

EDITORIALS.

NEW ENGLAND BIGAMY AND UTAH POLYGAMY.

IN the *Princeton Review* for July is a very caustic article from the pen of Rev. Leonard Woolsey Bacon, entitled "Polygamy in New England." The writer, unlike most people who undertake to dilate upon polygamy in Utah, knows whereof he speaks, being a resident of the region whose social customs, family arrangements and local laws are the subjects of his able pen, and a lineal descendant of the Puritans as well as one of the people affected by the sarcasms which abound in his article.

The chief point made by Dr. Bacon is the practical establishment of polygamy in Connecticut with the sanction of law and religion, while its votaries and supporters rail at polygamy in Utah, and seek its suppression by violence. He shows a difference, however, between "Mormon" and Puritan polygamy. One is simultaneous, the other consecutive. The "Mormons" have more wives than one at the same time; the Puritans put away the first to marry a second, the second to marry a third, and so on *ad libitum*. The reader is left to draw his own conclusions as to the relative merits of the two systems, and to decide whether it is worse for a man to marry two wives, live with, care for and support them and their offspring—the "Mormon" way, or to turn her out of doors with her children, in order to satisfy his lusts, fancies, or both, with another—the Puritan fashion; also to judge whether the "Mormon" apostle who seals a plural wife to a married man, is more culpable than the "Christian" priest who adds the sanction of his church and office to that which Jesus denounced as adultery.

It should be understood that Dr. Bacon does not endorse either kind of polygamy. But he points out the peculiarities and contrasts of each kind, and with biting irony shows the attractions and beauties—to lecherous men and loose-minded women—of the New England plan of making bigamy respectable. A few extracts from the article will be interesting to our readers, and give them a correct idea of its tenor and style. Dr. Bacon, in regard to the difference in the two systems says:

"In the first place, polygamy in Utah is unlawful. It is scarcely just to speak of it as an institution of that Territory, when it is only a prevailing social usage, sustained by some religious sanctions. In the New England States, on the contrary, polygamy is distinctly instituted by act of legislature; and the polygamous marriages, instead of being 'sealed' in some private sacristy of a religious sect, are authorized by the highest judicial officers of the State under the seal of its Superior Court, a dignity which is not bestowed by these commonwealths on ordinary Christian wedlock. The concubinage thus authorized is usually blessed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and declared to be a Christian marriage, by a minister of the Christian religion, which (as it can hardly be necessary to inform the reader) is the prevailing religion of the New England States. This singular rite is frequently made the occasion of a good deal of social festivity and merry-making. The perfect solemnity of visage with which the ecclesiastic goes through his part of declaring that, in the name of the Lord, to be Christian marriage which the Lord himself declares to be adultery, tends to impart to the affair a *buffo* aspect that may naturally minister to the hilarity of the guests and spectators."

"Another and perhaps more important point of difference between the New England and the Utah—perhaps it would be better to say the Puritan and Mormon—polygamies, is this: that the Mormon polygamy is simultaneous and the Puritan polygamy is consecutive. The Mormon polygamy is quite after the old patriarchal pattern. It does not require one to be 'off with the old love' as a condition of being 'on with the new.'"

And herein the Mormon usage would appear, to a superficial observer, to have the advantage, in point of humanity, over the Puritan institution, which requires ordinarily, under severe penalties, that the first wife, with or without her children, and with or

without provision for her support, as the case may be, shall be put out into the street before the new one is received. * * * If the brazen advocates of the base system of Mormonism should have the hardihood, in the face of our Christian civilization, to claim it as an offset in their favor that this picture of domestic bliss under the New England system fails to represent the pining loneliness of the rejected wife, the sons of the Pilgrim Fathers would promptly retort that if the old wife pursued a solitary life it would be either her own fault or her misfortune, and in either case the law on which the institution of New England polygamy is founded must not be held responsible."

With regard to the legal aspect of the two kinds of polygamy, he thus defines the laws of the different States:

1. "Simultaneous polygamy is interdicted. 2. Consecutive polygamy is interdicted except by license from a magistrate. 3. When the two parties to a marriage consent to ask a license to marry again at their discretion, there is no difficulty in obtaining it. 4. Even when one of the parties is reluctant, the fact is not ordinarily a practical hindrance to the other party to get from the Court the desired license for bigamy. 5. The bigamous or polygamous marriage, if duly licensed, is held by the State to be in all respects equally honorable with Christian wedlock."

As to the expense attending the New England mode, he remarks:

"The license fees are trifling, and for the slight professional work involved there is so lively a competition among gentlemen of the bar that the expense is kept down to a moderate figure. The most serious cost of bigamy is one not really necessary—the increased fee paid to the officiating clergyman in consideration of the awkwardness of his position and the strain upon his feelings. But this is a mere matter of compliment or perhaps religious zeal on the part of the bridegroom; for the case is rare indeed when \$5 or \$10 will not procure, for such an occasion, the services of a minister of the gospel of unimpeached orthodox and good and regular standing."

The writer next takes up the question of the relative prevalence of polygamy in New England and in Utah. This is surrounded with some difficulty because of the incompleteness of statistics, particularly as regards plural marriages in Utah. The number of "permits to commit bigamy," as he designates divorce decrees, and the number of marriages in the New England States are known. In several States the proportion is about one divorce to eight marriages, slightly fluctuating, but with a tendency to increase. As each divorce is practically a license for two to commit bigamy, he argues that the ratio would be as one "permit" to every four marriages, if all the parties availed themselves of the opportunities thus extended. But some of them are soon re-married; and others after trying new partners come together again, and he remarks that,

"Cases like these, however delightful to the philanthropist, are annoying to the statistician, for they confuse the figures."

Altogether the nearest that we can safely come to a statement of the ratio of polygamies to the total number of marriages among the New England population of native stock in the State named is that it is somewhere between one to eight and one to four. This estimate includes only the legal polygamies. The unlicensed or criminal polygamies are a class by themselves, and are generally regarded in good society as not only unlawful but immoral. Rarely, if ever, can an acknowledged bigamist maintain his position in society and his good standing in the church, unless he can show his authorization from the Superior Court. In view of the facility with which such authorization is granted, it is felt, not unreasonably, that a person desiring to indulge in bigamy is without excuse for not complying with the prescribed formalities."

Dr. Bacon then shows that the bigamous relations of New England are sustained chiefly, not among the walks of humble life, but in the strong, educated intelligent middle stratum and in the ranks of the Church, ministers in good standing and professors in theological seminaries, their family relations being

unobjected to by the clergy, who are yet "unanimously and conscientiously opposed to polygamy—in Utah."

Discussing the probabilities of the future in New England, Dr. Bacon says:

"The present amount of polygamous marriage there prevalent is a fact, not of social statics, but of social dynamics. It represents a stream in motion, and in pretty rapid motion, too. For polygamy as a legal institution has existed in New England for much less than two generations, and the present per annum and per cent. of polygamous marriages represents an irregular but rapid increase which is continually going on. The heaven has only begun to work. * * * The time is not far distant when the ratio will be not, as now in some parts of New England, two bigamy permits to every eight marriages, but a much higher ratio. Progress in this direction is so rapid as naturally to alarm timid minds."

Proceeding to satirize the disagreement between the Puritan bigamists and the "Mormon" polygamists he says:

"Already perspicacious minds can see that the difference between these antagonized parties is not really one of principle; that the question between the simultaneous polygamy and the consecutive polygamy, if it is worth disputing about at all, is one on which there is something to be said on both sides and that really our only serious contention with our Mormon brethren is on the ground of their prematurity—that they have usurped in their nonage privileges of legislation that belong only to a sovereign State. Let them wait their time, avoid in the phraseology of their statutes any needlessly offensive expressions, and it will soon become obvious to all but fierce polemics on either side that there really is no moral question at issue between the two sections."

Putting aside all badinage on this interesting subject, we beg to inform Dr. Bacon that there is nothing in common between "Mormon" marriage and New England bigamy. The Puritan style is not polygamy at all. There is a very important "moral question at issue between the two sections." It is the question of "putting away." The Bible very clearly and emphatically declares that God hates putting away; but it nowhere announces that He is averse to plural marriages. What God hath joined together no man is to put asunder; but there is no intimation that God has not and will not put together more than one wife to one husband.

Apart from the religious aspect of the question there is a very wide difference between a system that permits a man to cast off a wife, often without her wish, in order that he may take another—the chief motive which prompts divorce in New England, as shown by Dr. Bacon—and that which permits a man to marry another wife with the consent of the first—both being sealed to him not only till death, but for all eternity—and requires him to act kindly and justly to both.

There is and can be no union of sentiment between Puritan bigamy and "Mormon" plurality; and we may look for a continuation of hostility on the part of the refined, intellectual, licensed, wife-discarding, "Christian" consecutivists of New England, against the unorthodox, patriarchal, Bible-believing, family-raising polygamists of Utah. Their motives, actions and aims are as diverse as the poles, and tend to diametrically opposite results. For while the former originates in lust, prompts the suppression of offspring and leads down to death, the latter springs from the fountains of enlarged affection, promotes family increase and is pregnant with multiplied blessings and eternal lives.

METHODISM AND POLITICS.

DURING a Methodist Conference of the Wyoming District, Pennsylvania, recently, an animated, not to say acrimonious, debate was occasioned by an attempt to obtain the endorsement of the Independent Republican ticket. The resolution introduced was voted down; not, however, on the principle that politics was no part of the business of

the meeting, for the Cameron ticket was indorsed in the place of the Independent, and thus the Methodist Conference committed itself to machine politics in Pennsylvania.

Now, on the rule applied by Methodists to the "Mormons" when Elders advise the people to vote in a certain way, this certainly must be a "Union of Church and State." Yet we hear no outcry about it, either in the Methodist ranks or from any other denomination. Neither do either of the papers we have seen, religious or secular, make any comments on this alleged un-American method. Perhaps the difference in locality accounts for it. What is wrong in Utah may be right in Pennsylvania. Or is it not rather the difference of religious bodies. What may be a terrible thing for "Mormons to engage in is quite correct for Methodists to do. That is it, no doubt. Politics and religion must not unite in "Mormonism," but they may be thoroughly mixed and mingled in Methodism.

TWO MISSIONARIES TO MEXICO.

THE Memphis (Tennessee) *Appeal* has published a letter written by a gentleman who went to Mexico in company with several others from the Southern States to investigate some mining affairs in our neighbor republic. The correspondence alludes to some "Mormon" missionaries who were en route to Mexico on the same vessel as the writer, and he gives the following account of his conversations with those Elders. We copy it, as it will be of interest to the friends of the two young men, who were called to go to Mexico at the April Conference in this city. He says:

"We had aboard our ship two 'Mormon' missionaries from Salt Lake City, going over to Mexico to convert the 'Greasers' to their faith and 'polygamy.' One of them, an intelligent young man of about 23 years of age, and a son of the celebrated 'Mormon,' Orson Pratt, discussed his religion and his people with us 'Gentiles' with a candor and a fullness that to me was rather astonishing. I must confess my views somewhat altered from my acquaintance with him."

I had always thought their religion and practices would not bear the sunlight and civilization of our nineteenth century; but laying aside the plurality of wives doctrine, it is no bad faith. Our party contested every point with him, and put him through a cross-examination that would have tried a Philadelphia lawyer."

This young missionary was born, bred, and reared in Salt Lake, and we might say under the very shadow of the Tabernacle; to us then it seems no surprise that he should think "Mormonism" embraced everything pure and holy, while to us it appears the one black blot upon our nation's otherwise fair escutcheon. He is quite an enthusiast on his subject, and as more liberality towards others' religious views than is generally shown. He proposes to operate for a while in this city until he is more familiar with the language of the country, and I shall watch his movements with more than ordinary curiosity."

THE UTAH COMMISSION.

UNDER the above title the New York *World* publishes the following editorial. It is rather ironical, but conveys some good lessons to anti-polygamy hypocrites.

We do not know how many New Englanders are grieved over the non-appointment of any down-easter on the Commission, but there several out-westerners who are frightfully chagrined and outraged at the omission of their names in the President's nominations. That not one of the Utah ring, after all the begging and wire-pulling and lying that have been resorted to, should get the ghost of a chance to manipulate election matters in this Territory in the interest of the conspirators, is a little more—or a great deal less—than was bargained for. Hence the gnashing of teeth and the uncompromising remarks concerning President Arthur, which have disturbed the air in certain quarters ever since the telegraph carried the names of the Commissioners across the country.

The "Mormons" are well satisfied with the exclusion of Utah men

from the Board. There are gentlemen here, non-"Mormons" as well as "Mormons," who could be safely entrusted with the management of affairs placed in such a singular condition by the anti-American Edmunds bill. But the class who most desired the position were of those least fit to hold such power as the measure contemplates, and they have been, as we think, wisely left out of the Commission.

We have no means at present of judging what course will be taken by the Board appointed, but it is to be hoped that the gentlemen composing it will seek to discharge their remarkable duties within the line of the law, and in accordance with the principles of justice and honor. In that case they will incur the hatred of a few malcontents, but gain the respect of the majority of the citizens of Utah and the great people of the United States.

The *World* says:

"Massachusetts and New England in general doubtless feel aggrieved that not one of the Utah Commissioners appointed by the President is a citizen of the commonwealths of Edmunds or Hoar, and therefore a man who knows a great moral idea when he sees it. Another reason why New England statesmen may feel aggrieved at the appointment of only Western men is the undoubted and undeniable knowledge which Dr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon has shown they have of Utah's peculiar social characteristic, and that, too without Utah's peculiar religious basis for it. And it may be a grave mistake that the President has made in not selecting at least one New Englander to go to Utah. The results of his investigations might have been used as a 'converting' power at home. If a man will have more than one wife, there are advantages in having them simultaneous."

It is no infrequent occurrence that a gentleman among the Saints marries a second wife to nurse the first and in turn to be nursed by the first in the frequent illness that falls to their domestic lot. The peculiar economy and charity are unknown among New England polygamists. Of course, too, in Utah every wife is cared for during the husband's life, and not, as in New England, only during the brief blinding of a civil contract. These reforms might be made in the system of Eastern polygamy by a careful study of the advantages of the Mormon system; and surely New England is entitled to whatever benefits may result from the commission's investigation in Utah. But just what we are to gain from the labors of the gentlemen appointed is not yet clear. They may "respectfully report" upon the advantage of simultaneous polygamy and point out the greater domestic peace and the better moral that have resulted from it in Utah than in New England; but not even a Republican Congress will be likely to have the audacity openly to recommend polygamy or to suggest desirable changes in the management of wives to the 'lawful' polygamists of the northeast."

The members of the commission are to be commiserated. The civilization of the United States will not endure either form of polygamy any longer than the time when, as Jefferson said of all such things, "good sense has fair play and reason and laughter it out of doors without suffering the State to be troubled with it." If they investigate the morals of the Saints of Utah, their report must condemn the sinners of Connecticut, and the attention of Congress and philanthropists and 'ladies' societies' must turn in another direction than towards Utah. If they confine themselves to political work and reorganize the government of the Territory, they will receive Mormon thanks but Republican denunciation. This would be a better fit to Utah, but not a few redoubtable politicians would be thrust upon the charity of the party, and the twin relic would remain twin—one in New England, the other in the Salt Lake Valley. The politically 'branded' children of the Saints will not suffer the inconsequential consequences that the socially 'branded' of the Sinners now suffer, and Mormonism has won a mighty and precisely this kind of inebriate opposition since the day of the 'martyr' prophet, seer and revelator. After all, the Utah commission may be a deeply laid scheme of New England polygamists to strengthen polygamy in Utah and thereby advance in New England this ancient social doctrine which non-interference, charity and ridicule would long ago have overthrown."