



GEORGE Q. CANNON.....EDITOR

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THE S. F. "TIMES" CORRESPONDENT
ON THE MORMONS

MR. George F. Parsons has written a series of letters to the San Francisco *Times*, under the heading of "Among the Mormons," which will doubtless be read with interest by Californians. We do not know how long Mr. Parsons remained here; but we suppose that his stay was brief, and whatever errors have crept into his letters—for they are not entirely free from mistakes—we attribute to that cause. The letters, so far as we have seen, are as correct as could be expected from one coming in, as we imagine Mr. P. did, with but little previous knowledge of Utah and its people, and they speak highly for his industry and the care which he has taken to obtain information. We shall await with interest the remaining portion of his correspondence. If he continues to write as favorably of the affairs and the people of Utah as he has done in the letters which have reached us, we shall be almost surprised. For, however fair a man may be disposed to write about Utah and "the Mormons," he soon becomes aware of the fact that it is unpopular with a certain noisy class, and unless he be a man of considerable moral courage, he is apt to weaken and to shape his utterances to better suit their taste. Already we notice a contemptible little San Francisco sheet contains an article in which an attempt is made to hold Mr. Parsons up to ridicule. The truth he tells does not agree with its depraved taste, and it evinces spleen.

Speaking of Ogden, Mr. P. says: "The traveler who enters Utah from the west will meet with little worthy of note until he reaches Ogden, which is some forty miles to the eastward of Promontory Point. Brigham City, it is true, lies to the westward of this town, snugly sheltered at the base of the Wasatch Mountains, but it is by no means so considerable a place as Ogden. On entering it one is reminded of the quiet country towns of the older States, though Ogden is, if possible, even more hushed and somniferous than those abodes of peace and monotony. It boasts one principal thoroughfare, but the streets are laid out with a liberality as regards space, that might be copied with advantage by more pretentious places. The houses are for the most part built of adobe, and the town is situated at the very base of the hills, some of the houses being placed upon a level bench which rises at the rear of the main street. The largest buildings are the Tithing House, the hotel (the only one in the place), kept by Bishop West, and the Tabernacle where religious services are held. The stores are few in number, and the amount of business done does not appear to be large, though the advent of the railroad has given a stimulus to trade, and is gradually awakening the Mormons to the necessity of action. One thing soon makes itself apparent to the sojourner in this little place, and that is, that Ogden is exceedingly orderly. There are here regular Mormon policemen; and there is moreover, a station-house, built on the hill, of rough stone, and looking strong and firm enough. But the police have little to do, and the station-house is seldom tenanted save when some foolish Gentile puts an enemy into his mouth to steal away his brains, and reflects discredit upon the civilization he misrepresents by his drunken vagaries. Bishop West, to whom I have alluded, is a favorable specimen of the leaders of the Mormon Church. He is a quiet, gentlemanly, well-informed man; and though he has not yet learned how to keep a hotel, I have hopes of his improvement in this respect. Perhaps I shall not be recommending him to your lady readers when I state that he has nine wives at the present time, but that is one of the peculiarities of Utah society, and I cannot evade it, even if I were inclined to. * * *

Outside of the main street the houses are scattered, and generally stand in their own gardens, which, at this season of the year, are fragrant and lovely with the odor and the color of peach and apple blossoms. Here may be seen on a pleasant afternoon, the two or three wives of the tradesman or the artisan, seated in the shade of the verandah, nursing their respective babies and keeping an eye upon the gambols of the multitudinous little ones who roll and tumble about the foliage-covered porch.

The fruit grown in these gardens is said to be of a very superior quality, but I was not fortunate enough to be present when it was ripe."

"OGDEN TO SALT LAKE

"There does not appear to be much good land between Ogden and Salt Lake, when once the Weber Valley is passed. The bottoms there are very rich and fertile, but the river is, as I heard a traveler remark, 'a very mean stream,' and has an ugly habit of spreading itself all over the low lands when the snows melt in the hills. On reaching Farmington, a pretty village some twenty-two miles from Ogden, some choice land appears. Farmington is situated on the slope of the foothills, and in front of it a considerable tract of good soil stretches away down to the margin of Salt Lake. There are here some substantial houses of stone, which differ from our own style of architecture in that they are made to last. There are some flourishing orchards, pretty gardens, fine springs of delicious water, and pleasant groves of trees, in the neighborhood, and it is altogether a very picturesque and cozy looking little place. Passing along the road here, one meets wagons, driven by swarthy country folks, accompanied, far more frequently than in Gentile countries, by their wives and children. Nearly all the women in these regions wear sun bonnets of such portentous dimensions that there is no more chance of seeing the face at the back of them than if one was trying to discern a person's features by looking through the Summit tunnel."

"SALT LAKE CITY.

"Down in the wilds of Arizona, amid a desert region presenting everywhere the marks of ancient volcanic action, where the gigantic cactus rises to a height of sixty feet, and throws out its huge, coarse blossoms, like bleached human heads, at right angles to the fluted columnar shaft, the traveler comes upon an edifice which is so utterly and entirely out of place, and foreign to the surroundings, that he is compelled to recall the childish legends of the Arabian Nights, and to wonder if indeed some whimsical genii has not caught up the building from the midst of a populous city, and planted it in the wilderness in mockery. For the bewildering structure is a temple of no mean pretensions, and within fifty miles there is no human habitation. Wonderful as this spectacle undoubtedly is, it may well be questioned whether the City of the Saints, the capital of Deseret, is not entitled to rank as the more remarkable creation. It is not at this day that the full force of its interest strikes the observer, for the labors of that extraordinary people who emulate the honey bee in their indefatigable and patient industry, have so far reclaimed the desert all around the place that its earliest discoverers would fail to recognize it. But twenty years ago, when the first veterans crept slowly through the defiles of the mountains to the eastward, and emerged upon the plain which once formed a portion of the bed of the Great Salt Lake, they had need of all the fervor and faith that religious fanaticism could supply, to reconcile them to the destiny marked out for them by the leaders of the struggling and harassed Church. Bleak mountains, sterile soil, void of vegetation and of forest growth, met their expectant eyes, and foreshadowed hardship and privation of the most distressing character. But the lot was accepted silently and with submission. The fiat had gone forth, and here, in the only possibly fertile spot for many miles around, the wanderers pitched their tents and established their city."

"Twenty years have passed away, and in the evening of a spring day we are entering Salt Lake City from the westward. On our right hand flows the river Jordan, between low banks, and through level ground. Far away to the westward the great dead lake gleams in the rays of the declining sun, and a broad expanse of flat and barren country lies between the lake and river. On the east bank of the Jordan the city is situated, at an elevation of 4,350 feet above the sea level. At its back the Wasatch Mountains rise to a height of ten thousand feet, and on their summits glitter eternal snows. Wind-ing around a rocky promontory we approach the city. Scattered widely over the plain, its streets and houses mark the landscape with patches of garden, and long lines of pleasant shade trees, amid which the white buildings rise, presenting a most charming and picturesque effect. There may be more beautiful cities than Salt Lake, but there is not one whose beauties are so strongly impressed upon the observer by its contrast with the surrounding desert. The City of the Saints is an oasis—the garden spot in the midst of a howling wilderness—and whatever objections may be made to the Mormon religion and the Mormon institutions, there can be but one opinion as to the industry and perseverance that have enabled them to build up this beautiful city. The place is laid out with much judgment and good taste. The streets are more than 128 feet in width, and are bordered on either side with rows of shade trees, while sparkling mountain streams of delicious water ripple through well built stone courses in every thoroughfare. The houses are mostly built of adobe, plastered, though many wooden and some stone edifices, of a substantial character, have been erected of late years. Everywhere throughout the city the eye is refreshed by blooming gardens and umbrageous trees, and this exuberance of foliage, together with the pleasant murmurs of the streams by the roadside, lend

an indescribable charm to the scene. The city is said to cover three thousand acres of land, and it is laid out in blocks of ten acres each, each block being divided into lots of one acre and a quarter—just enough for a neat cottage and garden. The trees most commonly met with are the acacias, locust, cottonwoods and alianthus, but outside of Main street, which is the principal business thoroughfare of the city, one comes upon cozy cottages surrounded with peach and apple blossoms, and nestled in luxuriant rose bushes. The tiny cottages which stand apart from the road here and there, sheltered in nests of deep green foliage, are mostly the residences of wives who have separate establishments—a very common practice here. Some of these cottages are built with much taste, and there is generally about Salt Lake City an English air to be met with in no other town upon this continent, or at least, upon this side of the continent.

"TITHING AND OTHER MATTERS.

"The system of mutual aid, which Christian communities believe in and laud, but seldom practice, is in Utah the rule; and he who should refuse assistance to an impoverished brother, when possessing the means to supply it, would not only be regarded as a recreant to his creed, but would subject himself to severe reprimand from the heads of the Church. Thus it happens that while in Utah there are comparatively few wealthy men, there are none abjectly poor, and the stranger might travel from end to end of the Territory without encountering one man so miserable as to be compelled to sue for alms. The question of the tithes has never, so far as I am aware, raised any ill feeling or complaint among the Mormons, as it has done in other countries. They give cheerfully, and I believe they give fairly, not endeavoring to overreach their spiritual teachers by cunning evasions or chicanery, but honestly setting apart the full tenth of all their produce for the Church. The secret of this cheerful contribution is, I take it, to be found in the fact that, though the power of the Mormon Church is despotic, [?] the Bishops and Apostles are among the hardest workers in the community, and they do not grow rich upon their positions. Nearly all of the Apostles are poor men; men who, though not living exactly from hand to mouth, are nevertheless often put to it to make both ends meet, and to provide for the increasing wants of the large families which their position in the Church almost forces upon them. The tithings are appropriated to their legitimate uses, and the people knowing this, and being moreover in full accord with the dignitaries of the Church, never grudge their share of the tax."

After stating that President Young's policy in providing for the people a commodious place of amusement, and that the "Mormons" display far more taste and discrimination in the matter of amusements than even the intelligent people of San Francisco, which proves that the policy of their leader has had at least the good effects of sharpening their wits and refining their judgments, he says:

"The Theatre at Salt Lake City is a remarkably fine building. It is, I think, larger than anything of the kind on this coast, and in its interior arrangements it is modeled more after the Drury Lane Theatre in London, than after any American place of amusement. There are three tiers, or circle, above the parquette. The middle circles, or, as they call it, the first circle, is usually reserved for Gentile visitors, though no respectable stranger is refused admission to the parquette, where, as a rule, the Saints sit. The stage is a very fine one. The appointments generally, such as green room, dressing rooms, wardrobes, carpenters' loft, scene rooms, etc., are on a far larger and more convenient scale than the generality of our theatres in this city—always excepting the new California Theatre. Everything is comfortable, complete, and ample in accommodation. The theatre was built by Brigham himself, and he has spent much time and money in perfecting it in every part. The greatest drawback is the absence of gas in the house, and this, of course, detracts much from the general effect of the building, at night."

"THE MORMON POLICE.

"The Pacific Railroad brought with it a scum of ruffianism which surged on from one mushroom town to another, along the line, marking its passage by murder, and sowing the seeds of vice and villainy wherever it rested. Bands of these vile wretches sometimes entered the quiet city on the banks of the Jordan, and sought to erect there the gambling hells and whisky shops without which they could scarcely exist. The Mormon police were unaccustomed to dealing with such characters, but they succeeded to a miracle in keeping the peace. There were no riots, there was no shooting. But the ruffians somehow found out that the quiet men who came and talked to them so calmly were not to be trifled with, and they speedily betook themselves to 'fresh fields and pastures new.' I happened to be myself a witness of the way these Mormon policemen conduct themselves under such circumstances. The place was a little way station called Taylor's Mills, some four miles east of Ogden City. A train going to Wasatch had brought up a crowd of men who had been working on the Union Pacific Railroad, and this crowd composed of some

of the worst roughs I have ever seen. Many of them were half drunk and wholly quarrelsome, and they soon began to talk about 'cleaning out the d—d Mormons,' and were evidently ripe for a row. Presently they commenced quarreling among themselves, and it looked as though a general riot was imminent. At this juncture a plainly dressed young man made his way into the seething vortex of the crowd, and confronting the most quarrelsome rough, a bull-headed, close cropped scoundrel, with strong indications of the prize fighter about him, quietly told him that no fighting would be allowed there. The man was surrounded, and it would have been easy to fell him with a blow from the rear, but his coolness daunted the bully, who began to quiet down a little. Soon, however, finding that the policeman was alone, his courage returned, and he began to abuse him, uttering threats about shooting and eyeing the Mormon murderously. The latter repeated his order, and then arose a Babel of yells and threats, in the midst of which I fully expected that the daring policeman would have been trampled under foot, if not shot down and killed outright. He maintained his coolness, however, and in a few minutes, to the amazement of the lookers on, he had succeeded in dispersing the crowd by some occult process beyond my comprehension. Perhaps the power of the police in Utah is fortified by the fact that every Mormon bears arms, and knows how to use them, and that every Mormon is ready, at a moment's notice, to sally forth in defense of his brethren or his Church. Whatever the cause may be, it is however certain that thieves, roughs, and other bad characters, stand very little chance of pursuing their nefarious business successfully in Salt Lake City."

IMPROVEMENTS IN AGRICULTURE
NECESSARY.

THE completion of the railroad is likely, among other things, to make a great change in the method of conducting agricultural operations of every kind in these mountains. Our distance from every place where grain, stock and dairy products were produced left the supplying of our markets to our own citizens. But the completion of the railroad has changed all this. Grain, flour, butter and cheese can all be brought from the East, and considerable quantities of these articles have already been imported and disposed of. This plan of supplying our wants may answer for a season like the present, when our own products have been greatly lessened by the destructive ravages of grasshoppers and the employment of hundreds of our laboring population upon the railroad; but it will never do to depend upon. For should this policy be persisted in, we will fall into the condition of hewers of wood and drawers of water to other communities, and the result will be utter impoverishment.

Agricultural pursuits, in all their branches, must receive more attention from us than they have done in the past. They must be followed more intelligently, less slovenly and more in consonance with the improvements of the age than they have heretofore. We need teachers in agriculture in this country. Many who now follow this pursuit were not in the least familiar with the business previous to coming here. We have a few doctors, lawyers, merchants and clerks, and many mechanics and factory hands, who have found themselves upon their arrival here under the necessity of turning their attention to the cultivation of the earth. And though they have been able to earn a living, and in many instances do very well, still they have not mastered agriculture so thoroughly as if they had been trained in early life to the business. A thoroughly earnest man, possessing a complete knowledge of agriculture, capable of infusing enthusiasm into the hearts of those with whom he converses, could find a splendid field for usefulness in any of our agricultural districts.

Let him persuade his neighbors that agriculture is one of the most intellectual and ennobling of callings, and he has accomplished considerable. Then let him teach them how to make farms pleasant, buildings commodious, appropriate and charming, and how to maintain order, system and economy, to use proper farm machinery and to make their farms pay, and he becomes a great benefactor to his immediate neighborhood and to the entire community. We have such men among us, and if the Bishops of the various agricultural wards would form organizations, their knowledge and experience might be made widely beneficial.

We are now in a position where we must compete with other communities. The struggle has already commenced, and we must show our mettle. We have a religion that is incomparably superior to