

MASK OF THE SMOOT SMASHERS

Grant Wallace Handles the Question in the San Francisco Bulletin.

SOME CAUSTIC CRITICISMS.

He Arraigns the Women Who Have Taken Up the Fight Against Utah's Senator-Elect.

A lot of self-constituted agents of the divine wrath, mostly club and church women, elated over their success in flooring Senator Brigham Roberts, are preparing to hold a scalp dance around the remains of Mr. Reed Smoot, the newly elected senator from Utah.

Mrs. Elliott, the leader in the anti-Smoot halleluiah, tells us that the women of the United States (meaning a precious few of them), "realizing that the ultimate outcome of seating Reed Smoot in the senate would be the further degradation of woman and the desecration of the home, have banded together tooust him and voice their determination to keep the octopus of "Mormonism" from fastening its fetters upon the unprotected females of the eastern states."

Bachelorhood isn't "catching," however; neither is the state of being married as much as Abraham or Jacob or some of the closer ancestors of Jesus, particularly since President Woodruff of the Church of Latter-day Saints, on Sept. 25, 1890, issued a manifesto striking out of the necessary beliefs and practices of the "Mormon" Church the practice of polygamy. Polygamy is a dead issue.

THINLY VEILED ATTACK. That the plea of "protecting the homes" from the "blight of polygamy" is a specious one, and merely a thinly veiled attack against the rival religious body of the Latter-day Saints, inspired, not by any fear of the defunct octopus of polygamy but by the jealous desire to clip the wings of a rival sect, is shown by their express declaration to Senators Platt, Depew and Burgess, the members of the senate committee that they demanded the unseating of Mr. Smoot "on the ground of his allegiance to the Mormon Church and his knowledge of the practice of polygamy, irrespective of whether he is a polygamist or not."

Verily, the good ladies raise the cry of "the wolf!" whether there is any wolf or not, and insist on "protecting" homes which in the next breath they indirectly admit are not in any noticeable danger. Many of the club women of broader minds and larger human sympathies have flatly refused to be used as clubs for smashing the official head of this brother Christian, whose only offense, so far as has been discovered, consists in belonging to a sect which has not yet grown numerous enough to be "respectable."

THEIR OWN HOMES NEGLECTED. These women neglect their own homes and children, if they have any, to "protect" the homes of others from a condition which it is admitted by their own evidence would actually vastly improve most of them. Behind their skirts, as usual, lurks a villainous body of small-caliber preachers, who are always ready with their holy pea-shooters to scatter destruction amongst the ranks of far-off evils, whose conventionalty blind to the vastly greater ones, the injustice, hypocrisy, crime and degradation at their own back doors.

When religious persecution begins, the persecuted ones have my sympathy, and the persecutors—narrow, unkind, bigoted—have my pity. Persecution is never frank and honest. It is born of yammering hypocrisy. It always fights behind a mask, the mask in the Smoot case being the idiotic yawn about "protecting the home."

What is a good home? How shall we know, save by the results—the output? "By their fruits ye shall know them." The leaders of this attack on Smoot, while forced by the facts to speak in terms of the highest praise of the peculiar people of Utah and of the happy homes and moral, innocent, well-educated children of the "Mormons," yet insist, in the next breath, that Smoot must be barred from the Senate lest his influence shall blast the American home!

As a matter of fact, if we are to judge by the results, the average Gentile American home is a good deal less of a success than the average "Mormon" home.

TRIBUTE TO UTAH WOMEN. "Nine out of ten of the polygamous wives own 100 acres of land each, and can vote for the president of the United States. They are good women, moral, devoted to their children, and true to their husbands. My heart bleeds for them," says Mr. Elliott. She admits her inability to rouse them to a sense of the awfulness of this unprecedented state of things. They even had the effrontery to try to convert her! But, though unable to save the women, she has hopes of rescuing the well-fed and well-educated children, although, as she points out, even their case has a "superstitious" aspect, in that the youngsters in these terrible "Mormon" homes "are absolutely innocent of any sense of immorality," and therefore hard to convert to the chaotic Gentile way of running homes and churches. Truly, there is urgent need of missionaries to change this alarming state of innocence of the children into a quaking conviction of sin—a condition precedent, of course (not to morality, for morality never "saves souls"), but to "salvation!"

There are few present-day apostates; on the contrary, the religious zeal of the younger "Mormons" is stronger even than in the days of Brigham Young, and men and women of all classes go on missions to all parts of the world without question and at their own expense—and the tithes are paid with greater regularity than ever.

SOME COMPARISONS. The "Mormons" have no paid preachers, missionaries. Those who expound the "Mormon" gospel are not a parasitic class, and are not above spending most of their time in useful labor, being thus truly democratic in spirit. On the other hand, priestcraft and preachercraft are purely aristocratic or monarchical institutions, in origin and in spirit. Again the zealous "Mormon" missionaries, to be found the world over, are not on salary. They are usually young business men and women, professional men and farmers, who choose to lay aside money-getting entirely for a few years "to do the work of the Master."

In intelligence and moral wholesomeness, those who have seen are not whit behind other Christian missionaries. As there is no provision made for the salvation of women in the Scriptures, their only chance of heaven is

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to be sealed up to some Elder for time and eternity, to be a star in his crown forever. Brigham Young's definition of spiritual wifehood was expressed thus: "I say to every man on the face of the earth, if he wishes to be saved, he cannot be saved without a woman by his side. This is spiritual wifehood—that is, the doctrine of spiritual wives."

He must remember," says the author of the recent "Story of the Mormons," "that it is a part of the doctrine of polygamy that women be sealed to some devoted member of the Mormon Church, 'for time and eternity,' and that the space around the earth is filled with spirits seeking some 'tabernacles of clay,' by means of which they may attain salvation. The Mormon women believe that the salvation of the sex depends on 'sealed' marriages, and that the more children they can bring into the world, the more spirits they assist on the road to salvation."

In the earlier days of the Church, the bringing of a new wife into a family produced discord and heart-burnings; with the coming of later generations, schooled to look upon polygamy as a matter of course, it is different. All the testimony I can obtain in regard to the Mormon women are now the most earnest advocates of polygamous marriages."

Said one competent observer in Salt Lake City to me: "As the women of the South, during the war, were the rank and file of the rebel army, so the women of Mormondom are today the most zealous advocates of polygamy."

GROWING ALL THE TIME. It is even said by many Gentiles that the "Mormon" Church is the only great religious organization which is really growing at a faster rate than the population. It is doubtless the jealousy and fear aroused by this fact that is the mainspring of the agitation against these excellent Christian people by their "so-called" Christian brethren of other creeds.

I have personally known a good many "Mormons" have sometimes attended their church and have had them as college classmates—including a granddaughter of the "prophet," Joseph Smith. Without exception, I believe that their characters and their home lives were such that it would keep the average good Methodist or Presbyterian brother hustling to equal them. Therefore, when the strong arm of the law is invoked by the good ladies of the Dorrans and X. Y. Z. societies to protect the homes of the rest of us from the spread of their "pernicious influence," we smile indulgently and a trifle wearily, and murmur "rotten!"

ACTS AS A BOOM. I care as little for the religious beliefs of the "Mormons" as for those of the Hottentots or Baptists. Doubtless they are all good enough for the people who in their present stage of development need them. Results, only, are all that count. Inasmuch as methods are of no moment, I see no more reason for this effort to change "Mormonism" into some more ancient form than for Calvinism to be changed to "Mormonism."

When saints pitch into each other, the rest of us may well keep right on cheerfully boiling potatoes, knowing that the good thing will suffer, if they are persecuted, the Latter-day Saints should rejoice. Persecution invariably "booms" any sect.

Here is the way Elbert Hubbard, who perhaps dips his tin dipper a little deeper into the well of truth than any man of the century, sums up the case; and I believe he reflects the plain, horse sense of the great mass of unprejudiced people: "ELBERT HUBBARD QUOTED. 'If sects did not serve mankind they would never be evolved—each sect, like a coal screen, catches a certain sized man. A reasonable amount of superstition is a good thing for certain folks. It is an aid to the imagination, and the fairy tale is not bad for children. A superstition is a crutch—no man will keep it any longer than he needs it. Don't take it away from him. Leave him alone and he will throw it away for himself. The wars of the world have been mostly caused by zealots who were trying to make men exchange one sect for another.'"

All are good—all are bad—it depends upon your point of view. What we microbes think of God does not make much difference to God—we can only mirror ourselves. As we change our ideals we change our God. God is getting better all the time—higher, nobler, wiser, gentler, kinder.

I conversed in Salt Lake City, said to me: "My sister and I married the same man. We all loved and revered him in life. My sister and I and our children live in loving memory of him. He never spoke to us an unkind word. I said nothing, because there was nothing to say. My sister and I and our children who quibble, quarrel and make their house a hell. And I asked myself this question—'Is monogamy wholly good?' And the inward answer was, 'It may be and it may not.' And then I asked myself this question, 'Is polygamy wholly bad?' And the inward answer was, 'It may be and it may not.' A man in Utah may have three wives and treat all with infinite tenderness; and another may live in Boston and have one wife, and use her to bat up flies."

THE PROMISCUOUS GENTILE. "Laws for the suppression of polygamy have been made by men 'imperfectly monogamous,' and are founded on the idea that man by nature is base and his soul devil. We doubt that proposition now—we are having more faith in nature, and as our faith in God increases we govern less. The promiscuous Gentile is not much beyond the fish; but polygamy demands a degree

of affinity—there is choice and there is loyalty. "The Mormon men and women have always been and are now true to their marriage ties. Polygamy and prostitution are never found together. Herbert Spencer once wrote: 'Polygamy seems to be a variant of man's search for his mate,' but no wiser ever dare say as much for the monogamic institution of promiscuity."

"Why should meddlers worry themselves about a man a thousand miles away who has two wives or three? If the wives are willing, whose business is it? We make laws against murder because men object to being killed. But love and marriage are private matters, and beyond providing that a man should not allow his wife and children to become public charges, the government should keep its coarse hands off."

A UNIQUE DISTINCTION. The "Mormons" have the unique distinction of living up to their religion. It is a vital thing to them, seven days in the week—not a mere name and a cloak. Their religion may not be as high as that of the W. C. T. U., people could wish, but such as it is, it makes honest people, moral people, temperate people, well educated and well-to-do

people of these despised "Mormons." If the Protestant and Catholic religions did half as much, the Buddhists, Mohammedans and "Mormons" would not need to send missionaries to us, and the angels would not have to hiss for those "good Christians" who so bitterly attack them.

Those busybodies, the Smoot-smashers, should begin drinking a new brand of weak tea, and direct their energies to elevating the homes in their immediate vicinity. It is also respectfully suggested that they re-read the eleventh commandment, and add to it a twelfth, which reads, "Mind your own business."

Their plea is a malodorous mixture of fraud, misrepresentation, hypocrisy, practical justice and nonsense. On purely moral grounds, Reed Smoot has a better right in the United States senate than nine-tenths of the philandering old gentlemen who compose that august body and who are notoriously "imperfectly monogamous."—Grant Wallace in the San Francisco Bulletin, Dec. 14, 1903.

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THE WIDOW'S MITE.

She Put it in a Bank and Now Wants a Receiver for It.

Hartford, Conn., Dec. 22.—A petition for the appointment of a receiver for the Windham County National Bank of Danburiel was presented in the superior court today by Mrs. Ella S. Russell of Killingly, widow of former Congressman Russell. She alleges that the president of the bank and board of directors have been using the funds of the bank for speculation to such an extent that it is doubtful if the capital stock of the bank is equal to the outstanding indebtedness.

She further alleges that many fraudulent acts have been committed by the bank officers. A receiver was appointed.

According to a recent statement the bank had on deposit \$289,000. The capital stock is \$50,000.

Comfort Starr Burlingame of Brooklyn, Conn., the president; Charles P. Backus, the treasurer; and James Perkins, John A. Payne and Albert D. Putnam, directors, all of Killingly, are named as the defendants by Mrs. Russell, who alleges that they formed a syndicate for the purchase of and

speculation in stocks with borrowed money.

She charges that Burlingame spent a large part of his time in New York directing the speculation, which was on the whole unsuccessful.

To meet the calls for margins, Mrs. Russell avers that the directors and officials she names conspired to further borrow of the bank money to meet the necessities of arranging notes with different lenders. To avoid difficulty with the bank examiner in some cases where it was impossible under the law to borrow any more money on notes made by any of the persons interested, it is alleged they voted to loan funds on notes signed by persons whom they knew to be without pecuniary responsibility, knowing that these funds were to be used by speculative partnerships.

She declares that the defendants have carried notes which they knew were not good at their face value on the books of the bank in order to make it appear that the capital of the bank was unimpaired and that the five officials voted to pay dividends to stockholders when they knew that the capital stock of the bank was seriously impaired.

Anthony Comstock III, New York, Dec. 22.—Anthony Comstock,

secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, is reported to be seriously ill at his home in Summit, N. J. Two months ago he was thrown down stairs in Bridgeport, Conn., while attempting to arrest a physician charged with circulating obscene literature. Several ribs were broken and he was badly bruised but he attended to his business until indications of internal injuries developed.

Taft Pardons Prisoners. Manila, Dec. 22.—Gov. Taft has pardoned several Filipino prisoners on the approach of the Christmas festival, including the priest Leonardo Depuey, who was under sentence of death by a military court for burying alive the president of Taytay, which has been commuted to penal servitude for a period of 20 years.

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