

their neighbours or defied the law in any way, and so vigorous their growth still appears that they claim to have increased their number by fifty thousand since the last census in 1890. Of all their characteristics, the sincerity of their belief is the most striking. In Ohio, when one of the preachers of these "Smithite" Mormons was conducting me through the many-storied temple, still standing huge and gray on Kirtland Bluff, he laid his hand on a pile of copies of the Book of Mormon, saying solemnly, "Sister, here is the solidest thing in religion that you'll find anywhere." I bought the "solidest" thing for fifty cents, and do not advise the same outlay to others. The prophet's life is more marvellous and more instructive than the book whose production was its chief triumph. That it was an original production seems probable, as the recent discovery of the celebrated Spalding manuscript, and a critical examination of the evidence of Mrs. Spalding, go far to discredit the popular accusation of plagiarism.

Near Kirtland I visited a sweet-faced old lady—not, however, of the Mormon persuasion—who as a child had climbed on the prophet's knee. "My mother always said,"