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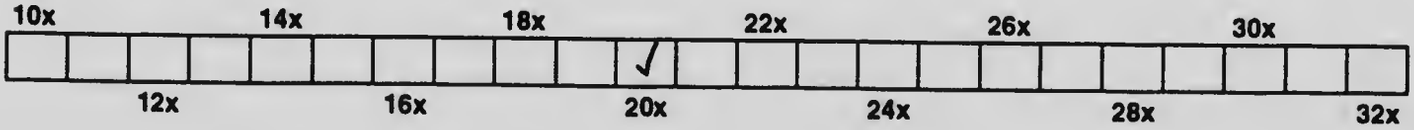

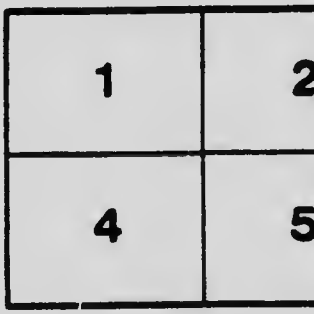

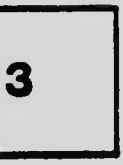

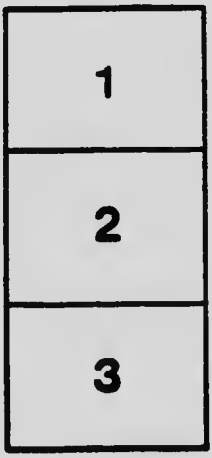

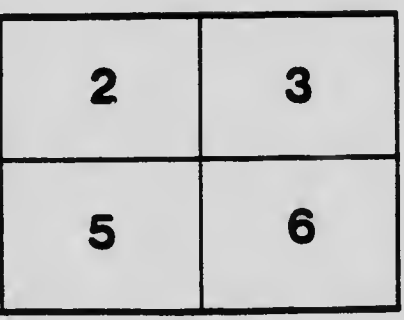

THE OTHER HOUSE

C L Fisher

THE OTHER HOUSE

A TRUE STORY OF THE MODERN
MORMON POLYGAMY

By

MARTHA ANDERSON
and
HARVEY J. O'HIGGINS

THE C. M. CLARK PUBLISHING COMPANY
BOSTON, MASS.

NOTE

In Mormondom the wives and children of plural marriage say, "He is over at the other house", when the husband and father is abiding for "a week" or "a day about"—according to whatever may be his domestic method and discipline—at the home of his other wife and her family. And that phrase—"The Other House"—has become most sinisterly significant of all the cruelties and mysteries and silent despairs of the new Mormon polygamy, now criminally recrudescent.

When Harvey J. O'Higgins was in Utah working with ex-Senator Frank J. Cannon on Senator Cannon's exposure of the shameful conditions in the Mormon Kingdom—since published under the title "Under the Prophet in Utah"—he obtained from Martha Anderson the materials for this story of her personal experience with "new" polygamy. Martha Anderson is an orthodox Mormon woman. In order to protect her and other innocent persons from the consequences of publicity, proper names have been changed in her narrative, descriptions of places have been altered and some recognizable details of character and circumstance have been disguised beyond any possibility of public indentification; but the essential facts have been in no way falsified, and the truth about the present-day conditions in Utah have been presented as faithfully as possible in typical incidents personally observed.

I

THE FIRST WIFE

THERE are straight, broad streets in Salt Lake City — the Mormon "Zion" and they are pleasant with shade-trees and little gutter streams of clear mountain water that refresh the eye on dusty Summer days and make a cool murmur in the heat. Under the trees of one of the quietest and pleasantest of those streets, on a green lawn, stands a cottage home—such a home as you may see almost anywhere in America—not large or pretentious, but pretty, neat, homelike, with vines climbing the porch, and flowers brightening the pathway.

Often, in the afternoons, a woman sits reading on the porch. She can raise her eyes and see the mountains, high and

brown, against the Summer blue of the eastern sky. She can see the cleft of the cañon — Emigration Cañon — through whose rocky gorge her father came, with a wagon train of pioneers, into the grassy slopes of the huge valley. She can see, far in the west, the waters of the Great Salt Lake gleaming under a moist haze of sunlight. She can see, near at hand, among the tree-tops, the six gray spires of the Mormon Temple that flies the angel Moroni on its highest finial, on a gilded ball, to trumpet the gospel of the Saints to all the world.

But if she looks up from her book at any of these — to rest her sight — she gazes listlessly, with reluctant eyes, as if she were unwilling to return to her own life from the fictions to which she has escaped. If she turns her head to watch her little children playing on the lawn, she regards them with a sort of sorrowful tenderness, brooding and sweet, but with a pity in her love. Her face is delicate,

refined, full of a charm of beauty that has been spiritualized by suffering. Her shoulders, almost girlishly small and slender, are already a little bowed.

Do you picture all Mormon women as crude and ignorant? I have many friends "out on the world," as we say in Utah, but this young Mormon mother — my friend Ruth — is the equal in intellect, in education, in refinement, of any woman I ever knew. She seemed born to be happy and to make others so. Yet now she lives, exquisitely miserable, in the pain of a tragic sorrow from which there is no escape for her, for her children, or for her husband, through whom it came.

There have been many such tragedies in Utah, but I have not known them as I know hers. She hid it, even from me, for many years, though we have been like sisters to each other since early girlhood. Her womanly reserve and her loyalty to her husband kept it concealed. When at last her misery broke down all

restraints—forcing an outlet, to find the sympathy of friendship—I shared her silence, too, as I shared her sorrow. I should not reveal her secret now—even under the cover of fictitious names—except with her permission. She has said: "Some other woman—perhaps one of my own little girls—may be saved from such unhappiness by hearing of mine. It may do some good. For a long time it seemed the right course—the only possible course—for me to hide it. But this thing thrives on secrecy. The wrongdoers are silent from policy; the victims from pride, from loyalty. Yes, tell it! Tell it!"

* * *

I have known Ruth for twenty years. We were students together at our State university. I wish I could make you see her as she was then—attractive and lovable, intelligent and with manners and accomplishments somewhat unusual among Mormon girls of that day. Her

mother had been well educated, had left a home of luxury and refinement "for the gospel's sake," and through all the hard work and harsh environment of early days had kept the speech and manners of a gentlewoman. The music, the conversation, and the books of their home made the hours I spent there some of the most delightful of my life. Together Ruth and I read old tales of chivalry and romance, the novels of Scott, of Dickens and Dumas. With all the fervor of sentimental and sensitive girlhood we thrilled and glowed with them. Fiction was not very favorably regarded in the strictly orthodox Mormon house. That, perhaps, lent a not unpleasant dash of adventure to the reading.

With all her romance and sentiment Ruth was never a melancholy girl. She was happy, affectionate and trustful. She never seemed to doubt that she would find in others the same gentle sentiments that warmed her own heart.

It was during our university course that she met George Easton. Everybody liked him—the teachers for his strong mind and earnest work, his fellow students for his frankness, his enthusiasm and his genial good nature. The attraction between Ruth and him was almost the miracle of love at first sight. He was so ardent and impetuous that their engagement followed in a few months. My memory of them, as sweethearts, is altogether dear and beautiful. They seemed to me to live in a golden mist of happiness that hid from them every cruel, sordid, unlovely thing in the world.

They were married in the Autumn—not merely "until death shall part," but forever, through all eternity, in accordance with our Mormon faith. They were not wordly-wise. They began their wedded life with a very modest endowment of this world's goods. But Ruth's confidence in the ability of her young husband was beautiful to see—as beauti-

ful as his faith that, with her inspiration, he could achieve any fortune that would make her happy.

She had confessed to me an aversion for—a dread of—the peculiar system of marriage among the Saints. She had confessed it at first half fearfully, for an open avowal of such a feeling would have marked her as one on the road to apostasy, but I felt as she did about it, and because of this similarity of sentiment we held many discussions on the subject. There was tragedy in the lives of many women about us. We glimpsed it often, though the policy of our people was to keep such things discreetly hidden. Under the surface serenity there was a threat that we feared might sometime strike our own lives and make havoc of all our girlish dreams—dreams in which polgamy had no place.

But in 1890, just about a month before Ruth's marriage, there was given out, at the semi-annual conference of the Saints,

a message from our President embodying "a revelation from God for the guidance of His people." It was in effect a manifesto prohibiting further polygamous marriages and even forbidding the further continuance of former polygamous relations. That manifesto lifted a burden of fear from Ruth and me and thousands of our sisters. We drew the freest breath we had ever known. Ruth's happiness was complete. "I have always hated it," she said "and yet I feared sometimes that I might be wicked for doing so. Now surely it isn't wrong to hate it, since God Himself has forbidden it."

To be sure, there were whispers, among the older brethren, that the manifesto had been given out merely to appease the wrath and blind the eyes of the Gentiles, and that, in the due time of the Lord, polygamy would be restored. But "the sisters" all believed that a merciful Father had heard their cries of anguish and had taken pity on them.

After her marriage, Ruth, in her little home, took on a quaint and charming assumption of matronly dignity. Her pride and confidence in her husband were sweet to see. Her whole life seemed set on the resolve to be a perfect wife and helpmate to the man she loved. For three months I saw their happiness complete and perfect. Then, suddenly, without warning, from a clear sky, there came a call to George to go on a mission to England to preach the gospel.

Such a call is always phrased as a request, but to the faithful Saints it comes as a command. We are taught that the gospel must be preached to every kindred, tongue and people, so that all the honest in heart may be gathered to Zion. Mormon girls relinquish their sweethearts, Mormon mothers give their sons, and Mormon wives yield their husbands that the great work may be carried on.

At first the distress of the young couple was pitiful. The long separation of two

years seemed so cruel! It stretched before them like two centuries. But the habit of obedience to authority was strong; it was their duty to make this sacrifice for their religion; they prepared to make it as bravely and patiently as they could.

I wondered at their courage. That wonder grew when, seven months after George's departure, their child, a boy, was born. In those months of waiting, and in her final hours of agony, Ruth showed a heroism of soul of which even I had hardly believed her capable. I could see that every day, and every hour of every day, she yearned for her husband in her suffering; and when the pain was ended, and there came that moment of ecstasy when she held her son—*their* little son—on her breast, I knew how she longed to look into her husband's eyes and see them shining with joy and pride and tenderness.

The boy was a healthy, beautiful child, and Ruth lived for the day when his father should see him and rejoice in him

as she did. The months passed. At last George was honorably released. I saw him united to his wife and his son. I thought of them now as happy for life.

Soon afterward I left Salt Lake, but Ruth and I exchanged letters occasionally and hers were always bubbling over with joy. George was as dear as ever. The boy grew and thrived, and said and did so many wonderful things! One letter brought news of the arrival of a little daughter and told me that they had made her my namesake. George wrote that she was a miniature of her mother. "And you know," he said, "that is the loveliest thing I could say of her." Other children came to them. I heard of these as always welcome to that happy circle, and always bringing love and joy with them into the world.

Then there came a long break in our correspondence. When Ruth wrote again I was disappointed by the tone of her letter. There was some change in her—

indefinable but evident. It was as if the warmth and brightness had gone out of her affection, like the sunlight from a landscape, leaving all the colors dull and lifeless. I feared that she had grown away from our friendship.

When circumstances brought us together again I was glad, for I hoped to resume our old intimacy. But I found a different Ruth. Her feeling for me seemed unchanged and her welcome was affectionate, but all her sparkle of animation was gone. She was quiet and listless. Only when her children were near her or when she spoke of them did I see any of the gladness of her old spirit.

Often I thought she seemed anxious to tell me something—to open her heart to me—then she would suddenly draw back into a gentle but inpenetrable reserve. One afternoon I found her looking pale and ill, but almost feverishly animated. She proposed one of our long walks into the hills, and as we went along

she talked rapidly and disconnectedly, rushing from one subject to another. It worried me.

We reached the base of the mountains and sat down to rest in a spot that had been one of our favorite retreats. From that point the whole valley was spread before us. Just below us, the army post—Fort Douglas—was set out among its trees, in the half circle of the officer's homes, the long barracks, the church, and the little cemetery, with its ranks of quiet graves on the hillside. Farther down, the city seemed to rest after the day, to enjoy the coming of the evening. Far in the west, beyond the shining lake and the blurred blue mountains, the sun was setting in a blaze of flame.

I was thinking of the days when we used to come there to read, and talk, and dream our wistful girlish dreams. The sunset gun boomed into the silence, and the clear notes of "The Star Spangled Banner" rose to us from the army post.

Old Glory came fluttering slowly down the flagpole. And there was something in the music and the sight of that great flag that brought a sudden pain to my heart and the quick tears to my eyes. I found Ruth's hand and held it. At my touch, she burst into weeping.

"Oh, Martie," she sobbed, "I can't— I can't stand it any longer! I must tell some one or my heart will break. I don't want to be disloyal to him—to George—but oh! I can't even talk to him about it. I——

" Do you remember—when we used to come here—there was only one thing in the world that I feared. And before I was married that was—stopped. Polygamy!

" I don't want to be disloyal to him, Martie. He's a good man and I love him as deeply as I ever did. It's the system that has wrecked him—and me—and the other woman too, I suppose, though I can't think of her; I'm too full of my own bitterness.

"I've never been able to talk about it —to any one. Every other trouble or worry I could carry to him—but not this. Even he can't help me."

She was talking in a strained, dead tone, her hands clinging together in her lap, controlling herself in a rigidity of body that was more agonized than a writhing. Whenever her voice choked, she waited stiffly till she could go on again; and she did not even raise her hand to wipe the tears from her cheeks.

"You know how happy our marriage was. You know we tried not to be selfish about it. The two years of George's mission meant a great sacrifice for us, but we made it. We made it as willingly and cheerfully as we could. When the little ones came we received them as sent from God, and resolved to try to better the world through our lives and theirs. And I felt that, so long as we didn't grow selfish or careless of our duty toward others there wasn't anything displeasing to Him in our being so happy.

"You know George has always been zealous in church work, and I was glad when they made him a bishop, because it showed they recognized his ability and his usefulness. I didn't complain when the new work took so much of his time—though he had to be out so often in the evenings attending meetings and church duties; and often he would be away for three or four days at a time doing church work in other parts of the State.

"One evening he came home from a meeting that had been called by some of the high church dignitaries. He looked tired and worried, and when I tried to cheer him up he became irritable and more gloomy than ever. You know how frank he is, naturally. We had never had secrets from each other. Our talking together was like thinking out loud. I knew, that night, that something had come between us.

"In a few days, he told me. At the meeting, he and a few other young men—

men in responsible positions—had had a restoration of polygamy suggested to them. It was done cautiously, but——

" Brother R—— said that God is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. He said that the principles of God's truth are changeless and eternal too— that the principle of celestial or plural marriage was as true to-day as ever it had been. And he was followed by Brother S——, who declared that the Lord would restore polygamy and open up a way for His people to practise it—and there would then be an opportunity for the young men assembled, and others, to live that part of their religion—and while it wouldn't be compulsory, any one rejecting it would stand responsible at the judgment-seat for failing in his duty. You can imagine——

" You know the arguments they would use, and the way they would play on the ambitions of some of them with the idea of reaching high positions in the church,

—and on the faith of the religious ones, with the promise of exaltation in the world to come. They didn't say *when* it was to return. They left that indefinite. But George was worried, and I felt the old terror clutch at my heart. I couldn't hide my fear from him, and he tried to reassure me—and himself. He held me in his arms and told me over and over again that I was the only wife he wanted in this world or in eternity. And I tried to believe it—and forget about it—but I couldn't.

"There were other meetings, and long talks with some of the older brethren. You know George isn't weak, but he's devoted to the church. He believes that its leaders are representatives of God on earth—that they hold their positions by authority from Him—and speak by inspiration and revelation.

"One day he said: 'I have never expected to live in polygamy. I was born of polygamous marrige. And I have

believed in the principle, though I thought the correct practise of it too severe for weak human nature. . . I've never loved any other woman, Ruth. I never shall. . . . But sometimes we must sacrifice our feelings for our convictions. If this principle of plural marriage were restored and I felt it my duty to enter it, would you be able to give your consent?'

" My heart seemed to stop beating. I couldn't answer. I began to cry. I broke down. He didn't say anything more—then.

" But later he brought up all those old arguments you know so well—that it purified our souls of selfishness; that it gave to the many spirits anxiously awaiting entrance to this world a chance to come here and do their work in this stage of their existence. I tried to oppose these with arguments of my own: that not only might it destroy selfishness in women but even the women themselves. I told him that women were said to be more

spiritual and less selfish than men and that polygamy made men more gross and selfish and despotic. But, after all, I couldn't argue much. I didn't *think* about polygamy; I *felt* about it. It was revolting to something deep down in my nature—not just jealousy—something less selfish than that.

"I know you'll hardly belive that, with all my old horror of it, there came a time when consent was wrung from me—I can't tell you how. I don't know myself. I suppose every woman, if she's emotional and religious, will make a martyr of herself. Hindu women throw themselves on their husband's funeral pyres; and we Mormon women consent to our husbands taking other wives.

"The final argument, with me, was that his conscience might sometime demand the sacrifice of us both and that his usefulness and goodness in this world and his exaltation in heaven might depend upon it. I was worn out with discus-

sions. I believed that it was a matter of conviction with George. I thought the opportunity so remote that it might never come at all. And at last I said that, if it *did* come, and he thought it a duty to enter polygamy, I would not oppose him.

"From that moment I've never been happy. I was like a prisoner condemned to death, but hoping always for a reprieve. I had been trustful; fear made me suspicious. We both grew reserved.

" George made a trip to Mexico to visit some church conferences in our colonies there. When he came back, I knew by his manner that—I asked him. He admitted it. He had done it by the advice of his superiors in the priesthood. He said he thought it would be easier for me if I didn't know till afterwards.

" While he was away I had gone to sleep every night with a prayer for him on my lips — and with my arm reaching to the pillow where his dear head always rested. . . . And while I had longed for

the sound of his voice, he had made marriage vows to another woman! And while I longed for his caresses, she had been in his arms!

"I asked her name. It was Esther Woodward. You remember her? She's almost my age, but she looks younger and fresher than I do because she's been free from care and illness. She's handsome and attractive. I used to like her, but in that moment I hated her. It was the first time I had ever hated any creature. I almost hated my husband. I completely hated the system that had robbed me of what was dearest to me in all the world. I don't know what I said. I was half crazy.

"He tried to soothe me. I couldn't let him touch me. I threw some wrap around me and rushed out of the house. I wanted to go to the hills and be alone. I don't know where I went. After a while I found myself in the hills. I was dazed. I was tired. The fire in my brain

had burned out. It was almost dark. I went home.

"I had to go home. There were the children. I didn't know what else I should do, but there were things I *must* do for them. They had to be fed and bathed and dressed. Sometimes the routine of living seems stronger than anything else—unless it's death.

"The next few days I don't remember very well. In the back of my brain was an idea that, as soon as I could, I'd take the children and go away somewhere. *That* throbbed insistently. Somewhere! Suddenly it stood out, like a question—Where? I had no people, no affiliations anywhere else. Where could I take my children? He'd been a good father to them. They loved him and their home. They were happy. I thought—perhaps—they need never be anything else.

"He pleaded with me to forgive him. He told me that he loved me better than anything else in the world. He begged

for my love and confidence and promised that he would make things as easy for me as he could. I felt numb and dead. I said I'd bear it as well as I could for the children's sake and because I believed he'd done the wrong through a perverted sense of duty.

"I take care of the children. I attend faithfully to the house. I make George comfortable. But the things that were once pleasures have become duties. I don't make scenes, they would distress us both, but I can never again do the fond, foolish, demonstrative things that made us both happy. I accept his kisses, but I can't offer them myself. When, occasionally, he makes some pretext for leaving me, I don't ask any questions. Sometimes the pretext may be genuine, but I always think that he is with her, and my brain seethes with tormenting fancies of them together.

"The secrecy of this new polygamy has spared me one thing—the curious and

pitying regard of friends and acquaintances. I've forced myself to hide it all. If they have guessed, they haven't dared talk to me.

"This morning she gave birth to a son. He has come to take the place of my children as *she* took mine. Oh, I have always loved all children and the mothers in their hours of agony. But this woman! This child! The world seems too small for me and my children and for her and her son. I mustn't hate—the child. It's innocent. I mustn't hate innocence and helplessness. I musn't!

"I've prayed, but my prayers aren't answered.

"Oh, what can I do, Martie? What can I do?"

I had been listening in a horror and a helplessness that held me as tense as she—facing the sunset as she faced it, till I could no longer endure the sight of its far, cold withdrawal, that seemed in some way an abandonment of her to darkness and

misery—and I hid my face in my hands and wept for her.

But with her cry of "What can I do, Martie?" she turned to me, reaching out blindly, and I drew her to me, and she clung to me like a child, shaken with sobs that I could do nothing to console.

What could I say? What could I do? Tragedy of death itself could not be more irrevocable. It was her happiness that had been killed—her hope in love—the heart of her life. It was shameful, horrible, unendurable. But even if she could leave him —even if she could take her children from their father and break all those ties of the past that bound her to him in the memory of old joys and common sorrows borne together—even if she could escape from the claims of friends and relatives that held her inescapably—what would she have to take with her but the ruin of her life that she now wept over?

I knew that in spite of everything she

still loved him—with the heart-broken love of a wronged woman who could no more hate him than she could hate her own child. And I knew that for all his blindness and fanaticism, he had still a human, natural love for her. There was nothing that I could do—nothing that I could say. I held her dumbly.

The light slowly faded out of the sky.

When her fit of weeping had spent itself, she dried her eyes and kissed me—in a silent gratitude for the sympathy that I had thought too vain a thing to give voice to. She saw the street lights that were showing bright below us. "I must hurry," she said. "The children will wonder——"

I stood up with her. She turned and put her arm around my neck. "Martie," she said, "you don't think that I am cruel or selfish or wicked, *do* you?"

"Oh, Ruth," I cried, "you're all patience and goodness and—oh, I wish I could help!"

She kissed me gratefully again. "I know. Only God can help. I just wanted what you gave me. Thank you, dear. The strain was killing me. . . . You'll not mind, sometimes—when I can't stand the silence—you will let me speak to you?"

The sobs choked me.

She said consolingly: "There, dear. I feel so much better. Don't—It's all right." And, turning bravely to the city, she led me down the hillside, with her arm around me.

Blinded by my tears, I did not see her face till we came to a lighted house where the window blinds had not been drawn. The family were sitting at the dinner-table—a young father and mother with their little child—smiling. Ruth looked past me at them. I pray that I may never know for myself the pain of longing and regret that ached in her eyes.

She did not speak. I could not. We went in silence to her gate, and there I kissed her good-night. "Don't be too

hard on him—in your thoughts," she pleaded. "It isn't *he*, you know. It isn't *he*."

I knew. Oh, I knew! And that was the horror of it.

I waited, lingering futilely, to watch her up the pathway to her door. She opened it and stood in the frame of light, her back to me, looking at the tragical coziness of the little hall—and then, turning quickly, with both hands, almost convulsively, she threw the door shut—on her secret—on her sorrow—on her innocent shame.

O Utah! how shall you answer to mankind for the misery of such homecomings? How shall you cleanse yourself of the guilt of such martyrdoms? How shall you atone for the tears of my poor Ruth? For it is to *you* that she cried so despairingly: "What can I do? Oh, what can I do?"

II

THE PLURAL WIFE

"It was Esther Woodward," Ruth had said. It was Esther Woodward who had shadowed the life of the woman dearest in the world to me. And when I met Esther Woodward again for the first time after I had heard Ruth's story, the sight of her filled me with an anger that brought the blood to my face.

She had an air of aloofness and dignity, with the sort of beauty that is called statuesque, and a calm poise of the head that carried her heavily-coiled hair like a crown, proudly. *She proud!* I turned from her, trembling with an indignation that I could not hide. She had stolen another woman's happiness; and to do it she had broken not only the law of the

hand, but the law of the church. I wanted to make her suffer a little as she had made Ruth suffer so much. I wanted her to feel my disgust for her. I tried to look at her with a composure that should show nothing but supreme womanly contempt.

If she understood, she gave no sign. Her dark eyes met mine impassively. Her clear white skin showed no flush. Her lips held their habitual curve of serene reserve and pride. I thought I saw an added self-sufficiency, as of matronly contentment, in her complete and fruitful beauty; and that complacency of stolen happiness turned me cold with abhorrence.

I had known her as a silent girl—religious, and withdrawn from our young circle of boy-and-girl amusements; and when our lives had deepened into the natural interests of youthful love-affairs, she had remained outside that circle too, neither attracting affection nor apparently desiring any. We had passed her, in

our common paths, with a cheerful indifference. Now, in my loathing, I felt that there had been something repellent in her, something abnormal that had warned us away from her, something that had become inhuman enough to do this monstrous injustice to dear Ruth.

Esther's family and ours had long been friendly neighbors, but no word of her marriage had passed between them. There is in this new polygamy something criminally secret that forbids the confidence of old friends, and hushes gossip, and makes familiar curiosity avert its eyes. I suppose there must have been a score of acquaintances in our neighborhood who knew, from the birth of Esther's child, that she had become a plural wife; but I did not hear a word of it from any one—except Ruth. I spoke of it to no one. I said nothing to explain the aversion that made me ignore Esther Woodward at our Relief Society and Mutual Improvement meetings, at which she began to reappear.

I asked no questions when she ceased again to come. I remembered that when I had last seen her she had looked ill; but there was no calamity that could have overtaken her which I should not have thought deserved.

A few months later a fatal accident brought death into her mother's house, and it became my duty as a neighbor to help in the friendly offices of aid and consolation. I went almost reluctantly. Sister Woodward was a real mother in Israel, and I admired and loved her. She had known much sorrow and many hardships in her life, and she had grown only more patient and sweet and kindly under them. She had devoted herself to charitable work within the church, in a largeness of sympathy that had made her dear to us all. We were eager to help her now, if any help were possible, but I was afraid that if she knew my feeling for Esther, I could be of small comfort to her.

I found that Esther was away from home, and I was glad; but if Sister Woodward suspected my relief she did not show it. She was bearing her sorrow bravely, uncomplainingly, as she had borne so much in her long life. She was grateful for what I did. I was surprised and touched by her dependence and reliance on me, and I wished truly that I might be able to do something to comfort and console her. She sat so patiently by her window, with her poor old gray head only bowed a little, and her dear wrinkled face so mutely enduring!

I put my arm about her shoulders and bent down to ask: "Isn't there *something* —isn't there *anything*—that I can do?"

She was silent, but I felt a little tremor as if she were about to speak, and her clasped hands in her lap moved nervously, and tightened. She said at last: "Martha, if you would— There's one thing I've wanted to speak about, but I couldn't. You know, there are sorrows worse than

death's. It's harder to see a child suffer —suffer every day—than it is to give them up to our Heavenly Father—to peace and rest."

I knew what she meant, and I must have shrunk a little from her, for she reached up her worn, thin hand and caught my fingers. "It's my Esther—my poor girl. You don't know how she's suffering. She's proud. She would never ask for it—but she needs—she needs pity. She told me once that you wouldn't even speak to her, and it hurt her, though she tried not to show it—even to me. She's a good girl, Martha. She's a good girl—You did all you could for my dead child. Can't you——"

All my loyalty to my friend Ruth had swelled in my heart. I looked away from the pleading of those dim, eager eyes. "Sister Woodward," I said, "I wouldn't hurt you for the world, but you know how I love Ruth. *She's* the injured one. They might both have been happy. Esther

might have married any one. She's beautiful—and you say she's good. Oh, why couldn't it have been some one else than Ruth's husband!"

I felt brutal when I saw her tears, and I thought that she would turn from me in anger; but she had been schooled to endurance. "Dearie! Dearie," she wept, patting my hand, "you don't understand. I've suffered, and I've seen others suffer, for what we believed to be right. Esther is suffering now— for conscience' sake— like all those others. Your own grandfather went to prison because he believed in polygamy and practised it, and you think he was a hero. Dearie, it was your grandfather who brought my family into the church. I've always cared for people of your name. That's one reason why I don't want *you* to wrong Esther in your heart. You love Ruth. Yes, yes. But you must be just to Esther. I want you to see her. I want you to hear the truth about her."

It was on my lips to say "I am not Esther's judge"; but before I could say it, I stood condemned before myself. I *had* judged her, and I had judged her unheard. I promised Sister Woodward that I would go and see her daughter.

She told me that Esther was living in B——, where her baby had been born, and where she was known only as Sister Gray. She and her husband, George Easton, had feared to have her remain in Salt Lake City, where she was so well known by outsiders, as well as by our own people. He did not dare to give her the protection of his name, and she could not appear now under her maiden name, since her baby had come. So she had gone back to B——, where all the people were Mormons.

B—— is only a few miles from Salt Lake City—a small, straggling village—a settlement as we call it. According to our reckoning of age in the new West, it is old; for its locust and box-elder trees

were among the first planted by the pioneers. Most of the houses are of a type common in early Utah days, built either of roughly cemented stone or of adobe bricks. In Spring the orchards are like pink and white clouds hovering close to the earth. In Summer the yards are gay with old-fashioned flowers, and vines screen the walls. But I went there in late November; all the flowers were gone; the trees were bare, and the dead-brown vines clung desperately to the forlorn, ugly old houses, shaken by the bleak mountain winds that whipped and blustered through the streets.

I had been called to visit our Relief Society organization in B——, and I had journeyed down from Salt Lake City with two of the older sisters. But all during the hymns, the prayer, the testimonies of the sisters, and the sewing for the poor after the regular meeting, the thought that Esther was in B—— and that I had promised her mother to see her, kept insistently in my mind.

It was late in the afternoon when the meeting closed. Several sisters invited us to take supper and spend the evening at their homes. My companions accepted, but I made my excuses and asked to be directed to Sister Gray's. The house was pointed out to me, and I walked toward it, wondering what Esther Woodward and I could say to each other that could help or comfort either of us.

It was a little dirt-gray adobe cottage. When I came to the gate I was so reluctant to enter that I hesitated, glancing guiltily at the windows. There was some one looking out. I walked slowly up the narrow weed-grown path, and saw that it was Esther standing sideways at the window, her back toward me, staring out across her shoulder at the mountains. There was something in her arms. She did not see me. I knocked at the door. She opened it herself. It was the baby she was holding.

I had thought, before, that she looked

ill. Now I saw the marks of more than a bodily pain. The delicate skin under her eyes had withered and discolored. The expression of her mouth had changed from the curve of gentle pride to a hard line of repression. She recognized me with a slow surprise that faded into an almost sullen expectancy.

"Esther," I said, "your mother asked me to come to see you. I promised her I would."

She opened the door wider to let me in, but as she drew back she gathered the baby closer to her breast. I stepped into the front room of the cottage—for there was no hall—and she closed the door with her shoulder and stood rigid, silent, inhospitable.

I said: "If you don't want to see me—"

She drew up the shawl that was slipping from her shoulder, and without moving her eyes from their steadfast gaze at me, she replied deliberately: "I do. Yes. I have wanted to see you. Won't you sit down?"

She watched me seat myself in an old rocking chair. Then she walked to the window and stood looking out at the dusk. I felt the bareness of the room without glancing at it, as I suddenly felt the barrenness of her life without consciously thinking of it. I felt them both in a depression, in a sinking pain at the heart.

"Now that you're here," she said dully, "I don't know what there is to say."

I knew that she had been fond of books and pictures, but there was not a book even on the center table—just some sewing, a work-basket, and a small kitchen bowl with a spoon in it. There was not a picture on the bare walls, where the paper and its design had faded and yellowed together into one common drab of saffron.

It was all so unlike the cheerful comfort of her mother's home—even in the face of grief—that it silenced the thought I had of trying to tell her some consoling word of her mother's brave resignation.

"There are sorrows worse than death's." I realized it.

She had turned. "I know you blame me—almost as much as Ruth does," she said, dispassionately. "And I've tried not to care—but I've felt it. I've tried to do right, as I saw it. And I thought so long as I did *that*, I could endure anything—misunderstanding, loneliness, anything. But"—She looked down at the silent, staring infant in her arms, and ended in a low breath—"I can't. I can't."

"If I have done you an injustice," I put in hastily, "I'm sorry, Esther." She looked up at once in a quick defiance. "But I don't know how you can justify yourself," I replied to that look. "It was against the law of the church as well as the law of the land. And you ruined Ruth's whole life."

"And mine!" she cried. "What about mine? She plucked at her shawl again, throwing back her head. "No. Not that. I don't care—it doesn't matter

about me. It's baby. I can't stand it for *him*. I can't. You must tell her. You must explain to her. She mustn't——"

"Ruth?"

She sank down suddenly into the chair that stood behind her. She was weeping. "I can't have them hating my little boy. I can't. If anything were to happen to [illegible] they'd lie to him and make *him* hate me, and teach him to blame me. I want to tell you. I must. I must make them understand. Oh, baby! baby!" The child had begun to squirm against the pressure of her arms. He broke out in a querulous wail.

I went over to her, in pity. "Give him to me. Your crying frightens him. Let me have him. Don't cry. Give him to me."

She wiped his little contorted red face distractedly with the end of her shawl as I took him up. "There!" I said to calm her, "what a sturdy, beautiful boy! How like you he is! How much does he weigh?"

She told me with a pathetic smile faltering through her tears; and while I dandled him to and fro, she boasted of his health and his baby virtues—that he never cried except when he was hungry, that he slept so well at nights she had to wake him to feed him, that he would lie for hours in her arms looking up at her solemnly. Her face had softened. I had unconsciously found the way to her heart, to her confidence.

"He has made such a difference," she said. "Sometimes I think I was never natural till he came. Didn't you use to think I was different—from the other girls?"

She kept her eyes on him, all the time, apprehensively. I sat down and let him rest on my lap, where he lay regarding the strange face above him with a blinking absorption of interest. "I thought you were more serious-minded than *we* were," I replied. "And more religious."

"Even when you were young," she

said, "you all had your sweethearts, didn't you? I don't believe I ever thought of love or marriage. Mother used to worry about it. She wanted me to go to parties." She spoke as if she had been going over it all in her mind, made newly introspective by solitude and lonely thoughts. "She asked me once about getting married, and I didn't like it—the thought of it. I wanted to live with her all my life, and—yes, I was religious. Ever since I was a mere child. I suppose that was it." She thought about it, with a curious, puzzled interest. "I used to be so happy singing in the Tabernacle that I'd cry. They used to preach about the sorrows and the wickedness of the world, and I always felt safe from all that, *there*. I thought perhaps I would be sealed to some good man for eternity—and be a wife only in Heaven—but—Did you ever feel that way about marriage? That it was a part of the sorrow and the wickedness?"

I answered with some cheerful commonplace about marriage being a woman's greatest happiness. I felt as if I were replying to the first self-questionings of a young girl.

"Yes," she said, "that's what mother told me. I suppose I was queer." Her face clouded with her thoughts. "They told me I ought to marry for *principle*, even if I didn't *care* about it. Not mother! It was Sister R——said it—first—once when I was on a trip with her, doing church work, when we were driving from one settlement to another. She asked me why I didn't marry, and I told her what I had told mother—that I wanted to give my life to church work. She said: 'But haven't you thought that you might serve the church better by marrying? You know, we don't believe in our girls being nuns, like the Catholics.' And then she said: 'It's a pity you didn't live a few years ago. You would have made a splendid plural wife. You could have

strengthened the church by helping to keep up that divine system of marriage.' "

Esther had dropped her voice to repeat the words of that first hint of the temptation, and now, in silence, she gazed at me unseeingly, with a drawn frown twisting her black eyebrows. It was growing dark, and I sat in the shadows with the child asleep on my knees. She went on—as if piecing together the incidents of her betrayal for the first time consecutively to herself—in a level, thoughtful tone of unconscious candor:

"Then, one Sunday night, at our ward meeting, one of the brethren spoke on polygamy. He said he felt strongly impressed that God was about to restore it to our people, and he said that through that principle the Latter Day Saints would save the rest of the world from its grossness and wickedness. He told how pure and unselfish people became in the plural marriage relation. He said that the women who had lived in polygamy

in the past—and those who would live in it in the future—were heroines of the faith—that they were intended by God to become mothers of the noblest spirits among all those who were waiting for an opportunity to enter this world.

"Then the next speaker was George Easton. I had known him ever since we were children—but never intimately. I had never happened to hear him speak in meeting before. And I thought I had never heard any one who had more of the spirit of the Lord. His voice rang with such sincerity. His face seemed transfigured when he bore his testimony to the truth of the gospel. And when he spoke of the sacrifices our fathers and mothers had made for their faith—especially for their belief and practise of plural marriage—how the women had suffered the scorn of the world, of exile from their homes, and how the men had gone to prison rather than deny the truth—my heart burned with loyalty to those mar-

tyrs, and I found tears running down my face.

"I never thought of George Easton, after that, as a man like other men. I compared him to the Apostle Paul, and gradually I grew to think of him under that name. I began to see him frequently. We were associated together a good deal in the Sunday-school work. And I began to think of being sealed to *him* for the hereafter. And so, at last, I told mother, and she spoke to father, and he mentioned it to the bishop.

"I don't know how I learned that George knew of it," she said, as wistfully as any young wife recalling the happy days of her courtship. "I think I guessed it from his manner to me. Often, when our work gave him the opportunity, he talked to me about the truth and beauty of the gospel. One evening he walked home with me from a Sunday-school teachers' meeting. We walked slowly under the trees. Suddenly he said: 'Es-

ther, you're a noble girl. You're destined to do great good here and to receive a high reward in the hereafter. You will shine like a bright jewel in the celestial kingdom of some good man. I wish I were worthy to take you to myself.'

"I was frightened with the joy that came upon me—and the doubts. I revered him more than I had believed I could revere any man. But I was afraid to think—to ask myself if there was anything more than just revering him. That night I prayed that God would show me my way of life. Was I to love here, and be united only in the hereafter? Or——"

She clenched her hand against her breast, passionately. "Oh, how was I to know? How was I to know what it meant—what I was doing? I had never cared for a man before, except my father and my brother. I didn't know. I didn't understand."

The pressure of the hand on her bosom seemed to force back that cry of despair

and regret. She controlled herself with a hard catch of the breath. The hand dropped into her lap. She went on, after a silence, monotonously:

"Then Sister E—— died. She died suddenly. Before the funeral they let us know—all of us who had been near to her—they let us know that she was an elect and ordained priestess to God—an appointed queen in the eternities—a plural wife. I had admired her so. She had been one of my ideals. She was a good woman. To me she had seemed angelic.

"The services in the church academy were the most beautiful I've ever seen. Some of us who had been told the secret of her life were dressed in white and wearing wreaths of bridal blossoms, and we sat around her white velvet coffin and sang the songs of Zion. From the pulpit the apostles and prophets of the church looked down at us.

"Brother Smith spoke of the purity

of her life and the assurance of her resurrection among the saints. He said that she had chosen the nobler part, and her reward was more glorious than human tongue could describe—greater than human intelligence could conceive or human hope could compass. He said that Sister E—— had been set apart in the councils of the gods, before the world was made, to come in this dispensation to mate with a prophet and help him to the establishment of a redeeming principle. She had been saved and exalted eternally by her act of consecration. She would reign forever as a queen at the right hand of the Father, and women of lesser devotion would be her ministering handmaids, without husbands, and without children.

"We who sat around the coffin knew what he meant. He was proclaiming the sanctity and the necessity of plural marriage. And when he looked down at us and cried in his thrilling voice: 'Go, ye sisters of Christ and daughters of God.

Go and do likewise!' it seemed to me a command had come that I couldn't disobey without the loss of my soul.

"It was a call in this life. I wasn't to wait to die and then have George take me as a wife for eternity. I must brave all the laws of men and all the condemnation of society by treading the path that had led Sister E——to her sainthood.

"Brother Smith came down from the pulpit while we were still grouped around the coffin. He clasped our hands, one by one. When he reached me. I know I turned pale. He whispered: 'Are *you* too, ready to obey the everlasting covenant, Sister Woodward?' I couldn't answer. I looked at him. He understood. He pressed my hand."

She stretched her arms up, and silently let them fall again. I could not see her face, it was only a pale blur in the darkness.

"After a while, I knew that they had all talked it over, and that George had

acquiesced, and that my assent was assumed. No one spoke of it, but I knew it from the worried way my father looked at me. I knew it from the mystery of my mother's manner. I wondered why George didn't come to me. I waited and waited. I waited in a sort of daze. I wondered what was happening to me. They were all so kind.

"Once, when I met Brother Smith, he looked at me with such exultant approval that my heart thrilled with the faith that God had marked me as a saving priestess. I waited.

"One day, my mother said: 'Some of the sisters are going to conference in Mexico, Esther. George wants you to go with them. Oh, my child, I pray that you may be happy. You are doing the will of the Lord and He will bless you.' But my father took me in his arms and said: 'My little girl! Do you really want to go? Tell your dad. It's not too late. I'll stop everything, if you just say the

word. Don't be afraid. No one shall be unkind to you while I live.'

"I couldn't say anything. What could I say? That I didn't want to be George's wife—here and hereafter? *That* would be a lie. That I didn't want to obey the will of God? *That* would be blasphemy.

"So I said: 'It's all right, father. I know how good and kind you are—but I want to go to George'—and he released me with a sigh, and turned away. I wondered at him. I couldn't understand why he—even when he prayed, that night, aloud 'O Lord, guide Thy young handmaiden with Thy wisdom and help her to be prudent, and let her not be led away by any mistaken counsel'—still I would not understand.

"And that was all the warning I had—his prayer and his sigh when I refused his offer of help. That was all. That was all. God did not speak."

She said it in a deep, hoarse, empty voice: "God did not speak!"

She was leaning forward on the arms of her chair, supporting her head in her hands, her fingers spread across her temples. There was almost a sneer of self-contempt in her dead dryness as she continued:

"Sister G—— went with me on the trip to Mexico. She offended me with the constant oilinesss of her congratulations. She kissed me morning and night— and whenever she introduced me to any of the brethren and sisters, she did it with such smirks and whispers and such little dabby, proprietary airs. Besides, she wouldn't talk about anything but 'polygamy, that sacred principle.' She took more liberties with my precious secret than my own mother had taken.

"If anything could have roused me— But no! I was on my way to happiness on earth and exaltation in Heaven!

"When I met George at Colonia Diaz, he was pale and quiet. He took me from the bishop's house. We walked a little

distance from the settlement, and there we met an apostle. I promised never to tell his name. He's dead. May the Lord deal with him!

"He told me to place my right hand in George's. He gave me to him—here and hereafter—'by virtue of the authority of God in him vested.'

"I walked back to the bishop's house a wife—George's wife—a plural wife—and a priestess to God."

There followed a long silence. I knew that she was weeping. She said, in a broken whisper: "I was happy. Wherever we went, every one was good to me. They all seemed to know, without being told. Nobody asked questions. Nobody spoke to me about it. Nobody said anything to warn me. Oh, my God! I was *happy*!"

She slipped to her knees on the floor. When I had put the baby on the chair and stumbled across the darkness to her, I found her in a stricken huddle, with her

hands twisted in her hair. I thought she had fainted. When I heard what she was whispering, I thought she had gone mad. I——

I can not write of it.

I could not make her hear me. I could not get her up. It was the baby who did it. He had begun to whimper as soon as I put him down, and now he was crying lustily. I got him and brought him to her. She was struggling to her feet; she clutched him and sank down with him, and I heard her consoling him with distracted endearments. I felt as if we were all going mad there in the darkness.

I don't remember how I ever found the matches and lighted a lamp. It showed her sitting on the floor, with her baby hungry at her breast, her head thrown back upon the seat of the chair, and her hair, wet with tears, dragged across her eyes. When I had helped her into the seat and dried her poor white face, and pinned up her hair, I kissed her;

and she looked at me with the uncomprehending stare of a first return to consciousness and closed her eyes again.

I took off my hat and coat and went to find the kitchen. I was crying so, myself, that I could scarcely see. I wanted to get her something to eat and put her to bed. That was the best that I could do for her.

The kitchen had the same look of homelessness that had shown in the front room. There were no curtains on the windows—just old green blinds that were tied up with cords. The kitchen utensils did not fill one shelf. The cook stove was rusty; some of the baby's clothes hung drying on the oven door. Everything was clean but bare, and there was no sign anywhere of the loving hand of the housewife.

I could imagine her going about her work there mechanically, alone with her tragic thoughts. The hopeless pathos of it all came over me in a nervous

revulsion that made me feel faint and ill. I went shakily about, setting the table and renewing the fire; and all the time my futile brain kept repeating to me, over and over, senselessly: "What a shame! What a shame! What a shame! What a shame!"

They were both victims equally—she and Ruth!

I heard her putting the baby to bed in an inner room, and I made up my mind that I would not let her talk any more. But when she came in silently, with a face of hopeless calm, and went to the dishes on the stove, I realized how useless it would be for me to try to do anything to control or persuade her.

"Tell Ruth," she said, "that I didn't begin to understand what we had done, until after George had seen her. Then I read something of it in his look. Remorse—it was if we had been guilty together. He was gentle with me, but he wasn't the same as before. I was too

proud to ask, and he didn't tell me. I thought it would pass."

"Don't talk about it," I pleaded. "Don't. Not now. Not yet."

She shook her head. "You must make her understand. I thought it would be all right—in time. And when the baby came, and George knelt beside my bed and prayed for us all, I was sure that God heard and was watching over us—that He would help us.

"Only—George never let himself be seen with us. Baby was born here, in this house. I had to hide. And when we were able to go out, George never went out with us. Sometimes he wouldn't come for days. I began to see what my life was to be—no home, no husband—just a kind of sanctified, sacrificial aloofness."

She was blundering aimlessly with the pan in which I was warming over some stale chops. I took the cooking fork from her and begged her to sit down at the table. She obeyed me unconsciously.

"I went to visit with George's mother. And one morning she came fluttering nervously in to me and said: 'Esther, I don't know what you ought to do. Ruth is here to spend the day. I'm afraid it would be painful to you both if you were to meet. Don't you want to go through the back way to Gertrude's, and take Baby for a few hours?'

"If it had been only myself! But our baby, his baby! His wife and child! We were as much his as Ruth and *her* children.

"I took Baby up in my arms and went into the parlor. Ruth was sitting there with her two little ones. When she saw who it was, a look of awful horror came over her face. She caught her children to her, and put her arms around them—to shield them—from me, think of it! From *me*!

"I stood staring at her. Mother Easton came in and plucked at my sleeve. I looked at her. I didn't understand. And then, in just one instant,

I saw it. Ruth hated me and Baby. She hated us for herself. She hated us for her children. I had taken her husband like —like a bad woman. I had stolen him —from her—from her children.

"I knew, in that instant, every depth and flame of the hell that Ruth had suffered.

"I could have gone down on my knees and—and asked her to forgive me, but her face and her eyes turned me away. I couldn't look at it—the misery—the misery I had brought to her. I couldn't face her. I felt degraded—lost.

"I kissed mother—George's mother. It was good-by. I never wanted to see her again. She didn't know. I didn't say any thing. I took Baby's things. I wouldn't wait for a carriage. I wouldn't leave any message for George. I wanted to get out of the house and out of their lives, forever, always.

"My father cares for my wants. He has refused to let me accept any help from George.

"We live here in hiding—because the church refuses to acknowledge our marriage. They are denying to the world the existence of new polygamy. That is father's reason—to protect his church. But not mine. I daren't see George. I don't know whether I hate him or love him. In either case I couldn't trust myself.

"There's nothing left. I heard yesterday that he and Ruth had denied to their older children—and to the world—that he has another wife. They have been forced to do it by the church."

She moved her hands on the tablecloth, blindly, smoothing out a crease in it, over and over, again and again. I put a plate of food before her. She gazed at it blankly. "You must eat something," I coaxed. "You must keep well and strong—for the baby."

She nodded. "I must live for him," she said, more to herself than to me. "I must live to tell him. They would lie to him."

And she began to eat, slowly, determinedly, without a word, her eyes set, her hands fumbling.

She said once: "They all lied to *me*." I did not reply. I refilled her glass with milk and gave it to her. She took it, looked down again at her plate and continued her meal.

She must have been half famished. She leaned back at last and shut her eyes. After a long silence she said simply: "I can't pray. I can't pray any more." I put my arm about her to help her to rise. She let me lead her to her room and get her into bed.

* * * *

When I was leaving her, next morning, I promised to try to make Ruth understand, and forgive, and think more kindly of her. "And I'll come back again," I said, "and tell you."

"No," she replied. "I'll not be here."

"Where are you going?"

She shook her head. "I'm going away. Good-by."

I kissed her. Her lips were quite cold.

"You will write to me?" I asked.

She shook her head again. "Good-bye."

She stood in the doorway to watch me go, and I called back a farewell from the gate, but she did not answer. I waved to her at the street corner, but she made no movement in response.

I have never seen her since. The silence of the new polygamy has closed over her. Betrayed, deserted, buried—not a martyr but the innocent victim of a sanctified crime—when I think of her "I can't pray any more," as she said. I can't pray any more!

III

THE PRIESTS

MISERY is a pain to which the nerve of suffering soon grows dull. I told Ruth of my visit to B——, of how I had called on Esther, of what I had seen, of what I had heard there. I tried to make Ruth feel Esther's wretchedness. I tried to make her understand that Esther had been almost as innocent a victim as she had herself. And poor Ruth tried to be just. She admitted every plea that I made, every excuse that I offered. When I told her that she ought to forgive Esther, she replied: "I do. I do. I'm sorry for her. I'm sorry for us all." But it was said with a weariness of misery that made it sound almost like indifference; and when I dropped the subject, I saw that she was relieved to be done with it.

Unhappiness had not made her hard; she was too sensitive a spirit to be calloused. But it had exhausted her. She was in every way less responsive than she had been—more silent—passively gentle instead of quick in kindness and eager to aid. She had not needed the affliction of grief to give her fellow-feeling. Its stroke had bruised her. It had left her numb.

It had aged her husband. When I had first known him, he had been the fair-haired, wide-eyed, idealistic type of religious boy, zealous with a frank young enthusiasm that was appealing in its unsophistication. As he grew older his success—the success of his ingenuousness—gave him an air of confidence, of smiling self-reliance, that seemed the manner of a masterful man. I supposed him to be a sane, compelling character. The disaster of his polygamous marriage quite broke my faith in him. And, as time went on, I saw that it had broken his faith in himself.

At first he carried himself—at home, at least—with a cowed and stubborn self-righteousness; but after Esther's disappearance, he got the look of a man who saw himself guilty. At the table he would relapse into awkward silences and absent-minded broodings. I saw him on the streets, with none of his old spirited assurance in his walk. One morning, as I passed the offices of the first presidency of the church, he came out, staring unseeingly, and passed me by with a queer, bewildered expression of face.

Ruth and he had been brought more near to each other by the illness of their youngest daughter, who had almost died of diphtheria during the winter; they had momentarily forgotten their estrangement in their common anxiety, and prayed together beside the sick-bed, and encouraged and consoled each other in their fear. When the little girl was out of danger, they did not wholly draw apart again, and it was Ruth who made clear

to me what was going on in her husband's mind.

He had been talking to her. He had been telling her of the incidents that had led up to his marriage with Esther Woodward, and he had apparently come to see himself as much betrayed by the priests as Esther had been. He felt that he would never have married her except in obedience to an exhortation that amounted to a command from those "superiors" whom he had spent his whole life learning to obey. And now they had deserted him. They had done nothing to aid or justify either him or the woman whom he had ruined. They themselves had to be "protected," and to that protection they sacrificed his plural wife and her innocent child. They had used every persuasion, every influence, every promise of religion, to encourage a criminal renewal of polygamy among their people; and, at the first threat of the inevitable exposure, they had left their victims to save themselves!

"I tell you," George said, "I've had my eyes opened."

He was to have them opened very wide before he saw the whole truth of his condition.

He had been very popular in his district, not only with the Mormons, but with the Gentiles of his acquaintance. He was a Democrat in a Republican stronghold. There was a movement to nominate him on the Congressional ticket, and Ruth had encouraged him to accept a career in politics, since he had lost heart for his work in the church. On the morning that I had seen him coming from the president's office, he had been summoned there and told that any public career was impossible for him. He was a "new" polygamist. It would not be safe. The authorities of the Church were denying the existence of "new" polygamy among their congregations, and they could not risk the exposure of the plural marriage of a candidate for Con-

gress. They forbade him to take any active part in politics. He must remain inconspicuous, obscure.

Always, heretofore, in yielding obedience to the "counsel" of his superiors, he had felt himself a free agent, and he had been treated as such. But this command was given to him brusquely, coldly, and in a tone that scarcely concealed the implied threat. They told him flatly that the Church leaders had picked another man for the nomination.

He was in their power. They—and they only— could protect him from the legal consequences of his bigamy, by their control of the government of the State. "I'm no longer a free man," he told Ruth. "I'm a slave—and a coward."

Later she found him weeping in abject helplessness over a letter from Esther which read: "You ask me for my forgiveness. Perhaps I can give it some time. I can not forgive myself yet. Most of all I can not forgive those men

who brought this shame on my child and me, and on Ruth, and on you. There is no place anywhere for me and my boy. When I changed my name to 'Gray,' I should have changed my other name to Hagar. I am Hagar, and my son is Ishmael, and the church that I loved and worked for all my life has driven me out into the desert. God help us!"

I began to hear of other new plural marriages. On a Relief Society trip to the southern part of the State I spent a night in the home of Sister E——, one of our Scandinavian Saints. As we sat, after dinner, in her little sitting-room, she told me that her eldest daughter was married to Apostle T——; and she told it with as much pride as a peasant woman whose daughter had captivated a duke. I asked her how this could be, since Apostle T—— already had a wife and the manifesto had prohibited him from taking any more. She looked at me as if she thought I must be joking. When she

saw that I was serious, a twinkle showed in her eyes. "Vell," she said, "I t'ought you knowed. T'at vas all yust to fool the Yentiles." And she said it with the naive, mischievous cunning of a child.

One day I met on the street an old schoolmate whom I had not seen for years. I asked her about herself—whether she was married, where she lived. She replied so evasively, seemed so ill at ease with me, treated me so uncordially and left me with such abruptness, that I was as much hurt as surprised. I did not understand her manner until I heard that she was a "new plural" and had two children who called her "Auntie" without knowing that she was their mother!

I began to realize that the restoration of polygamy was more than the mere personal tragedy of Ruth Easton or Esther Woodward or any other woman. It was a community peril—an evil that affected all Mormons, bound as we are by the pledges and the laws of our Church—

a wrong done to all Gentiles who lived and reared children among us. When I had first heard Ruth's story, I had thought only of her sorrow. When I had seen Esther, every other thought was lost in pity of her. But now I foresaw the danger to us all. Where should we be at the end of such a course of organized hypocrisy and social guilt? We had been credited, even by our enemies, with being sober, industrious and honest. Honest! What would become of our honesty, corrupted by this general duplicity, infected by a policy of falsehood and community dishonor, betraying the trust reposed in us by the nation and by our Gentile neighbors, skulking and cheating and lying—a society of guilty Pharisees and canting shufflers!

In the old days, polygamy had at least been practised openly and bravely. This "new" polygamy was nothing but treachery, full of horror and shame. I did not want to lose my faith in the gospel, and I

did not want to cut myself off from my own people, whom I had known and loved all my life; but I could not find in my royalty to our faith any justification for such a fraudulent perpetuation of a practise once abandoned by revelation from God; and I could not continue a silent associate in guilt with either the authors or the victims of this killing perfidy.

I tried to give our leaders the benefit of the doubt. I tried to make myself believe that perhaps they had not authorized such marriages as George Easton's to Esther Woodward. I tried to think that there might perhaps be some mistake. And I worried so with hopes and fears and doubts and disbeliefs that I could no longer enjoy the meetings and the church work that had always been a quiet pleasure to me. I came to the point where any certainty would be better than my fretful half-knowledge. I resolved to learn the truth.

I had the right to ask it. My great-grandfather had died for the faith at Nauvoo, and through every succeeding generation our family had been devoted Saints. I myself, for years, had given fully of my money, time and strength to the cause.

And there was one man among our leaders to whom I could go to ask the truth as I might go to my own father. I had not had more than a passing word with him for years, but I had known him from my childhood; he had been my father's dearest friend; he had visited us constantly in my girlhood; and once, in the days of the persecution, when he was in hiding "on the underground," he had found a refuge in our house from the Federal officers of the law who were seeking to arrest him on a charge of "unlawful cohabitation." (I shall never forget my delight at the sense of mystery and the importance that I felt when we sat with locked doors and drawn blinds, as if the house were deserted.)

I went to him now, confident of his honesty and assured that he would answer my questions with frankness. I shall not write his name. It is enough to say that I knew the practise of polygamy could not have been resumed without his official knowledge and his secret consent.

He greeted me with a paternal kindliness, asked me about "the folks" and offered me a chair near him, beside his desk. It was in his office. The door had been closed on us.

I reminded him of the time when he had hidden in our house, and I told him how proud I had been to help protect one of the brethren from persecution. He laughed and recalled incidents of that visit—even one of me singing, with much fire, "I'll Be a Little Mormon."

He said, smilingly: "I hope you're as zealous a Latter Day Saint now as you were then."

"I want to be, President ——," I replied. "I try to be." And then, because

I did not know how to broach the subject, I blurted out: "I've come to get you to strengthen my faith that all is well in Zion."

My earnestness evidently startled him. "Why!" he said. "Sister Martha! Surely you're not weakening in the faith?"

"No," I answered. "I believe the gospel's true. But sometimes people may have the truth and yet fall into error. I've heard some things lately that horrified me."

He frowned, perplexed. I looked down at his desk-top.

"I've always been loyal to our Church and our people," I went on. "In the old days, when they announced bravely their belief in polygamy and their intention to practise it, my heart was with them. I knew they were sincere—ready to endure imprisonment and even death for their belief. But when the manifesto was given, I was glad both personally and for our people—for whom it meant peace— an

honorable peace. I have heard lately that polygamy has been resumed—that those who entered it years ago are still living in polygamy—that new plural marriages are being performed by sanction of the Church."

I paused. He was silent. When I looked up, I found no kindly light in his eyes. They were cold and baffling.

"Well," he said slowly, coolly, "go on. What more have you to say?"

"Why!" I stammered. "Is—is it true?"

"And why do you want to know? What differences does it make to you?"

That tone of hostility stung me. I answered in a voice almost as hard as his own: "I am a Latter Day Saint. The affairs of the Church are my affairs and those of every other member of the Church. I'm a part of it. If its pledges to the nation are being broken——"

"Where have you obtained your information?" he asked.

"I'm not at liberty to tell you," I an-

swered, for I was determined not to betray Ruth and George.

"And you have no evidence to offer? You're easily disturbed, Sister Anderson, if you're so excited by rumors so vague and so unreliable that you can't even tell where they come from. Have you talked of these matters to others?"

I told him I had done very little talking.

His manner softened somewhat. "Now see here, Sister Martha," he said, "you mustn't lose faith in the Church—*and its leaders*—on account of every lying rumor that is started by our enemies. It's true that we still believe in the rightfulness of polygamy, but its practise was suspended by the command of the Lord until the world—and particularly this nation—is purer and more fit to receive the truth. They're too wicked, and our people have been too weak, for us to make them accept it. But we're growing stronger." There was a gleam in his eyes. "When the time comes we shall save the world by the same

glorious principle that it has scorned and rejected." He added hastily: "But the time hasn't come yet. We made promises and we're keeping them. There have been no recent plural marriages. I know of none since 1890. If any of the Saints have been determined to fulfil the law of celestial marriage, and have gone into polygamy, they have done it on their personal responsibility."

I could have wept. I knew that he was lying—even he!—and to me!

"One thing I want to warn you of," he continued smugly, "and that is the tendency to look for error in others rather than in yourself. Never mind about the affairs of your brothers and sisters. Attend faithfully to your own duties. Obey the priesthood, and above all, never set yourself up in judgment over the Lord's anointed. Never raise your voice against the sacred principle of polygamy, which your own grandfather practised so faithfully. If you *do*, you cast the stain of

dishonor upon him, and upon your own name and birth."

He rose. The interview was over. As I went out, he said, in a voice that could be heard in the anteroom: "I hope you'll be back to see me soon, Sister Anderson, to say that you've been mistaken—and to tell me you've recovered your faith."

I made no reply. There was no reply possible with the indignant despair in my heart.

Next day I resigned my position as secretary of the Young Ladies' Association. I ceased all my activity in church work. I even discontinued my attendance at meetings. I did not give up my faith in the principles of our Church, but I was "out of harmony" with the leaders and their policy. I could not be true to myself and "sustain" them.

Then our "block teachers" called on me. Once each month every Mormon family is visited by these ward workers, to ask whether all the members of the house-

hold are fulfilling their religious duties; whether they are paying the tithing; whether they attend meetings and hold private and family prayers; whether they have hard feelings toward any of their brethren or sisters; and finally whether they sustain the priesthood. With us they had dropped these questions, knowing us and our way of life so well. But on this evening there was a change in their manner. As soon as I met them at the door, I knew that they had come to take up a "labor" with me.

After a moment or two of talk on indifferent topics, the senior teacher, Brother Mackey—a thin-lipped, stern man—said challengingly: "I've missed you at meeting lately, Sister Anderson. Have you or any of your family been sick?"

His companion, Brother Cross, a little Englishman, sat twirling his thumbs, drawing in his breath occasionally with a queer sucking sound, and watching me.

"No," I answered, "I haven't been to meeting just lately."

"I'm surprised, Sister Anderson!" he said. "We thought you were one of our best workers. Have you been attending to your duties? I suppose you pay a full tithing?"

I told him that I had always done so.

He asked about private and family prayers, and I assured him that they were not neglected in my home.

He asked about my feelings toward my brethren and sisters. I told him I believed I had no personal enmity toward any one.

At last he asked me whether I sustained the priesthood as servants of God, and how I felt in the gospel. I replied: "I sustain all the servants of God who are faithful to His commands and do His will. But I have heard some strange things, and I cannot believe that all who hold the priesthood are faithful servants."

Brother Cross stopped twirling his thumbs. His eyebrows rose on his narrow forehead. He opened his mouth to

speak, but Brother Mackey put in quickly: "Just what do you mean, Sister Anderson?"

"I mean this matter of new polygamy."

They looked at me in uneasy surprise. "But polygamy is not being practised *now*."

"I know that it *is* being practised now—that there is polygamous living in the old cases and that there are new plural marriages. It's against the manifesto. It's against the law, and it's traitorous to all our pledges to the Government."

"Don't you believe in polygamy?" Brother Mackey asked. "Don't you believe that it was revealed to Joseph Smith by God Himself?"

"Brother Mackey," I answered, "it doesn't make any difference whether I believe in polygamy or not. I believe that Joseph Smith was sincere, and that most of our people who used to practise it were sincere. But the manifesto was a revelation, too, and it forbade polygamy. It should be as binding as the other

revelations. Besides, we gave our word to the Government—and got our property back—and our citizenship—and were given Statehood—on the understanding and the promise that polygamy had ceased."

Brother Cross showed a shocked agitation. "*Hi* don't believe there *be* any new cases," he said. "But if there be, hit's none o' my bus'ness. I attend to my duties and trust the Prophet and 'is apostles to manage the Church. God will never hallow us to be led astray, look ye."

Brother Mackey's lips were in a hard, straight line. "What makes you think polygamy is being practised?"

"Well, for one case, you know that Brother M——'s second wife has had three children since the manifesto, don't you?"

"No, I don't," he cried.

"But you live next door to her."

"I know nothing of her private affairs. *I* am not curious about my neighbors. How do *you* know they're hers? Maybe she adopted them."

This was too obviously insincere to answer.

"Then," I said, "there's that poor Swedish girl, Sister E——. She's a plural wife and married to a man old enough to be her grandfather. When the manifesto was issued, he was not yet in her teens."

"Now, 'owever do you know she's married?" asked Brother Cross, with superhuman adroitness. "Did you see 'er married?"

"No," I retorted. "And I didn't see you and your wife married. But I sincerely trust you were?"

We were all getting excited. Brother Mackey made an effort to attain a soothing tone. "But," he insinuated, "I don't see why all this should affect you, Sister Anderson—even if it's true. You should attend to your duties. You believe in the gospel. That's enough for any one."

"Yes," I argued, "but the very foundation of our Church is a belief that our lead-

ers are inspired—that they receive revelations from God to guide us. Truth is surely the greatest attribute of God. Then how can our leaders be His faithful servants when they teach and practise deceit, and disregard the revelation given to President Woodruff?"

Brother Mackey cried, in a pallid anger: "I warn you that you are on the road to apostasy. You set up your puny judgment against the Lord's anointed. Look into your soul and see whether some secret sin of your own has not made you lose faith. That is the case with all apostates."

He glared at me with a cold malignity. I might have expected this accusation of sin, but I had not. I rose to face him with what self-control I could. "You have always been welcome in my house before," I said. "Now I wish you to go—and never enter it again!" I could not trust my voice further. He made an oracular pulpit gesture, as if he were about to speak. I turned and hurried from the room.

It was shortly after this that the contest came up against the seating of Apostle Smoot in the United States Senate. At the time of his election our people had boasted that one of the Lord's servants had been chosen to go to Washington to give inspired aid in the affairs of the nation; and many had declared that this was the beginning of the triumph which Joseph Smith had predicted when he said that the Latter Day Saints should one day rule the United States. There was surprisingly little interest shown by the mass of our people in the contest.

The Church newspaper, the *Desert News*, did not publish the official testimony. It gave only carefully expurgated accounts of the case. It was in a [illegible] paper that I read the Associated [illegible] despatches recounting the official proceedings. And there I learned, for the first time, from the testimony of our own leaders, into what depths we had fallen.

I read of dozens of people who were liv-

ing in plural marriage. I read the testimony of Brother Reynolds that though his own daughter had two children he did not know whether or not she was married—and he made no inquiries! I read the testimony of Margaret G——, the new plural wife of one of the wealthiest men in the Mormon Church. She went to Washington alone; she sat up all night in a waiting-room, because she knew no one and had no place to go; and, to protect the villainous coward at home in Utah, she took dishonor on herself and her young child, by testifying that she had no husband. I learned that the highest men in our Church schools, the guides and exemplars of Morman youth, are polygamists I read the testimony, forced from Joseph F. Smith himself, that since the manifesto he had lived with his five wives and had eleven children by them. And these men came home and boasted of how they had "confounded our enemies!"

It filled me with loathing and repulsion.

Since then I have more than ever withdrawn myself from Church circles. I do not consider myself an apostate from the creed, but I can not countenance what I believe to be a monstrous infamy. I have not risen in the Tabernacle to protest against the leaders who have forced us into this horror. Perhaps, if I were a man, I should do so. I like to think I should. But being a woman, I shrink from the notoriety—and from the sorrow and reputed disgrace that it would bring on my nearest and dearest.

And what good would it do? One man has accused a church officer of new plural marriage and protested against his holding his high position. The protestant has been disfellowshipped. He has suffered financial disaster and social ostracism.

Another man—the bravest and ablest among the Latter Day Saints—wrote a public protest againt new polygamy and against church interference in politics and business. He attacked no tenet of

the faith, but he was excommunicated from the church, nevertheless, for "unchristianlike conduct," and he has been persecuted ever since with that malignity of which our priests are capable.

Perhaps I shall not be allow to maintain my present attitude of outward neutrality. I, too, may be accused of unchristianlike conduct. If I am, my faith in our cardinal principles will avail me nothing. I shall be an outcast from the church in which I was born and reared —estranged from all my old friends and ostracised by many of them.

It is the price we pay, in Utah, for daring to think.

O America! America! The land of the free.

BOOKS TO OWN

The Bible for Creed
Shakespeare for Literature
Blackstone for Law
UNDER THE PROPHET IN UTAH
for Polygamy

Every Man one Wife
Every Woman one Husband
Every Child his Birthright
UNDER THE PROPHET IN UTAH
kills Polygamy

What is a Plural Wife?
What is Her Child?
What is **The Other House?**

UNDER THE PROPHET IN UTAH
tells, and touches the soul with divine pity and human hope.

BIGAMY AND POLYGAMY

Does God teach, or United States wink at, Bigamy and Polygamy? The Bible teaches to honor thy father and thy mother. Shall the offspring of bigamy or Polygamy honor his father and mother?

UNDER THE PROPHET IN UTAH
tells the tale; its analysis is clear and convincing, concise and cutting, overwhelming and pathetic.

Read what the

New York Times

says of

"Under the Prophet in Utah."

Extracts from the review of December 17, 1911.

No grimmer picture has ever been presented than that of the Mormon wife, not the Mormon wife of the old happy days before the United States Government intervened, but the Mormon wife who has become "sealed" since the law made her "sealing" a crime. Before 1890 her mother lived in plural marriage without sin. Nowadays both the Church and the State have made plural marriage a crime; but the Church stealthily connives at it. The Church presents a sanctimonious face to the State, and says that plural marriage is no longer permitted, while it waves its hand behind its back to the libertine and tells him that what it is saying to the State is all a bluff.

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Under the old communism there was not a poor man in Utah, now the almshouses are full, and the Mormon Bishop reaches even in there to collect his tithe. What was the greatest experiment in communism the world ever saw—for the tithes were devoted to the support of the community, and hence there was not a poor man in Utah—has become a great engine for the emolument of the hierarchy, and that hierarchy is resolved into the person of the millionaire Prophet, Joseph F. Smith.

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Mr. Cannon made a wise choice of a collaborator for Mr. O'Higgins has a compelling way of stating Mr. Cannon's facts —so compelling that it interferes with your rest.