

UTAH AND THE LET ALONE POLICY.

Congress shows signs of wishing to shirk the responsibility of a war against Mormonism. The Cullom bill, as it passed the House, is stripped of its ugliest provisions—such as making the lawful wife of a Mormon a competent witness against him, providing that the statutes of limitation shall not bar a prosecution under the act, authorizing the confiscation of property of persons convicted, and empowering the President to send the military into Utah, and accept of 40,000 volunteers if necessary to enforce the law. These now discarded sections were outrageous upon principles of common law and upon the Constitution, and were condemned by every just man who gave to the subject a moment's thought. The bill as it now stands is simply a measure prohibiting and punishing polygamy and concubinage in Utah by process of the courts. This, however, is not what the original movers and friends of the bill want. Their purpose was to organize an armed crusade against the Mormons, which should end in killing them or violently expelling them from Utah, and throwing open the rich lands which Mormon industry has cultivated and beautified to the free settlement of envious adventurers from the surrounding regions. The Cullom bill as toned down is harsh enough in some respects, but falls far short of the scheme which its authors contemplated—especially in the absence of the military provision for executing it. It therefore stands a chance of failing in the Senate, for want of sufficient lobby interest to push it through. Should the sections stricken out be restored by the latter body, the House will probably decline to agree; and so there is a reasonable prospect that nothing decisive will be done with Utah this session. And suppose there is not? Why, in that case, Mormonism will remain for a while what it has been, a nuisance certainly, but a nuisance so far removed from civilization that it does not directly affect us. To the philosophic mind, reading about the evils of Mormonism is like reading about the idolatry and immoral practices of South Sea Islanders or Africans—it provokes an ardent desire to reform those benighted people, but does not raise a bloodthirsty longing to kill them, or expatriate them. Salt Lake City happens to be on the route to the Pacific, and travelers are thrown more or less in contact with the Mormons, but they are not obliged to stay there and have their sensibilities shocked by a deliberate study of polygamy in its chosen American home. It is only those who seek, from motives of pruriosity or idle curiosity, to look into the unpleasant mysteries of Mormonism, who are pained by them, or profess to be. They have no particular interest—or should have none—for the millions of American citizens who do not have occasion to visit Salt Lake City, nor for those who do go there, but pass through the place on their business beyond. We have but little respect for the superstitious feelings of those persons living a thousand miles from Utah, who nevertheless see it in their lives, but who still feel tormented with a sense of moral responsibility for crushing out its unwholesome customs. Such persons would be more consistent and do more real good if they would bend their energies to extirpating the notorious immoralities that prevail in cities and towns of the older and highly civilized States. There is need enough right about us for the purifying before we undertake to sweep Utah clean. We are far from intending an apology for the polygamous usage of Utah. We are as truly in favor of breaking them up as any sons can be. But we think that this can best be done gradually and gently. Time is an important element in the remedy. Time will settle Utah with great numbers of thrifty people, who will be hostile to the bad elements of Mormonism, although they may accept, for the sake of convenience, the advantages of the Mormon religion. The schism has already assumed wide and deep proportions between those who follow Brigham Young and those who dissent from him in the elevation of polygamy to a prominent article of faith. The extent of the rupture is greater than most people are aware of. We have seen the statement, from a correspondent who had been gathering social statistics in Utah, that the number of Mormons who would stand or fall by polygamy in a direct conflict with the United States would not be over 5,000. The remaining 10,000 male Mormons would ultimately yield (though not without a struggle) to the necessities of the situation, and remain in Utah on the government terms, while Brigham Young with his little army would retire into fresh fields of adventure and build up, if he could, another seat of religious empire. If this report is true it might be better policy for outward and moral sentiment to wait (expending itself for the meantime on the objects of its proper concern nearer home) and see if the breach will not still further widen and end at last in the overthrow of Brigham Young and polygamy by the Mormons themselves. The Cullom bill, if passed, even in the amended form, would be regarded as a war against Mormonism as a religion as well as in its character of an organized immorality, and would cost the government a great deal of money and trouble; and would come out at last just where the Mormons themselves will probably come out, if let alone—that is in the driving forth of the few thousands of irreconcilable polygamists into new regions. The question, as it seems to us, is whether the Mormons shall be allowed to regenerate themselves—to return to the guidance of the original J. O. Smith revelation, which did not countenance polygamy, but on the contrary opposed it as decidedly as the New Testament does—or whether the Federal government shall violently interfere to do the work. We should be satisfied to let the matter rest a while longer, and see what the Mormons will do for their own purification before calling upon Congress to pass any bill to perform that work for them by force of arms. *Journal of Commerce*, March 28.

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