

## A Visit to the Mormons.

A correspondent writing from Salt Lake City, on the 14th ult., says:

The journey by rail from San Francisco to Salt Lake, a distance of nine hundred miles, was made in fifty hours. I was disappointed by the scenery on the way. I was not disappointed, however, on reaching the city. The City of the Saints is, indeed, beautiful—beautiful in itself, as well as beautiful in its situation. Twenty-five years ago, the place was an uninhabited, uncultivated wilderness. Now it is a thriving city of about 20,000 inhabitants. Whatever one may think of the religious peculiarities of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints, as they prefer to be called, every generous and unprejudiced mind must admire them for their indomitable enterprise and courage, and patience and industry in effecting such a marvellous transformation. I worshipped with the people several times in their tabernacle. The services are much the same as in orthodox churches. The chief difference is that the Bible is not read. This difference, however, is not increased by reading the Book of Mormon. Both books lie on the preacher's desk, but neither seem to be used, save when lifted up occasionally by the preacher by way of illustration. The people do not know which of the bishops or elders is to preach until he enters the pulpit, and the preacher professes not to know what he is to preach about until he rises to address the congregation. He then speaks (as I heard the celebrated Orson Pratt express it) 'as God will direct and enable him.' The burden of the discourses to which I listened were—the insufficiency of Bible teaching; the necessity of special revelation; the doctrine of a particular providence; the necessity of repentance and of baptism by immersion; a defense and advocacy of polygamy; the universal goodness of Mormon faith and morals compared with the disunion and immorality so prevalent among outside Christian sects; a superior heaven for all faithful Mormons—an inferior one for all outsiders, if they have led good lives, and a place of suffering, though not necessarily of endless duration, for unbelievers, among whom apostate Mormons would be, and suffer worst. One of the preachers ended his discourse with a philippic against the use of intoxicating drink and tobacco. These things are used to a very limited extent among the 'Saints.' It would perhaps be well if one could say as much of communities elsewhere. I was much impressed the first Sunday I was there by the way in which the day was observed. Tabernacle and church-going seemed the order of the day. Not a shop was open, not even a fruit stall. There was no buying or selling, no recreations, no amusements, no noise or bustle of any kind, but everything in the city as quiet and orderly as in a Quakers' meeting-house. What a contrast between a Sunday at Salt Lake and a Sunday in San Francisco! One of the leading men in the Mormon Church kindly invited me to spend an evening with him at his residence. We had a lengthy and, I am afraid, unprofitable theological discussion. I admitted there was much in their religion that was both good and true, as there is in almost every religion, but contended against what I believed to be of an opposite character.

The Bishop, who thus entertained me, was a very kindly, lively, pleasant old gentleman. I omitted to enquire how many wives he had, but he had quite a host of fine children. The Mormons, so far as one can judge of them by their every day life, are in many respects an exemplary people. They are temperate, cheerful, active and enterprising. In all my business dealings with them I invariably found them courteous, upright, and honorable. Among them there is no pauperism, prostitution, or 'squalid wretchedness,' and, as a rule, no drunkenness, profane swearing, or low gambling. They have a keen eye to getting on in the world, and to having many wives and lots of children. It is part of their religion. All other things being equal, the more wives and children here, the more honor and happiness hereafter. Their heaven is made to consist in a perfect earth—a sort of Mahomedan paradise. And who can tell?—there may be such a mode of life in some of the 'many mansions.' That they are a religious people cannot be doubted, though their religion may be of a low type. As Swedenborg would say, 'they live on the natural plane, not on the spiritual.' But whatever the nature of their religion, if they are earnest and consistent in it, they are entitled to our respect—more so, indeed, than those who, while professing, it may be, a higher and purer religion, hold it lightly and live it badly. All Mormons, though at liberty to take more wives than one, do not do so—some from one cause, some from another. The majority of the common people have only one wife, some, too, who are in good circumstances. Quite a number, however, of the persons I conversed with, acknowledged having two, and rejoiced in it, and only wished they were able to have more.

Polygamy, though not good in itself, may be 'good for the present distress.' If it is good for a man in a normal and well-conditioned state to have but one wife, it may be relatively good for him in an abnormal and ill-conditioned state to have more. I shall close with this question: Whether it is a greater evil that a man should have two or more wives, or that two or more women should have no husbands?—*Glasgow Sentinel*, Feb. 22.

There are two ways of going through this world. One is to make the best of it, and the other is to make the worst of it. Those who take the latter course work for poor pay.

I give you ten minutes to prepare for death, said a ferocious French lover the other day to a lady who declined his proffered hand, as I am going to kill you. The lady proposed a last request. Let me have a cup of tea? Is that all? says Othello. All, dear—I should like to die warm.

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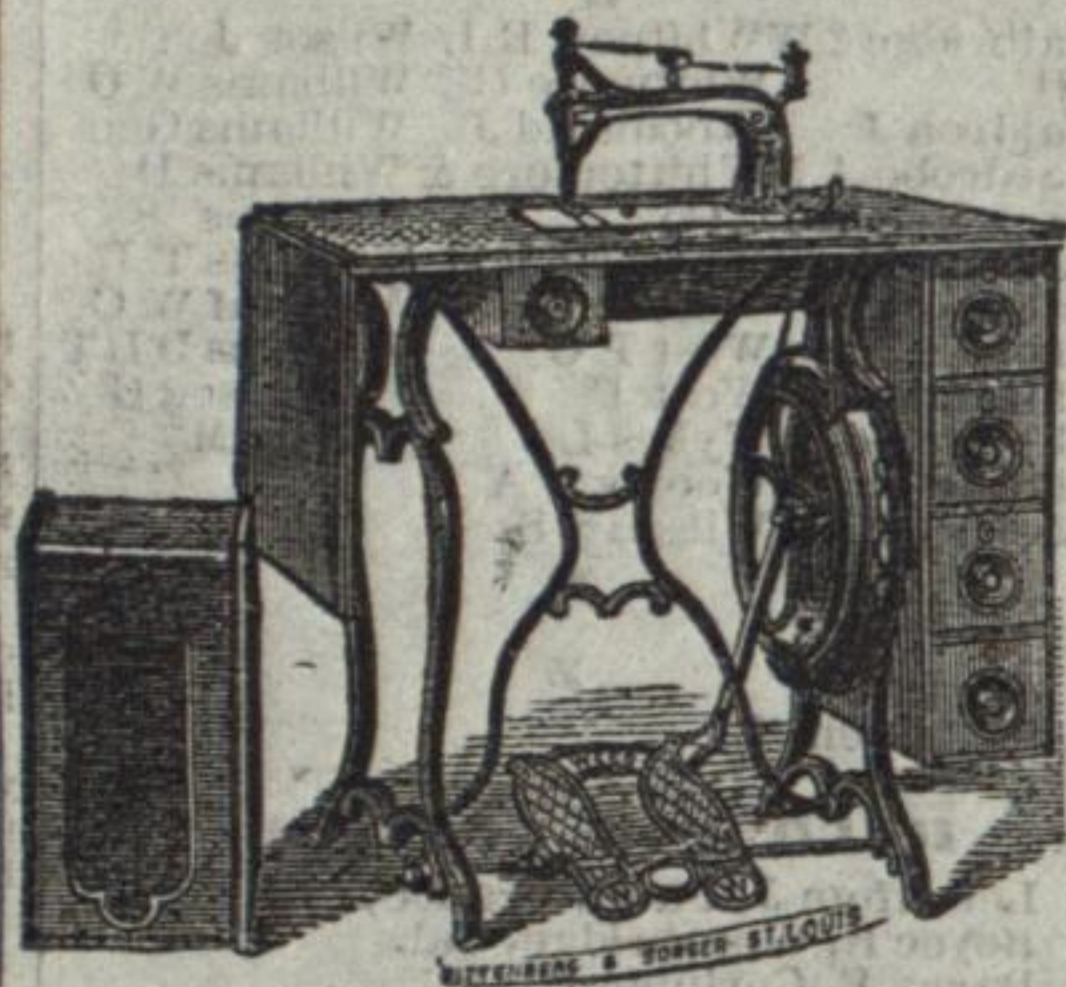
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P. A. ROBBINS, C. B. ROBBINS.

Salt Lake City, March 7, 1873. w8 1m



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