taken as a whole there is probably no other city where an unprejudiced man may find better opportunities for studying economic, social and educational questions than in Salt Lake City."

I will add also that the school property of Salt Lake City is worth \$1,218,661.00. The number of school children is 14,742, and for every school child there is invested \$109 in the school.

Education is compulsory. It is not only supposed to be but it is. Everything is furnished free to the child, even to the tablets and pencils. There can be no excuse for a child growing up without an education, and it is not allowed.

TESTIMONY CORROBORATED.

And here let me give a few statistics which may be also interesting. Salt Lake City—city and county building cost \$555,000. Utah has the highest birth rate and the lowest death rate of any state in the Union. Salt Lake City has five daily newspapers and nine weekly newspapers; has 2,431 volumes in the public library. Population of Salt Lake City, about 90,000. Capacity of the "Mormon" temple is 11,000. The organ is the second largest in the

world; has a regular choir of 500 trained voices, which can be increased to 1,000 in two days.

Here is another of the writer's pitiful attempts. She brings forth, as if it was merely a new idea, the old, old threadbare story of the Book of Mormon being a plagiarism of an unpublished novel, which has since been published, known as the "Spaulding Manuscript," which she claims came unlawfully into the possession of one Sidney Rigdon (who was a friend of Joseph Smith) who plagiarized this novel.

Now I would state for the benefit of the writer, and any other uninformed inquirer, that the "Spaulding Manuscript" theory has long ago been exploded. There is no more similarity between the Book of Mormon and the "Spaulding Manuscript" than there is between day and night. Evidently the writer has read nothing.

It is a fact that Sidney Rigdon never saw or knew of the Book of Mormon until it was handed him completely finished.

This is his testimony on his dying bed as well as before, and we have ample proof that he was an upright and responsible man. I have met and talked with his son, John W. Rigdon, who is also an honorable and splendid old gentleman.

Then follows excerpts from letters written by John P. Meakin and V. S. Peet, corroborating the foregoing.

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