

Bible Marriage Should be Tolerated.

As remarked before, we should tolerate Mormon polygamy. It cannot, in this enlightened age, absorb the female element to such an extent as to produce female scarcity, as oriental polygamy did in the early age of the world. At present, the tendency all over the world is to an excess of females at an adult age. "The tendency of a dense population," remarks a newspaper writer, urging the necessity of making women self-supporting, "is to make the female sex preponderate, and we must find something to do with the surplus women. If we look at foreign countries, we see that under the age of fifteen the males exceed the females; but that beyond fifteen the females preponderate, and so on until ninety. In sixteen foreign nations this holds good. In England, the ratio of females to males is three to two; while in France, where the people are longer-lived than other European nations, it is even greater. When we get up to the gray-haired era of life, we find in France, between 50 and 60, a female excess of 81,526; between 60 and 70 it becomes 186,471; between 70 and 80, 60,295; and over 80, 32,081. Of course these figures do not apply to the United States. In Massachusetts the women are nearly 20,000 in excess, while in Connecticut they are 6,144, and the same ratio runs through New Hampshire and Rhode Island. In Vermont and Maine, the men are in surplus; while New York shows 5,234 more women than men, to be accounted for by the crowded condition of New York City, which alone shows nearly 20,000 in excess. While the open countries have a preponderance of men, in some territories as much as twenty to one, it is shown that the tendency of the female sex is to outnumber the other. As we grow in civilization, we must, therefore, expect this to take place; and it is proper that we should meet the problem now, and so decide it that we may have no trouble in the future."

From the foregoing figures it will be seen we can stand considerable polygamy, without making a scarcity of women. In this country there is not a particle of danger that this old marriage system, if tolerated, would absorb the female element to any great degree. American women are, as a rule, too smart to marry a man whose social and religious belief would allow him to take a plurality of wives; and fewer still would marry one who had already a dozen hanging at his elbows, wig, and coat tail. If you find one now and then, who would rather thus marry and have a piece of a husband, than to go through life without any, no obstacles should be interposed to prevent this choice; if there be a poor girl, here and there, who would, rather than make shifts for a pittance, receive a fraction of affection and comfortable support, your interference may send her to a more demoralizing school than the hearth of a Mormon Elder; polygamy is better than prostitution. If there be any one who would rather marry a fraction of a man, than to go through life childless, it is a choice that does not concern us. It is none of our business. She may find that happiness in the possession of an affectionate child and of companion-wives to relieve her of the conjugal drudgery of matrimony, that she could neither find in single life nor monogamy. The educated prejudice in the minds of the people against polygamy, if called in question, is satisfied to defend itself in misrepresentation and denunciation, which amounts to nothing when you arrive at the "hard pan" beneath the dregs.

So far as the effects of polygamy upon our national welfare are concerned, there is nothing yet to show that they are damaging. The Mormons have never hurt us, save in our imaginations. True, we have struck at them once or twice, and they have employed sufficient force to resist the blow. But we can hardly strike at any body of people on this continent who have not the pluck to resist. We do not grow cowards on American soil. As to their material prosperity, the *Round Table*, commenting on these people, and a book about them, remarks—

"We are thus driven by the inexorable logic of facts to admit the possibility that, given certain natural conditions—the conditions of area, physical requisitions, and non-interference from without,

which are precisely those which have attended our own national life—a society may thrive, progress, increase, accumulate all the material essentials of modern civilization under a system which in every leading characteristic is diametrically opposite to our own. We are forced to acknowledge that neither social nor political equality, neither universal suffrage nor enforced monogamy, are indispensable prerequisites to the diffusion of education, the enjoyment of happiness, or even to the solidity of the State. Relatively speaking, the Mormons have done in the enumerated particulars as much in their thirty years as the collective nation has achieved in its ninety; and, abstractly considered, we have no more right to predict the failure of their system from internal causes than that of the republic itself. So far as comparison between their chief city and our own in respect of cleanliness, order, temperance, thrift, and judicious expenditure may go, we are certainly at a disadvantage; and it cannot be denied that if there be an explanation of so intricate a problem which can save the credit of our own usages, and vitiate the force of the Saints' example, it is certainly not an obvious one."

Many suppose that polygamy is prohibited by the New Testament; but such was not the opinion of Martin Luther, and a synod of six reformers who were called upon to decide the question in a certain case. They held, says Nichols, "that the gospels nowhere in express terms commanded monogamy, and that polygamy had been practised by the highest dignitaries of the Church." The same writer remarks—"Polygamy continued in the Christian church until a comparatively recent period, and was allowed by Luther and the Fathers of the Protestant Reformation, as it also is to this day, under certain circumstances, by our Boards of Foreign Missions."

Why, in prescribing marriage, should one system be forced upon such a variety of people, any more than one religion? All mankind, with the exception of a few ascetics, must, in view of physiological teaching, acknowledge the necessity of sexual association for the health and happiness of the race; but does it follow that all should be compelled to accept one system for the regulation of this association?

Especially should courts of law keep out of families, and families out of courts of law, if any way can be invented to manage these things otherwise. The ancient Romans never were so orderly in their marriage relations, as when they kept law out of the family. The reader will remember that at that time, when no divorces were said to have taken place for a period of five hundred years, those people thought the family hearth was too sacred for public tribunals. They did not think that "legislation should touch the independence of the family, nor confine by legal restraints the ties which natural affection had formed." They pursued in their affectionate relations the even tenor of their way, and if they encountered difficulties a family tribunal could not settle, the censor was called in, and this officer acted on no rules of law, but simply on principles of equity as he understood them. Under this arrangement, as Rome swallowed up one nation after another, she took in those in which polygamy was practised, and it is a favorable commentary upon her system as it then existed, that her sexual morality did not show any marked indications of breaking down until they began to adopt Greek law for the governance of the family.

We want a Secretary of marriage, whose duties it shall be to investigate the various systems of marriage which have been practised from the earliest period, study impartially their effects upon the peoples living under them, make annual reports of the same for the enlightenment of present generations, in order that they may profit by the experience of the human family in past ages; this report to be accompanied with such recommendations as may be thought best calculated to contribute to the happiness and moral and physical improvement of the people.

Polygamy should be tolerated expressly by national consent. We have among our Christian missionaries the example of toleration in respect to polygamic marriage. They find that many of the

people among whom they are laboring cannot be restrained from having a plurality of wives, and consequently, and I think very wisely, they let the marriage question alone. If those people are heathen, we have any number of them among us; and you need not go to Utah, nay, you need not leave the limits of Manhattan Island, to find them. Many of them achieve what the world calls greatness, and when they die long obituaries extol their virtues. Some of those who are casting stones at the Mormons would break their own windows if they leveled their missiles at the nearest domiciles wherein polygamy [adultery] is practised. The Mormons, indeed, are better than this class of assailants, for they do not morally degrade their women. But you may ask, "Why legalize polygamy?" Simply that women may better be the wives than the mistresses of men. * * * One of the early Christian emperors offered rewards to those who would marry their concubines. It is vain to say that you will yet banish the mistress, or that you will blot out prostitution. The religious world has been working at it most vehemently, and with an army of strong men and strong women, for at least five hundred years, and Christianity has been pitted against it for nearly nineteen hundred years; and to use the language of a western orator, "Where are we now; where are we drifting to?"

The polygamic system is nearly as old as the world, and the monogamic system is nearly 2,500 years old, and the society makers have certainly not yet attained any very gratifying results in their efforts at perfecting the morality, health and happiness of the people living under them. We need, I repeat again, the inventive and progressive spirit of the age directed to the discovery of means whereby the human family may be wholesomely governed in their sexual relations, so governed, indeed, that nature's institutes and individual rights may not be disregarded, while all that relates to the moral and religious well being of every individual may be made still more perceptibly operative.—*Home Talk*.

Notes Concerning Marriage.

In the earliest history of Egypt, 3,500 years B. C., Menes, first king of Egypt, made laws respecting marriage. Men then in that country had concubines, and for thousands of years after.

Norton says, harems always formed a portion of the Persian and Turkish households, at a time when those nations were all powerful.

From the time of Fu-hi, 2,650 years B. C., polygamy has been practised in China.

"Under his (Moses') laws polygamy prevailed to a greater extent than in all oriental Asia."

"The number of wives was not limited by Moses, but the rulings of the rabbis subsequently fixed it at four, after the example of the patriarch Jacob."

"When the people of Judea became subject to Roman law, a woman was allowed a dowry, and a wife without a dowry was considered only a concubine."

Nichols says, "The description of patriarchal life in the book of Genesis would apply with little alteration to the customs of most oriental countries."

Gide says, "Polygamy was more largely permitted in Judea than in all eastern Asia; not only was a man permitted to have many wives, but also concubines."

"Even after the Jews became subject to the Romans, polygamy among them to a considerable extent continued. Herod the Great, if I remember rightly, is said to have had seven wives. Those who had fled to Europe after their dispersion by Titus, A. D. 71 held tenaciously to their customs, including polygamy, as long as they could. According to Maimonides, a distinguished rabbi, the Jews of Europe had a plurality of wives as late as the thirteenth century."

At Athens, Cærops, 1550 B. C., allowed a man one wife and one concubine. Afterward in Greece concubinage died out, or rather was supplanted by courtship, the courtesans being the most intellectual, cultivated, accomplished and publicly honored women in the country.

"When Greece became a Roman province, about one hundred and fifty years before Christ, their sys-

tem of marriage, like that of the Romans, became what might be called a loose form of monogamy; less monogamic than that of the first Romans, and less polygamic and omnigamic than that of the Grecians at the time of Pericles."

The empire of Persia was founded by Cyrus about five hundred and sixty years before Christ, and in that country from the first, polygamy has been sustained by law, religion and custom.

Zoroaster, the founder of the religion of the Persians, many centuries before the empire, say 1200 B. C., allowed polygamy among his followers.

The *New American Cyclopaedia* says polygamy "has existed from time immemorial, especially among the nations of the East. It prevailed before the flood, was common among the patriarchs, and was tolerated by the laws of Moses."

"There are no positive injunctions in the Bible against the practice. In the East the custom has been almost universal, being sanctioned by all religions, including that of Mohammed, which allows a man to have four wives." "Among the Greeks, at least of later times, polygamy was never practised, although in the Homeric age it seems to have prevailed to some extent. In republican Rome it was not known; but during the existence of the empire the prevalence of divorce gave rise to a state of things almost analogous with it." "It prevailed among the barbarous nations of antiquity, with the exception of the Germans, who, Tacitus says, 'almost alone among the barbarians, are content with a single wife.'"

Norton says, "Persian monarchs never had less than four hundred wives and concubines."

The ancient Parthians and Scythians practiced polygamy.

As with the larger and more powerful ancient nations, so with the multitudes of smaller nations, polygamy was almost universal.

Polygamy is a part of the Mohammedan religion, which has a hundred and forty million of followers, and is rapidly spreading now in the Orient.

Lecky says that, in the tenth century, "a tax called cullagium, which was in fact a licence to clergymen to keep concubines, was during several centuries systematically levied by princes."

"The Chinaman is allowed as many wives as he can support."

Norton says, "Polygamy is the custom in China." Picard says Japanese princes and noblemen are permitted to have a number of wives.

In Japan, "if a man finds he cannot have children by his first wife, he invariably marries or purchases another."

Polygamy also prevails in Burmah and Hindostan and throughout Africa.

Footo says, "Polygamy is an institution which has remained unchanged throughout the whole East, through all changes of time, races, religion, and climate. Those even who have given to Asia the purest laws—Zoroaster and Moses, were obliged to make their rigid doctrine conform with this custom. That which proves that it exists in all climates and all zones, is, that it is found among the Indians of the two Americas, the Tartars of the two Russias, and Kamschatka, as well as in the heat of the tropics."

"American wives, with occasional exceptions, are faithful to their husbands, and many husbands, particularly in the rural districts, are faithful in return. But the fact that over one hundred thousand public prostitutes, and at least an equal number of private mistresses, are supported in the United States, and many of them in extravagance and splendor, leads us to the irresistible conclusion that, while monogamy is the law in state and society, polygamy [adultery in these instances] is the custom of not a small proportion of the male population. It is a proverbial remark in New York, that the abandoned females of this city are maintained chiefly by the patronage of married men visiting the metropolis."

"There is an educated prejudice against polygamy, especially, which has considerable root in truth, and a great deal in bigotry. The newspaper press, catering to this prejudice, visits Mormon polygamy with the most sweeping denunciation. To my personal knowledge, many of these articles are written by men who personally hold to different opinions than those which they publish. In the

literary world writing is regarded as a business from which to acquire a subsistence, if not wealth. And you cannot always judge of the personal proclivities of the newspaper-writer by his editorials. It pays at this juncture to denounce without qualification Mormon polygamy, and for this reason mainly it is done."

Norton says, "Polygamy seems not to have been entirely eradicated among the Christians of the sixth century, as we find it then enacted in the canons of one of its councils that if any one is married to many wives, he shall do penance. Even the clergy themselves in this period practised bigamy, as we find it ordained at another council held at Narbonne, that such clergymen as were bigamists should only be presbyters and deacons, and should not be allowed to marry and consecrate."

"In the eighth century Charlemagne had two wives. Sigebert and Chilperic had also a plurality, according to Gregory of Tours. But we even find an instance of bigamy and polygamy as late as the sixteenth century. Philip, a German prince of Hesse-Cassel, obtained permission from Luther and a synod of six Reformers, to marry a second wife during the life of his first one, and he accordingly did so. In this remarkable case Luther exercised an authority which even the most daring of the Popes in the plenitude of his apostolic power had never ventured to attempt."

"The celebrated John of Leyden (a leader of the Anabaptists in Munster, Germany, in 1533) announced his right to marry as many wives as he chose, following the custom of the kings of Israel, and put it in practice so far as to marry seventeen."

"It was practised among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians, as well as the more barbarous tribes in both North and South America. Montezuma, the Emperor of Mexico, at the time of the Spanish invasion had three thousand women. The Incas in the twelfth century married only their own sisters, but were allowed a great number of concubines. The Peruvians, before the coming of the Incas, are said to have had their women in common, with no recognized marriage relation, but subsequently adopted polygamy."

"The Brazilians practised polygamy in ancient times, and I believe now do in portions of their empire. In Nicaragua, polygamy was formerly allowed, and adulterers were simply divorced. In Carabahi, caziques had as many wives as they wished. * * * The other inhabitants had as many wives as they could support. Polygamy, indeed, seems to have obtained among the ancient inhabitants of the whole of Central and South America, and, as a result, little adultery or violence was committed. The aborigines of North America, though generally content with one wife, sometimes took two or three. In conclusion, it is stated on good authority that, from the creation of the world, polygamy has been the rule with four-fifths of the human race."

Gold in the Black Hills.

General Custer has found gold in the Black Hills, and now he is happy. For now he can satisfy the skeptics who pronounced his expedition useless, or nothing more than a disguised crusade against the Sioux. And he can nobly repel the charge that the army is an encumbrance on the nation, not earning its salt. What! an expedition useless that opens up to the world a new gold region, with (mindug) treasure in it enough to pay the national debt; and an army burdensome that stands ready at short notice to clean out the Indians so that this immeasurable wealth may be brought to light! When Custer started out with his fighting column he was at a loss for a good reason for the movement; and the best his friends could say of it was this—that he would keep his command healthy by exercise; that he could, by an imposing show, defer the Sioux from hostile operations, if they had a mind for a quarrel, and that he would add something to our stock of geographical knowledge. But now that Custer has discovered gold among the Black Hills, he need make no other excuse for being there. That will satisfy everybody, except cool heads, of the exceeding wisdom and profit of the expedition. It seems almost ungracious