

Boston Index, March 13.

THE MORMON PROBLEM: A REPLY.

The article on this subject, which we copied from the *Boston Index*, having been commented upon by Mr. Potter, one of the editors, Mr. Curtis replies to it as follows. We do not give Mr. Potter's article, because the main points are quoted in Mr. Curtis' reply. We do not endorse all the writer's sentiments, but we admire his manly stand for what he conceives to be the right.

Editors of The Index:

Either Mr. Potter's usually fair and wise method of treating public questions has deserted him in this discussion or my own native obtuseness has become still more pronounced. Though he disowns any special reference to my article in his own *Index*, February 28, yet in view of the adverse opinion he gives of my argument in the beginning, and the opposition he records to the proposed petition at the close of his article, it seems proper enough that I should interrogate his reasonings. And this I shall do by stating the principles on which my appeal was based, first noticing certain points in Mr. Potter's argument.

When he says, "There is no clear right for national legislation against polygamy as a crime, and no claim of religious authority can invalidate that right," he states what is perfectly compatible with the whole tenor of my appeal. But the several other issues which it was meant to bring out and emphasize he leaves untouched. He makes some approach, however, to the issue, in saying that "Congress has ample right, moral and constitutional, to legislate against polygamy in Utah, as elsewhere, and to enforce its legislation." This is spoken in the present tense, and without any condition or proviso. I deny that Congress has this right, until it shall have vindicated its integrity and atoned for its past misdeeds by discharging its duty to the commonwealth in effecting at once a complete divorce between Church and State. I also declare it to be a deplorable inconsistency in Congress to legislate against polygamy as a crime in Utah, when it has not the right to do it in any one or all of the States, which is the theory held. It believes it is Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts (whom Mr. Potter does not name), who introduced the "Supplementary Bill," "two features" of which Mr. Potter takes to be "of very questionable constitutionality." These are the putting of the church corporation into strange hands and abolishing the Emigration Fund Company. Is not this assailing the Mormon Church? Does it not give the animus, the intention, of the law? Does it not give a meaning to the words of Governor Murray, that it is "not polygamy, but the Mormon hierarchy" that must be made the point of attack, and to the words of liberal papers like the *Christian Union*,—"The power of the hierarchy must be broken; that requires law, directed, however, not against polygamy"? And what of President Arthur's proposal, with Joseph Cook and his audience and their ilk for a backing.

I must save, however, the ladies of Utah the compliment which Mr. Potter has paid them in saying; "Nor does it logically avail aught against this argument * * to argue that the Mormon women who live in polygamous marriage are in better material condition than they were when peasants in Europe, and would not exchange their new life for the old. The negro's condition was doubtless raised by Southern slavery above that to which he was born in Africa; but this did not break the moral appeal for his emancipation, not for the purpose of sending him back to Africa, but for opening to him the opportunities of civilized freedom." Thank you. Frank and honest! But what of the logic? These "Mormon women" you compare to the negro. Is the comparison a true one? The negro was kidnapped or sold into slavery, and he welcomed his emancipation. The Mormon women fled from your "civilized freedom," entered into the bondage of polygamy of their own accord, and protest with all the earnestness of their nature against your purpose to release them from that state. They embraced Mormonism, because they saw in it the betterment of their moral as well as material condition. Besides, they were not all "peasants." You labor under a great mistake. A large proportion were not. My mother was not. But I should have loved her none the less if she were. I almost wish she had been. I visited her home in England. I sat in the pew occupied by the family for generations, and listened to the pastor whom her father and grandfather had listened to. I knew then why it was she became a Mormon. I observed the customs of the country, saw in what low estimation man was held, and more especially woman; and I knew then why it was that a stream of Mormon emigration had steadily flowed through these years. And I blessed Mormonism for it.

I look at this question from the stand-point of Liberalism, which is one of principal, honor, consistency. I look on Congress as the representative of this nation, and on its acts as the witness to its virtuous will and high endeavor. The Mormon problem I hold to be complex, and that its solution is impossible, if otherwise considered. The fact should never be absent from the mind that Mormonism is begotten

of this generation, was cast in the mould of its habitudes of thought and practice. The world first, our nation next, are responsible. But this formula is capable of a more definite expression. There are three standards of appeal in judging of the character of a people—law, creed, and custom—which declare the civil, religious, and social bent or aspirations of a community. There is always a greater or less approximation to oneness in these three. The methods tried in the past for making them one have led to despotism, civil and ecclesiastical, the principle being always the same,—the use of arbitrary power in the person of king or priest, constituting either a monarchy or a theocracy. We live in a transition age, when the democratic idea, the sovereignty of the individual or of reason, is extending its sway over men's minds. The experiment of a democracy, a government by the people, is now in progress. But where are we? The questions which it behooves every one to ask are: Have we a democratic constitution? What is our creed? Is there any disparity in the principle, and conflict in the spirit, of these two? and from which do the customs and relations of man's life derive their sanction? And so, when a practice is arraigned as antagonistic to the general welfare, the most natural question to ask is, Does government, religion, or society give any countenance to the deprecated evil? By which is it succeeded the most? These are the questions which a patriot and reformer will put to himself before choosing his course of action, before casting his vote for any public measure. It is because these questions are not answered that legislation and reforms so often prove abortive.

Now, polygamy, in the community in which it exists, finds its support in the Church which commands it and in the civil power which allows it. But we must look elsewhere for the spirit that created the Church and for the example that gave encouragement to the civil power. In other words, I find in the practice of government, the teachings of religion, the habits of society, the explanation of this so-called anomaly in Utah.

1. Christianity, which is the religion of the civilized world, is in essence, and has been in fact throughout most of its history, theocratic. The majority of Christians, the Catholics, still rigidly adhere to this primitive idea of a government of God on earth. And Protestants yield a reluctant, wavering, or joint allegiance to the civil power. Many Protestants of learning and influence openly advocate a union of Church and State. Christianity, Catholic and Protestant, assumes lordship over the question of marriage, making grudgingly and against its will, and often unconsciously, concessions from time to time to the State. And now, loud protests are being heard from nearly every quarter against this invasion of church prerogative. In respect to marriage, the Catholic recognizes the validity of none solemnized outside of its communion, while both Catholic and Protestant derive the institution and sanction of marriage from the revealed will of God. A union of the sexes not sealed by Bible or priest is prostitution. The Shakers condemn marriage on the same high unimpeachable authority.

2. Our government is not in principle a theocracy; but there exists a union between Church and State, that gives to the theocratic idea moral and material aid and support. Though the Constitution of the United States is democratic, the constitutions of the several States are in a sense theocratic. And, then, the theory and practice of the general government are at war, its actions contradicting its principles. On the subject of marriage, its attitude is one of compromise and equivocation. Though marriage is supposed to be regulated by law, it is not clear what law, whether civil or ecclesiastical, or whether State or national, though each State claims exclusive jurisdiction. The common law even is of mixed origin, and is in force only as suits the pleasure, the will, of the States separately.

3. Monogamy is said to be the custom of civilized society. Perhaps it would be better to call it the theory, though that even would be far from true. There are other customs and other theories to which it would be the worst of follies to close our eyes, some of which customs are allowed, and even regulated by law, as the social evil for instance. Liberals were startled, or professed to be, at the revelations made not long since of the spread of free-lovism. But "free love" is not the worst form of the evil it suggests, for the reason that it is avowed, and appeals to science for its justification. There are heathen populations wasting away under the ravages introduced among them by our so-called civilization. Did not Mr. T. W. Higginson quote Chunder Sen in proof of this in Boston the other day? But are these the sole ravages, "brandy and beer," or even the typical ones? We know better. Is there not a more "dreadful poison," for whose manufacture our civilization has, if not the monopoly, and endless variety of patents unknown to the most barbarous people? I myself have been among Indian tribes, who were strangers to certain vices and diseases until introduced by our advanced guard of civilization. Not by the Mormons; for the sun shines not on a community freer from syphilis taint or venereal complaint. Even the savage, with his dull perceptions, looks on Mormonism on this account alone as a "thing of beauty," an oasis amid the desert.

Yes, the question has its relevancy: What is the comparative morality of Mormon and Gentile communities? Are there not wide-spread evils in our monogamic society, that put even polygamy, as conceived by an outsider, to the blush? If the capital of our nation is thick sown with seragios, if not a few members of the Congress that passed the anti-polygamy law are pluralists in practice, does it signify nothing? Then, the question may be asked if polygamy is a *malum per se*, a crime in itself? Does Mormon polygamy tend to the degradation of woman? Does it debase man? David practised it rather extensively, and yet he is regarded worthy of the world's homage. His spirit, as I read in one of the most popular works in Christendom, *King David*, is the soul of our modern piety! If it had nothing to do with the making of the man, it certainly did not, as far as we know, unmake him.

I am not a retainer for the cause of polygamy or Mormonism. Polygamy is a transitional form of marriage, and belongs to the past. Monogamy is the ideal of an advancing civilization.

I do not say that the Mormons are right, but that the United States government is wrong. I advise not that this question be dropped or postponed, but that it be settled on principles of justice, equity, and fair play. John Stuart Mill, a mind of no common mould, thought the United States could afford to let the Mormons carry out their experiment unmolested. I think it would be a thousand times better to do that than to continue in the course now being pursued. I think it the duty of Liberalism to see to it, in as far as lies in its power, that, in the extinction of polygamy, example shall count for more than precept. I see how easy it is to draw up an indictment against Mormonism. It requires neither skill nor courage, for the reasons that the power of Congress over the Territories is supposed to be so absolute, and that Christendom is ready to applaud any affront whatever offered to this new, upstart community. But where is the statesman that dares stand up in the national legislature, and propose an amendment to the Constitution for the complete separation of Church and State? It would probably cost him many votes. He would most likely fail of re-election. But to his name would come praises from the lips of the unborn future. What was the fate of the amendment in 1876 to forbid States appropriating funds for sectarian purposes? After various amendments, one being "this article shall not be construed to prohibit the reading of the Bible in any school or institution," it was defeated, and for reasons implied in the remark of one, a senator, that he preferred "leaving the States to manage their domestic institutions as the people of each State may choose." If religion and marriage are "domestic institutions" in Massachusetts, Illinois, Wyoming, Nevada, why not in Utah?

The greatest criminal in this case is the United States. "The India outcast, making theft and murder a part of his religious observance," is less a criminal. So is the Hindu sect, burning its widows alive. If polygamy is a crime, the nation is chargeable with complicity in the deed; and the greater it makes the crime to be, the more it magnifies its own guilt. The greatest crime known to the Constitution is falsity to the oath of office, or should be. And every senator and representative that abets or connives at the union of Church and State in any form violates his pledge to his conscience, his people, and his—well, that's enough. Why should there be an association formed to secure, in the fundamental law of the land, a recognition of "Almighty God," "the Lord Jesus Christ," and "the Bible"? Let not your heart be troubled, for they are already there. A man, to be a slave, need not wear manacles or brandmark. Be not surprised if I call at *The Index* office to ask you to sign a petition, before many days have passed.

T. W. CURTIS.

MORMONISM.

The following is the closing article of a series of twelve which have appeared in the columns of the *Greely Tribune*, from the pen of Capt. D. Boyd, who has caused quite a furore against himself by his manly stand in defence of an unpopular maligned people, but has also caused much admiration and applause from the fair-minded and just, for his bravery and good sense:

I have before called attention to the fact that the Mormons have had many foreign apologists, but, so far as I know, no American, except the late Judge Black. To my certain knowledge, many well-informed, fair-minded Americans entertain the same views about the Mormons as does the writer. But they stand in awe of public opinion. Of course, it would be political suicide for one who should dare to raise his finger against this insane onrush of popular frenzy. What cowards political expectations make of the able, ambitious portion of the citizens of the Republic!

Whoever has the hardihood to speak out, (unwelcome truth!) stands from henceforth branded in the public estimation as a fool. It was the same kind of public opinion which stood by and applauded the murder of Joe Smith and his brother Hyrum, and drove the Mormons from the bosom of civilization into the howling wilderness; as that which murdered Lovejoy, dragged Gar-

rison through the streets of Boston with a rope around his waist, and rotten-egged Wendell Phillips. The same unreasonable blind fury, I say, because there is not one in a thousand now howling against the Mormons who could give a reason for the clamor they are making. They simply take it for granted that a custom which is newly adopted and contrary to their own must not be tolerated, whether it concerns themselves or not.

Before closing, it is right that my exact position be understood. I am asked, "Do I believe polygamy right?" If by this it is meant, do I believe that it would be right for a man who is married in a monogamous community to take a second wife without the full, free and cordial consent of the first one, then I say, most emphatically, no! because it would be a breach of the most sacred of contracts. Besides, I shall go farther, and say that it would, in my opinion, be very imprudent counsel for any wife to give or any husband to take. The bell that would ring the announcement of the second marriage must be the death knell of the love which was supposed to make sacred the first. But, in the second case, it would be an imprudence about which it was nobody's business but the parties concerned. If we are to legislate to prevent imprudent marriages, where shall we end? That many—perhaps most of the marriages which take place under our eyes, can only result in misery, is patent to the observation of all but the parties concerned. Still, it seems to be taken for granted that the contract is sacred, provided each is so sufficiently under the influence of a frenzy called love as to blind them to the defects of each other. Admitting that love is the flower of life, it may soon, in some cases does soon, fade without ripening into the noble fruitage of friendship, nourished and matured by mutual needs finding mutual satisfaction.

It is to be remembered that polygamy is nowhere compulsory, while monogamy always is. Where permitted, prudent people would never contract plural marriage so long as human nature remains essentially as it is, with its love, its hate, and its jealousy. Very prudent people now deem it advisable not to contract monogamic marriage. We can but admire the audacity of the man who has the courage to marry half a dozen of women in an age when so many dread the supporting of one. Who, of the two, holds in higher estimation the worth of woman—the man who fears to marry one, lest her several good-for-nothingness and extravagance bring him to poverty, or the Mormon, who counts the numbers of his wives among his riches? It would be well worth our while to study carefully this problem of Mormon economics. It would seem that among them neither father nor mother sighs when the new-born babe happens to be a girl. They seem to regard the little stranger as a desirable acquisition, likely to become a useful member of society.

To characterize as unwise the attempt to suffuse polygamy in Utah is not the same as to advocate the repeal of all laws against polygamy among people who believe in monogamy. While I believe that a prohibitory liquor law is both wise and practicable in Greeley, I would not believe that a prohibitory liquor law enacted by Congress for Wyoming would be either wise or practicable. A prohibitory liquor law would be practicable in Utah, and an anti-polygamous law in Wyoming, because they would each be in accordance with the sentiment of the people. But the sentiment in favor of plural marriage is more deeply rooted in the minds of the people of Utah than is that of the right to sell intoxicating liquors in Wyoming. The people of the latter Territory do not regard the use of intoxicants as a religious act. The case would be parallel should Congress pass a law forbidding the use of wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. By the way, the Mormons only use water, and make of it a commemorative feast, celebrated every Sabbath.

This is the fundamental difficulty that besets attempts to get rid of polygamy in Utah. It is woven into the warp and woof of the Mormon religion. This will be admitted by all who have studied the subject. The writer had a conversation with Miss Faithful, when here last week, on this subject. She says that polygamy is ingrained in their religion and there is no hope of curing them of the one without converting them from the other. The women will argue in favor of polygamy from one end of the week to the other and there is no hope of convincing them by argument. She then asked me what was my remedy. I replied, only the slow growth of general knowledge—the light of science and literature bringing on a more perfect day, under the influence of which the ghosts of superstition shall pale and fade away. But how slowly the light of growing knowledge quenches the outlines of these ghosts, the student of human progress knows full well. They will not down at the scourge of the persecutor, but vanish at the cock crow of science. The best missionaries to send to Utah would be lecturers who would let religion severely alone, and who could awake among the people an interest in science and literature. Then send them Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Tyndall's *Fragments of Science* and Spencer's *Sociology*. To these add Shakespeare's plays, Tennyson's poems, Dickens', Thackeray's and George Eliot's novels, and not a few standard histories. With these and the induced disposition to

read them, Mormon superstition would vanish, and, no doubt, with it polygamy. But the induced disposition to read them! "Aye, there's the rub!" Their priesthood would fight them, tooth and nail, as every other priesthood has fought them and is fighting them. Still, there is this in favor of the Mormons: They are a people remarkable for their patience in listening to opinions hostile to their own. A lecturer can not only go anywhere in Utah and be unmolested in attacking their most cherished opinions, but will ever be accorded an attentive hearing. Who has ever heard of a Mormon mob rotten-egging a lecturer from the platform? Surely there, is hope for a people so patient as this.

D. BOYD.

VIEWS IN RELATION TO MEXICO.

Hubert H. Bancroft, the historian, recently made an extensive tour of Mexico. On his return to San Francisco he was interviewed by a San Francisco *Chronicle* reporter. It is quite interesting, but too lengthy for publication in our columns in full. We insert the following extract, however:

WOES OF THE WORKING PEOPLE.

"What is the present condition of the lower classes?"
"Pitiable in the extreme. In the cities they are the servant of servants; in the country they are bound by habit, by family ties and debt to haciendas and mines in a state of peonage or practical serfdom. Of course there are grades. The lowest are a reproach to humanity. They are far worse off as participants of this quality of European civilization than were their ancestors under aboriginal regime. Among them are some of the poorest and most abject creatures on earth. They are thinly or but partially clad, and the men, beside cotton jackets and pantaloons, wearing hats and sandals, and the women and children going barefoot. A grade or two higher we find the serape and rebozo. The poorest live on whatever they can pick up in the way of food, and at night huddle in huts or adobe apartments, or sleep on the ground or pavement. Among them are all sorts of deformities and diseases and they are forced to labor of the most degrading kind. In the cities they are made to take the place of trucks, and in the mines of machinery. They are made to carry through the streets and along the highways boxes and packages of merchandise weighing from 150 to 400 pounds, to say nothing about stones, heavy timbers and adobes for building, water, earthen and wooden ware, furniture, coffins, ofal, etc. It filled me with humility and shame to see the image—not of my Maker, but of myself—thus debased, and sadder of all was to consider the lives of little children. Not that the mothers were unkind to them. On the contrary, their affection and devotion were remarkable, but they have no conception of what we would call the comforts of life."

"And yet they say those people are good workers."

"None better. There are among them, of course, idlers, lazy vagabonds, who stand like statues all the day long by the wayside and rot there or petrify there before they will raise a hand to provide themselves with food. But as a rule there are no people on earth who will do more work for less money. It is a significant fact that three are no Chinamen to speak of in Mexico; that in scattering themselves over the earth the Mongolians avoid this place as they would a place of pestilence. They cannot compete with the Mexican peons either in the amount or quality of labor or economy in living. And the negroes of the United States are beside them a lazy lot, with dull, stolid brain and no small feeding powers."

BUILDING UP A MIDDLE CLASS.

"Are the laboring classes difficult to get along with?"

"By no means. Keep faith with them, pay them promptly as you promise, and they will serve you fully and acknowledge mastership as by divine right. They have been so taught; they have been drilled for centuries in the school of servility; the first lesson of manhood they have yet to learn."

"What is likely to be their final destiny?"

"That depends upon the circumstances attending development during the next two or three generations. If a large and superior foreign population floods in, the native Mexicans will be overwhelmed, thrust aside, to some extent absorbed, and for the rest extirpated. If those who enter from abroad come as teachers in the several arts and industries rather than usurpers of the soil, many of the present inhabitants will be educated and improved into an intelligent and substantial middle class. Indeed, every day this class is growing, rapidly becoming larger and stronger, and, indeed, this is the most hopeful feature of the republic."

"You regard the prosperity of this class as essential to the prosperity of the nation?"

"Most decidedly. The primary necessity of the Mexican nation to-day is not foreign population or foreign capital, but an educated and thrifty middle class, made up from its own people. The intelligent rulers throughout the republic understand this perfectly. They know that a peaceable and permanent Government can-