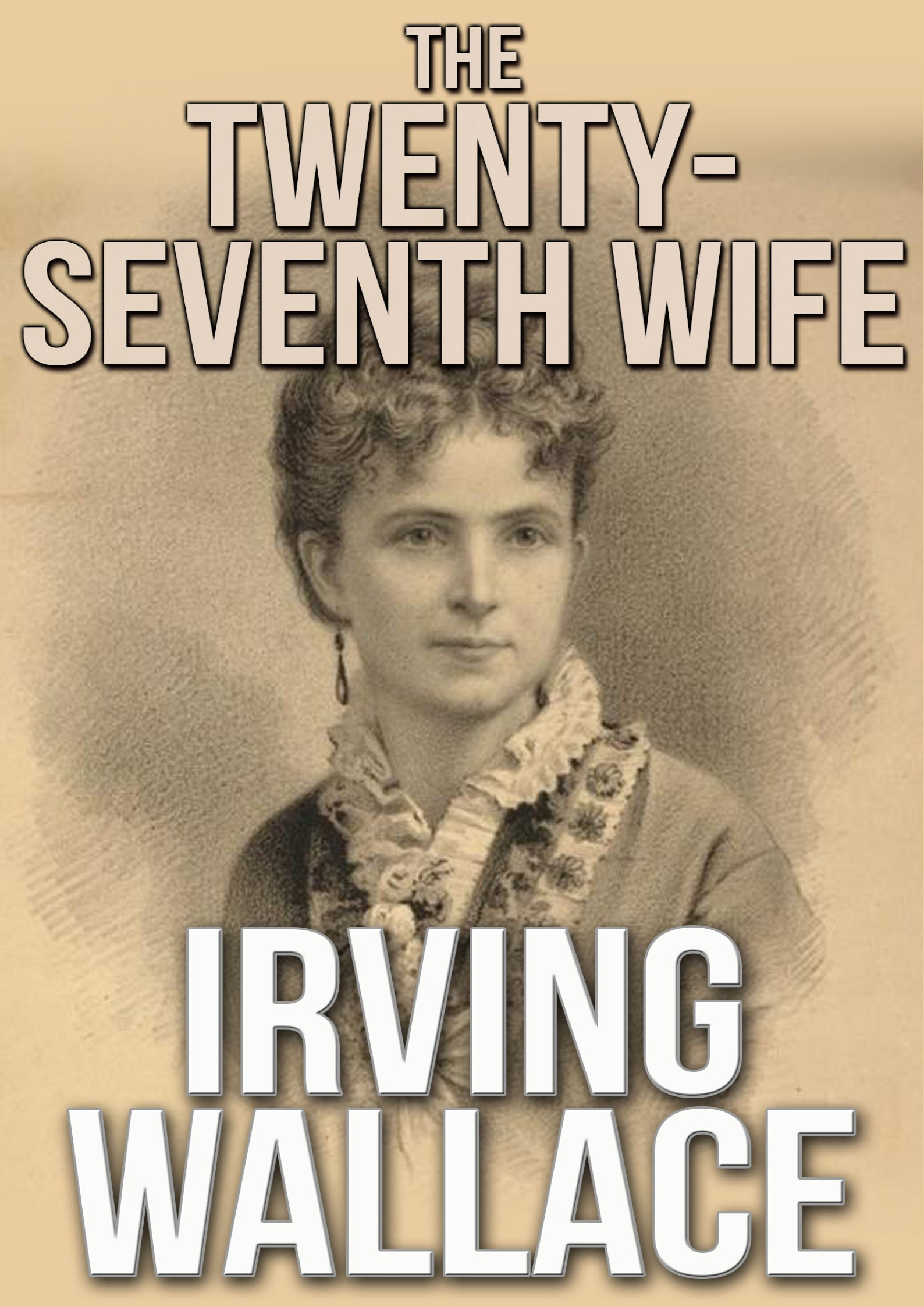
THE TWENTY-SEVENTH WIFE



IRVING WALLACE

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH WIFE

By Irving Wallace



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Meet the Author



The author with his daughter, Amy

Irving Wallace was born March 19, 1916 in Chicago, Illinois. He began writing for various magazines at age 15 and worked as a screenwriter for a number of Hollywood studios—Columbia, Fox, Warner Brothers, Universal, and MGM from 1950 to 1959, then he turned solely to writing books. His first major bestseller was The Chapman Report in 1960, a fictional account of a sexual research team's investigations of a wealthy Los Angeles suburb. Among other fictional works by Wallace are The Prize and The Word. His meticulously researched fiction often has the flavor of spicy journalism. A great deal of research went into his novels, which cover a wide variety of subjects, from the presentation of the Nobel Prize to political scenarios. With their recurring dramatic confrontations, his novels lend themselves well to screenplay adaptation, and most of them have been filmed, including The Chapman Report and The Prize. Wallace also compiled several nonfiction works with his family, including The People's Almanac and The Book of Lists, both of which have spawned sequels. Irving Wallace died June 29, 1990 in Los Angeles, California at the age of 74 from pancreatic cancer.

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For Sylvia
A Singular Wife
And Her Parents Rose and Harry Kahn

"Not far from this is another semicircular space surrounded by a high wall … and here stands the city of the Nang Harm, or Veiled Women. In this city live none but women and children. Here the houses of the royal princesses, the wives, concubines, and relatives of the king … Into this inmost city no man is permitted to enter, except only the king…."

—*The Romance of the Harem*, by Mrs. Anna H. Leonowens, 1873

"I am conscious that my narrative savours of incredibility: the fault is in the subject, not in the narrator."

—*The City of the Saints*, by Richard F. Burton, 1861

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I: THE FUGITIVE

"*Would you think that they could abduct me from here?*"

—Ann Eliza Young

It is a curious fact of history that 1873—the year during which Ulysses S. Grant began his second term as President of the United States, financial panic bankrupted 5,000 businesses, yellow fever decimated the South, William "Boss" Tweed was convicted of fraud, and the cable car was introduced to San Francisco—was also the year in which a majority of Americans were fascinated, agitated, or otherwise preoccupied with the subject of life in a harem. For this strange absorption, two young ladies were largely responsible—one being a woman born in Wales who had spent five years in a Siamese harem, and the other being a woman born in Illinois who had spent four years in a United States harem.

The English authority on seraglio living was Mrs. Anna H. Leonowens. In 1873 her unusual book, *The Romance of the Harem,* was published by James R. Osgood and Company in Boston. Only three years earlier, Mrs. Leonowens had made a small but solid reputation with her first book *The English Governess at the Siamese Court,* the story of which would become better known in the next century as *Anna and the King of Siam* and *The King and* I. After her husband had died in India, the twenty-seven-year-old Mrs. Leonowens had accepted the job of tutor to the sixty-seven children of King Mongut of Muang Thai, or Siam. In her first book Mrs. Leonowens had narrated her adventures of five years in the barbaric court of a benevolent tyrant. Now, encouraged by her friends, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Harriet Beecher Stowe, she undertook in her second book to reveal the details of the Siamese king's harem of 9,000 wives and concubines and to discuss the thirty wives and mistresses who were the mothers of his vast brood of children.

"Polygamy—-or, properly speaking, concubinage—and slavery are the curses of the country," Mrs. Leonowens wrote in 1873. And then she added: "The number of concubines is limited only by the means of the man. As the king is the source of all wealth and influence, dependent kings, princes, and nobles, and all who would seek the royal favor, vie with each other in bringing their most beautiful and accomplished daughters to the royal harem… Woman is the slave of man."

This Victorian exposure of Siamese polygamy, although less widely read than Jules Verne's then current *Around the World in Eighty Days*, created heated discussions among its American readers. For these readers knew, as almost all Americans knew, that under their very noses, a short train ride away in the mountain fastness of the Territory of Utah, more than 10 percent

of a large and growing colony of fellow American citizens were openly practicing a similar polygamy and that the Vermont-born leader of this colony had twenty-seven wives and fifty-six children. “Modern Mohammedanism,” Frances E. Willard, the temperance crusader, would write in Chicago, “has its Mecca at Salt Lake.”

Twenty-one years earlier Brigham Young, President of the Church of Latter-day Saints, had publicly proclaimed, as a divine revelation, the celestial tenet of plural marriage, or polygamy. In the two decades after, the practice of American polygamy had become the subject of intense and angry national—and even international—controversy. As early as 1856 the first Republican nominee for President, John Charles Frémont, had advocated a platform that inveighed against “those twin relics of barbarism—polygamy and slavery.” By 1873 slavery had been extirpated in an intramural bath of blood, but the other relic of barbarism remained and flourished.

The 100,000 Mormon Saints of Utah Territory, veterans of savage persecution, defended their God-given polygamy with passion. They had been directed to practice it by the Lord, they said. “The controversy is with God, not us,” remarked Eliza Roxey Snow, who had been a wife of Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, and who was now platonically wedded to Brigham Young. The Mormons were only following in the footsteps of Abraham, they insisted, and performing a form of marriage that had been sanctioned by Luther, St. Augustine, and John Milton. Furthermore, they added, they were practicing plural marriage without lust and only for the purposes of procreation. “God never introduced the patriarchal order of marriage with a view to please man in his carnal desires,” said Brigham Young, “but He introduced it for the express purpose of raising up to His name royal priesthood, a peculiar people.” Heber C. Kimball, Brigham Young’s alter ego, who had forty-five wives and sixty-five children and was thought by a young visiting author to resemble an “Italian mountebank-physician of the seventeenth century,” put the matter more succinctly. “ ‘To be plain about it, Mr. Kimball, what did you get these wives for?’ “ Mr. Kimball once asked himself before a large assembly. And then he replied, “The Lord told me to get them. ‘What for?’ To raise up young ‘Mormons’—not to have women to commit whoredoms with, to gratify the lusts of the flesh, but to raise up children.” As a result of this passionless polygamy, the Mormons pointed out, they had done away with the evils of spinsterhood, prostitution, adultery, and other small cancers of the outer monogamous world.

But the outer monogamous world of Gentiles, as the Mormons liked to call all nonbelievers, remained outraged and horrified and continued to react with indignation for more than two decades. Gentiles persisted in believing that Mormons were satisfying not God but their lower carnal instincts. The Gentile attitude was personified in an anecdote told about the polygamous

shereef of Morocco. Dr. Edward Westermarck, a scholar on marital evolution, had accompanied a group of English ladies on a visit to the Moorish shereef. One English lady asked the ruler why his Moors did not satisfy themselves with one wife as did Europeans. The shereef seemed amazed. “Why, one cannot always eat fish,” he said.

Between Gentiles and Mormons there was no meeting of minds on polygamy. Captain Richard F. Burton, fresh from an excursion to Mecca, had visited Salt Lake City and clearly defined the conflict: “The anti-Mormons declare that it [polygamy] is at once fornication and adultery—a sin which absorbs all others. The Mormons point triumphantly to the … absence of that uncleanness and licentiousness which distinguish the cities of the civilized world.”

The enemies of Mormon polygamy, while all moral indignation and righteousness and prattling persistently of hearth and family, often had their own private reasons, conscious or unconscious, for opposing plural marriage. Clergymen saw the appeal of the practice as a threat to the older, established religions. Businessmen, worried about the Mormons’ cooperative economic structure, and politicians, worried about the Mormons’ united voting power, saw polygamy as a useful red herring for achieving their deeper purposes. Male reformers, perhaps jealous of the “sexual variationism afforded by having a number of wives with whom to go to bed,” and female reformers, recognizing the system as a threat to their own security and yet piqued by evidences of male Mormon virility, converted their guilts into moral protest. Gentiles inside Utah, as well as many who had once lived there or passed through, often masked personal interest and self-profit in shocked virtue.

For twenty-one years the campaign against so-called Yankee harem life continued unabated. Horace Greeley, after a firsthand investigation, wrote: “Fanaticism, and a belief that we are God’s especial, exclusive favorites, will carry most of us a great way; but the natural instinct in every woman’s breast must teach her that to be some man’s third or fourth wife is to be no wife at all.” Harriet Beecher Stowe pleaded for her countrymen to “loose the bonds of a cruel slavery whose chains have cut into the very hearts of thousands of our sisters—a slavery which debases and degrades womanhood and the family.” J. H. Beadle, newspaper publisher and ghost writer, stated: “The white inhabitants of Utah are the only branch of the Caucasian race that have adopted polygamy within many hundred years… It has shown a marked and rapid tendency towards evil, and in many of its features probably worse than in any Mohammedan country.” Fanny Stenhouse, whose husband had succumbed to the allurements of plural marriage but later repented, wrote: “Visitors will come from Utah and will tell you that the Mormon women are happy in Polygamy, for it is a part of their religion. Never; until new hearts and new natures are given to the women of Utah, and all that is womanly, and

pure, and sacred, is crushed out from their souls, can one single woman be truly happy in Polygamy!" As to the puritanical restraint to be found in polygamy, a daughter-in-law of Brigham Young had the last word. "If Salt Lake City were roofed over," she said in the New York *Times*, "it would he the biggest whorehouse in the world."

Whether or not Mormon polygamy made of Salt Lake City a temple of godliness or a whorehouse was still the dominant issue on the American scene in 1873. The appearance of Mrs. Anna H. Leonowens' factual book *The Romance of the Harem* stirred the fire of debate anew, but what made the fire a raging blaze was the dramatic action of an attractive and ailing young lady in Utah.

Her name was Ann Eliza Webb Young, a Mormon by birth, an actress, a divorcée and, most important, the twenty-seventh and last wife of Brigham Young. In the summer of 1873 Ann Eliza Young deserted her husband, Brigham Young, Prophet and colonizer, and sued him for a divorce. Eventually she succeeded in putting him in jail, and the repercussions rocked his Church to its very foundations.

By her defection and daring—at risk of losing reputation and life, she insisted—and by subsequently raising her voice more loudly against the American harem than any voice had ever been raised before, Ann Eliza Young struck polygamy in the United States its greatest blow, a blow from which it never recovered. Overnight, it seemed, she became a wonder, to last not nine days or nine months but nine years. Because of Ann Eliza Young, twenty-seventh wife, the intimate secrets of the American harem would become public property, the extremely vigorous relic of barbarism would be relegated to historical curiosity and sexual oddity, and the emerging field of professional lecturing would have its first sensational box-office star, at last.

At daybreak of Tuesday, July 15, 1873, three horse-drawn furniture vans stood before a new two-story adobe dwelling. This dwelling, of Gothic design, with steep gables and stained windows, was located on the southwest corner of South Temple and Second East streets in Salt Lake City, Territory of Utah. Hastily, almost furtively, before the city could come awake, the movers toiled to empty the house of its furnishings.

Inside the house, in the high-ceilinged parlor, Ann Eliza Young nervously directed the movers through the many cramped rooms, downstairs and upstairs. Explaining her tension of that morning, Ann Eliza wrote: "My plans were quickly laid, and with the assistance of friends whom I had found in this hour of trouble, were carried into instant execution, before they could be discovered by Mormon spies."

During much of the six months before, Ann Eliza Young had been bedridden and too ill to revolt against her lonely, loveless, and impoverished

life as twenty-seventh wife of Brigham Young. Throughout that period she had been regularly attended by Dr. J. N. Williamson, who charged her no fee. “She is suffering from diseases peculiar to females,” the good physician later announced, “which causes her much pain, and has pain in her back, as also a bearing-down pain, causing her to become very nervous.” What Ann Eliza required, said the physician, were “nursing and sympathy.” Since she received neither from her famous and notorious husband, Ann Eliza looked to her friends, among them a clergyman, an attorney, a retired general, a newspaperman, and several boarders, to give her the advice and encouragement that she needed in this emotional crisis. At last, aided by these friends, and summoning up the last of her physical stamina, she had made her decision: to cross swiftly from the cloistered world of the Latter-day Saints to the spacious world of the non-Mormons, to escape the most widely publicized harem on earth for the freer air of the monogamous household, to do what no other wife of Brigham Young had yet done—walk out on him without his consent or knowledge.

Standing now in her parlor, watching the movers carry off her frayed, shabby furniture, Ann Eliza Young, despite her recent travail, was still a strikingly handsome young woman. At twenty-nine years of age, tall and lithe, she wore her dark-brown hair youthfully loose around her shoulders. Her deep-blue eyes, broad fine nose, rich red lips and white teeth contrasted sharply with her pale complexion. Her face was at once sweet and sad, yet, disconcertingly, a flashing trick of the eyes and a firm chin gave evidences of hidden inner strength. On this early morning she favored a long flowing dress of plain black, as if mourning the four years of her second marriage, yet there were tiny celebrations in the white linen collar and cuffs, the green necktie, the jet earrings and breastpin. In a few days a reporter from the New York *Herald,* meeting her, would shake his head incredulously in print: “The first drought was that the Prophet was intensely stupid to have driven that beauty from the harem.”

In forty minutes the three moving vans were filled. Now they rumbled off to deposit their cargoes with an auctioneer. In another day the furniture of Ann Eliza and Brigham Young would be sold for $380. And Ann Eliza would not be displeased. “The furniture was worth almost nothing, being old and worn, and of common quality at its best,” she said, “but my friends bought it at large prices, ‘to help the young apostate’….”

With the three moving vans gone, Ann Eliza sought the younger of the two sons she had had by her first marriage. This was eight-year-old Leonard Lorenzo Dee. His brother, Edward Wesley Dee, older by a year, had earlier been sent to the plural household of Ann Eliza’s mother, ten miles south of Salt Lake City, ostensibly for no other purpose than a change of scene and a vacation. Now, taking young Leonard in hand, Ann Eliza hastily left the

desolate dwelling that Brigham Young had built for her and made her way to the home near the Methodist Episcopal Church in Third South Street where waited her protectors, the Reverend and Mrs. C. C. Stratton.

Until she had begun to take in boarders to help support herself, with Brigham Young's enthusiastic permission, Ann Eliza had regarded all non-Mormons or Gentiles as the progeny of Satan. Then, at a social gathering in the house of a lady friend, she met an infidel named Howard Sawyer, and she was pleasantly surprised to find that he did not have horns. Shortly after, at another social in the home of a Mormon, she met Howard Sawyer again, and he in turn introduced her to the Reverend C. C. Stratton, who was fortuitously present.

For almost two decades after the founding of Salt Lake City, the Mormon religion had an exclusive hold on the community. In 1865 a fiery, anti-polygamist army chaplain, the Reverend Norman McLeod, preached for the Congregational Church in that city. On a fundraising trip east, the Reverend McLeod testified against plural marriage before a Congressional committee and was warned by Mormons not to return. He heeded their warning and did not reappear in Salt Lake City until 1872. A Catholic priest Father E. Kelly came to Salt Lake City in 1866 but failed in his efforts at proselytizing. The Catholics did not come to stay until 1871, when Brigham Young contributed a piece of land and $500 toward the building of their church. Two Protestant preachers, the Reverend George W. Foote and the Reverend Thomas W. Haskins, came in 1867. Brigham Young had little objection; the missionaries proved ineffectual, acquiring only 101 converts in three years. By 1870 the first Methodist preacher, the Reverend G. M. Peirce, appeared and delivered his sermons in a hayloft over a livery stable. Apparently his work made some inroads. In a year the Methodists had built a $50,000 church, the first non-Mormon place of worship in Salt Lake City or in Utah. In 1872 the Reverend Stratton took over this church, and though the Methodists would have no more than 189 converts by 1882, Stratton himself was soon regarded as one of the foremost non-Mormons in the territory.

Now, at the Mormon social, the Reverend Stratton began to converse with Brigham Young's twenty-seventh wife. The clergyman was fascinated, since Sawyer had told him that he might question Ann Eliza freely and that he would receive "frank and honest" answers. Ann Eliza, too, was fascinated. "Mr. Stratton was the first representative of a religion outside the Mormon belief whom I had ever met," she said, "and I listened anxiously to every word he said, hoping to find some ray of light and cheer." The clergyman was persuasive, and Ann Eliza left the party feeling, she admitted, "very strongly drawn toward the world which he and Mr. Sawyer represented."

Some weeks afterward, suffering the vapors and an increasing disenchantment with her religion, her husband, her lot as a harem wife, Ann

Eliza “remembered Mr. Stratton’s kindly words.” She summoned a sympathetic boarder and railroad man, Malcolm Graham, and begged him to take a message to the Reverend Stratton. The boarder Graham was glad to oblige. He felt that Ann Eliza was being mistreated. Although she was ill and without food, medicines, or servants, Graham would vouch that he “never saw said Brigham Young at the house of Mrs. Young and never heard of his visiting her.” Ann Eliza was “in danger of actual starvation,” Graham would testify, and she survived only through the good offices of her boarders and neighbors. Graham needed no urging to play good Samaritan. He hastened forthwith to the Reverend Stratton with Ann Eliza’s request for an interview.

That same afternoon the Reverend and Mrs. Stratton met with the distraught Ann Eliza. “They received me so cordially,” recorded Ann Eliza, “that my heart went out in love toward them at once. I talked to them unreservedly, and opened my soul to them. I told them of my childhood, my religious training, my unhappy domestic experience, and all the occurrences of my marriage to Brigham Young. They listened with earnest sympathy, and when I finished my story, were overflowing with words of pity and consolation. I shall never forget them in my life. They were the sweetest words which had ever been spoken to me, for they helped me to see the way out of bondage.”

Returning to her boardinghouse, Ann Eliza seemed instilled with a new courage. There was, she said, “a resolution forming in my mind, which was speedily to overturn my whole life, and bring me into a new and strange existence.” Ann Eliza began to see the Reverend Stratton more and more frequently. She told him, the clergyman would remember, “that her soul was not in the Mormon Church, and that she was merely a nominal wife to President Young, living in a separate house and receiving no share of his attentions, and that she wished to be set free by United States law.” This, then, was her resolve: to leave Brigham Young’s harem and divorce him.

Although Ann Eliza was emotional about her need to be free, the Reverend Stratton viewed her predicament and future more objectively. He reminded her, conservative shepherd that he was, that she possessed “a comfortable home” and some small support from Brigham Young. If she left him, she would lose both home and support. Furthermore, she might find herself faced with even worse hardship. The United States law might not recognize her polygamous marriage, and, if it failed to do so, she would be no more than an escaped concubine and utterly destitute. He wondered if it might not be the better part of wisdom to continue as harem wife until Congress could legislate on her behalf or until God saw fit to help her. But by now Ann Eliza was out of patience with both Congress and God. She wanted her freedom at once. In that case, said the Reverend Stratton, she must find “a competent attorney.” For himself, he had tried to give her the grimmest picture of reality, of the

difficulties that lay ahead, but once she understood them and yet determined to go ahead, then he would be staunchly beside her all the way.

The “competent attorney” appeared as if by divine intervention. Ann Eliza had rooms to let in her house at three dollars a week, and among her newest boarders appeared the Missouri-born, thirty-year-old Judge Albert Hagan, a member of the bar, and his wife. Hagan, Ann Eliza would learn, had been a colonel in the Confederacy until his capture in Kentucky, where he had met and married his wife nine years earlier. After the war he had moved to Santa Cruz, California, to practice mining law, and now he had decided to seek his fortune in Salt Lake City.

Shortly after the arrival of the Hagans, Ann Eliza had occasion to visit with her husband, Brigham Young, and during that visit she found him extremely disagreeable. Wounded, she returned to the boardinghouse and made no effort to hide her bitterness.

“Mrs. Hagan’s kindly eyes discovered my distress,” said Ann Eliza, “and she instantly begged my confidence. I gave it unreservedly and fully. She asked leave to tell her husband, and he, indignant at the treatment I was receiving, consulted with other lawyers, and all agreed in advising me to bring a suit against Brigham for divorce and alimony.

“Mr. Hagan assured me that if I did not gain the suit, I should have found a way of getting out of my life in Mormonism; that it would be a test case, showing how the polygamous wives of Mormons stood in the law, and that I would find ready sympathy from the outside world.”

Faced with the moment of final decision, Ann Eliza hesitated. Her upbringing in the Mormon faith, the unshakable devotion of her beloved mother to the faith, the terrifying idea of daring to strike at the powerful Prophet briefly undermined her resolve. Judge Hagan told her that he must make a short business trip to California. He hoped that she would seriously consider his advice and added that he would expect a final decision upon his return.

After Judge Hagan had left, two Ward Teachers of the Mormon Church, during their routine visits, paid a courtesy call on Ann Eliza. One of the Teachers inquired, as if by rote, “Sister Young, do you enjoy the spirit of our religion?” Angrily Ann Eliza exclaimed, “No, sir, I do *not.*”

Stunned, the Ward Teachers proceeded to lecture Ann Eliza. Finally they pleaded with her to be rebaptized, assuring her this magnificent experience would restore her faith. Wearied by evangelism, Ann Eliza consented to go through the ceremony once more. But, on appearing at the Endowment House, she was obstructed for two hours by red tape. At last, because she was the Prophet’s wife, she was admitted before a contingent of Danish emigrants.

The rebaptizing of Ann Eliza began. “The men officiating were talking and laughing as if engaged in an every-day affair,” she remembered, “while I was

trying to feel solemn and to exercise faith—a signal failure, I assure you. I was led into the water by a great strapping fellow, who mumbled a few words over me and plunged me in. I was taken from the water gasping for breath, and placed in a chair. Some more words were spoken over me, and the farce ended. Everything was done in such a business-like manner, with an utter absence of anything of a devotional nature, that I was thoroughly disgusted, and made no further effort to believe in Mormonism or its ordinances."

To survive the trauma of having abandoned, within herself, her lifelong faith, and to avoid facing the decision she must make upon Judge Hagan's return, Ann Eliza devoted herself more busily than ever to her boardinghouse. As if this might solve everything, she desperately tried to make the venture a success. Her guest rooms were filled, and to serve her added roomers she realized that she needed a larger stove. Since it was a practical necessity, she found the courage to visit her husband, Brigham Young, in his office.

He looked up from his desk to listen as she pleaded for the larger stove.

When she was through, his heavy face showed surprise. "I believe you are keeping boarders," he said.

"Yes, I am, and that is why I want the stove. I cannot do the necessary cooking on the one I have."

Brigham was annoyed. "If you want a cooking stove, you'll get it yourself. I've put you into a good house, and you must see to the rest. I cannot afford to have so many people calling on me for every little thing they happen to think they want."

Heartsick over his refusal and his coldness, Ann Eliza determined never to call on him again. She made her way back to the boardinghouse, and on the way back she brushed aside the last web of indecision.

When Judge Hagan returned from California, Ann Eliza was waiting for him. They conferred, and once Hagan felt satisfied that the twenty-seventh wife would stand firm, he brought his new partners, two prominent local attorneys, Judge F. M. Smith and Judge Frank Tilford, into the case. Since the case was, as the Reverend Stratton had warned, unprecedented and possibly weak (for it was questionable if a Federal court would recognize all plural wives of a single husband as legal wives by civil law), Judge Hagan sought to plug every loophole.

There is reason to believe that, before allowing Ann Eliza to make her move, Judge Hagan proceeded to enlist in her cause first all her friends and his own and then influential Mormon haters who might prove useful. Among these Gentile supporters were the Federal judge who might try the case, a politician of military reputation to serve as Ann Eliza's legal "next friend" in court, and a newspaperman employed by the anti-Mormon mouthpiece, the Salt Lake City *Tribune.*

Of this triumvirate of aides—all became Ann Eliza's close friends, and one

was later thought to have become her lover—the most important and valuable was Judge James B. McKean, the High Justice of Utah. Like his arch enemy, Brigham Young, Judge McKean was born in Vermont. In his varied career he had been both Methodist preacher and a member of the bar in New York. He was handsome, scholarly, and genial in all matters except the subject of polygamy. According to Mormon sources, when President Ulysses S. Grant appointed McKean to the Federal bench in Utah during 1869, McKean remarked to the President's brother-in-law that whenever he found local laws interfering with him he would "by God's blessing… trample them under my feet." Non-Mormons doubted if McKean had ever been so indiscreet, but when the forty-nine-year-old judge arrived in Utah the year after his appointment, he promptly established a record for unrelenting belligerence against the Latter-day Saints.

Once, charging a jury in Salt Lake City, Judge McKean thundered forth, "I venture the prediction that the day is not far in the future when the disloyal high priesthood of the so-called Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints shall bow to and obey the laws that are elsewhere respected, or else those laws will grind them to powder." Writing to the United States Attorney General in Washington, D. C., Judge McKean stated: "If, in any age, there was ever a part of Christian land so utterly abandoned to the leadership of impostors, criminals, and traitors, as in this territory, I have never heard of it."

History has passed no objective verdict on Judge McKean. The non-Mormon, R. N. Baskin, United States District Attorney in Utah, praised him: "As a citizen he was without blemish. Free, literally free from every vice, punctual in his engagements, fair in his dealings, truthful in his statements, honest in his convictions, sincere in his professions, ardent in his friendships, and earnest in his devotions." The Mormon historian Brigham H. Roberts thought that was not the point at all and damned Judge McKean. "History is concerned with Judge McKean in his career as a public officer, and what boots his private virtues of temperance and general uprightness in private life, if by guidance of a half-insane prejudice and an overpowering bigotry, and intense hatred of a system of religion which does not meet with his approval, he is led by his fanaticism into usurpations of authority and the wresting of the law to gratify his personal malice."

Ann Eliza Young could have no better collaborator in court. Nor could her attorney, Judge Hagan. Ann Eliza would always remember that Judge McKean "took special interest" in her "and helped her to arrive at her conclusion to sacrifice herself and her own inclinations for the good of others."

Next to stand beside Ann Eliza in her fight was General George R. Maxwell, a wounded veteran of the Civil War, who was serving as Federal Registrar of the Land Office in the Territory of Utah. "He was disposed to

conviviality on rather a large scale," reported S. A. Kenner, a journalist friend, "and generally kept a long way from the methods of deportment which are supposed to characterize the typical Sunday School teacher; but much was overlooked in him because of having fought as a Union soldier through the Civil War and been literally shot to pieces." Three years before meeting Ann Eliza, Maxwell had run for territorial delegate to Congress against Captain William H. Hooper, Brigham Young's candidate. Maxwell's chances were about those of Custer obtaining a majority vote from the Sioux. Of the 20,000 votes cast, General Maxwell received 1,500. Later he protested Captain Hooper's election on the grounds of Hooper's disloyalty to the United States government, but to no avail. Now, stimulated by Ann Eliza's determination to contest the Prophet, General Maxwell prepared to support her in court.

The last of Ann Eliza's backers was the thirty-five-year-old James Burton Pond, a newspaperman on the Salt Lake City *Tribune*. Pond, a handsome widower of two years, lived with his young daughter as one of Ann Eliza's boarders. His background was colorful. His father had been a blacksmith in Allegany County, New York, where he had been born. Raised in Kenosha, Wisconsin, he became a printer in Fond du Lac at fifteen and was carrying a Sharps' rifle for John Brown in Kansas at eighteen. After scaling Pikes Peak, he enlisted in a Union guerrilla unit during the Civil War and was cited for gallantry in action against Quantrill's raiders and commissioned a major. After the war he became a restless wanderer and journalist, settling at last in Salt Lake City, where he divided his time between covering news for the *Tribune* and managing a furniture store. Of all Ann Eliza's friends, it was Major Pond who, at the crucial moment, would be the most useful to her. One day, too, he would be accused of scandalous conduct with his protégé.

On July 10, 1873, Ann Eliza, encouraged by her supporters, visited the Reverend Stratton one last time before her moment of decision. She reported the activities of Judge Hagan and his two associates on her behalf. She said that Judge Hagan was ready to proceed. The reverend could only give her his blessings. Nowhere would she find counselors of higher integrity, he said, and if they had the means to win her suit, she should bind herself to them to the bitter end.

And so, on the morning of July 15, 1873, Ann Eliza moved out Brigham's furniture and sold it off and hastily put herself under the protection of the Reverend and Mrs. Stratton. She spent a fearful afternoon with her mentors, waiting for nightfall. "In the evening," she said, "Mr. and Mrs. Stratton took us to the Walker House, the Gentile hotel, which became my Salt Lake City home." The line between two worlds had been crossed, the deed was done, and now, for Ann Eliza Young, there was no turning back.

The one-year-old Walker House, perhaps the foremost hotel in the Rocky Mountains, was an imposing four-story structure, with six colonnades and a

balcony guarding the entrance. Its advertisements to weary travelers, published throughout the territory, read: “This House is the largest and best appointed House in Utah Territory, and has accommodations for three hundred and fifty guests. Streetcars and carriages connect with the White Sulphur Baths. Reading rooms, containing papers from all points. Baths, Bar, Telegraph, news and cigar stand attached to the House.” This was the stronghold of Brigham Young’s opposition, a fortress for transients that pitted itself against the Prophet’s enormous Tabernacle, his private harem in the Lion House, and the executive offices in the Bee Hive House. Here Judge McKean, Judge Hagan, General Maxwell, and reporter Pond were familiar faces, and here lodged most prominent and inquisitive visitors from the Midwest and East, like President Ulysses S. Grant, Phineas T. Barnum, Mark Twain, Artemus Ward, General William T. Sherman, George Francis Train, Vice-President Schuyler Colfax, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Thumb, and Dom Pedro II, Emperor of Brazil.

Ann Eliza’s entrance into the gaslit lobby of the hotel, her registration, and her climb to the uppermost floor with her eight-year-old son and the Strattons occasioned only the slightest curiosity, for news of the abdication from her position as one of the queens of the harem was not yet public. On the fourth floor a suite of two small, neat rooms, in which her personal effects had already been deposited, stood ready. The narrow drawing room, or parlor, was furnished with a chaise longue, marble-topped bureau, small table and solid black walnut chairs, sewing machine, and Ann Eliza’s trunk. The adjoining room was the bedroom, dominated by its large double bed.

After Ann Eliza had put her son, Leonard, to sleep, she rejoined the Strattons. The hotel was alien, and she was unaccountably afraid. The Strattons had previously invited her to lodge with them, and now, for a moment, she regretted not having accepted their offer. Probably they renewed their invitation. But Ann Eliza sensed that from this night forward she must bear the main brunt of her decision alone. If she sought refuge with the Strattons, she reasoned, “I should expose them to Mormon fury and endanger their lives and their home.” With determination—and “untold fear and dread”—she decided to remain in Walker House.

After the Strattons had departed, Ann Eliza opened her trunk. She found the precious framed photographs of her mother, father, two brothers, and other relatives, and hung them about the drawing room. For a moment this was comforting. At last she undressed. After removing the long black dress and high button kid shoes, she stood, smaller than before, in her chemise and drawers. There were two windows facing out on Temple Street. She turned down the gas lamps and moved to a window. Below, the street lights were lit, illuminating the horse carriages that passed in either direction. Peering off, she could see the boxlike Endowment House where her time of trouble had

begun, and the six-year-old elliptical Tabernacle. In the darkness beyond, she knew, soared the majestic Wasatch Mountains and, behind their sentry summits, a haven of liberty which she was yet unsure that she would ever attain.

Shivering and exhausted, she went to bed. However, this night was not meant for sleep, but instead for a nightmare of wide-awake dreams.

Even three years later, when recalling the hours of that long night and the thoughts of that long night in her autobiography, every fear of it remained vivid in memory, like the horror of a black room in childhood:

"Imagine, if you can, my feelings, on being alone with my little child, in a strange place, under such peculiar circumstances. I had abandoned my religion, left father, mother, home, and friends—deliberately turned away from them all, knowing that the step I was taking could never be retraced. My heart cried out for my mother, who I knew would be more sorely stricken with my action than any one else in the world. I would have spared her if I could, but I was powerless to act in any other manner.

"It was the first time in my life that I had been in a hotel; and, as I was among people who I had been taught were my bitterest enemies, I was overwhelmed by a sense of desolate helplessness. I did not know what my fate would be. Every footstep in the halls startled me; for I expected that each would bring some one to summon me to a dreadful death. I fully believed that was to be my last night on earth, so I prepared for death; but the agony of suspense was awful. I had been taught that no deed was too bad, no outrage too dastardly, for the Gentiles to commit upon the Mormons; and here I had allowed myself to be placed so fully in their power that they might do with me as they pleased, and my fate would never be known."

Suddenly she wondered why she did not leave this foreign place and return to the world so safely if unhappily known and find refuge with a Mormon friend. And then she realized that no Mormon would dare to protect her. "I was in open rebellion against their leader," she remembered, "and had I remained one day among them, my doom would have been irrevocably fixed." Gradually, through the dark morning hours, the conviction grew that the Gentiles—the Reverend Stratton, Judge McKean, General Maxwell, Major Pond, Judge Hagan—were her true allies and that her real enemies were those whom she had fled—Brigham Young, the Apostles of the Church, the avenging Danites.

Her image of death being imminent had not changed. But the specter figure of the one who would deliver that death changed, shifted from faceless Gentile to familiar Mormon. No Danite, she decided in terror, would allow her to remain alive in this hostile hotel or to escape Utah Territory.

Ann Eliza knew by heart many of the public threats Brigham Young had thundered forth from the Tabernacle pulpit against apostates, those who had

forsaken the faith. One of Brigham's threats she particularly recollected: "The time is coming when justice will be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet: when we shall take the old broadsword, and ask, 'Are you for God?' and if you are not heartily on the Lord's side, you will he hewn down."

For all her fantasies about Brigham Young's murderous intent, it was unlikely that Brigham Young would have dared, or even desired, to send an assassin into a bedroom of Walker House to garrote or knife his twenty-seventh wife. Yet nothing was utterly impossible on that still rough and paranoiac frontier. Moreover, there was every evidence that the Mormons had maintained, in their earlier days in Missouri and Illinois, and perhaps still in Utah in the summer of 1873, a special secret-service force to frighten off or even dispose of dangerous enemies of the Church.

Certainly, in 1838, when there was more need of such an organization, the Mormons had formed a "death society," as Elder John Hyde labeled it. At first this society was called Daughters of Zion or Daughters of Gideon, after a Biblical quotation, but this was regarded as too effeminate an appellation for a band of strong and bearded young men. Next the society was called the Destroying Angels, but that was considered as overly theatrical and the name briefly became the Big Fan, which symbolized the blades of a threshing machine. Finally, from a verse in Genesis—"Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward"—the Sons of Dan, soon shortened to Danites, was permanently adopted.

The Mormons always justified having these armed bands by citing their need for defensive units against persecutors, and this was probably a sincere explanation, as far as it went. Ann Eliza persistently argued that the Danites were organized only "for the purpose of plundering and harassing the people of the surrounding country. I have been told this by a person who heard the oaths administered at a meeting of the band in Daviess County."

Under two paid assassins, one named Orrin Porter Rockwell, a long-haired man who was said to have shot the governor of Missouri, and the other William Hickman, who published his confessions of mayhem in a paperback book in 1870, the Danite idea seemed to survive the exodus west. "Some of the leading spirits of that band are still in Salt Lake City," wrote Elder Hyde in 1857. "Although they do not maintain their organization, being generally merged into Brigham's Life Guards, yet without the same name, they have performed the same deeds."

In i860 Horace Greeley gave some credence to the continuing rumors of threat and violence. United States soldiers encamped near Salt Lake City had told him "that not less than seventy-five distinct instances of murder by Mormons because of apostacy… are known to the authorities here." Greeley had heard of the poor Parrish family. "The family had been Mormons, but had

apostatized—and undertook to return to the states; they were warned that they would be killed if they persisted in that resolution; they did persist, and were killed." Coolly weighing the highly colored stories of Mormon homicide, Greeley concluded: "Some of these may have been fabricated by Gentile malice—others are doubtless exaggerated—but there is some basis of truth for the current Gentile conviction that the Mormons have robbed, maimed, and even killed persons in this territory … I deeply regret the necessity of believing this; but the facts are incontestable."

A year later Captain Richard Burton also conversed with the soldiers outside Salt Lake City. "These anti-Mormons declare that ten murders per annum during the last twelve years have been committed without punishment in New Zion… They attribute the phenomenon to the impossibility of obtaining testimony, and the undue white-washing action of juries…"

During the first year of Ann Eliza's marriage to Brigham Young, the anti-Mormon J. H. Beadle reported somewhat luridly to his public: "This lawless banditti went after the contumacious stranger with bowie-knives and Colt's revolvers." If the stranger refused to depart the territory, his fate was sealed. "He would never again be heard from; the mission of the 'destroying angel' was sudden, sure, and complete." And a mere two years before Ann Eliza's defection, Mark Twain had repeated stories heard from Gentiles of how Rockwell and Hickman led "assassinations of intractable Gentiles." At no time did Ann Eliza believe that Brigham Young himself had ever committed a murder. But she was sure that he directed the Danites. "In this way," she said, "Brigham Young had managed a great many murders, of which he would probably avow himself entirely guiltless, since his hands did not perform the deed… He looks clean enough outwardly, but within he is filled with moral rottenness to the very core." But, of course, by this time Ann Eliza was an angry wife.

Rigid in her strange bed, awaiting either death or daylight, Ann Eliza Young slept not a wink that night.

"I laid awake all night wishing for the day to dawn, yet fearing that I should never see it; and when the first ray of light came through my windows I was relieved and hopeful."

But relieved as she may have been to have survived the long night, and hopeful as she may have been to welcome the brightening new day, she could not begin to foresee the mingled victories and defeats, joys and miseries, peace and scandals, that would crowd the weeks, months, and decades that lay ahead. Perhaps it was better not to know, to be unable to imagine the future. Perhaps thus, finally, as she stirred on the alien bed, her apprehensive mind turned slowly backward to all that had been so incredible, improbable, bizarre, to all in the past that had brought her to this moment of secret flight and refuge….

II: THE PROPHET

"*Whenever I see a pretty woman I have to pray for grace.*"

—Joseph Smith

She was born Ann Eliza Webb in the embattled community of Nauvoo, Illinois, on September 13, 1844.

It was the year of "Fifty-four forty or fight" and "What hath God wrought?" It was the year of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and Poe's balloon hoax. It was the year thirty-nine-year-old Joseph Smith, the first Mormon, while running for President of the United States against James K. Polk and Henry Clay, was brutally murdered by a lynch mob. It was also the year that a forty-two-year-old carpenter and Mormon missionary, Brigham Young, replaced the martyred Smith as head of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

There had been four children in the Webb family before Ann Eliza's birth, three older brothers, Chauncey Gilbert, known as Gilbert, Edward Milo, and Lorenzo Dow, and one sister, Helen Maria. Ann Eliza was the only girl in the family to survive to maturity alongside of her brothers. She was also the last offspring of the union of her parents. Her father, Chauncey G. Webb, a carriage maker, was thirty-two at her birth, and her mother, Eliza Churchill Webb, a schoolteacher, was twenty-seven.

The organized Mormon Church had been in existence only fourteen years when Anna Eliza was born, and her parents had been among the earliest and most devout converts to the new faith. Both had joined the Church within three years of its founding, and it was this membership, as much as any genetic chromosomes, that shaped Ann Eliza's entire destiny.

For fuller understanding of most lives one "must begine at ye very roote" of the family tree, the early Puritan William Bradford once remarked. But in the peculiar case of Ann Eliza Webb, the most powerful character influences grew not out of her ancestral roots but out of the foundations of her church.

The Mormonism that dominated and shaped Ann Eliza's parents and herself took hold in a time of religious revival and ferment. *Hallelujah* was the common word on all lips. Although the young nation was strongly Presbyterian and Methodist, sectarian utopias flourished. Joseph Smith's Mormonism was the natural heir to Conrad Beisel's Ephrata Society, Lucy Wright's Shaker cult, Robert Owen's New Harmony, and John Humphrey Noyes' Oneida Colony.

Ann Eliza's parents, of course, subscribed to the Mormon version of the Church's beginnings. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had its birth on a summer's day in a lovely grove of trees outside Palmyra, New York, in the northeastern part of that state. Joseph Smith, Junior, the fifteen-

year-old son of a Presbyterian farmer, became confused by the Babel of religious exhortations. Seeking the true way, he consulted his Bible, and in the Epistle of James he read: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God…” Wandering out into the grove adjoining his family’s farm, he finally knelt and asked of God. Perhaps he was not surprised when a brilliant light appeared before him. The interior area of light, he saw at once, was inhabited. “I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air,” he later recorded. The pair introduced themselves as God and Son. With remarkable aplomb, young Smith asked which religious sect he might best join. He was advised, firmly and at length, to join none, since none were worthy of him.

Subsequently Smith described his vision to a local Methodist clergyman. The preacher treated the story with “contempt” and reminded Smith “that all such things had ceased with the apostles.” But Smith, understandably, felt that the time of miracles and visions was not past, and he began to recount his adventure to one and all. For three years he buttonholed cynics and was scorned. Meanwhile, as relief from occasional labors, he indulged himself in the pleasures of the flesh. “I frequently fell into many foolish errors,” he tactfully admitted later, “and displayed the weakness of youth and the foibles of human nature.”

But, as one who had seen a vision, his sins weighed heavily upon him. One night, in September of 1823, when he was eighteen, Smith prayed for forgiveness in the privacy of his bedroom. At once the brilliant light returned, and again it was occupied. “A personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor,” said Smith. “He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness.” The unfamiliar visitor announced himself as the angel Moroni, a messenger from the Maker. The angel, Smith recalled, said “that God had a work for me to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues… He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fulness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants; also, that there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim —deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted seers in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.”

Although Moroni temporarily departed, it remained a social and sleepless night for Joseph Smith, Junior, for Moroni came and went four times in all that night. The following day Smith tramped to the west side of the largest hill outside Manchester, New York, and under a rock he found a stone box

containing the gold plates. Since he had been advised not to remove the plates for yet another four years, Smith returned empty-handed.

Touched though he was by the divine hand, Smith did not neglect earthly matters in the next four years. In Harmony, Pennsylvania, he hired himself out to an elderly gentleman who wanted him to dig for an old Spanish silver mine. While so employed, Smith boarded in the house of one Isaac Hale. In the house also was the landlord's comely young daughter, dark-complexioned, hazel-eyed Emma, and Smith began to court her. Emma's father was something less than enthusiastic about Smith as a prospective son-in-law. "His appearance at this time," said Isaac Hale, "was that of a careless young man, not very well educated, and very saucy and insolent to his father." Despite the prospect of gold plates as a dowry, or perhaps because of it, the landlord continued to show resistance. Nevertheless, in 1827, when Smith was twenty-two, he married Emma Hale, who was twenty-three.

That same year Smith removed the gold plates, with their Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the translating spectacles known as Urim and Thummim, from beneath the hillside rock. When news of the gold plates swept the New York countryside, and avaricious mobs came searching, Smith was forced to hide his precious package in a variety of places, among them a hollow log and a barrel of beans. At last, with his plates and his bride, he returned to Harmony, Pennsylvania, purchased a small farm, and undertook the delicate work of rendering the hieroglyphics into English.

Employing the services of Martin Harris, a middle-aged farmer and businessman who was impressed by the younger man's visions, Smith began the marathon task of dictating a translation. In April 1828 Smith and Harris sat facing each other, but with a thick blanket hanging between them. On his side Smith would peer through the Urim and Thummim at the gold plate before him and see the words magically transformed into English and dictate them, a sentence at a time. Harris, on the other side, transcribed the dictation on foolscap, then read the sentences back and made any necessary corrections.

In eight weeks Harris had 116 pages of what was to be *The Book of Mormon.* The story was a history of the movement of three ancient peoples, the Jaradites, Lamanites, and Nephites, from Babylon and Jerusalem to America before the birth of Christ. Eventually these people destroyed each other through continual wars. The last of the Nephites recorded the tale on gold plates in 421 A.D. and left them for a future and more enlightened age. All that remained of these peoples were the American Indians, descendants of the Lamanites, and the gold plates, willed by the Lord to Joseph Smith, Junior.

Because Martin Harris had neglected wife and family to collaborate in the Lord's work, his domestic troubles increased. His wife nagged him. And he,

said his wife, became “more cross, turbulent and abusive to me.” Once, enraged because his wife had heckled him about *The Book of Mormon,* Harris struck her with the butt end of a whip. At last, tiring of domestic conflict, Harris begged Smith for permission to show his wife the 116 pages, in order to convince her of the importance of their work. Reluctantly Smith consented. However, Smith’s mother, Lucy Mack Smith, had misgivings. As she wrote in her memoirs: “Mr. Harris’ wife was a very peculiar woman, one that was naturally of a very jealous disposition; besides this, she was rather dull of hearing and when anything was said that she did not hear distinctly she suspected that it was some secret which was designedly kept from her.” Furthermore, Smith’s mother would not forgive Harris’ wife for once having called her Joseph “a grand impostor.” At any rate, Mrs. Harris was shown the 116 pages and seemed to be mollified.

Harris kept the manuscript in a drawer of his wife’s best bureau. One day, in a moment of overenthusiasm, eager to display the work to friends, Harris tried to find his wife’s key to the bureau drawer. Unable to locate it, he clumsily picked the lock, damaging the bureau. Later, when Smith appeared for the pages, the drawer was found to be empty. Harris ransacked the house, but the 116 pages remained missing, and never again were they seen. History has had no explanation except the one given by Lucy Mack Smith. She theorized that Mrs. Harris, angered by her husband’s vandalism as well as the influence of Smith upon him, had removed the precious pages and hidden them. “There is no doubt but Mrs. Harris took it from the drawer, with the view of retaining it until another translation should be given, then to alter the original translation, for the purpose of showing a discrepancy between them, and thus make the whole appear to be a deception.”

Thereafter Martin Harris was amanuensis no longer. A year later a twenty-three-year-old schoolteacher, Oliver Cowdery, volunteered for the assignment. Starting from scratch, hidden again behind a blanket, Smith dictated the entire 275,000-word book to Cowdery. Harris was restored to Smith’s good graces when he offered to finance the printing of the holy volume—$3,000 for 5,000 copies run off in Palmyra, New York, in the spring of 1830. With publication a reality, an angel lofted the gold plates back to heaven, but not before displaying his presence and the plates to three witnesses— Cowdery, Harris, and a farmer named David Whitmer—and then again to eight more persons. Interestingly, although Cowdery, Harris, and Whitmer all eventually broke with Joseph Smith, not one of them ever retracted his account of having seen the angel and the gold plates.

On April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith and his friends organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They had their holy book, and soon they had their hierarchy of fifteen—Joseph Smith, the first President and Prophet, aided by two counselors and twelve Apostles. Within a week the difficult

work of proselytizing and conversion began.

Everywhere the missionaries of Mormonism met strong resistance and skepticism. The miraculous story of the gold plates was held suspect. Peter Ingersoll, a neighbor of Joseph Smith, revealed that Smith had told him that he had concocted the fable as a practical joke and that Smith had disclosed to friends that his package contained not gold plates but common bricks.

A version of the origin of *The Book of Mormon* more widely accepted by anti-Mormons was that of the Spaulding plagiarism. In 1812, inspired by an archaeological excavation in Ohio, the Reverend Solomon Spaulding, Dartmouth graduate and Presbyterian minister, had written a romantic historical novel entitled *Manuscript Found.* The novel was a fictional account of ancient plates, dug up in Ohio, that told of the lost tribes of Israel in pre-Columbian America. Before dying of consumption, the Reverend Spaulding left manuscript copies of his novel with his wife and with a Pittsburgh bookseller. When the widow Spaulding read *The Book of Mormon,* she shouted plagiarism. She remembered that in 1825 her copy of her husband's novel had disappeared; by coincidence, she added, Joseph Smith had been working for her next-door neighbor as a well digger. Most anti-Mormons accepted this version of die truth in Joseph Smith's time, and many have continued to accept it to this day. However, Dr. M. Wilford Poulson, of Brigham Young University, perhaps the foremost living expert on Joseph Smith and the origins of Mormonism, studied all related documents and told this writer that the Spaulding theory was "nonsense."

Another point constantly made by anti-Mormons was that Joseph Smith was completely miscast in the role of Prophet. The argument was that the Lord would not have selected a human being with so many earthy frailties to carry out so spiritual a mission. The towering Joseph Smith was, indeed, a man of this world in every way. Combining the delicate and handsome features of a matinee idol with the physique of an athlete, he wrestled, gambled, swore ("like a pirate," the governor of Illinois would observe), drank, and whored.

A convincing picture of Joseph Smith was drawn by Josiah Quincy, the mayor of Boston. Quincy, accompanied by his cousin, Charles Francis Adams, son of President John Quincy Adams, called on Smith in Illinois during 1844. Quincy found the Prophet "a man of commanding appearance, clad in the costume of a journeyman carpenter… He was a hearty, athletic fellow, with blue eyes standing prominently out upon his light complexion, a long nose, and a retreating forehead. He wore striped pantaloons, a linen jacket, which had not lately seen the washtub, and a beard of some three days' growth." Quincy reported that he and Adams were formally introduced to Smith. "'God bless *you,* to begin with!' said Joseph Smith, raising his hands in the air and letting them descend upon the shoulders of Mr. Adams. The

benediction, though evidently sincere, had an odd savor of what may be called official familiarity, such as a crowned head might adopt on receiving the heir presumptive of a friendly court. The greeting to me was cordial—with that sort of cordiality with which the president of a college might welcome a deserving janitor."

During their conversations, Quincy frankly told Smith that he possessed too much power. Smith was not abashed. He replied, "In your hands or that of any other person so much power would, no doubt, be dangerous. I am the only man in the world whom it would be safe to trust with it. Remember, I am a prophet!" To which Quincy added for his readers: "The last five words were spoken in a rich, comical aside, as if in hearty recognition of the ridiculous sound they might have in the ears of a Gentile."'

Mormon colleagues did not deny Smith's prophetless habits and manners. In fact, Brigham Young was once said to have remarked, "That the Prophet was of mean birth, that he was wild, intemperate, even dishonest and tricky in his youth, is nothing against his mission. God can, and does, make use of the vilest instruments. If he acts like a devil, Joseph has brought forth a doctrine that will save us, if we abide by it. He may get drunk every day of his life, sleep with his neighbor's wife every night, run horses and gamble… but the doctrine he has produced will save you and me and the whole world."

To anti-Mormons the translation of the gold plates was considered as difficult to accept as the translator. Typical of the adverse criticism was that made by Mark Twain. He regarded *The Book of Mormon* as an "insipid" and "tedious plagiarism of the New Testament." He added: "It is chloroform in print. If Joseph Smith composed this book, the act was a miracle—keeping awake while he did it was, at any rate." Even Captain Richard Burton, a better and fairer friend of Mormonism, was appalled. "Surely there never was a book so thoroughly dull and heavy," he said; "it is monotonous as a sage-prairie."

Nevertheless, the philosophy of this book and its new ideal began to make converts in great number, and among these were Ann Eliza Young's parents. Ann Eliza's father, Chauncey G. Webb, had been born and raised in Hanover, New York. He lived under the same roof with his elderly mother and father, labored with his hands as a wheelwright, and enjoyed pleasures where he found them. He was a simple, solid young citizen, conservative, matter-of-fact, and often skeptical. He had little patience with spiritual matters and ignored the revivalist sentiment that so stirred his contemporaries. However, his parents were at that advanced point in years where they wanted the hope and promise of immortality. When the vigorous Mormonism, with its greener heavens, beckoned, they joined it fervently. And when their new Church pulled up stakes to buy land and found a utopia in distant Kirtland, Ohio—in accordance with a revelation visited upon Joseph Smith—they prepared to

follow.

Chauncey G. Webb was asked by his parents to accompany them—he was then twenty-three—and, briefly, he hesitated. He was possessed of no deep interest in this new religion or in any religion. But finally, rather than antagonize the parents he revered, and rather than be left behind by his kin, he accepted baptism in the Mormon Church and rode off with his elders to frontier Ohio. And there, in 1834, he met and fell in love with Eliza Churchill.

At seventeen, Eliza Churchill's life had been one of those minor hells that Charles Dickens was proving so adept at dramatizing. Born in Union Springs, New York, Eliza Churchill had lost her mother when she was four. Since her father was incapable of raising her and two other children, he was forced to farm them out, each to a different family, until that future day when he would have money enough to bring them back together in their own lodging. This family dream he never saw fulfilled.

Eliza Churchill was placed in charge of a stern family named Brown, every day waiting to be rescued, and never being rescued. For twelve helpless years, alien as an orphan, she existed under the domination of unloving foster parents. Denied the education that she desired, she was reduced (as in the old, old fairy tales) to despised household drudge. Her will to learn did not diminish. All self-improvement had to be accomplished secretly, but it was accomplished, and, voraciously, her underground reading ranged from the *Fanner's Almanac* to John Wesley.

At fifteen Eliza Churchill was intelligent and well-read, yet ingrown and lost in fantasy. She daydreamed, had visions, believed in miracles, and thus was able to survive her unhappy lot. When Mormon missionaries, among them a young zealot named Brigham Young, materialized in the vicinity where she lived, and were denounced by her guardians as blasphemers, Eliza Churchill was intrigued. She slipped out to hear them speak. What they offered was what she desperately needed—some fresh hope that was privately all her own. She accepted the divinity of the new religion at once. In two days she was baptized by Brigham Young.

Her will, reinforced by her recent conversion, her sense of revolt heightened, she disclosed the affiliation to her guardians. The Browns were infuriated and commanded her to renounce the idiocy at once. Eliza refused. She was imprisoned in the farm cellar "for several days" on a bread-and-water diet. This only strengthened her resolve. She would not relent. At last, realizing her fanaticism could not be overcome, the Browns unlocked the cellar door and ordered her to leave the only home she had ever known. She left gleefully, certain that her Mormon friends would care for her, and she was not wrong. Brigham Young escorted her back to Kirtland, Ohio, where she taught in exchange for her keep, until Chauncey G. Webb arrived and found her.

“It must have been the attraction of opposite natures that brought together in so close a relationship the practical, shrewd, somewhat skeptical man, and the devoted, enthusiastic, religious girl,” Ann Eliza Young later wrote of her parents. “It was probably the very contrast that made the young man feel such tenderness and care for the homeless orphan girl, and made her cling to him, trusting her helplessness to his strength.”

In 1835 they were married—or “sealed,” as the Mormons called it. Unlike Gentiles, who were married until death did them part, Mormons such as Chauncey Webb and Eliza Churchill were united “through time and eternity.” Sometimes Mormons were married for time only, since eternity had been promised a previous mate. But for Chauncey and Eliza Churchill the wedding was optimistically for all time on earth and all eons of the hereafter. Immediately following his marriage, Chauncey opened a small factory of his own, for the manufacture of wagons, and he prospered. Soon he built a home for Eliza Churchill and himself in Kirtland. “It was at this time,” wrote Ann Eliza, “that the friendship began between my mother and Brigham Young, which lasted so many years—a faithful friendship on her part, met, as a matter of course, by unkindness and treachery on his side.” Meanwhile, the newly affluent Chauncey was being cultivated by Joseph Smith. It had been revealed to the Prophet, in one of a continuing series of adumbrations, that he go into the banking business. Forthwith he organized the Kirtland Safety Society Bank. For capital, Smith convinced Chauncey and several other Mormons to invest all their cash savings. Because Smith proceeded to issue notes without silver or gold to support them, the government looked askance upon his project. To evade regulations, Smith reorganized his firm as the Kirtland Anti-Banking Company. Notes signed by him flooded the community.

“But the sham notes, passing from hand to hand, soon went far beyond the Mormon settlement,” wrote Ann Eliza. “Some even reached Pittsburgh, and a banker there who had received many from his customers sent an agent to Kirtland to investigate its affairs. He found the people busy and apparently prosperous. He visited Smith and was assured that the notes of the Anti-Banking Company were as good as specie. But when the agent produced his bundle of notes and asked for the cash equivalent, Smith’s tone changed. He told the agent that the notes were intended to be circulated, but not to be paid. That would spoil the game. After some warm talk the agent departed and reported the new method of banking to his employers. They promptly called in the aid of the United States Court. The bubble burst. My father and several other Mormons lost all they had invested.”

Mormon sources blamed the bank failure on the national financial panic of 1837. Ann Eliza was forever more critical. “If such an affair had happened in the Gentile world,” she insisted, “it would have been called swindling.”

Embittered, Chauncey Webb was prepared to quit the Church. Only the

pleadings of his steadfast wife, and the responsibility of supporting his first-born son, Gilbert, who arrived in December of 1837, kept him from apostatizing. Possessed now of less faith and less cash, Chauncey industriously resumed his production of wagons. But other members of the community, ex-Mormons and non-Mormons, were not so charitable toward the Prophet. They rose up against Smith, and one night a mob of hoodlums broke into his house, dragged him out, strangled him until he fell unconscious, then tried but failed to pour a vial of acid into his mouth. Finally the mob stripped Smith naked, poured tar and feathers on him, and left him to the mercy of his flock.

Shortly after, learning from his missionaries that the city of Far West in Missouri might be more receptive to utopia, Smith had a revelation that his church must move its headquarters across Indiana and Illinois to the safer Zion. The Prophet departed for Missouri by horseback in January 1838. Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb, taking their infant son Gilbert and what possessions they could carry, forsook business and home to follow by wagon.

The year in Missouri proved even less peaceful than the sojourn in Ohio. The two major Mormon settlements in Missouri were in, first, the city of Far West, and, second, thirty miles northward across Daviess County, in the pioneer Mormon city of Adam-ondi-Ahman (so named by Joseph Smith to mean “the place where Adam shall come to visit his people”), popularly called Spring Hill. Chauncey constructed a log cabin and workshop in Adam-ondi-Ahman, and his wife produced their second son, Edward Milo. As before, the industrious Chauncey persevered and prospered. Again security was brief.

The short-tempered Missourians already had a savage record of antagonism toward the Mormons. As slaveholders, the original settlers regarded the incoming Saints as threatening Northerners. Too, the Missourians resented the Mormons’ unorthodox religion, their economic competition, and their regard of enemy Indians as “a part of God’s chosen people.”

Unorganized but persistent hostilities against the Mormons resumed. Scattered Saints fought back. In Adam-ondi-Ahman, Joseph Smith encouraged self-defense. Calling his flock together, among them the troubled Webbs, Smith cried out, “Do all you can to harass the enemy. I never felt more of the spirit of God at any time than since we commenced this stealing and house-burning.” One of Smith’s foremost aides, a recently converted Campbellite preacher named Sidney Rigdon, delivered an even more inflammatory speech. “The mob that comes to disturb us,” he warned, “we will follow until the last drop of their blood is spilled, or else they will have to exterminate us. We will carry the war into their own homes and families…”

Unfortunately the Missouri mobs grew larger and bolder. To meet them,

the Mormons formed their hands of avenging Danites. Now the battle was fully joined. When a Missouri mob leader was a candidate for the state senate, the Mormons agreed to vote en masse against him. Twelve Mormons tried to reach the polls in Gallatin, but they were clubbed into retreat. In retaliation, Mormon riders gutted the town of Gallatin. In October 1838, twelve miles east of Far West at the settlement of Haun's Mills, Missouri state troopers under Colonel William O. Jennings attacked a poorly armed group of Mormon men, women, and children. Seventeen Mormon men and children died. One militiaman murdered a ten-year-old boy, explaining, "Nits will make lice, and if he had lived he would have been a Mormon." All reason was forgotten as the undeclared war pitched to a fury. Armed bands, on both sides, looted, burned, raped, and murdered.

At the height of the violence, Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb and their offspring were once again forced to give up home and workshop and flee to the comparative safety of the city of Far West. But soon their position was precarious. Governor Lillburn W. Boggs, who would later almost lose his life to an unknown assassin (thought to be the Danite, Orrin Porter Rockwell), issued the following infamous order: "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary, for the public good."

Faced by an approaching militia of 6,000, Joseph Smith sued for peace and surrendered to his persecutors. A hasty court-martial sentenced him to death by firing squad in the public square of Far West for the crime of treason. Chained to four of his aides in a single cell, Smith awaited his fate. In the end, perhaps, it was liquor more than prayer that saved his life. One night, after six months of imprisonment, Smith's jail guards began drinking heavily. Smith and his disciples offered them $400 for freedom and two horses. After four of the guards had fallen into drunken slumber, the fifth released them. In ten days, riding and walking, Smith and his aides reached the receptive asylum of Quincy, Illinois.

But even before Smith's miraculous escape, Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb had left Missouri for the more promising land of Illinois. Since vandals had already stolen their horses, Chauncey hitched oxen to an open wagon and set out across the hard, wintry prairies. "My mother," wrote Ann Eliza, "held her two infants close in her arms during all the long, tedious journey, to keep them from perishing. She had but one dress to wear, as she had to leave Daviess County in great haste, taking only her children with her."

In April 1839 the Webbs, exhausted and destitute, crossed the Mississippi River and rode into Quincy, short days before Joseph Smith and his aides were to arrive in triumph. Eliza Churchill Webb's bitterness at the Missourians—she would never forget that they had punished "innocent women and children"—was soon alleviated by the friendliness of the people

of Quincy. The Webbs were given food and clothing, and jobs were found for them. After two months in Quincy, Chauncey Webb moved his family south to the town of Payson, Illinois, where once more he built a house and a carriage-manufacturing shop. In all, the Webbs remained in Payson for three years, and they profited financially. But during the entire period Eliza Churchill Webb, although pleased to be delivered of two more children, Lorenzo Dow and Helen Maria, who died in her fourth month, continued to agitate restlessly against her isolation from her fellow Saints. She wanted to follow Joseph Smith, and Joseph Smith had gone elsewhere.

Three years earlier, ever searching for utopia, Smith had reconnoitered the midwestern area. Fifty miles north of Quincy, where the low marshland and high bluffs bent into the Mississippi on the eastern side of the river, stood the hamlet of Commerce, Illinois. Despite an old settlement of one stone house, two blockhouses, and seven log cabins, the surrounding countryside remained primitive and wildly beautiful. Across the way, on the western slope of the river, sprawled the abandoned military barracks of a ghost village called Montrose, Iowa. Joseph Smith was impressed. For $160,000, borrowed at exorbitant interest rates, he purchased vast tracts of property in and about both settlements. Next he subdivided the land into large lots, which he sold to Mormon families for $500 each. To those of his followers who had been impoverished by the Missouri mobs, he awarded homesteads free.

Smith constructed his first Illinois home, a log cabin, on the soft bank of the river one mile south of Commerce; one of his favorite Apostles, Brigham Young, took up residence for a short time in a drafty barracks building, just opposite in Montrose. From the first, the appellation Commerce had distressed the Mormon leader. It made the community sound like a way station for drummers, not a Mecca for Prophets. After brief deliberation Smith renamed his capital city Nauvoo, Illinois—Nauvoo being Hebrew, he said, for “beautiful place”—though no Hebraic scholar ever corroborated existence of the word.

The first occupation of Nauvoo was in June 1839. Within eighteen months the hamlet was a flourishing city of 2,000 log cabins and frame shanties, and soon these would give way to splendid red brick houses with gardens. Within five years Nauvoo was the largest city in Illinois, with a population of 20,000, making it almost twice the size of Chicago.

Very early, after an epidemic of malaria, Smith had the low swamplands drained, and then he set up quarters in the heart of the city. He had been commanded by the Lord, he said, to sell shares of stock to the brethren in order to build a boardinghouse for himself and his family. Almost at once the boardinghouse became a reality and was known as the Nauvoo House. One room was devoted to a museum, containing a variety of Egyptian mummies and an alleged autograph of Moses on parchment, with Smith’s mother, Lucy

Mack Smith, as curator of the collection. Often Smith would show distinguished guests through his museum, and at the end of the tour he would announce, “Gentlemen, those who see these curiosities generally pay my mother a quarter of a dollar.” Even Prophets, apparently, had overhead. Later, Smith owned a hotel and a grocery store in which he kept his private office.

From the outset Smith realized that he could become a political power in Illinois. He had a solid bloc of votes to deliver, and he controlled this bloc. In effect, he put the Mormon votes up to the highest bidder. The rival political parties in Illinois, the Democrats and Whigs, wanted these votes. Smith, in turn, wanted a civic charter for Nauvoo that would make it an autonomous and powerful community, perhaps the most powerful in America. The Whigs were agreeable to anything, and so Smith made his deal with them.

To represent him in preparing the Nauvoo charter, Smith sent to the new state capital in Springfield a recently acquired right-hand man. This was Dr. John C. Bennett, a physician-of-fortune, an abortionist, a scamp, a practicing turncoat, and a highly qualified candidate for any list of top rogues. At thirty-seven, Bennett had been a medical graduate and a professor of midwifery in Ohio, as well as Adjutant-General of Illinois. Professing sympathy for the Mormons and hiding his opportunism, he had joined the Church. Now, in Springfield as the Prophet’s representative, he drove a hard bargain with the Whig legislatures. The Nauvoo charter was to give the city the right to make and enforce its own laws, to hold its own courts, to have its private militia, and to build a university. Mormon historians agree that the twenty-eight sections of the charter were the “most liberal in American history.” The bill authorizing this charter was passed by the Illinois legislature in December of 1840, and among those voting for it was a young politician named Abraham Lincoln.

As a reward for his bargaining, Dr. Bennett was made the first mayor of Nauvoo. Smith reserved for himself a higher office. Under the charter, he created the Nauvoo Legion, which consisted of 6,000 Mormon men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five wearing comic-opera uniforms and carrying real muskets. Smith made himself the lieutenant general of this legion, a military rank held previously in American history only by Lieutenant General George Washington.

As Nauvoo grew, Joseph Smith looked for foreign conquests. He ordered the ailing Brigham Young off a sickbed and sent him, with other missionaries, to England to spread the word. With only eighteen dollars in his pocket, Brigham made his way to Liverpool. His accomplishments were a wonder. In a single year he raised money to get 5,000 copies of *The Book of Mormon* printed and presented Queen Victoria with one. He started a Mormon newspaper called *The Millennial Star.* He moved among the poor, overworked factory laborers and painted for them a word picture of a Mormon heaven as

brilliant as the Mohammedan heaven, and 8,000 were converted to the church. Of these, in 1841 Brigham sent 769, mostly women, back to thriving Nauvoo, Illinois.

A year after the influx of English converts began, another group of new arrivals appeared in Nauvoo. Eliza Churchill Webb had finally convinced Chauncey that she could never be happy so far removed from her beloved Joseph and Brigham. Relenting at last, Chauncey traveled north alone to Nauvoo to scout landsites. He found five level acres, cleared the deed, made a down payment, and returned to Payson to gather his wife, his children, and his possessions. The move to Nauvoo was effected. But, upon arrival, Chauncey learned that his ownership of the five acres was being challenged. A wealthy Mormon convert named Dr. Robert D. Foster argued that he had a prior claim on the property made by verbal agreement two years earlier. The matter was brought before the Church for arbitration. Since Dr. Foster was a close friend of Joseph Smith, he carried the day and the disputed acreage. Later he would repay the Prophet by defecting from the Church and becoming Smith's Judas.

Disappointed though he was, Chauncey Webb wasted no time in recrimination. Instead he found several lots he liked as well as the first land, bought them for cash, and built on one a commodious house and another carriage factory. Settled in Nauvoo, Eliza Churchill Webb was happy. Soon she would have grave reasons for regretting the change.

Paradise must have its serpent, and in Nauvoo the serpent was Dr. John C. Bennett, Mayor. Overnight, it seemed, Bennett was deposed as head of the Nauvoo municipal government, accused of licentious conduct, and excommunicated from the Church. Smith took over the mayor's office for himself, and the boiling Bennett trotted off eastward to have his revenge. What happened immediately thereafter would have far-reaching consequences for Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb and all their Mormon neighbors.

On July 8, 1842, Bennett announced to one and all that in a series of articles to be published in the *Sangamo Journal* and in a forthcoming book, he would tell the truth, the whole, shocking truth, heretofore secret, about Joseph Smith. He had become a Mormon merely for the purpose of unmasking their perfidy—"It at length occurred to me that the surest and speediest way to overthrow the Impostor, and expose his iniquity to the world, would be to profess myself a convert to his doctrines, and join him at the seat of his dominion"—and now he was ready to tell the world all he knew of "Holy Joe and his Danite band of murderers."

Bennett published his articles and then his 341-page book in 1842. The book, printed by Leland and Whiting of Boston, was *The History of the Saints: or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism.* The scandal that the book made public was that Joseph Smith and the Mormon hierarchy were secretly

practicing polygamy in Illinois.

Indeed, this was true, but so successful were the Mormons in discrediting Bennett's character and career that his fantastic charges were not immediately fully accepted by the nation at large. However, they were accepted throughout non-Mormon Illinois, and this was the first of a series of exposures that contributed to the downfall of idyllic Nauvoo.

Bennett's conflict with Smith came mainly over an attractive young lady. She was Nancy Rigdon, daughter of the august Sidney Rigdon. According to Bennett, the Prophet had asked him to play John Alden. "If you will assist me in procuring Nancy as one of my spiritual wives," said Smith, "I will give you five hundred dollars or the best lot on Main Street." Bennett claimed that he refused to cooperate on the grounds of protecting female virtue. He would not admit that he also wanted Nancy. Smith then, on his own, invited Nancy to his printing office. Angered, Bennett forewarned Nancy of the Prophet's designs. Nevertheless, Nancy went to see her leader. According to Bennett, "Joe was there, took her into a private room (his favorite assignation room), and LOCKED THE DOOR… Joe then swore her to secrecy and told her that she had long been the idol of his affections, and that he had asked the Lord for her, and that it was his holy will that he should have her… He then attempted to kiss her and desired her to kiss him… She told him she would alarm the neighbors if he did not open the door and let her out *immediately.* He did so…" He also dictated a letter to her. "Happiness is the object and design of our existence," he wrote, and pressed his suit. Nancy showed the letter to her father, who confronted Smith with it. After first denying seduction, the Prophet finally admitted that he had attempted it—"to test Nancy's virtue," he said.

According to Bennett's exposé, the Church Apostles were almost all libertines, most of them as lecherous as their leader. One of Bennett's more sensational stories recounted the attempted seduction of Martha H. Brotherton, a handsome and cultivated young English import, by the already married Brigham Young, with the assistance of Joseph Smith. Bennett claimed that he had an affidavit, made out and sworn to on July 13, 1842, by Martha Brotherton, disclosing how she had faced a fate worse than death. One afternoon, after she had been in Nauvoo three weeks, Brigham asked to see her in an upstairs room of Joseph Smith's grocery store. She was surprised to find a sign on the door: "Positively No Admittance." Presently she was inside with Brigham and Joseph Smith. After meeting the Prophet, she found herself alone with Brigham, "who arose, locked the door, closed the window, and drew the curtain." Brigham then swore her to secrecy and asked her to become his plural wife.

The proposal stunned Martha Brotherton. Would she consent? "If it was lawful and right, perhaps I might," she said, "but you know, sir, it is not."

“Well,” said Brigham, “Brother Joseph has had a revelation from God that it is lawful and right for a man to have two wives….”

Martha tried to stall. She must seek permission of her parents. Brigham had no patience for this. He wanted a kiss. Martha did not comply. To help the seduction along, he locked her in the room alone for ten minutes and went to find the Prophet. At last he reappeared with Joseph Smith.

Brigham turned to Smith. “Well, Sister Martha would be willing if she knew it was lawful and right before God.”

“Well, Martha,” said Smith, “it is lawful and right before God—I *know* it is. Look here, sis, don’t you believe in me? … Well, Martha, just go ahead and do as Brigham wants you to—he is the best man in the world, except me.”

Martha continued to beg for time to think. Smith became impatient. “He said it was the best opportunity they might have for months,” Martha reported, “for the room was often engaged.” No amount of persuasion could weaken her. She remained adamant in her chastity and departed at last with virtue intact. Shortly afterward she fled to St. Louis, where she made out her affidavit and then turned it over to Bennett. The story created a sharp scandal, blunted somewhat when Martha’s sister, Elizabeth Brotherton, a devout Mormon who was soon to become the plural wife of high-ranking Parley P. Pratt, countered with an affidavit of her own, attesting to the fact that her sister was “not only a liar but also immoral.”

Nevertheless, Bennett’s scurrilous account of how “the Lord of the Harem glutted his brutal lusts to the maximum of his sensual desires,” and sanctioned it all under the guise of divine commandment, stirred Mormon and Gentile alike in Illinois. Ordinary Saints speculated to what extent all this oriental harem living had been going on under their noses. What they learned, and what many non-Mormons guessed, created a wave of apostasy inside the Church and deep resentment among righteous and puritanical Methodists and Presbyterians on the outside. Nauvoo would never recover from the blow.

According to Brigham Young’s later account, Joseph Smith had been considering the possibilities of celestial or plural marriage as early as 1829, at the time he was squinting through the Urim and Thummim and dictating the translation of the gold plates to pedagogue Oliver Cowdery.

“Brother Joseph,” Cowdery had asked on one occasion, “why don’t we go into the order of polygamy and practice it as the ancients did? We know it is true, then why delay?”

“I know that we know that it is true and from God,” said Smith calmly, “but the time has not yet come.”

Apparently, during the Kirtland, Ohio, period, Joseph Smith had decided that the time had almost come. While translating his version of the Old Testament, the Prophet had been intrigued by the polygamic practices of

Abraham, Jacob, Solomon, and David. There is little doubt that he sincerely believed that the plural-wife system of the ancients was the God-favored system of marriage. Beyond this there may have been decisive personal factors that influenced him. Quite possibly his juiceless and forbidding wife, Emma, was not the most entertaining of bed partners. Evidently Smith had a roving eye and a need for sexual variety. Yet his stern puritanical upbringing did not give him the easy conscience of a rake. He could not allow himself mistresses. And so, possibly, to have his cake and eat it, too, he allowed himself a plurality of wives. However, since polygamy had not been practiced extensively in the Western World since the Middle Ages, except among Turks and Arabs and tribes in Africa, Smith realized that he could only make it acceptable for himself if he made it acceptable to his wide following. This he might accomplish by making the practice an order from on high. Or perhaps, as the Mormons insist, none of this elaborate intrigue was necessary, for Smith *did* receive an order from on high.

At any rate, with whatever limited divine sanction he had, Smith began to devote himself to premature polygamy. In Kirtland, Emma had agreed to give room and board to a poor but attractive seventeen-year-old orphan girl named Fanny Alger. Secretly Smith married her, enjoyed the marital prerogative, and soon Miss Fanny, in fact, Mrs., was pregnant. The gossips were busy. A neighbor, Fannie Brewer, later swore in an affidavit: “There was much excitement against the prophet, on another account, likewise—an unlawful intercourse between himself and a young orphan girl residing in his family, and under his protection!!! Mr. Martin Harris told me that the prophet was most notorious for lying and licentiousness!!” The forest of exclamation marks did not hide the trees. The veil dropped from Emma’s eyes, and, in a rage, she drove the plural Fanny into the street.

Undiscouraged, Joseph Smith continued to sow the seeds of the new principle. Official Church records allow him twenty-seven plural wives. Fawn M. Brodie, his best biographer, discovered documentation for forty-nine plural wives. It is said that between 1835 and 1843, when the Lord gave him full license, Smith married between eleven and twenty-six young women, most of them not yet twenty years old. All of these marriages were surreptitiously made, since Emma was so unreasonable. It is said that, at the Prophet’s insistence, Emma made a home in Nauvoo for girls without family and funds. There were twelve of these girls in all, and all were their host’s plural wives without Emma’s knowledge. When Emma finally did learn the truth, she threw out ten of the girls, permitting her husband to marry two of them, Eliza and Emily Partridge, sisters aged eighteen and nineteen, unaware that Joseph had already married them.

By 1843 word of Joseph Smith’s marital activity had spread in and about Nauvoo. To put an end to the dangerous gossip, Smith wrote in the public

press that the idea of “a community of wives” was “an abomination in the sight of the Lord.” When a missionary, Hyrum Brown, did not take him seriously, Smith had Brown “cut off from the church” for “preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines” in Michigan. Meanwhile Smith had completed a prolonged and successful session in marriage counseling with the Lord, and now he was ready, at last, to pass his great secret on to the more enlightened members of his hierarchy.

In February 1843, Smith invited his secretary, William Clayton, to take a walk with him. Casually Smith steered the conversation to the subject on his mind. He said he knew that Clayton, though married, had deep affection for another woman, a convert in England. Clayton did not deny it. Smith suggested to his secretary that he send for her, marry her, and keep two wives. If Clayton registered shock, Smith did not recognize it. “It is your privilege to have all the wives you want,” he said coolly. Then he went on to discuss his revelation. According to Clayton: “This was the first time he talked with me on the subject of plural marriage. He informed me that the doctrine and principle was right in the sight of our Heavenly Father, and that it was a doctrine which pertained to celestial order and glory.”

Two months later, Lorenzo Snow, just returned from a missionary assignment in Europe, was also taken for a walk by the Prophet. “We walked a little distance,” said Snow, “and sat down on a large log that lay near the bank of the river. He there and then explained to me the doctrine of plurality of wives; he said that the Lord had revealed it unto him and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives; that he foresaw the trouble that would follow and sought to turn away from the commandment; that an angel from heaven then appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment. He further said that my sister, Eliza R. Snow, had been sealed to him as his wife for time and eternity…”

On Wednesday, July 12, 1843, Joseph Smith, who had been carrying the revelation about in his head, confessed to his brother Hyrum and his secretary Clayton that he hated to go further with it because of the storm it would raise with number one wife Emma.

Hyrum thought that Emma could be handled. “If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage,” he told his brother, “I will take it and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.”

Smith smiled wanly. “You do not know Emma as well as I do.”

But Hyrum would brook no more delay. “The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity, and heavenly origin.”

“Well,” said Smith, “I will write the revelation and we will see.” Clayton

hastily found paper, while Smith and Hyrum sat down. Smith explained that in *The Book of Mormon* the Saints had been limited to one wife and no concubines. On the other hand, in the Old Testament, Abraham and the other ancients had "many wives and concubines." So, quite logically, Smith had inquired of the Lord if old Abraham had sinned in polygamy. Now Smith dictated to Clayton the Lord's reply and the revelation. "Verily, this saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand, to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines: Behold! and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee…" Whereupon, after considerable verbiage, the Lord reassured the Prophet that Abraham had partaken of polygamy by divine commandment. "Go, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law, and ye shall be saved."

As he dictated the revelation, Smith clarified the granting of plural marriage by repeating the Lord's words, "If any man espouse a virgin and desires to espouse another, and the first give her consent; and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then he is justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him… and if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery for they belong to him and are given unto him; therefore he is justified."

There was, of course, still the nagging problem of Emma. The Prophet decided to incorporate his wife into the revelation by anticipating her wrath. He had asked the Lord if—as he knew she might—Emma could practice polyandry or plurality of husbands while he practiced plurality of wives. The Lord had put his mind at ease and served warning to Emma. "Verily, I say unto you, a commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself, and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham…" Yet what if Emma denounced and resisted polygamy? The Lord would not have it. Smith dictated the Lord's reply. "And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me…"

Finally the revelation was on paper. "After the whole was written," recalled Clayton, "Joseph asked me to read it through slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct."

With considerable confidence, brother Hyrum took the written revelation and hastened off to read it to Emma. She heard it out, all of it, and was not amused. After berating Hyrum soundly, she threw him and the revelation out of the house. Hyrum returned to the Prophet, crestfallen. "In all my life," he said with wonder, "I have never been so abused by a woman."

Now that the revelation was on paper, Smith began to read it to his

intimates. Sidney Rigdon, Brigham Young, William Law, a Canadian convert, were all appalled by it. Hearing it for the first time, remembered Brigham, he "desired the grave, and I could hardly get over it for a long time." Smith continued his readings. Bishop Newell K. Whitney was impressed and asked if he might make a copy. Smith consented.

What happened next Brigham Young described years later: "After Joseph had been to Bishop Whitney's he went home, and Emma began teasing for the revelation. Said she, 'Joseph, you promised me that revelation, and if you are a man of your word, you will give it to me.' Joseph took it from his pocket and said, 'Take it.' She went to the fireplace and put it in, and put the candle under it and burnt it, and she thought that was the end of it, and she will be damned as sure as she is a living woman. Joseph used to say that he would have her hereafter, if he had to go to hell for her, and he will have to go to hell for her as sure as he ever gets her."

But, of course, there was another copy of the revelation, and then several copies, and the doctrine continued to be circulated among the elite of the church. News of it spread throughout the prospering community. A New Hampshire girl, visiting Nauvoo, pretty Charlotte Haven, wrote her family in the East: "A month ago or more one of the Apostles, Adams by name, returned from a two years' mission in England, bringing with him a wife and child, although he had left a wife and family here when he went away, and I am told that his first wife is reconciled to this certainly unwelcome guest to her home, for her husband and some others have reasoned with her that plurality of wives is taught in the Bible… I cannot believe that Joseph will ever sanction such a doctrine, and should the Mormons in any way engraft such an article on their religion, the sect would surely fall to pieces, for what community or state could harbor such outrageous immorality?"

At last even Chauncey and Eliza Webb were approached by Joseph Smith and informed of the new doctrine. Since Chauncey was doing well with his latest carriage factory, and regarded as an influential personage in Nauvoo, Smith wanted his support. He ordered Chauncey to "live up to his privileges" and take more wives. Eliza Churchill Webb, despite her awed devotion to the Prophet, was horrified by the introduction of celestial marriage. She wanted to conform, to obey the leader she worshipped, to have secure her marvelous place in the Mormon heaven, but she did not wish to share Chauncey with another woman. Night after night the Webbs discussed the course they must follow. They could reach no decision. So absorbed were they in their personal problem that they were hardly aware of dramatic events building to a climax in the streets of Nauvoo and neighboring non-Mormon towns.

In the months before the secret polygamy revelation, resentment had been growing slowly against the Mormons and particularly against Joseph Smith. Now the citizens of Illinois knew Mormonism firsthand, and they did not like

it. “The cheap story of the golden plates and the colonization of the American continent by emigrants from Jerusalem,” wrote Bernard DeVoto, “the mumbo-jumbo of illiterate, semi-Biblical, degraded Masonic rituals, the apocalyptic nonsense of the Mormon metaphysics—such things were in themselves enough to cause trouble on a frontier enthusiastically Methodist and Presbyterian.”

Mormon prosperity and political opportunism also created antagonism. To make matters worse, Joseph Smith had decided to run for President of the United States against James K. Polk of the Democrats and Henry Clay of the Whigs. Earlier, dangling his bloc of votes, Smith had asked the two candidates how they would treat the Mormons if elected. Both replies had been unsatisfactory. Smith then saw clearly that the votes must go to himself. A political convention was arranged in Nauvoo, and it nominated Smith for President and Sidney Rigdon for Vice President. Candidate Smith then drew up his platform and sent 250 Mormon missionaries to every corner of the United States to stump for it. He advocated that Congress be reduced to one third of its size, that congressmen take salary cuts down to two dollars a day, that the money saved by these cuts be used to buy off slaves and that slavery be abolished within six years, that state prisoners be pardoned, that federal troops be used to suppress mobs, that a national bank be established, and that Mexico and Canada be invited to join the United States.

How Joseph Smith would have fared at the ballot box he would never know, for tragedy was about to overtake him. His intense political activity, combined with gossip about the polygamy revelation—and, in fact, the growing practice of polygamy among the Church hierarchy—twisted resentment into hot hatred. There was needed only one more provocation to turn Illinois into the bloody battleground that the Saints had known and suffered in Ohio and Missouri.

This provocation came soon enough. William Law, the Canadian who was Smith’s second counselor, got into a disagreement with the Prophet over whether building materials that he possessed should be used for private enterprise or for the Mormon Temple then being erected. The disagreement became a divorce when Law, who had threatened to kill any man who preached polygamy in his house, learned that Smith had made overtures to his attractive wife. It is not clear if Law, along with his brother Wilson Law and Dr. Foster, quit the church or were excommunicated. But suddenly they were anti-Mormon and in support of the exposés being published by Dr. Bennett.

Law determined to air his grievances. Using a printing press located in a grocery store, he wrote and published a newspaper named the *Nauvoo Expositor.* Only one issue appeared. It was enough. On June 7, 1844, Law’s newspaper was distributed through Nauvoo and neighboring towns. The purpose of the paper, Law said, was to “censure and decry moral

imperfections" evident in the "self-constituted Monarch." Proclaimed the leading article: "We are earnestly seeking to explode the vicious principles of Joseph Smith, and those who practice the same abominations and whoredoms…" According to the *Expositor*, deluded females were being imported wholesale from abroad to sate the lust of the Prophet. Each new arrival was brought to Smith's private quarters and ordered to sleep with him. "She is thunderstruck, faints, recovers, and refuses. The Prophet damns her if she rejects. She thinks of the great sacrifice, and of the many thousands of miles she has traveled over sea and land, that she might save her soul from pending ruin, and replies, God's will be done, and not mine."

This sort of thing was *lèse-majesé*, and Smith knew that it must be stopped at once. Declaring the *Expositor* a public nuisance, Smith, wearing the cap of mayor, gave the city marshal the following instruction: "You are hereby commanded to destroy the printing press from whence issues the 'Nauvoo Expositor' and pit the type of said printing establishment in the street…" Smith accompanied the marshal and other aides to Law's grocery headquarters. A burly bodyguard stood before the door. When the Mormons tried forcibly to enter, the bodyguard knocked three of them down. Only then, it is said, did Smith enter the fray. He flattened his adversary with a punch. Hastily the press was broken, the type scattered, and copies of the newspaper destroyed.

The surrounding countryside rose in fury against these strong-arm tactics. Smith was charged with inciting a riot, and a warrant was issued for his arrest by Governor Thomas Ford of Illinois. Realizing that he had overreached, Smith, accompanied by his brother Hyrum, fled by skiff across the swollen Mississippi to Montrose, Iowa. It was his intention to continue westward to Oregon or California, there to reestablish Nauvoo. But while in hiding, he received word from Emma that any such abandonment of his people, at this critical moment, would be regarded as cowardice. Shaken, for essentially he was fearless and loyal, Smith hesitated. At last, having been promised adequate protection of his life by Governor Ford, he reluctantly returned to Nauvoo. Surrendering to the authorities, he murmured, "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am as calm as a summer's morning."

Joseph Smith and Hyrum were now charged with the crime of treason against the state and confined to a spacious cell room of the Carthage jailhouse, twenty miles southeast of Nauvoo. A segment of the militia guarded the premises. Smith and his brother spent an uneasy night in their cell. The following day, the muggy summer's Thursday of June 27, 1844, after having sent for the Nauvoo Legion to rescue them, the Smith brothers prayed, conversed, and relaxed with two visiting friends, John Taylor and Willard Richards. At five o'clock in the afternoon, from their second-story cell, the four men heard the muffled sounds of gunfire.

In the yard below an anonymous mob was closing in on the jail entrance. A hundred assassins, their faces blackened, carrying guns and knives, had scaled the small fence, had survived token resistance from the guards who fired over their heads, and were now breaking into the building. Upstairs, in the cell, Joseph Smith, in shirt sleeves, dropped the wine he had been sipping, jumped to his feet, and snatched a six-barrel pistol (smuggled to him earlier by a follower) from his coat. His brother Hyrum grabbed for a single-barrel pistol. The attackers forced the cell door, and as it burst open, a fusillade of shots rang out. Smith wounded three of the mob. But their volley caught Hyrum in the head, chest, and leg and killed him instantly. Taylor was hit four times and gravely wounded. With the odds insurmountable, Smith threw down his pistol and leaped for the open window. As he ascended the ledge, bullets exploding through the smoking cell door and from the court below struck him. “Oh Lord, My God,” he groaned, then doubled over and pitched forward, falling two stories to the path alongside the jail. Some accounts say that he was dead when he hit the ground; others say that he was still alive and hastily propped up to a sitting position, to be dispatched by a firing squad of four. A Mormon legend has it that one attacker moved in to decapitate him with a bowie knife—there was still a price on his head in Missouri—but that a timely bolt of lightning forestalled this desecration.

The Illinois mob had thought that the death of the Prophet would mean the death of Mormonism, but the mob miscalculated completely. The Church survived for two reasons: first, the murder of Smith gave the Church its Golgotha and its martyred Christ; and, second, it paved the way for the election of the very man needed at this moment, Brigham Young, one of the greatest organizers in American history.

News of the Prophet’s death reached Brigham Young in Boston two weeks after the event. Immediately he hastened back to Illinois. He arrived in Nauvoo the night of August 6, 1844, to learn that Sidney Rigdon had preceded him from Pittsburgh by three days. Already Rigdon was working to be made “guardian to the church.” On August 8 a crucial outdoor meeting was called. The twelve Apostles and a mass of Saints gathered in a meadow to listen to Rigdon and Brigham Young.

Standing atop a wagon, Rigdon spoke first. His hour-and-a-half speech was halting, uninspired, and he made little impression on the gathering. In the afternoon Brigham spoke. “You cannot fill the office of a Prophet, Seer and Revelator: God must do this,” said Brigham. “You are like children without a father and sheep without a shepherd. You must not appoint any man at our head: if you should, the Twelve must ordain him.” Instead, Brigham proposed that the Apostles take over Joseph Smith’s high seat. He did not have to add that he was the leader of the Apostles. He was proposing rule by wise men; Rigdon was proposing himself alone. But it was not merely this difference

that moved the audience. It was Brigham's instinctive theatrical ability that carried the day.

Long after, Orson Hyde, a Church elder, would remember: "He spoke, and his words went through me like electricity. 'Am I mistaken,' said I, 'or is it really the voice of Joseph Smith?' This is my testimony; it was not only the voice of Joseph, but there were the features, the gestures and even the *stature* of Joseph before us in the person of Brigham. And though it may be said that President Young is a complete *mimic*, and can mimic anybody, I would like to see the man who can mimic another *in stature*, who was about *four or five inches higher than himself*."

By nightfall the forty-three-year-old Brigham Young, journeyman house painter and carpenter from Whitingham, Vermont, was virtually the new Prophet of the Church. And among those who sustained him, in that meadow that day, were Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb, she eight months pregnant with the child who was to he her last and who was to become Brigham's twenty-seventh wife. Four months later, in Nebraska, Brigham Young would officially be elected second President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Thirty-four days after Brigham had taken control of the Mormons, days during which Sidney Rigdon was excommunicated, the nine murderers of Joseph Smith were acquitted by a jury, the Nauvoo charter was in the process of being repealed, and mobs began agitating for complete expulsion of the Saints, Eliza Churchill Webb gave birth to her fifth child, an infant girl whom she baptized Ann Eliza Webb.

"I was born on the 13th of September, 1844," Ann Eliza Webb wrote later, "at the most tempestuous and most critical period in Mormon history."

Only briefly were Chauncey and Eliza Churchill Webb permitted to be happy with their newborn child. As the child would write in the purple prose of maturity: "I was consecrated to sorrow by the baptism of my mother's tears upon my baby brow… My baby hands wiped away tears, my baby fingers stroked a cheek furrowed by them, and my baby eyes never saw beyond the mist in hers. I came to her when the greatest misery of her life was about to fall on her."

This "greatest misery" was not the mob violence outside the Webb household but rather the inevitable problem of polygamy. Once Joseph Smith had advised Chauncey to "live up to his privileges." Smith's sudden death had seemed to solve the problem. Now the Prophet's successor, occupied though he was with the future of the Church, sought to carry out the wishes of the martyred founder. When Ann Eliza was one year old, Brigham Young called on her parents. Sternly he ordered Chauncey to accept the revelation of plural marriage and to practice it. Chauncey left the decision to his wife: to leave Mormonism or to share her household and husband with another woman.

Eliza Churchill Webb suffered a hundred hells. She agonized over the problem, and prayed and prayed. Polygamy, her daughter later wrote, “was the most hateful thing in the world to her, and she dreaded and abhorred it, but she was afraid to oppose it, lest she be found ‘fighting against the Lord.’“

When Brigham pressed for a decision, Eliza Churchill Webb surrendered. Immediately, the harassed couple were faced with a second problem. Who would be the other wife? Chauncey and Eliza Churchill made their choices independently and compared them. Both had selected the same girl. She was nineteen years old and attractive and already lived under their roof. Her name was Elizabeth Lydia Taft. Shortly after Ann Eliza’s birth, she and a younger sister had come to live with the Webbs as boarders. “She was a very pleasant, cheery, affectionate person,” Ann Eliza wrote, “and all the family became very much attached to her… She was thoughtful of my mother, and tender to us little ones, petting us and indulging us in our childish whims, and we, in return, loved her very dearly.”

With some embarrassment, no doubt, thirty-three-year-old Chauncey proposed to his youthful boarder. Elizabeth Taft was stunned by the proposal and emotionally torn. On the one hand, she did not wish to hurt Eliza Churchill Webb; on the other, she wanted to please Chauncey Webb. In the end, because she was rigid in her Mormon faith, she decided to please Chauncey. She accepted the proposal. Her only condition was that the wedding await the expected arrival of her parents, from Michigan, in March of 1846. Brigham was consulted. He would allow no delay. On a day in January of 1846, in the new Nauvoo Temple, Chauncey Webb took his second wife, with his first in attendance, and now Ann Eliza had two mothers.

“In the spring of 1846,” Ann Eliza recorded, “our family left Nauvoo, with the large body of the Saints, to find a new home in the West.” In the nearly two years since Joseph Smith’s assassination and Brigham Young’s ascendancy, anti-Mormon feeling in Illinois had not abated. Governor Ford, anxious to prevent more violence, had used every stratagem to get rid of the Mormons. After suggesting to Brigham that he and his followers “get off by yourselves where you can enjoy peace,” he reversed his tactics. He hinted to Brigham that if the Mormons did not leave at once the federal government might prevent them from moving at all, for fear that they would join forces in the Rocky Mountains with the British in an attempted grab of the West. This was deceit, and Brigham undoubtedly knew it, but pressure by the governor, the militia, and the unruly mobs, was at a bursting point. The leader of the Apostles realized that the time for the last exodus had arrived.

During the Wednesday morning of February 4, 1846, in blustery winter weather, the first contingent of Saints crossed the solidly frozen Mississippi River to the Iowa side, with no destination but safety. On a late morning eleven days later, Brigham Young, with his wives and children in wagons,

abandoned his brick home and considerable property and, accompanied by Willard Richards (who had escaped the Carthage jail assassination unscathed), moved across the ice to join the vanguard of Saints at the temporary camp of Sugar Creek, nine miles inside Iowa.

In two weeks 2,000 Mormon men, women, and children and 400 wagons had piled up at Sugar Creek. Conditions were primitive. The very first night, nine children had been born. No day was without its birth, said Eliza R. Snow, "some in tents, others in wagons—in rainstorms and in snowstorms. I heard of one birth which occurred under the rude shelter of a hut, the sides of which were formed of blankets fastened to poles stuck in the ground, with a bark roof through which the rain was dripping. Kind sisters stood holding dishes to catch the water as it fell, thus protecting the newcomer and its mother from a showerbath."

Still fearing massacre, Brigham determined to put as much land as possible between his fugitives and the Illinois mobs. On March 1, 1846, Sugar Creek was abandoned, as Nauvoo had been, and the 400 wagons sloshed and groaned across the mud of Iowa, plodding westward. Most often only six miles a day were covered. Animals fed on tree bark where there was no grass; humans died of exposure to the cold. It took three and a half months, until mid-June, to reach the Missouri River. By homemade ferry the Saints crossed the water to the Nebraska side, and six miles north of present-day Omaha, their leader established a settlement. This was to be known as Winter Quarters, halfway house on the route to the Rockies.

Meanwhile an even larger body of Saints, all but the old, the ailing, the weak in faith, had belatedly fled Nauvoo in April, following the rutted trails of Brigham Young's party. Among these were the Webbs, delayed because Chauncey had been occupied day and night building Conestoga-type wagons for what the historian Hubert H. Bancroft called a migration without "parallel in the world's history." Soon even the old and ailing followed. Robbed and beaten, besieged for two days in Nauvoo until they surrendered, they traded their possessions for their lives and escaped overnight. Nauvoo was left virtually a ghost town.

One of the few prominent Mormons to remain behind was the late Prophet's wife, Emma Smith, who had been pregnant by Joseph at the time of his assassination and bore her eighth child by him late in 1844. Refusing to recognize Brigham as her new leader, Emma stayed on in Nauvoo with her large family. Two years after the exodus she married a bearded and baby-faced young tavern keeper named Major Lewis C. Bidamon and devoted her latter years to tending bar with him. In old age she denied Joseph's visions and the fact that he had practiced polygamy. Before her death in 1879, when she was seventy-five, she told her third son, "No such thing as polygamy, or spiritual wifery, was taught, publicly or privately, before my husband's

death… He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have." Her eldest son, Joseph, formed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Independence, Missouri, during 1859, proclaiming that this was the pure, monogamous Mormon Church and that Brigham Young had corrupted the old Church by himself introducing polygamy.

But in 1846 almost all Mormons followed the old Church out of Nauvoo. For seven months a continuous stream of humanity—believers in all—and their livestock, converged on Winter Quarters. In these harried months, said Bernard DeVoto, "the Iowa prairies witnessed such a pageant as no one had seen since the Goths moved on Rome." In Nebraska, Brigham tried to create the semblance of a city, but haste and poverty made the task impossible. Winter Quarters rose on the Missouri River bluffs like a haphazard boom town, with mules, horses, oxen, chickens, cattle, goats, and sheep covering the forty-one blocks that were dotted with log cabins, dugouts, caves, and dirt-roofed shacks.

Amid chaos Brigham maintained iron discipline and organization. In a hurriedly built meeting hall the hierarchy plotted the future. Missionaries to England came and went. A gristmill was constructed, and crops were planted. Scurvy was repelled by importing potatoes from Missouri, bought with the proceeds of women's homemade willow baskets. Monotony and misery were alleviated by singing and dancing almost every night to the inspiring music of Captain William Pitt's brass band, which had been converted in England and brought over as a unit. No mood of anarchy or slackness was permitted. When three young men named Clothier, Brown, and Barnum played it fast and loose with the young ladies, they were charged with "adultery or having carnal communication" for fifteen nights, found guilty, and flogged.

Although Ann Eliza Webb was little more than two years old at the time, she always insisted that her "first distinct remembrance was of Winter-Quarters." Her sister, Helen Maria, had died in 1843, and now, in a sturdy log cabin prepared by Chauncey, Ann Eliza dwelt with her three surviving brothers, two mothers, and father. Soon this home, too, was broken up. Chauncey, realizing that the hierarchy was planning a westward trek, was impatient to make as much money as possible for supplies. There was no prospect of income in Winter Quarters, and so Chauncey proposed to move to a Mormon settlement in Missouri and see what he could earn. Leaving his second wife, Elizabeth Taft, and his sons, Gilbert and Edward Milo, in the cabin in Winter Quarters, he transported his first wife, his youngest boy, Lorenzo Dow, and Ann Eliza to Missouri.

"That winter, in Missouri," Ann Eliza remembered, "is one of the bright spots in my childhood, to which I am especially fond of looking back. It is, indeed, the only really happy time I can recollect. My father was busy most of the time, and we lived very pleasantly and comfortably, for that section of the

country at that early day; my mother was more cheerful than I had ever known her to be, and the atmosphere of our home was peaceful. The second wife had been left [at Winter Quarters in Nebraska] and my mother had her husband's sole care and attention, as she had had it in the old days before the curse of polygamy was thrust upon her." In the evenings a Negro band entertained, and two-year-old Ann Eliza had her first dancing lessons and was soon adept at performing several numbers popular among the slaves.

Late in January of 1847, the happy interlude came to an abrupt halt. Word reached the Webbs that Brigham Young had been favored with his first revelation from the Lord. He had never been so favored before, and, unlike his predecessor Joseph Smith, he would not be so favored often. The moment was impressive. Apparently Brigham had been told to find a permanent settlement for the Saints somewhere in the Rocky Mountains—he would know the place when he saw it—and the revelation also gave him "instructions for the guidance of the camps of Israel on their journeyings to the west." The Webbs were summoned to return to Winter Quarters.

Back on the bluffs of the Missouri River, Chauncey expected that he and his family would accompany Brigham and the first pioneer party, but this was not to be. Brigham commanded Chauncey to remain in Winter Quarters another year and concentrate on constructing wagons for the main body to follow him. At the time a 3,500-pound wagon, twenty-six feet long, required the labor of four men and the time of two months to build, and no one was more expert at directing this vital work than Chauncey. Furthermore, Brigham wanted Chauncey to help lead the larger second party that would follow in his footsteps. And so Chauncey bent to his augers and linchpins, and little Ann Eliza resumed her dancing lessons, and Brigham prepared for his most challenging journey.

In his own mind, Brigham had settled upon a desolate section of the West known as the Salt Lake Basin for his destination. Four years earlier Senator George H. McDuffie, of South Carolina, had told the Senate that he would not "give a pinch of snuff for the whole territory. I wish to God we did not own it." Even the writings of John Charles Frémont and other explorers, whom Brigham studied, described an unpromising land that was populated only by sage and salt grass, cottonwood and willow trees, a few streams and lakes. In spite of this—or perhaps because of it, since he wanted a haven isolated from persecuting non-Mormons and out of the path of expanding Empire—Brigham made this Salt Lake desert his goal. As he told a reporter from the New York *Times:* "From Frémont's reports, we determined to get our wagons together, form a grand caravan and travel through the country to the Salt Lake, miles from any civilized settlement."

On April 9, 1847, the final trek began. There were 143 members to this advance party, including Brigham and the sixth of his plural wives, Clara

Decker Young, a quiet, well-read, nineteen-year-old New York girl who had married the new Prophet three years earlier. Also in this party were two other women, two non-Mormon whites, and three Negro slaves.

Traveling in sixty-four wagons and carriages (actually light wagons), the men trudging alongside their teams with rifles alert under their arms, the caravan covered the 541 miles to Fort Laramie in seven weeks, arriving there on Brigham's forty-sixth birthday. Following the line of the old Oregon Trail, but often beating their way off the trail to avoid anti-Mormons and Indians, they improved on Frémont's maps through use of two sextants and other instruments, set up prairie mailboxes every ten miles (sometimes in buffalo skulls) to leave letters for those who would follow, fought off raids of Pawnee Indians, and built rafts to cross the Platte River.

The routine became a nightmare of monotony. Awakening with the first rays of sun at five, usually announced by the blast of a bugle, the small party cooked breakfast and fed the teams for two hours. At seven they resumed the seemingly endless march across rugged flatlands, those stretching prairies that Captain Richard Burton would characterize as "an ocean in which one loses sight of land." By eight-thirty of the evening they would grind to a weary halt, create a wagon circle for defense against redskins, then eat, pray, and indulge in dancing, card games, and practical jokes.

Too often, in reaction against the hardships of the trek, the Saints would cavort long beyond their nine-o'clock nightly curfew. Once, said Brigham, "I called the camp together and remonstrated with those brethren who were giving away to trifling, dancing, and card playing…" On this occasion Brigham told those he had summoned about his wagon, "If any man had sense enough to play a game at cards, or dance a little without wanting to keep it up all the time, but exercise a little and then quit it and think no more of it, it would do well enough, but you want to keep it up till midnight and every night, and all the time. You don't know how to control your sense… Suppose the angels were witnessing the hoe down the other evening, and listening to the haw haws the other evening, would not they be ashamed of it? I am ashamed of it."

Chastized, they plodded on more religiously, more silently. In Wyoming, a welcome figure, that of Jim Bridger, king of mountain men for a quarter of a century, appeared. He tried to divert Brigham from the Salt Lake Basin. "Mr. Young," said Bridger, "I would give a thousand dollars if I knew that an ear of corn could be ripened in these mountains. I have been here twenty years, and have tried it in vain, over and over again." Brigham, fortified by vision, replied that "if he would wait a year or two we would show him what could be done."

It was boiling summer now, and they were in the mountains, hacking trees, cutting brush, prying loose boulders to make trails. And they were strangely

ill. Passing back information on their trek to the Saints in Winter Quarters, Brigham tried to explain the odd malady: “The cold frosty nights of the mountain pass, followed by warm days and the great dust of the succeeding plains, tend to produce sickness, such as fever, head and backache… let every soul be very careful for clothing and keeping warm over the mountain pass, and particularly as night approaches, keeping out of the evening air, as much as possible, and out of the dust.”

On July 23, 1847, they had reached an enormous valley of the Salt Lake Basin. Brigham was too ill with mountain fever to enter it. Instead he sent an elder, Orson Pratt, with forty-two men, to explore the valley. That night Pratt camped on the site of what would soon become Salt Lake City. At daybreak Pratt ordered the earth plowed. But the sun-baked ground was hard as flint, and plow points broke on it. Hastily Pratt had a stream dammed, allowed the diverted water to soak the earth, and then planted the first Mormon crop over several acres.

The following day an Apostle, Wilford Woodruff, drove his light wagon, with Brigham reclining in the rear, to the valley entrance. “I drove my carriage, with President Young lying on a bed in it, into the open valley, the rest of the company following,” wrote Woodruff. “When we came out of the canyon, into full view of the valley, I turned the side of my carriage around, open to the west, and President Young arose from his bed and took a survey of the country. While gazing on the scene before us, he was enwrapped in vision for several minutes. He had seen the valley before in vision, and upon the occasion he saw the future glory of Zion and Israel, as they would be, planted in the valleys of the mountains. When the vision had passed, he said, ‘It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on.’ So I drove to the encampment already formed.”

Four days later Brigham was on his feet. This would be Salt Lake City in the Mormon’s own State of Deseret, which meant honeybee. At once the city was planned: a perfect square of ten-acre blocks, each block subdivided into lots one and one-fourth acres in size. Forty acres were set aside for a mammoth temple. And, because unfriendly Ute Indians were in evidence, a large fort of logs and adobe bricks was given first building priority. Soon the fort began to rise from the valley bottom, spread across ten acres, with its walls nine feet high and twenty-seven inches thick. Now crops were planted, and flour mills, tanneries, business shops planned, and Brigham knew that it was time to fetch the rest of his impatient Saints from the East.

On August 26, 1847, he started the tedious crossing back to the Missouri River. Halfway there he came face to face with a company of 2,000 Mormons on the march. He instructed them of the perils ahead, inspired them, and sent them off. Then he resumed his own journey to Winter Quarters. In nine weeks he reached the Nebraska colony where waited the remaining Saints, among

them the Webbs.

All through that autumn and winter, Brigham carefully organized the second and last party he would lead to the Salt Lake Basin. And all the while Chauncey Webb industriously hammered out new wagons, exchanging the income from sale of these vehicles for provisions. With the advent of spring the last party was ready. There were 1,229 Mormons, including the seven members of the Webb family, in 397 wagons, including two superb ones Chauncey had made for his own clan. Besides carrying passengers, the wagons were top-heavy with every comfort of civilization, from stoves and bureaus to farm equipment and pianos. The livestock that accompanied this train made it appear like a Noah's ark on foot: 1,275 oxen, 699 cattle, seventy-four horses, eighty-two dogs, thirty-seven cats, five beehives, and one squirrel.

On May 4, 1848, when the earth bloomed and Ann Eliza Webb was a bursting three years and eight months of age, the grand caravan got under way for the Rocky Mountains. The Webbs were among the more prosperous families on the train. Chauncey had stuffed his two wagons with provisions for an entire year, and there were three yoke of strong oxen for the vehicles. The prevalent mood among the Webbs, was one of good cheer and anticipation, despite the expected exhaustion on the trek.

Ann Eliza reflected her family's mood. For her, the wagon train was a traveling circus and every morning a new miracle. Long after, she would not forget: "I ran along, during a portion of the day, by the side of the wagons, picking the flowers by the way, and talking to the different members of the train, for I knew everybody, and was petted almost as much by my fellow-travellers as I had been by my negro friends in Missouri. It is a wonder that I was not completely spoiled; I daresay I should have been, had it not been for my mother's sensible and judicious training. I was her idol, the one object for which she cared the most in the world; but for all that, she ruled me wonderfully, and I yielded her the most implicit obedience, while giving her the most passionate childish love and devotion.

"I remember her so distinctly on this journey! She occupied herself a great deal with writing, keeping a literal transcript of all that befell us on our journey, mingled with the deepest religious meditation and poetic fancies. She always wrote in a large book, which she afterwards destroyed.

"We rested every Sabbath, and always held services. Sometimes we stayed a week in camp, resting our tired oxen, and recruiting our own strength. It was a pleasant season of the year, and we could afford to travel leisurely, as we had left Winter-Quarters so early that we had ample time to reach Salt Lake Valley before the weather became disagreeable."

Ann Eliza had no memory of the hardships of the 1,031-mile crossing. Only the happy adventure of it remained forever in her mind. Above all else

she remembered the stirring hymns and songs—one penned by her mother—sung in chorus by one and all during Sunday encampments. “I shut my eyes now,” she wrote as a grown woman, “and see a large company gathered together, in a fast-falling twilight, on a wide plain, that seems as endless as the ocean; the blue of the star-studded sky is the only covering for the heads of this company. In the dusk the white-covered wagons look weird and ghostly. Campfires are burning; men, women, and children are clustered together, and the talk goes back to the old days and the trials and persecutions which these people have borne, and forward to an independent and happy future, blessed of God and unmolested by man. In the glow of anticipation, some one strikes up this fervid hymn… and the wide plains echo back the stirring strains. I nestle by my mother’s side, awed and subdued, but content to feel the clasp of her hand and meet the loving light of her eyes. The song is over, and ‘hosannas’ and ‘amens’ resound on every side, and out of the blue sky the stars smile down on the wanderers with a calm, hopeful light.”

At the Weber River, a few days from its destination, the company halted and pitched camp for a week. Women fished, and men repaired bolsters and axles, and Brigham Young repeated details of his revelation. When Ann Eliza celebrated her fourth birthday, Brigham attended. At this time, Ann Eliza recalled, she was one of Brigham’s favorite youngsters. ‘I little thought then,” she added ruefully later, “what relation I should one day hold to this man, who was older than my father. My future was not foreshadowed in that summer journey in search of a home.”

Finally the camp on Weber River was broken. The last days of marching, on callused feet, were faced with vigor and haste. And at once, it seemed, though more than four weary months of travel lay behind them, the Salt Lake Valley opened beneath their eyes. A kind of civilization was waiting. From her mother’s side Ann Eliza could see a city of 450 log and adobe homes, a massive fort, three sawmills, and 5,000 planted and irrigated acres of crop (that had survived, through a miraculous visitation of sea gulls, a black invasion of crickets). On September 20, 1848, Ann Eliza Webb and her elders descended into the valley.

Peace, at last, was the joyous refrain in every mind. None could know that peace would be short-lived.

III: THE FIVE MRS. WEBBS

"*Good God! I have wives enough to whip out the United States.*"

—Heber C. Kimball

On August 29, 1852, four years after the founding of Salt Lake City, Brigham Young announced to his followers, to the nation, to the world, that henceforth the doctrine of plural marriage was an official tenet of the Mormon Church.

The occasion for this explosive bulletin was a routine two-day conference of 106 Mormon missionaries gathered together in Salt Lake City, to be briefed on their work before leaving for such distant parts as France, India, Russia, and South Africa.

On the morning of the second day of the meeting, almost before the missionaries had settled in their places, forty-one-year-old Orson Pratt, seventeen years an Apostle, the Church's leading intellectual light, and the husband of ten living wives, rose to his feet and suddenly began to discuss the secret revelation on polygamy given to the late Joseph Smith in Nauvoo during 1843.

"It is well known… to the congregation before me," said Pratt, "that the Latter-day Saints have embraced the doctrine of a plurality of wives as part of their religious faith… But, says the objector, we cannot see how this doctrine can be embraced as a matter of religion and faith… In reply we will show that it is incorporated as part of our religion and necessary for our exaltation to the fullness of the Lord's glory in the eternal world."

Pratt then discoursed at length on the celestial aspects of polygamy and its Biblical background.

"Here, then, we perceive, just from this one principle, reasoning from the blessings of Abraham alone, the necessity—if we would partake of the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—of doing their work, and he that will not do the works of Abraham and walk in his footsteps will be deprived of his blessings.

"Now let us inquire what will become of those individuals who have this law taught unto them in plainness if they reject it? I will tell you. 'They will be damned,' saith the Lord God Almighty in the revelation he has given."

Attempting to anticipate every doubt, Pratt assured his startled listeners that Mormon polygamy would not be practiced to "gratify the carnal lusts and feelings of man," but would be practiced to fulfill a holy demand of the Lord. Later Pratt would explain that in this doctrine the Saints were obeying the word of God and not the precedent set by Old Testament patriarchs. "The Latter-day Saints in this territory practice polygamy, *not* because the law of Moses commands it; *not* because it was extensively practiced by the best of

men we know of mentioned in the Bible, the old patriarchs, Abraham, Jacob, and others… We have no right to practice it because they did, but because it is enjoined upon *us* by divine command."

Would divine command contradict temporal law? Pratt was positive that it would not. There was nothing in the Constitution of the United States about the number of wives an American citizen might legally possess. "I believe that they will not, under our present form of government (I mean the government of the United States), try us for treason for believing and practicing our religious notions and ideas. I think, if I am not mistaken, that the Constitution gives the privilege to all of the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions… Then, if it can be proved to a demonstration that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional."

Still Pratt realized that the revolutionary marital doctrine might make the timid quake. For these Pratt sounded a final warning: "There will be many who will not hearken, there will be the foolish among the wise, who will not receive the new and everlasting covenant in fullness, and they never will attain to their exaltation, they never will be counted worthy to hold the scepter of power over a numerous progeny, that shall multiply themselves without end, like the sand upon the seashore."

If the 106 Mormon missionaries assembled were left dazed by this remarkable turn of events, and if they found their lunches hardly digestible, they had much sterner oratory awaiting them in the afternoon conference. For now Brigham Young, second Prophet and newly appointed first Governor of the Territory of Utah, had much to add. Standing before the missionaries and his own aides, Brigham placed his exalted blessings on the daring doctrine.

"You heard Brother Pratt state, this morning, that a Revelation would be read this afternoon, which was given previous to Joseph's death," Brigham said. "It contains a doctrine a small portion of the world is opposed to; but I can deliver a prophecy upon it. Though that doctrine has not been preached by the Elders, this people have believed in it for years.

"The original copy of this Revelation was burnt up. William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the Prophet. In the meantime it was in Bishop Whitney's possession. He wished the privilege to copy it, which brother Joseph granted. Sister Emma burnt the original. The reason I mention this is because that the people who did know of the Revelation supposed it was not now in existence.

"The Revelation will be read to you. The principle spoken upon by Brother Pratt this morning we believe in. And I tell you—for I know it—it will sail

over and ride triumphantly above all the prejudice and priestcraft of the day; it will be fostered and believed in by the more intelligent portions of the world as one of the best doctrines ever proclaimed to any people.

"The world has known long ago, even in Joseph's days, that he had more wives than one. One of the Senators in Congress knew it very well. Did he oppose it? No! But he has been our friend all the day long, especially upon that subject. He said pointedly to his friends: If the United States do not adopt that very method [plural marriage], let them continue as they now are; pursue the precise course they are now pursuing, and it will come to this, that their generations will not live until they are 30 years old; they are going to destruction; disease is spreading so fast among the inhabitants of the United States, that they are born rotten with it, and in a few years they are gone.' Said he, 'Joseph has introduced the best plan for restoring and establishing strength and long life among men of any man on earth, and the Mormons are a very good and virtuous people.'

"Many others are of the same mind; they are not ignorant of what we are doing in our social capacity. They have cried out, 'Proclaim it'; but it would not do a few years ago; everything must come in its time, as there is time to all things. I am now ready to proclaim it.

"This Revelation has been in my possession for many years, and who has known it? None but those who should know it. I keep a patent lock on my desk, and there does not anything leak out that should not."

But Brigham Young had deliberately opened the patent lock on his desk, and now the word was out. Sixteen days later, on the day following Ann Eliza Webb's eighth birthday celebration, *The Deseret News,* established two years earlier as the mouthpiece of the Church, issued a fifteen-cent extra edition to confirm the announcement in print before the entire incredulous nation. And seven months later, in Liverpool, England, the *Millennial Star* trumpeted the doctrine to the wide world.

Now, at last, the mysterious and private practice was in the open. And all the world gaped. For the Mormons of the United States were the first Western peoples in modern times to advocate and encourage harem living. Perhaps it was the boldness of the announcement that shocked the most. By fleeing to sparsely populated Utah, the Mormons had sought to avoid persecution and opposition. Yet, knowing full well that the flaunting of polygamy in public would bring down on their heads the righteous wrath of the entire monogamous nation, the Church hierarchy had sanctioned the doctrine. What on earth had impelled Brigham Young to make the sensational announcement?

There were several reasons for publicizing what had been, until 1852, a private matter. Since Nauvoo, the Saints had lived their doctrine in secret, but the secret was not well kept. As Ann Eliza Webb would explain years later:

“The command had gone forth to take more wives, and it did not matter at all whether there was a place to put them in; they must be taken into polygamy. It was kept quiet from the outside world, and the elders who were sent out on missions were commanded to keep utter silence on the subject. Rumors did get out after a while, especially after the California miners began to pass through Utah. There were no hotels at Salt Lake City at that time, and the emigrants who stopped there to rest before finishing their journey were compelled to become temporary inmates of Mormon homes, where they found polygamous wives and children as a matter of course. Naturally they would grow curious after a time concerning these extra women and children, and as the inquiries were sometimes quite embarrassing, every subterfuge had to be resorted to so as to keep the guests in ignorance of the system.

“But, try the best they might, they could not prevent suspicions of the truth.”

It was the forty-niners, headed for the gold fields of northern California, who spread the scandal westward. But they were not alone. A year later, in 1850, Utah had been made a territory of the United States by Congress. After appointing Brigham the first governor of this territory with a population of 11,000, President Millard Fillmore also nominated nine men as Federal officeholders. Of these nine, four were Mormons and five were anti-Mormons. The most pugnacious of the anti-Mormons was Perry E. Brocchus, of Alabama, who had been selected to serve as associate justice of Utah Territory.

On September 8, 1850, an ailing Judge Brocchus requested permission to address the Saints at a meeting in the Bowery, a makeshift outdoor tabernacle that seated 2,500. Brigham granted the request and sat by as Judge Brocchus launched into what appeared to be a mild and non-controversial speech. The Mormons had offered to send a block of marble as their contribution to the Washington Monument, and now Judge Brocchus was remarking that such marble should only be presented by a people who were loyal to the government. Against a stony silence, the judge frankly questioned Brigham’s loyalty. The judge could not forget that upon the occasion of President Zachary Taylor’s death, Brigham, who resented the late President for having rejected Utah’s appeal for statehood, had exclaimed, “Zachary Taylor is dead and gone to hell, and I am glad of it!… I prophesy, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the power of the priesthood that is upon me, that any other President of the United States, who shall lift his finger against this people, will die an untimely death and go to hell.”

Now the judge undiplomatically alluded to Brigham’s remark. As he afterward reported his speech thus to President Fillmore: “I endeavored to show the injustice of their feelings towards the Government, and alluded boldly and feelingly to the sacrilegious remarks of Governor Young towards

the memory of the lamented Taylor. I defended, as well as my feeble powers would allow, the name and character of the departed hero from the unjust aspersions cast upon them, and remarked that, in the latter part of the assailant's bitter exclamation that he 'was glad that General Taylor was in hell,' he did not exhibit a Christian spirit, and that if the author did not early repent of the cruel declaration, he would perform that task with keen remorse upon his dying pillow." If this were not enough, the tactless and fearless judge turned his attention to the Mormon women. "Oh, ladies, sweet ladies," he implored, speaking of Brigham Young, "why do you 'go in' for such a man? Your smiles should be turned on the contemplation of men who can handle the sword—George Washington and Zachary Taylor, the second Washington. Oh, Governor Young can't handle a sword." The judge was fully aware of secret polygamy. How could these fallen women present a block of marble to their government? "In order to make this presentation acceptable," said Judge Brocchus, "you must become virtuous and teach your daughters to become virtuous, or your offering had better remain in the bosom of your native mountains."

At once a wave of Mormon men were on their feet, bellowing for the floor. Brigham, shaken with rage, was on his feet before them. "His manner," the judge admitted to the President, "was boisterous, passionate, infuriated in the extreme; and if he had not been afraid of final vengeance, he would have pointed his finger at me, and I should *in an instant* have been a dead man."

Brigham did point his finger at the judge, but it was to shame him. "I ask you all," he shouted to his excited audience, "have we ever before listened to such trash and nonsense from this stand?" He wheeled upon Brocchus. "Are you a judge, and can't even talk like a lawyer, or a politician, and haven't read an American school history? Be ashamed, you illiterate ranter, not to know your Washington better than to praise him for being a mere brutal warrior. Washington was called first in war; but he was first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen. He had a big head and a great heart. Of course, he could fight. But, Lord! What man can't? What man here will dare to say, with women standing by, that he is a bit more a coward than Washington was? Handle a sword! I can handle a sword as well as George Washington. I'd be ashamed to say I couldn't. But you, standing there, white and shaking now, at the hornets' nest you have stirred up yourself—you are a coward, and that is why you have cause to praise men that are not."

As to the judge's insinuations about female immorality and lascivious harem life among the Mormons, Brigham held such rumors in utter contempt. "What you have been afraid to intimate about our morals, I will not stoop to notice," Brigham said to the judge, "except to make my particular personal request to every brother and husband present not to give you back what such impudence deserves. You talk of things 'you have on hearsay' since your

coming among us. I'll talk of hearsay, then—the hearsay that you are discontented and will go home because we cannot make it worth your while to stay. What it would satisfy you to get out of us I think it would be hard to tell; but I am sure that it is more than you'll get. If you or anyone else is such a baby-calf, we must sugar your soap to coax you to wash yourself on Saturday nights. Go home to your mammy straight away, and the sooner the better."

In less than a year, after suffering the most chilling ostracism, Judge Brocchus and his fellow anti-Mormon officials had fled to Washington, D.C., Just as the forty-niners had taken the news of secret polygamy to the west coast, these defeated Federal officials took lurid details of harem living to the east coast. Brigham Young hated the distorted pictures of celestial marriage resulting from these rumors as he detested secrecy in general. The plural-wife doctrine was, after all, a revelation of the Lord, and Brigham was proud of it. Furthermore, in the few years since the founding of Salt Lake City he had seen his people flourish—a half million dollars' worth of livestock was in the area, 16,000 acres were under cultivation, and 250 miles of settlements, each known as a stake of Zion, spread across Utah—and Brigham felt strong and secure in the isolated Rocky Mountain valley. Finally, because he was an intensely practical seer, Brigham realized the necessity to propagate the race on this distant frontier. Single wives united to single husbands would produce children, but not enough children and not fast enough. On the other hand, many wives serviced by a single fertile husband might produce children in vast numbers, and the soaring population would ensure the future prosperity and power of the Church. And so, for all of these reasons, Brigham Young determined to put an end to evasions and to make the startling doctrine of plural wifehood a matter of normal and open practice and public record.

The national uproar that greeted this radical matrimonial innovation was instantaneous, persistent, and did not cease for the remainder of the entire nineteenth century. Celebrated authors and journalists came across the plains and through the mountains, by stagecoach, to visit Salt Lake City as they would visit a zoo and to report their observations and feelings on the strange mating institution.

The paramount exhibit, of course, the central attraction, was Brigham Young's own household. It exasperated him that visitors were interested in little aside from his polygamous family. "When strangers come to see me," he said, "their first reflection is, 'I would like to ask him a question if I dare.' What is it? It is all about wives. My conscience! What a generation of gentlemen and ladies we have!"

In the full eloquence of his later years Brigham once told his congregation: "Ladies who come into my office very frequently say, 'I wonder if it would hurt his feelings if I were to ask him how many wives he has?' Let me say to

all creation that I would as like they should ask me that question as any other, but I would rather see them anxious to learn about the Gospel. Having wives is a secondary consideration; it is within the pale of duty, and, consequently, it is all right. But to preach the Gospel, save the children of men, build up the kingdom of God, produce righteousness in the midst of the people, govern and control ourselves and our families and all we have influence over, make us of one heart and one mind… is our business, no matter how many wives a man has got; that makes no difference here or there. I want to say, and I wish to publish it, that I would as soon be asked how many wives I have got as any other question, just as soon, but I would rather see something else in their minds. Instead of all the time thinking, 'How many wives have you?' or 'I wonder whom he slept with last night.' I can tell those who are curious on this point. I slept with all that slept, and we slept on one universal bed—the bosom of our mother earth, and we slept together. 'Did you have anybody in bed with you?' 'Yes.' *Who was it?' It was my wife. It was not your wife nor your daughter nor sister, unless she was my wife and that too legally. I can say that to all creation, and every honest man can say the same; but it is not all who are professed Christians who can say it."

Brigham Young was ill-cast for the role of model polygamist. His earliest background was dominated by puritanism, poverty, and monogamy. Born of a Vermont farming family in 1801, he was the ninth of eleven children. Motherless from the age of fourteen, Brigham was beaten by his father for the slightest infraction of family rules. Religious morality was strict, and he was never permitted to walk more than a half hour on Sundays. At the age of twenty-two he became a Methodist. A year later he became a married man. His first wife was eighteen-year-old Miriam Works, of Cayuga County, New York. Brigham hired himself out as house painter, carpenter, farm hand, to support Miriam and the two girls she bore him. In April and May 1832, Brigham and Miriam were baptized into the Mormon Church by Joseph Smith. Four months later, at Mendon, New York, Miriam "clapped her hands and praised the Lord" and died of consumption, leaving Brigham a widower at thirty-one.

Two years passed before Brigham married again. His second wife was Mary Ann Angell, of Puritan stock, Baptist persuasion, born in New York and raised in Rhode Island. As an adolescent she filled her head with the Scriptures and determined that she would not wed until she would "meet a man of God." Converted to Mormonism in 1830, she traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, alone, met her man of God, and as an old maid of almost thirty-one married Brigham Young on February 18, 1834. In the forty-five years that she was married to the Prophet she gave him six children, three boys and three girls. She disliked polygamy, yet, as first wife, gave consent to each new plural marriage (a technicality required by Mormon law). In 1852, when

polygamy was made public, Mary Ann Angell was forty-nine. Although an intelligent woman, she was of a retiring nature, yet she dominated the other wives by the accident of seniority. In those early days in Salt Lake City, Brigham's wives lived side by side in an L-shaped series of log and mud-plaster cabins. Mary Ann Angell alone had a private cabin separated from the rest. The other wives looked up to her and called her "Mother Young." Her superiority, she knew, rested in a single point of law: if polygamy were ever declared illegal, she alone would remain Brigham's legal wife and major heir to his estate.

Even though Joseph Smith did not dictate the plural-marriage revelation until July 12, 1843, Brigham began to practice what his Prophet secretly preached a full thirteen months before. On June 15, 1842, the forty-one-year-old Brigham married his first plural wife, twenty-year-old Lucy Ann Decker, who gave him seven children (and always permitted them to sleep through the mornings, remembering how she hated her own New England childhood when she had to awaken every dawn at five).

Having entered into polygamy with reluctance, or so he always said, Brigham now devoted himself to multiple matrimony with surprising (or understandable) zest. He celebrated the year of the revelation, 1843, with two more marriages performed on a single day in early November. The first of these brides was the second cousin of Ralph Waldo Emerson, a tall, educated nineteen-year-old girl from New York, Harriet Elizabeth Cook Campbell, who gave Brigham a son three years later; the second bride was, by contrast, the somewhat elderly Augusta Adams, a dignified Massachusetts woman of forty-one, who would remain childless.

Between May and September of 1844, Brigham added another three wives. In the spring, when he was forty-three years old, he married a child bride, sixteen-year-old Clara Decker, the tiny, younger sister of his first polygamous wife. It was Clara who, three years later, accompanied him on the difficult first journey into the Rocky Mountains. In the autumn Brigham married a beautiful brunette from New York, Clarissa Ross, who was thirty years old and gave her husband four children. Shortly after, Brigham took for a wife the first of the six widows of Joseph Smith whom he would marry. This was the dark, slender, thirty-year-old Emily Dow Partridge, who had been born in Ohio and raised in Mormonism since she was seven. In her youth she had overheard her father describe her to a friend as the "odd one" in the family. Apparently this experience had been traumatic, for long after she would write her children: "Let me tell you here that if any of you ever have a child that is in any way peculiar, don't let that child know it by anything you may say or do. For many times some of the most noble qualities have been crushed or destroyed while in their undeveloped state because they were not understood."

At the age of nineteen, along with an older sister, Emily Dow had been sealed to Joseph Smith as his twenty-third wife, in the reluctant presence of Smith's first wife, Emma Hale. "From that very hour, however, Emma was our bitter enemy," Emily Dow Partridge once revealed. "We remained in the family several months after this, but things went from bad to worse until we were obliged to leave the house and find another home." Emily Dow, in the year she was married to him, gave Smith no children; however, she gave Brigham Young two sons and five daughters.

In 1845, as successor to the Prophet, Brigham was too occupied with his new post to take more than one wife. This wife, his ninth, was Olive Grey Frost, a frail tailoress from Maine who had done missionary work in England and had married Joseph Smith just before his assassination. Upon seeing Smith's coffin—a wooden box covered by a horse blanket and grass—Olive Grey Frost, it was said, "went entirely mad." At twenty-nine, still mourning and ill, she married Brigham Young. They were man and wife only eight months when she died in Nauvoo of pneumonia.

On February 15, 1846, under the threat of mob violence, Brigham Young was forced to flee Nauvoo forever. In the twenty-three days preceding the exodus, either excited by a revival of religious fervor or eager to protect his place in heaven by good works on earth, Brigham married eleven women ranging in age from seventeen to forty-two. In the seven days between January 14 and 21 of 1846, Brigham took seven brides. Then, in the four days between February 2 and 6 of 1846, he took four more brides.

This matrimonial spree began on January 14, 1846, a month before his departure from Nauvoo. In that one day Brigham married Louisa Beaman, Emmeline Free, and Margaret Maria Alley. Thirty-one-year-old Louisa Beaman, of New York, full-busted and lovely, was another of Joseph's widows. Eventually she gave Brigham two sets of twins, all boys, and sentimentally she named the first set Joseph and Hyrum, after her former husband and brother-in-law. This wedding of Brigham's was immediately followed by one to the beautiful and adoring Emmeline Free, made over her parents' objections. The youthful Emmeline pampered and petted her husband, and by 1852 she was his most beloved spouse. Of Emmeline, John Hyde would write in 1857: "Brigham has a favorite. She is a very good-looking person, of about thirty years of age. She is tall; her eyes are a very soft blue, large and full; her hair light brown; complexion very fair, and general expression very intelligent and prepossessing… In her case, Brigham violated his own law. For a little while, he indulged his vanity so far as to wear his hair curled; much laughter and remark was occasioned by persons often noticing his head fixed up in papers and hair-pins, of an evening. This lady was the industrious hairdresser." Apparently Brigham was more consistently attentive to Emmeline than to any of his previous wives. Between

1847 and 1864, a period of seventeen years during which at least seventeen wives competed for his bed, Emmeline produced ten children by Brigham, four of them sons. The third wife married by Brigham that single day was Margaret Maria Alley, a twenty-one-year-old girl from Massachusetts. She would die in Salt Lake City six years later, just after the public proclamation on polygamy, and her children would be raised by Clara Decker.

A week later in Nauvoo, on January 21, 1846, Brigham took himself four more wives between daybreak and dusk. One was thirty-one-year-old Susan Snively, an energetic and aggressive Virginian of German extraction, another was seventeen-year-old Ellen Rockwood of Massachusetts, the third was twenty-four-year- old Martha Bowker, of New Jersey, and the fourth was a young widow of Joseph Smith, twenty-three-year-old Maria Lawrence, of Canada. While that wondrous day delivered four faithful wives, it would provide Brigham with no added progeny. The following day, January 22, 1846, almost as an afterthought, Brigham took his seventeenth wife, Margaret Pierce, a charming Pennsylvania girl of twenty-two. Margaret did not give her husband a child for nine years, but at last, in 1854, she produced the son who would be Brigham's fiftieth offspring.

After eleven days spent recuperating from his marathon of celestial marriages, Brigham vigorously returned to the altar on February 2, 1846, when he became the third husband of Zina Diantha Huntington, of Watertown, New York. The descendant of a Pilgrim father, Zina had been converted to Mormonism at fifteen and had married Henry Bailey Jacobs in Nauvoo during March of 1841. Seven months after this marriage, while Jacobs was on a mission to England, Zina had become Joseph Smith's eighth wife—even though seven months pregnant with Jacobs' first son. Since Jacobs adored his wife, he agreed to share her. Zina had been Joseph's plural wife for three years when she was half widowed. At twenty-five she became the plural wife of Brigham Young, with Jacobs on hand to witness the ceremony.

The day following his marriage to Zina, and apparently still in the mood to rescue another of Joseph Smith's widows, Brigham married forty-two-year-old Eliza Roxey Snow, who was the sister of Lorenzo Snow, an Apostle, and who had secretly been sealed to Joseph Smith in June of 1842. Eliza Roxey Snow had lived under the same roof with Joseph and his first wife, Emma Hale. In the spring of 1844, both Emma and Eliza Roxey were pregnant by Joseph. When Emma, who did not suspect this, emerged into the hall outside her bedroom one morning to find Eliza Roxey, clad only in a nightgown, and her husband locked in each other's arms, she lost her temper. Grabbing a broom, she swung at Eliza Roxey, who retreated, slipped, and fell down a flight of stairs. Wildly Emma drove her rival into the street. As a result of this harrowing experience Eliza Roxey Snow suffered a miscarriage. Eventually

she hid her past behind the curtains of conservatism and respectability. A teacher and prolific poet, Eliza Roxey became the foremost female apologist for polygamy and perhaps the most influential woman in the Church. She provided no children for Brigham; in fact, it is doubtful if their marriage was more than platonic.

Three days after his union with Eliza Roxey Snow, on February 6, 1846, Brigham married his twentieth wife, a small Massachusetts widow of twenty-five who always signed her name as Naamah Kendel Jenkins Carter Twiss. Almost nine months before, Brigham had personally officiated at the marriage of Naamah to one John S. Twiss. In three months Twiss was dead, and Naamah was a widow until salvaged by Brigham.

Thereafter, for thirteen months in Winter Quarters, Brigham devoted his time to less romantic Church business. But then, twenty-four days before heading westward, he contracted marriage to two sisters in a single day. On March 20, 1847, the forty-six-year-old Brigham took for plural wives twenty-year-old Mary Jane Bigelow, an Illinois girl, and her seventeen-year-old sister, Lucy Bigelow. Upon arrival in Salt Lake City, the older sister, Mary Jane, who had not yet cohabited with Brigham, asked him for an annulment or legal separation, and it was granted. However, Mary Jane's younger sister, Lucy, remained a staunch polygamist and faithful partner for life, giving Brigham three daughters between 1852 and 1863.

Once established in Salt Lake City, Brigham refrained from further marital acquisitions and temporarily concentrated his energies on organizing a secure and civilized community. No new wives were added to his crowded household until after his public announcement of celestial or heaven-directed plural marriage.

And so, at the very moment when Brigham Young officially recognized polygamy, he stood before his people and the entire world as the prime practitioner of the holy doctrine. He had been married twenty-two times by August of 1852 and, with two wives dead and one separated from him, he was living with a household of nineteen women.

The entire United States, it seemed, wanted to know more about polygamy in general and Brigham's harem in particular. The anti-Mormons were fanatical in their disapproval; the Mormons were equally fanatical in their defense. Objectivity was almost impossible to come by in the decade after 1852. But during the turmoil of those years, when journalists and authors were pouring into Salt Lake City, there arrived two professional Gentile observers who, if not entirely objective in their opinion, were inclined toward moderation in their published reports of what they witnessed. One of these was Horace Greeley, who disapproved; the other was Captain Richard Burton, who approved.

When the forty-eight-year-old Horace Greeley arrived, by stagecoach from

the East, in Salt Lake City during July of 1859, he was already as nationally famous as Brigham Young, his senior by ten years, was infamous. Publisher of the celebrated New York *Tribune*, he was often America's conscience and one of its foremost opinion makers. In his crackling pages he opposed woman suffrage, the theater, easy divorce, business monopoly, and slavery. Persistently he advocated high tariffs, Irish independence, prohibition, strong unions, and the draft laws. He opened his pages to an odd variety of geniuses: Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, Karl Marx. With considerable foresight he advised the nation's young men to go west. At last, because he was curious about Mormonism, Brigham Young, and plural marriage, he went west himself.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of July 13, 1859, Horace Greeley sat down across from Brigham Young, who was backed by two of his grown sons, Heber C. Kimball, and a number of other Church functionaries. Horace Greeley began to pose his questions, and Brigham replied with pleasing frankness. "He spoke readily," Greeley told his readers, "not always with grammatical accuracy, but with no appearance of hesitation or reserve, and with no apparent desire to conceal anything, nor did he repel any of my questions as impertinent. He was very plainly dressed in thin summer clothing and with no air of sanctimony or fanaticism. In appearance, he is a portly, frank, good-natured, rather thick-set man of fifty-five, seeming to enjoy life, and to be in no particular hurry to get to heaven."

After a brief exchange on general topics, Greeley, the crusading abolitionist, wanted Brigham's views on the burning subject of slavery, which his Prophet predecessor had once denounced.

"What is the position of your church with respect to slavery?" Greeley wanted to know.

"We consider it of divine institution," said Brigham serenely, "and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants."

"Are any slaves now held in this territory?"

"There are," admitted Brigham.

"Do your territorial laws uphold slavery?"

"Those laws are printed—you can read for yourself. If slaves are brought here by those who owned them in the States, we do not favor their escape from the service of those owners."

Apparently Greeley was somewhat nettled. "Am I to infer that Utah, if admitted as a member of the Federal Union, will be a slave state?"

Brigham, who wanted desperately to be admitted to the Union, knew which way the wind was blowing and played it diplomatically. "No, she will be a free state," he declared flatly. "Slavery here would prove useless and unprofitable. I regard it generally as a curse to the master. I myself hire many

laborers and pay them fair wages; I *could not afford to ovm them.* I can do better than subject myself to an obligation to feed and clothe their families, to provide and care for them in sickness and health. Utah is not adaptable to slave labor."

Somewhat calmed, Greeley inquired about other aspects of the Church structure and finally arrived at the subject that, next to slavery, interested him (and his readers) the most. But first a preparatory question.

"Can you give any rational explanation," Greeley asked, "of the aversion and hatred with which your people are generally regarded by those among whom they have lived and with whom they have been brought directly into contact?"

Brigham did not so much as blink. "No other explanation," he said, "than is afforded by the crucifixion of Christ and the kindred treatment of God's ministers, prophets, and saints in all ages."

The preliminaries were completed. Greeley plunged ahead. "How general is polygamy among you?"

"I could not say. Some of those present have each but one wife; others have more; each determines what is his individual duty."

"*What is the largest number of wives belonging to any one man?*" Greeley wanted to know.

"I have fifteen," said Brigham. "I know no one who has more, but some of those sealed to me are old ladies whom I regard rather as mothers than wives, but whom I have taken home to cherish and support."

"Does not Christ say that he who puts away his wife, or marries one whom another has put away, commits adultery?"

"Yes, and I hold that no man should ever put away a wife except for adultery—not always even for that. Such is my individual view of the matter. I do not say that wives have never been put away in our church, but that I do not approve of that practice."

The interview had lasted two hours, and, for his part, Greeley felt that it had been fair give and take on both sides. Yet, during the eight days he continued to report to New York City from Salt Lake City, the subject of plural marriage continued to weigh heavily on his mind. He tried to divert himself with other observations: Mormons and Gentiles did not mix socially; sermons in the new Tabernacle were too verbose and too rambling; the mass of Mormons were "honest and sincere" in their faith, although possibly "this so-called religion (with all others)" might be "a contrivance for the enslavement and fleecing of the many, and the aggrandizement of the few"; Brigham Young was a dictator, and as a result all Federal officials were rendered impotent, should be withdrawn, and the territory itself (after being reduced in size) should be left to the Mormons as a private and autonomous reservation; "more than a thousand barrels of whisky have been sold in this

city within the last year" despite the fact that the Latter-day Saints prohibited the drinking of hard liquor; the laborer's lot in Utah was more difficult than his lot in Kansas.

But what continued to fascinate Horace Greeley above all else were the numerous plural wives. This "degradation… of woman to the single office of child-bearing" troubled him deeply. The wives of polygamy seemed lifeless, inert, inactive. Eight years later, an English visitor, William Hepworth Dixon, would experience the same sensation: "I have never seen this sort of shyness among grown women, except in a Syrian tent." According to Greeley: "No Mormon has ever cited to me his wife's or any woman's opinion on any subject; no Mormon woman has been introduced or has spoken to me; though I have been asked to visit Mormons in their houses, no one has spoken of his wife (or wives) desiring to see me, or his desiring me to make her (or their) acquaintance, or voluntarily indicated the existence of such a being or beings." Before leaving Salt Lake City, Horace Greeley reported his final judgment on the subject: "I do not believe the plural-wife system can long endure, yet almost every man with whom I converse on the subject seems intensely, fanatically devoted to it, deeming this the choicest of his earthly blessings. With the women, I am confident it is otherwise; and I watched their faces as Elder Taylor, at a social gathering on Saturday night, was expatiating humorously on this feature of the Mormon system, to the great delight of the men; but not one responsive smile did I see on the face of a woman. On the contrary, I thought they seemed generally to wish the subject passed over in silence."

On August 25, 1860, little more than a year after Greeley left Utah, Captain Richard Burton, the fabulous English explorer, Orientalist, author (not yet knighted), rode into Salt Lake City on a covered wagon, after a nineteen-day journey from St. Joseph, Missouri. At thirty-nine, Burton had lived nine lives. Sent down from Oxford, he had become a captain in the Bombay Native Infantry. When the British Intelligence requested a report on conditions in Karachi, Burton presented them with an essay on sexual perversions among the Indians. At home in Goa as well as Somaliland, he had discovered Lake Tanganyika and Victoria Nyanza. He had mastered a dozen languages, including Jataki, an Afghan dialect. Seven years earlier, determined to become one of the few white men to visit forbidden Mecca, he dyed his skin brown, memorized the intricate Mohammedan ritual, and had himself circumcised in a painful operation. Then, disguised as a Pathan haji, he successfully entered Mecca. The practice of polygamy in Eastern countries intrigued him, and now that the Mormons were practicing it, he was eager to see how it worked in the West. He believed in polygamy, perhaps because it was bizarre and exotic, and defended it, much to the distress of his future wife, Isabel. Defensively she always reminded visitors that, after all, Richard

was satisfied with having one wife and that “he is a *domestic* man *at* home, and a homesick man away!”

Attired in wide-brimmed hat, English shooting jacket, flannel shirt, and buckskins, Burton came to Utah armed with Bartlett’s *Dictionary of Americanism*, two pistols, and a long knife. A savagely handsome, mustached giant, he wore his hair cropped close to the skull to prevent scalping by Indians (and would later lecture the London Anthropological Society on the art of scalping). For his first meeting with Brigham Young—arranged by the recently appointed governor of the territory, 240-pound Alfred Cumming, of Georgia—Burton respectfully changed his rough attire to fashionable stovepipe hat and dark frock coat.

At noon of August 31, 1860, Captain Burton was led by Governor Cumming into Brigham Young’s office, where the Prophet and several aides were waiting. After introductions and handshaking Burton sat on a sofa and observed the man he had crossed an ocean and a continent to see.

“I had expected to see a venerable-looking old man,” wrote Burton in *The City of the Saints* the following year. “Scarcely a grey thread appears in his hair, which is parted on the side, light colored, rather thick, and reaches below the ears with a half curl… The forehead is somewhat narrow, the eyebrows are thin, the eyes between grey and blue, with a calm, composed, and somewhat reserved expression… The nose, which is fine and somewhat sharp pointed, is bent a little to the left. The lips are close like the New Englander’s, and the teeth, especially those of the upper jaw, are imperfect. The cheeks are rather fleshy, and the line between the *alae* of the nose and the mouth is broken, the chin somewhat peaked, and the face clean shaven, except under the jaws, where the beard is allowed to grow. The hands are well made, and not disfigured by rings. The figure is somewhat large, broad-shouldered, and stooping a little when standing.

“The Prophet’s dress was neat and plain as a Quaker’s, all grey homespun, except the cravat and waistcoat. His coat was of antique cut, and, like the pantaloons, baggy, and the buttons were black. A necktie of dark silk, with a large bow, was loosely passed round a starchless collar, which turned down of its own accord. The waistcoat was of black satin…

“Altogether the Prophet’s appearance was that of a gentleman farmer in New England—in fact, such as he is… He is a well-preserved man, a fact which some attribute to his habit of sleeping… in solitude. His manner is at once affable and impressive, simple and courteous: his want of pretension contrasts favorably with certain pseudo-prophets that I have seen… He shows no signs of dogmatism, bigotry, or fanaticism, and never once entered—with me at least—upon the subject of religion. He impresses a stranger with a certain sense of power: his followers are, of course, wholly fascinated by his superior strength of brain… Of his education I cannot speak: ‘men not books,

deeds not words' has ever been his motto: he probably has, as Mr. Randolph said of Mr. Johnston, 'a mind uncorrupted by books'… He assumes no airs of extra sanctimoniousness, and has the plain, simple manners of honesty. His followers deem him an angel of light, his foes, a goblin damned: he is, I presume, neither one nor the other… He has been called hypocrite, swindler, forger, murderer. No one looks it less."

The ensuing conversation took one horn. In the early sparring Burton was curious about an unusual pistol and a rifle which hung from the wall. Brigham explained that one of them was "a newly invented twelve-shooter" to replace the obsolete six-shooter. The Prophet was interested in the motive behind Burton's visit. Burton told him that "having read and heard much about Utah as it is said to be, I was anxious to see Utah as it is." Happily Brigham tried to describe Utah "as it is"—dwelling largely on the subjects of agriculture and livestock. There was a lively exchange on the territorial violence and massacres reported to the rest of the nation. Brigham referred to these as strictly "Indian wars" and complained that the wounding or death of two or three was always exaggerated to twenty by the time the news reached the outside world.

At last Burton determined to speak aloud what had been on his mind throughout the interview. He told Brigham that he was fascinated by Mormonism and its customs and that he would like to be taken into the Church and baptized inside the mysterious Endowment House. Brigham, who had been briefed on Burton's proclivity for collecting odd cults, was prepared. "No, Captain," he said gently, "I think you have done that sort of thing before." (Curiosity in Mormon rites did not diminish through the years. In more modern times, according to John Gunther, author Sinclair Lewis asked one of Brigham's successors, David O. McKay, if he might explore the Mormon Temple, which had replaced the Endowment House. "Yes," said McKay. "All you have to do is adhere to the faith, give up alcohol and tobacco, and donate to the Church one tenth of your income in perpetuity."

Refused admittance to the Church, Burton defended his sincerity. He had, he said, traveled from the Old World to the New simply to become part of a people "sensible enough to permit polygamy." Persuasive though his visitor's argument was, Brigham would not relent. Instead he firmly changed the subject. Had his visitor, in his African explorations, covered the same ground as Dr. David Livingston, the Scottish missionary? Burton replied that he had traveled ten degrees north of Zambezi and the Victoria Falls. One of the Apostles present, Albert Carrington, rose to locate Burton's route on a wall map but moved his finger too near the equator. Brigham called to Carrington, "A little lower down." Carrington obeyed, dropping his finger lower on the map. This was accurate and Burton was impressed. "There are many educated men in England," he wrote, "who could not have corrected the mistake as

well." With this the interview was terminated, and Burton left without the license to practice polygamy, which he had hoped to acquire.

Burton remained almost a month in Salt Lake City and continued to study polygamy as an outsider. He had arrived favorably disposed toward the doctrine. What he saw at firsthand did not disappoint him. "To the unprejudiced traveller," he wrote, "it appears that polygamy is the rule where population is required, and where the great social evil has not had time to develop itself. In Paris or London the institution would, like slavery, die a natural death; in Arabia and in the wilds of the Rocky Mountains, it maintains a strong hold upon the affections of mankind… The other motive for polygamy in Utah is economy. Servants are rare and costly; it is cheaper and more comfortable to marry them."

Of course, admitted Burton, the Mormons had, with plural marriage, reduced romance and love "into a calm and unimpassioned domestic attachment." The monogamous company of two encouraged tenderness; the polygamous company of three made it rather a crowd. Still, perhaps this was not too bad. "Womanhood is not petted and spoiled as in the Eastern States; the inevitable cyclical revolution, indeed, has rather placed her below par, where, however, I believe her to be happier than when set upon an uncomfortable and unnatural eminence."

Before leaving Utah for California, Panama, and England, Burton came to this conclusion: "The Mormon household has been described by its enemies as a hell of envy, hatred, and malice—a den of murder and suicide. The same has been said of the Moslem harem. Both, I believe, suffer from the assertions of prejudice or ignorance. The temper of the new is so far superior to that of the old country, that, incredible as the statement may appear, rival wives do dwell together in amity; and do quote the proverb 'the more the merrier.'… They know that nine tenths of the miseries of the poor in large cities arise from early and imprudent marriages, and they would rather be the fiftieth 'sealing' of Dives than the toilsome single wife of Lazarus."

The immediate publicity given the plural-marriage proclamation by the press, and later by reporters of such stature as Captain Richard Burton and Horace Greeley, created the false impression that all Mormon males in Utah practiced polygamy. This was not the case. At that time the Church stated that no more than ten out of every hundred Mormon males practiced the doctrine. In recent years Mormon historians have revised the figure downward to three out of every hundred. However, in *The Western Humanities Review* for 1956, Stanley S. Ivins, after a study of polygamy, came to this conclusion: "From information obtainable from all available sources, it appears that there may have been a time when fifteen, or possibly twenty, per cent of the Mormon families of Utah were polygamous. This leaves the great majority of the Saints delinquent in their obligation to the principle of plurality of wives."

The great majority of practicing polygamists were among the wealthy and prominent Mormons of the territory. Plural marriage was an economic indulgence. Only the rich could enjoy it without hardship. And usually only the important members of the Church were in constant contact with the hierarchy and were thereby, even if they had objections, forced to conform. Among those upon whom polygamy was thrust, because they were wealthy and prominent, was Chauncey Webb. He was industrious. He was favored by fortune. As in Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, he had prospered again. The result was that his single surviving daughter, Ann Eliza Webb, was to be raised, at least in the eyes of the Church, by five mothers.

The Webbs, it will be remembered, arrived in Salt Lake City on September 20, 1848. In their covered wagon there were two Mrs. Webbs: Ann Eliza's mother, Chauncey's first and legal wife, Eliza Churchill, and his younger first polygamous spouse, Elizabeth Taft, who was pregnant throughout the trek westward. The parents of Elizabeth Taft, having arrived in Salt Lake City earlier, were on hand to welcome the incoming caravan. The Tafts lived in a cabin in the large fort and for a short time gave shelter to the Webbs. But Chauncey, independent as ever, soon erected a tent and housed his two wives, three sons, and Ann Eliza in this and in the adjacent covered wagon. At once he began to build a large adobe home. Within three months it was completed —"the first residence of any pretension in Salt Lake City," Ann Eliza said proudly, and the second eastern-style home in the community.

Chauncey's new home was needed by his family. For a month before, in February of 1849, Elizabeth Taft had given birth to a son, Seth Taft Webb. "This was a time and an occurrence to try my mother's spirit," wrote Ann Eliza of her stepbrother's birth, "but she bore it bravely, and showed herself a true Christian and a brave and sympathetic woman. She took all the care of the mother and child, and was as devoted to the former as though she had been a daughter. If there was any bitterness in her heart towards her, she certainly did not show it at this crisis of her life. It was a trying position for her to be placed in… a woman caring for another during the birth of a child whose father is her own husband."

Elizabeth Taft's recovery from childbirth was a slow process. In 1876, recalling this event that had occurred in 1849, Ann Eliza wrote: "In the absence of physicians, almost the entire responsibility and care of Elizabeth and the boy, my half brother, fell upon my mother. She has often said that in the care she gave her at that time, she tried to make amends for some of the bitterness of feeling she had shown before. She never expected to be reconciled to the family arrangement; but as it was inevitable, she was determined to do everything in her power to help everyone concerned in it, and to make the new home in Zion as peaceful and harmonious as possible. It was a difficult task, but then polygamy is made up of difficult tasks and trying

situations… My mother grew very much attached to the child, and he clung to her with loving affection. He is twenty-six years old now, but he has always kept his love for ‘Auntie’ as he calls my mother, and she has an unflagging interest in him. Indeed, all Elizabeth’s children are fond of my mother, and our two families have been more united than polygamous families usually are. This has been due to the common sense of the two mothers, who … knew each that the other was not to blame for the mutual suffering. For twelve years they lived together under one roof, eating at the same table, with not an unkind word passing between them.”

The first Mrs. Webb’s tolerance of the second Mrs. Webb was all the more commendable for the fact that, in the twelve years that they all lived together, the second Mrs. Webb gave Chauncey at least six children, four boys and two girls. Before her death in 1909, Elizabeth Taft produced eleven children in all. Despite this continuing evidence of her husband’s enthusiasm for his second mate, the first Mrs. Webb usually kept her jealousy to herself.

Yet married life was not altogether so serene in the Webb household. Time and again, watching her husband retire for the night with Elizabeth Taft, the first Mrs. Webb contemplated suicide. The responsibility that kept her from the ultimate act, she always said, was her duty to the four-year-old Ann Eliza. What she could endure the least—since the second Mrs. Webb was a soft, affectionate, outgoing girl of twenty-one at the time—was being witness to the endearments and attentions that Elizabeth Taft gave to Chauncey.

Once, when the two wives were alone, Eliza Churchill Webb turned on her younger rival and, uncontrolled, begged her not to show her love for Chauncey in her presence.

In a rare outburst of anger Elizabeth replied, “Do you think I have no trials?”

“God forgive me and help us both,” Eliza said with quick sympathy. “*I know you have.*”

Thereafter the first Mrs. Webb kept her feeling to herself and her peace with the other wife. But she could not hide her feelings from Chauncey, who had too easily become reconciled to this harem aspect of his domestic life.

On one occasion, seeing his first wife moody, and knowing for what reason, Chauncey shook his head and said to her, “I don’t understand it. You were willing at first. What is the difficulty now? Don’t you think Elizabeth a good, true girl?”

“Yes, indeed,” agreed Eliza Churchill.

“Don’t you believe in polygamy, then?”

“Yes, I suppose so. I wish to live *my* religion.”

“Well, what is to be done about it?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Eliza Churchill miserably, “but I can’t endure this life.”

“And yet you entered it voluntarily,” said Chauncey relentlessly. “I don’t understand you. You are strangely inconsistent.”

Eliza Churchill herself did not understand—torn between a faith she loved and a doctrine of the faith she abhorred—and retreated, as ever, into defeated silence.

Soon, however, Chauncey was absorbed with the basic problem of survival. He had brought a store of food from Nebraska, but in no time at all the cupboard was bare. “It was a year of deprivation and self-denial,” Ann Eliza recalled. All through that trying year the Webbs subsisted on the monotonous fare of rough bread made of unground wheat, dried buffalo meat, occasional pieces of dried fruit, and rationed cups of tea. While his wives attended to the four children and knitted clothing—for there were no ready-made garments to purchase—Chauncey commuted to the nearby canyons, from which he hauled timber to construct a carriage factory.

By the time Ann Eliza was five her father was again making money. Foodstuffs were being imported from neighboring states, and Chauncey could pay a dollar and fifty cents a pound for sugar and five dollars a pound for tea. Gradually sheep’s wool replaced buffalo’s wool for clothes, and soon ready-made calico dresses and men’s suits were arriving by the wagon load.

Because Chauncey had risen in the community, Brigham Young considered him a valuable Mormon. As such, Chauncey was ordered to serve a tour of duty as a missionary in Sheffield, England. Tied closer to the Church than ever by polygamy—for if he left the Church, where would he be accepted with the two wives he loved so dearly?—Chauncey was forced to comply. The mission abroad carried with it no expense money or salary. His wives and children had to live off his small savings. This was not enough, and during the husbandless period Eliza Churchill Webb shut down the large house and moved in with Elizabeth Taft’s parents. Eliza Churchill Webb also resumed teaching in Salt Lake City and in the not too distant town of Payson, Utah. The five-year-old Ann Eliza accompanied her mother to schools in both cities and was herself enrolled in classes.

When Chauncey returned, at last, from his English interlude, he immediately reopened his carriage factory. Again the big house was occupied, the entire family united under one roof, and the diminished savings account replenished. Increasing prosperity brought with it, as before, polygamous commands from Brigham Young. Once again Chauncey was advised to pay deference to the new doctrine by taking more wives. Any objections he may have originally had to plural marriage had all but vanished. Apparently, like many of the 3,000 Mormon missionaries roaming England, and especially Wales, he had acquired a taste for the fair-complexioned English country girls. Now, in 1856, these pretty, robust young ladies poured into Salt Lake City by the hundreds, many of them dragging their possessions behind them

in handcarts. Since Chauncey was obliged to further populate his bed and board, he decided (without too much pain, it may be assumed) that these English immigrants might be more decorative than the home-grown product. And so, as Ann Eliza remembered vividly, when she was twelve years old her forty-four-year-old father took three more wives, all at once, and all less than half his age, and suddenly there were five Mrs. Webbs.

To Eliza Churchill Webb and Elizabeth Taft Webb were now added Lizzie Webb, a second Eliza Webb, and Louisa Webb. The new third and fourth wives were hand-picked by Chauncey, but the fifth wife boldly picked him. Louisa, said Ann Eliza's mother sarcastically, "selected 'our' husband." The avalanche of new femininity hardly dismayed the first and legal wife at all. "My mother had already had her burden given her," wrote Ann Eliza, "and after she had been obliged to see another woman taking the love and care that by right belonged to her, and her alone, she grew indifferent on the subject, and declared that a few wives, more or less, would make little difference to her now, and she would be as well satisfied with one fourth of a husband as with one half." However, the second Mrs. Webb, Elizabeth Taft, did not accept the situation with the same resignation. It was the first time she had been superseded. Although she did not complain, she suffered a nervous breakdown and was put to bed, until she was able to gather her wits and adjust to the harem.

Desperately Chauncey tried to establish a working democracy in his household. At all costs, he realized, jealousy and rivalry must not be permitted. When he bought one wife a new hat, he bought all the wives new hats. But perfect equality was not always easy to maintain. One Christmas, when the wives were living in separate homes, Chauncey was given the gift of a turkey by a friend. Knowing that one turkey was not enough for five tables, and knowing also that his funds were at that moment too low to allow for the purchase of five turkeys, he decided to hide it and avoid conflict. Unfortunately his first wife, Ann Eliza's mother, discovered the bird.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked Eliza Churchill. Trapped, Chauncey replied, "Why, you may have it if you wish. I'm sure I don't know what else to do with it."

With malicious glee at her husband's discomfort, and because she resented the younger English wives, the first Mrs. Webb determined to strike a blow for seniority. "Oh, I really do not care about it," she said. "I have chickens, you know, and I like them equally well. In fact, I think I prefer them. But I would like to decide which of the other wives shall have the turkey, if you will allow me—"

"All right. I have given it to you, you know. You shall make what disposition you please of it."

"Thank you," said the first Mrs. Webb. "I should like Elizabeth to have it.

She deserves it, and needs it, too, and would be grateful for it. And then, too, you see, she, being next to me, would claim it by right of seniority."

Chauncey conceded. The first wife gave the precious turkey to the second wife, in order to put the third, fourth, and fifth wives in their places. And the unhappy Chauncey, to prevent rebellion, had to dip into his savings to placate the English wives at Christmas.

Chauncey's problem with multiple wives was not his alone. Susa Young Gates, one of Brigham's daughters, wrote: "Any man who fancied that the women of his household would have the heavy end of the trouble-balance while he soared into easy indulgence was due for a rude awakening. Mormon women were persons, not a sex-group. The man soon found that his particular life-job was that of domestic moderator." Once, in 1856, Brigham lost patience with the complaints of plural wives. During a Sunday sermon he offered to set all of the "whiners" free of their marriages in two weeks. "It is said that women are tied down and abused," he told his congregation; "that they are misused and have not the liberty they ought to have; that many of them are wading through a perfect flood of tears… Prepare yourselves for two weeks from tomorrow; and I will tell you now, that if you will tarry with your husbands, after I have set you free, you must bow down to it, and submit yourselves to the celestial law. You may go where you please, after two weeks from tomorrow; but, remember, that I will not hear any more of this whining."

In a study of 175 old polygamous families, one of Brigham's grandsons Kimball Young, the noted sociologist, found that only 23 per cent of the marriages suffered "considerable" to "severe" conflict, whereas 77 per cent were "moderately" to "highly" happy. In troubled plural households most of the wives' miseries came from insecurity. But often an insensitive husband could compound the conflict. Heber C. Kimball caused himself no end of trouble when he remarked to his friends, "I think no more of taking another wife than I do of buying a cow."

Chauncey Webb did not regard his mates as cows. As a consequence, the five Mrs. Webbs got along exceptionally well. They did not like polygamy, but they liked Chauncey, his home, his income. They were careful not to quarrel with one another, and they were careful to keep their resentments from their mutual husband. The rare grumblings that occurred most often took place when Chauncey showed partiality and excessive affection for Lizzie, his third wife.

The only major insurrection ever staged in the family was provoked by Louisa, the fifth wife. Because Louisa had aggressively proposed to Chauncey, the other wives privately nicknamed her "The Free-will Offering." Of all the wives, Louisa alone refused to share the drudgery of household labor. She had once been an actress, she said loftily, and menial work was beneath her. Needless to say, the other wives were irritated—"disgusted with

her selfishness and indolence," was the way Ann Eliza put it.

During this period Chauncey moved all his wives and children to a farmhouse seventy miles west of Salt Lake City. Shortly after, he traveled east to perform a mission for the Mormon Church. During his absence Louisa cast her gaze on some of the handsome young hands toiling on the farm. Whether or not she committed adultery with these men, or merely flirted with them, is not known. But when Chauncey returned from his brief mission, his first wife reported Louisa's "familiarity with the men employed on the farm" and "her undignified behavior." Chauncey promptly had a showdown with his errant fifth wife. He made his displeasure clear and told her that she would be sent away unless she learned to "behave in a more becoming and dignified manner."

Chastized, Louisa was all regret and apology. When Chauncey left the farm to drive some cattle to Salt Lake City, Louisa took to her bed. During the day little Ann Eliza looked in on her, and Louisa groaned that she was dying and gave Ann Eliza a premature inheritance of watch and chain. Frightened, Ann Eliza summoned her mother, who came running.

"Oh, I am dying," cried Louisa. "I shall never cause any more trouble in your family… My husband does not love me, and I cannot live. All I desire is death."

"It is not always so easy to die when we desire," said the first Mrs. Webb crisply.

"But I have made sure," replied Louisa. "I have taken poison."

Uncertain if Louisa had attempted suicide or was merely reverting to her acting career, the first Mrs. Webb finally summoned son Edward Milo from the field and sent him scurrying up the Salt Lake City road after Chauncey. It was evening when Chauncey returned. He was told that if Louisa was dying, it was the longest deathbed scene in history. Grimly he entered her bedroom, demanded to know what she had done, and then ordered an antidote of cayenne pepper and tea. Louisa fought the concoction but was forced to swallow it and then, for the first time, almost expired.

By the following day Louisa had fully recovered. Chauncey faced her frankly and informed her that he had suffered enough from her indolent ways and melodramatic scenes. She was, he said, disrupting his household, and she must leave. Tearfully Louisa confessed the poison hoax, insisting that she had only wanted to win his sympathy, and begged to remain. Chauncey would not have it. He took Louisa to Salt Lake City, divorced her, and was thereafter satisfied with his four other less theatrical wives. As for Louisa: she married a second husband in Salt Lake City, divorced him after three weeks, then married a third husband in southern Utah, and on a trip to St. Louis absconded with all of his money to England.

Meanwhile, this curious domestic life, with its topsy-turvy values, was

leaving a permanent brand on young Ann Eliza Webb. Growing to maturity, first with one mother, then with two, then with five, then with four, gave Ann Eliza insecurities she would never overcome. Under polygamy she acquired an enduring—although for a long time an unconscious—hostility toward all men. The figures of Chauncey and the five Mrs. Webbs would cast long shadows across Ann Eliza's future and gravely affect her matrimonial attempts.

Perhaps the announcement of polygamy in 1852, when she was eight years old, was the most profound single early influence in Ann Eliza's life. Yet there was another influence that same year of almost equal importance. As an infant of eight days, Ann Eliza had been blessed by her parents' Church. Not until she was eight years old did she formally become a member of that Church. On her eighth birthday Ann Eliza was baptized by Bishop Taft, the second Mrs. Webb's father.

"I was exceedingly terrified," Ann Eliza recalled. "I was taken to a pond, and the bishop carried me in his arms, and plunged me into the water; and so great was the nervous shock that I could not think of it without a shudder for years after.

"My mother was glad when it was over, for I was made a child of the Church, and by this rite she consecrated me to God and the Mormon faith."

From the date of her baptism, until attaining maturity and independence a decade later at eighteen, Ann Eliza Webb's growth coincided with the strengthening of the Church and the occurrence of many of the most dramatic events under Brigham Young's reign.

Three years after Ann Eliza's baptism, in the week preceding her eleventh birthday in 1857, there took place the worst tragedy to befall the Church since the public announcement of polygamy. This was the cold-blooded crime committed in southwest Utah that came to be known as the Mountain Meadows massacre.

Undoubtedly the killings at Mountain Meadows were the direct result of a series of tensions the Mormons had been under in the twenty-four previous months. Perhaps it all began with the ill-fated handcart migration scheme, a fiasco with which the Webb family was closely involved.

Because the winter of 1855 had been a particularly severe one in Utah—acres of crops had succumbed to sleet and snow, and livestock had frozen to death or starved—the Mormon Perpetual Emigrating Fund was low. The steady stream of converts from Europe was usually supplied with relatively expensive covered wagons for the journey west. Now there was no money for these wagons. But rather than halt emigration, Brigham Young proposed one of his favorite ideas that had not as yet been tried. "We cannot afford to purchase wagons and teams as in times past," he announced in September 1855. "I am consequently thrown back upon my old plan—to make handcarts

and let the emigration foot it… A company of this kind should make the trip in sixty or seventy days. I do know that they can beat any ox train crossing the plains. Let all the Saints who can… come while the way is open before them… let them come on foot, with handcarts, or wheelbarrows."

In England, and on the Continent, Brigham informed potential converts that it required only forty-five dollars a person to travel from Liverpool to Salt Lake City. That and strong legs. All the rest would be furnished free. At once, in England alone, 1,300 newly baptized Saints signed on for the unique trip. Within a year 3,000 would have attempted, and only a portion completed, the handcart journey.

Meanwhile Brigham chose Iowa City as the jumping-off point. Lumber was purchased in St. Louis, and the most expert carpenters and blacksmiths in Utah were hurried to Iowa City. Franklin D. Richards, an Apostle of seven years and the possessor of ten wives, was put in charge of the operation. Because Richards was determined to see the scheme work, he decided to draft the most experienced supervisor available. From Liverpool, Richards wired Chauncey Webb, then in his fourth year as a missionary in Sheffield, England, and ordered him to speed to the port at once. After a rough passage of fifteen days Chauncey arrived in Boston. Ten days later he was in Iowa City, overseeing the construction of the two-wheeled carts, which resembled rickshaws.

From the first, Chauncey experienced difficulties. As a conscientious veteran carriage maker, he demanded the best of material and craftsmanship. Each cart had to be sturdy enough to survive a journey of 1,300 miles. But his Mormon superiors felt that cheaper carts would perform as well as expensive ones. Firmly Chauncey was told "to make the wagons on as economical a plan as possible." Every new day Chauncey faced a fresh harassment. According to Ann Eliza: "They did not wish to furnish iron for the tires, as it was too expensive; raw hide, they were sure, would do just as well. My father argued this point with them until at last the agents decided to give up raw hides, and they furnished him with hoop iron. He was annoyed and angry, all the while he was making the carts, at the extreme parsimony displayed."

Handcarts were waiting when the first large company of emigrants arrived. Two groups of 446 foreign Saints, using ninety-six handcarts and five commissary wagons, set out from Iowa City in early June 1856. The men pulled the carts, loaded with personal effects, while their women and children walked beside them. Thus they dragged and marched their way across Iowa, Nebraska, Wyoming, and Utah, suffering no more than callouses and a few Cheyenne scares, for almost four months. Upon their arrival in Salt Lake City in late September, Brigham pronounced his scheme a success and encouraged the remainder to follow in the same way.

Meanwhile hundreds of foreign Saints were crowding into Iowa City,

where Chauncey's production of carts lagged far behind demand. To meet the demand, the hierarchy overruled Chauncey's meticulous requirements, and carts were thrown together, made out of the greenest, unseasoned timber. When two large groups of converts, delayed by a wait for carts, planned to depart for the West behind schedule in late summer, Chauncey vigorously protested. He explained that an early winter on the plains and in the Rocky Mountains would destroy them. Again he was overruled by the hierarchy. The two groups were allowed to go ahead.

On July 15, 1856, the first group, led by Captain James G. Willie, left Iowa City. In this company there were 404 men, women, and children from England, Scotland, Germany, and Scandinavia. They were accompanied by a food wagon and eighteen cows. Two weeks later they were followed by Edwin Martin's group of 576 new Saints.

Still confident that they would beat the winter, for they had been covering twenty miles a day, both groups started west from Nebraska in the latter half of August. Willie's group ate well: a portion of buffalo meat, a pound of flour, and some rice, sugar, and tea or fresh milk for each of the 404 persons daily. But by the time the group trudged into Fort Laramie, their rations were depleted, and the fresh supplies of food they expected to find in Laramie were not there. Worse, the winter had begun. With determination Willie pressed onward. It was foolhardy. Obstacles came fast and furious now. Indians raided them. Cows were lost to a buffalo stampede. Food seemed to evaporate, and daily rations were cut to a meager ten ounces per person.

The winter was at its worst. Snowdrifts impeded progress. Raging sleet storms and below-zero weather struck the group, whose members possessed only summer clothing and had no means for contriving shelter. As Chauncey had warned, the cheap handcarts dissolved in the terrible weather—axles snapped, and green lumber contracted and hoops popped off the wheels. Death came daily. On the Sweetwater the survivors of a night found fifteen had frozen to death in their sleep.

Long before, Chauncey, riding on a swift mule train, had passed these companies, and, back in Salt Lake City, he realized what their fate might be. He reported the emergency to Brigham. Then, after his four-year separation from his family, he spent two days with his wives and children but thereafter worked day and night preparing a relief train.

Brigham rushed one of his sons and a friend, on a light wagon, to meet the Willie and Martin groups and tell them that help was coming. Ann Eliza watched the relief wagons, carrying her father and her brother Edward Milo, as they rolled out of Salt Lake City. On November 9, 1856, the relief wagons, carrying warm clothes and bedding, potatoes and flour, found the Willie group snowbound in the hills. Of the 404 who had followed Willie, seventy-seven were dead. Shortly after, the Martin group was found, with sixty-seven

dead.

"I remember distinctly when these companies came in," wrote Ann Eliza. "Their wretched condition impressed me at the time, and I have seen many of them since, poor crippled creatures, stumping about the city."

Brigham blamed everyone, and everyone blamed Brigham. So furious was Chauncey with his superiors that he spoke of leaving the Church. But once again, as long before, Ann Eliza's mother dissuaded him. Shortly after, the handcart scheme was quietly abandoned. All that Chauncey ever got out of it were his third, fourth, and fifth wives.

The very famine and depression that had created the handcart fiasco also created another crisis in the Church. Many Mormons, tired of Utah's unyielding soil and hard weather, apostatized and moved to sunnier California. Other Mormons ignored the Sabbath, misused polygamy, committed adultery, quarreled with friends and neighbors. Clearly something had to be done. And so that fanatical period, known in the Church as the Reformation, came into being.

Ann Eliza saw its beginnings when she was still eleven and residing in Payson, seventy miles south of Salt Lake City, where her mother taught school while her father was abroad. A Utah Savonarola named Joseph Hovey came to Payson to preach. As Ann Eliza recalled it: "He commenced by accusing the people of all sorts of misdeeds and crimes, and he denounced them in the most scathing and the rudest fashion, and they trembled under his fierce denunciations, and cowered before him as before the face of an accusing angel. He accused them of theft, of licentiousness, of blackguardism, of lying, of swindling and cheating, of hypocrisy and lukewarmness in their religion, and of every other sin… 'Repent, confess, and be re-baptized' was his urgent call, 'and all your sins shall be forgiven you; yea, verily, for so hath the Lord promised.'"

A religious revival fanned out now, uncontrolled, encouraged by Brigham and a new young Apostle named Jedediah M. Grant. Missionaries moved from door to door, questioning sinners, demanding to know if they had committed adultery, shed "innocent blood," taken to drink, and paid their tithing of 10 per cent to the Church. Anger against religious "lethargy," as Brigham termed it, and against backsliders and anti-Mormons rose to a fever pitch. There were, or there were said to be, numerous killings. According to Ann Eliza, one of her female cousins had stopped over in Utah en route to California. She was married to a Gentile named Hatten. Ann Eliza's relatives were distressed that one of their number had married out of the faith. These relatives consulted the authors of the Reformation and were advised: "Put Hatten out of the way. It is a sin and a shame to have so good a woman dragged around the world by a Gentile." In a few days it was announced that Hatten had been murdered by "Indians."

Two Federal officials in Utah reported this state of affairs to Washington, D.C. Judge George P. Stiles claimed that the records of the Supreme Court of Utah had been stolen and burned. They had, indeed, been removed but not destroyed. Judge William W. Drummond—who infuriated the Mormons by permitting his mistress (for whom he had abandoned wife and family in Illinois) to sit beside him on the bench in Salt Lake City—accused the Reformation of three crimes of murder. In Washington, President James Buchanan was deeply disturbed by this intelligence. He thought that he sniffed rebellion in the air. Without further investigation he decided to act. Addressing Congress, Buchanan stated, "This is the first rebellion which has existed in our Territories; and humanity itself requires that we should put it down in such a manner that it shall be the last."

On May 28, 1857, Secretary of War John B. Floyd—to prevent Utah Territory from seceding from the Union—ordered 2,500 crack troops assembled in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with instructions to march on Salt Lake City. Although preparations were made in secrecy, two Mormons in Kansas learned what was happening. They passed the news on to Abraham O. Smoot, a Church elder, who rode west with the sensation.

On July 24, 1857, Brigham and several thousand Saints were celebrating the leading Mormon holiday at a camping ground called Silver Lake. Festivities were at their height when Smoot, after twenty days on the road, and three others galloped in with the alarming news that the United States was about to attack Utah.

Brigham and his aides were furious and defiant. From the pulpit Brigham challenged the approaching army. "Come on with your thousands of illegally-ordered troops," he shouted, "and I will promise you, in the name of Israel's God, that you shall melt away as the snow before a July sun." To this Heber C. Kimball added contemptuously, "Good God! I have wives enough to whip out the United States…" Brigham, and not he alone, believed that the invasion had an economic motive. Secretary of War Floyd, Brigham said, was out peddling army contracts that would profit him five million dollars. Later events proved this accusation partially true. The invasion of Utah would cost the United States fifteen million dollars. In 1860 Buchanan would force Secretary of War Floyd to resign over army contract scandals.

The Mormons prepared to make a fight of it. After a decade in the valley, they were powerful and self-assured. Declaring martial law, Brigham reactivated the old Nauvoo Legion. Two thousand men were called to arms, with 3,000 more standing by. A small, fleet ranger force, under Major Lot Smith, was sent forth to harass the United States Army. Major Smith hit at army supply trains, in one instance putting the torch to seventy-four wagons. He and his men stampeded army cattle herds and introduced a scorched-earth policy by burning the prairie grass. Another force reduced Fort Bridger and

Fort Supply to charred ash heaps. And the main part of the Nauvoo Legion, 1,250 men, was deployed above the narrow entrance to Echo Canyon. Meanwhile, anticipating a breakthrough, Brigham had Salt Lake City vacated, except for a few demolition teams trained to burn down the capital if necessary. Everything from grain to the presses of *The Deseret News* was moved out of Salt Lake City, and 30,000 Saints, the Webbs among them, were evacuated to the south.

The United States Army of 2,500 men was led by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, a Kentuckian who, it was said, had once knocked down a fellow West Point cadet named Jefferson Davis to win a tavern keeper's daughter and who now was spoiling for another fight. But there was no fight. Cooler heads were at work. Governor Cumming had arrived to treat with Brigham, as had Colonel Thomas L. Kane, a Philadelphian who was the Mormons' best friend in the East and whose life had once been saved by them in Nebraska when he had fallen ill. While Johnston and the army fumed in Camp Scott, the arbitration talks went on through the bitter winter. On June 26, 1858, Johnston was permitted to walk his restless troops through emptied Salt Lake City and to take up a more permanent position at Camp Floyd, forty-five miles away.

At last the Webbs and other Mormon families returned to Salt Lake City. And Johnston remained, hovering nearby. Irritation and discomfort continued. One group of army hotheads planned to kidnap Brigham, but Governor Cumming put a stop to this threat. Camp followers and discharged soldiers introduced debauchery and thievery into the city.

At last peace was achieved. Buchanan pardoned the Mormons. Johnston sailed from California for home. In 1861 the 2,500 troopers abandoned Camp Floyd and returned east to fight in the Civil War. A year after, Johnston engaged Ulysses S. Grant at Shiloh and was killed in the action. Governor Cumming suffered out the conflict in a northern prison. Secretary of War Floyd became a Confederate officer. Buchanan gave way to President Lincoln, and Lincoln told the Mormon publisher Stenhouse, "When I was a boy on the farm in Illinois there was a great deal of timber on the farms which we had to clear away. Occasionally we would come to a log, which had fallen down. It was too hard to split, too wet to burn and too heavy to move, so we plowed around it. That's what I intend to do with the Mormons. You go back and tell Brigham Young that if he will let me alone, I will let him alone."

Peace was wonderful, but it came too late to give the Mormons any serviceable good will in the hostile East. For, at the very time Buchanan was preparing for the so-called Utah War, a leading Mormon was involved in a scandal that confirmed the prevailing notion that all male Latter-day Saints were licentious and lustful.

In 1857 the clean-shaven, handsome, stocky Parley Parker Pratt, fifty years

old, was one of the leading lights of the Church. A member of the twelve Apostles, a poet, and a polygamist with six wives, Pratt was one of Brigham's foremost missionaries. As Ann Eliza heard the story, and as the anti-Mormon press featured it, Pratt was on a mission in San Francisco when he converted to the Church one Eleanor McLean, the attractive wife of a California merchant named Hector H. McLean and the mother of three young children. Not only did Pratt win Mrs. McLean for the Church, but he won her for himself. He seduced her, lived with her in sin, and convinced her to become his seventh wife when they returned to Utah. According to the Mormon version of the affair, Mrs. McLean was already a Mormon and separated from her husband when Pratt came along. Among other things, said the Mormons, Hector McLean was a wife beater and drunkard. Pratt had no interest in her, said the Mormons, beyond helping her recover her three children from her cruel ex-mate.

By both accounts, Hector McLean sent the three children down to his father-in-law's house in Louisiana. Swiftly Mrs. McLean followed her children and, by promising to renounce Mormonism, regained control of one of them. In a letter, she had arranged a rendezvous with Pratt on an Indian reservation in Arkansas. Learning of this, Hector McLean charged Pratt with alienating his wife's affections and abducting his child. Pratt was arrested and placed on trial in Van Buren, Arkansas.

Pratt suffered much anguish during the trial. Certain letters that he had penned to Mrs. McLean concerned themselves more with temporal affairs than Church business. Stung by this lechery, Hector McLean once pulled his pistol in court but was physically prevented from using it. An unruly Arkansas mob, all on McLean's side, packed the court and growled ominously. However, when Mrs. McLean absolved Pratt of all initiative in wooing her and abducting the child, the judge could do no more than acquit him.

The following morning, Pratt, on horseback, rode out of Van Buren, intent on joining an emigrant train to Utah and expecting to be joined there by Eleanor McLean. The outraged husband, however, had other ideas. Hector McLean, determined to take the law in his own hands, mounted up and rode into the countryside in pursuit of Pratt. There was a lively chase, with McLean firing after Pratt, on the gallop, and missing. Slowly McLean gained on the Apostle, and then, when they were side by side, McLean whipped out a bowie knife and lunged at Pratt, driving the knife home to the hilt. Pratt pitched from his saddle, mortally wounded, while McLean halted and put a bullet into him for good measure. Returning to the city, McLean was hailed as a hero by all Arkansas. He was neither arrested nor tried but recovered his third child and traveled freely to Louisiana. In Utah the mourning populace held the late Parley Parker Pratt up as a martyr—and saw all natives of

Arkansas as butchers.

The handcart fiasco, the famine, the Reformation had all contributed to building tension toward a climactic explosion. But it was the assassination of Pratt, as well as the approach of Buchanan's army, that finally triggered this explosion. In the early autumn of 1857 a Captain Fancher led a train of thirty wagons and 137 emigrants through Salt Lake City and then southwest toward California. Most of the members of this train were from four counties of Arkansas, and they were well-behaved family folk; however, the remainder were self-styled "Wildcats" from Missouri, and they were rowdies. The stage was set for the infamous Mountain Meadows massacre.

As the Fancher train members marched through the southern settlements of Utah, according to the Mormon version, they antagonized and provoked their hosts at every stop. The Mormons alleged that these emigrants boasted of having been part of the mobs that drove the Church from Missouri and of having participated in the murder of Joseph Smith. Because they were denied supplies, they tore down farmers' fences, called Mormon women whores, threatened to raze the town of Fillmore, and promised to return soon from California and help the Federal army in crushing the Saints. Also, it is said, they used arsenic to poison the springs at Corn Creek, thereby causing the death of many Indian cattle.

After passing through Cedar City, Utah, where they bought fifty bushels of wheat, the Fancher party proceeded to a point thirty-five miles southwest known as Mountain Meadows. This was a green valley, eight miles long and one mile wide, where the party hoped to rest a few days and feed its 600 head of cattle. Back in Cedar City, a group of Mormons under Colonel Isaac C. Haight, head of the local militia, was meeting in a church to debate the conduct of the Fancher party. Half of the group was for attacking and avenging Joseph Smith and Parley Pratt; the other half was for letting the emigrants leave in peace. On Monday, September 7, 1857, Haight sent a messenger by horseback to Salt Lake City to obtain Brigham Young's advice. The messenger reached the Prophet three days later, and the Prophet told him, "Go with all speed, spare no horse flesh. The emigrants must not be meddled with, if it takes all Iron County to prevent it. They must go free and unmolested."

But from the moment the messenger had galloped out of Cedar City, the Fancher party camped on Mountain Meadows was embattled. At daybreak of September 7, a large band of Indians attacked the emigrants. The first Indian volley killed seven whites and wounded sixteen others. Hastily the emigrants drew their wagons into a circle and then retaliated. Several Indians fell, two dead chiefs among them. At once the Indians sent word for other tribes to reinforce them and summoned John Doyle Lee, a prosperous Mormon farmer at Harmony, who was the government Indian agent for the area, to lead them.

The emigrants threw up dirt breastworks and settled down for a siege. After two days, realizing their supplies and water were low, they voted to send to Cedar City for help. Three emigrants on horseback tried to break out of the ambush. Two headed west and were promptly cut down by the redskins. The third, William Aiden by name, catapulted his mount out of the circle and dashed toward Cedar City. But Mormons were on the scene with the Indians, and one Mormon rose and shot Aiden, killing him instantly. This last action was witnessed by the beleaguered emigrants, and now they knew that a portion of their enemy were Mormons. The knowledge sealed their doom.

At this point there were fifty-four white men, including Colonel Haight, John D. Lee, and a Major John M. Higbee, and perhaps 300 Indians attacking the Fancher train. A council of war was held. Most of the Mormons felt that the emigrants must be massacred, so that there would be no adult witnesses against the Church. The few who feebly protested against a blood bath were silenced by the angry Indians, who threatened them. Through the long, charged night, whites and redskins debated the plan, and by dawn it was agreed upon.

With the first sun of Friday, September 11, two Mormons, Lee and William Bateman, carrying a white flag of truce, rode a wagon slowly to the circle of emigrant wagons, where a white flag was also mounted. Lee told the Fancher party that he was a Saint, there to rescue them, and that he knew what terms would appease the Indians. He advised the emigrants to throw all their rifles, pistols, knives in his wagon, march out unarmed, and leave all their wagons and cattle to the Indians. Lee promised that in this way the Mormons could escort them safely, on foot, back to Cedar City. The emigrants had no choice but to agree and comply.

Members of the Fancher party filed out into the open. Seventeen of their children under the age of seven were placed in one wagon, while a woman and three wounded men were placed in another wagon. The other women of the party and the older children were marched across the Meadows under Mormon guard. A quarter of a mile behind them the column of male emigrants marched, each with an armed Mormon beside him. Suddenly, in a shallow heavily surrounded by scrub oak, Haight shouted, “Halt! Do your duty to God!”

Each Mormon guard wheeled and shot dead the emigrant beside him. Other Mormons fired into the women and children, and those who tried to escape were mowed down by the surrounding Indians. The woman and three wounded men in the wagon were also slaughtered. Only the seventeen youngsters under seven, who would be poor witnesses, were permitted to survive. In minutes the cold-blooded mass murder was over. The corpses of 120 men, women, and children littered Mountain Meadows, and the stench

would arouse a nation.

Leaving the Meadows, the Mormons enjoyed a hearty breakfast then returned to the scene of the crime. The Indians had stripped and mutilated the bodies before leaving with their loot. The Mormons buried the dead in such a shallow grave that wolves soon uncovered it and scattered flesh and bone across the entire Meadows. Two days later the Mormons received the message from Brigham Young—"They must go free and unmolested"—and only then did the full import of the deed strike Haight. "Too late," he groaned, "too late!" Then and there the killers pledged to keep their participation a group secret.

Eighteen days later John D. Lee arrived in Salt Lake City and reported the "Indian massacre" to Brigham Young. At the terrible news Brigham wept and wrung his hands miserably as he paced the floor. "This is the most unfortunate affair that ever befell the Church," he cried. "I am afraid of treachery among the brethren that were there. If anyone tells this thing so that it will become public, it will work us great injury."

But soon the news was out and everywhere. Even Ann Eliza Webb, then thirteen, heard about it. "I was but a child at the time," she wrote later, "but I recollect, perfectly, hearing that an emigrant-train had been attacked by the Indians, and all members of the band, with the exception of a few of the smaller children, killed. I remember also *seeing* these children…

"Young as I was, I felt the mystery that shrouded the whole transaction, and I knew instinctively, as did many others, that something was hidden from the mass of the people by their leaders, which it was not deemed prudent to reveal; but the terrible truth was not then suspected by the faithful Saints."

In two months the news had spread throughout the country, and the Mormons were considered suspect. Investigation was in the air. Brigham decided to beat the government to it. He sent George A. Smith to the scene to look into the affair. Smith reported that Mormons had been in the vicinity but that the actual massacre had been committed by 200 Indians. Satisfied, Brigham so informed Washington, D.C. The government was less than satisfied. Judge John Cradlebaugh and a military escort were ordered to Iron County to locate every Mormon who had been in the massacre area and to serve thirty-six writs of arrest. The Mormon participants, forewarned, disappeared. From a cave above his farm, Lee watched the investigators through field glasses. Not one of the thirty-six writs was served.

Through the years public indignation and pressure did not abate. Although Haight and John D. Lee, especially Lee, were the Prophet's close friends, Brigham thought it wise to excommunicate them from the Church. Later Haight was quietly brought back into the Church. Lee, to keep himself out of sight, left his ten surviving wives—there had once been nineteen of them and sixty-four children—to care for his homes in Harmony and Washington, Utah,

and himself moved to an isolated cottage near the Colorado River. Still the massacre was dinned in Brigham's ears. Before Congress, Judge Cradlebaugh blamed it squarely on the Mormons and called it "one of the most cruel, cowardly, and bloody murders known in our history." At last, to put an end to the accusations of seventeen years, Brigham agreed that Lee be placed on trial.

On November 7, 1874, Lee was visiting several of his wives in Panguitch, Utah. The United States deputy marshal came calling. Lee hid in the hog pen. He was found and arrested. He went on trial in the summer of 1875. Although cut off from the Church, Lee knew that he had its support, for it was on trial too. The jury contained nine Mormons and three Gentiles. Witnesses were properly vague. No one in Utah was surprised that it was a hung jury and that Lee was freed. But throughout the country the public press shouted sham and hoax, and Brigham saw that a sacrificial lamb was needed to still the angry voices.

Once again, this time in the autumn of 1876, Lee was placed on trial. It is possible that Brigham made a deal with the government: convict Lee, if you will, and we will help you, but drop all charges against the rest of the participants. So it was Lee, alone, against the world. This time the jury was not rigged. This time silent witnesses became talkative. This time memories were improved. The indictment was that Lee, alone, had led the Indians. The verdict was guilty of murder in the first degree. The sentence was death by a firing squad at the scene of the crime.

Awaiting execution, Lee wrote a book, which his attorney smuggled to the world, exposing Mormonism, branding Brigham a "tyrant," accusing Haight of planning and directing the massacre. At last, on the now arid soil of Mountain Meadows, Lee sat watching his pine coffin being hammered together. A photographer requested his picture. He agreed to pose if three copies were sent to the three wives who had remained loyal to him. Now, to the press, he made a speech. He spoke favorably of Joseph Smith. He lashed out at Brigham Young. "See what I have come to this day," he said. "I have been sacrificed in a cowardly, dastardly manner! It is my last word—*It is so.*" He sat on the edge of his coffin, calmly listened to a Methodist minister's prayer, then stared at the five-man firing squad. "Center my heart, boys," he called out. "Don't mangle my body!" The volley rang out. Lee fell backward into his coffin. Mountain Meadows was avenged at last.

Through the years, out of the mass of lies and contradictions, several facts are now generally agreed upon by cooler heads. Brigham Young was probably not responsible for the massacre. His responsibility, if any, was more subtle. His aggressive sermons against Gentiles and aliens had infected his underlings with fighting fever and made possible Mountain Meadows. Yet even these sermons can be justified in the light of the constant persecution the

Church had suffered. Most likely the responsibility for the massacre rests equally on the shoulders of the large number of whites and Indians at the scene. John D. Lee was no more guilty than fifty other Mormons, and with his unfair execution he became another of history's little victims, those scapegoats seemingly so necessary to the continuance and balance of society.

Against this agitating background of controversy and violence, Ann Eliza Webb grew to maturity. She left youth behind her at an early age. When she was twelve she had several proposals of marriage from "church dignitaries." In Utah it was not uncommon for the older polygamists to set their caps for nymphets. "One enthusiastic elder," said Ann Eliza, "secured for a wife a girl of eleven years, and brides of thirteen and fourteen were often seen…" But Chauncey Webb would not have his only daughter a bride at twelve, and all offers were rejected.

In school Ann Eliza's education was narrowly Mormon. She was constantly taught to accept polygamy. "I gave very little heed to the advice," she said, "and set about making my own romance, just as girls everywhere do, in my imagination." At twelve Ann Eliza did not find life under one roof with the five Mrs. Webbs disagreeable. But her mother did. The first Mrs. Webb entreated Ann Eliza's father to give her a separate residence. This he refused to do. In desperation the first Mrs. Webb asked permission to take Ann Eliza on an extended vacation to Skull Valley, seventy miles out of Salt Lake City, where Ann Eliza's brothers had a log cabin and tended grazing land. To this Chauncey readily consented. When the other wives heard of it, one of them begged to go along. The first Mrs. Webb tried to resist. As she told Ann Eliza, "Why can't she see and understand that I want to make my escape from this confusion and trouble and go away alone?" Nevertheless, she took the other wife with them to Skull Valley.

A short time afterward Brigham Young was inspired to form an express company featuring a unique carriage of his own design. The carriages were to be manufactured in Chicago, and Brigham ordered Chauncey to Illinois to supervise the work. Though there had been no payment for either the long mission to England or the handcart work in Iowa, this time Brigham promised a salary. Nevertheless, until he had the money, Chauncey was forced to practice economy. Toward this end he asked his sons to enlarge the log cabin in Skull Valley, and then be sent his remaining three wives there. The first Mrs. Webb was furious. She told Ann Eliza "that she never, in her whole life, felt so rebellious as she did then." She even vowed not to pray for Chauncey's safe return from Chicago. And if the wives were not trial enough, the first Mrs. Webb was soon burdened by another worry. Her older son, Gilbert, was suddenly ordered to the Sandwich Islands, as Hawaii was then called, for a five-year mission. The first Mrs. Webb's health deteriorated, and Ann Eliza was filled with anguish and afraid that her mother might die.

Chauncey's assignment in Chicago was a failure in every way. Brigham had determined to establish a company called "B. Young's Express" and carry passengers, freight, and mail between Independence, Missouri, and Salt Lake City. Dissatisfied with existing means of transportation, he had meticulously designed a new kind of team-drawn wagon. Five times the size of an ordinary covered wagon, it was rectangular in shape, with twelve windows and mammoth wheels. Carriage makers in Chicago ridiculed the proposed monstrosity, until one, eager for the Mormon trade, agreed to undertake the construction with Chauncey's assistance. Brigham had wanted fourteen carriages built; instead, Chauncey had two made. Each one filled an entire freight car. No passenger was ever known to travel in either one. Disappointed, Brigham used them for freight until they fell apart, and then he abandoned the entire business.

When Chauncey billed the Prophet for his services in Chicago, Brigham hedged. He preferred to regard Chauncey's labors as "a gratuity to the church." By then Chauncey was too sick to protest. He had fallen ill in Chicago, and now, in Salt Lake City, he requested the first Mrs. Webb to nurse him. She refused and sent the second Mrs. Webb, Elizabeth Taft, in her place. But Chauncey still wanted his first wife beside him. Again he sent for her, and again she refused. She felt triumphant in being so necessary to him, but she felt the old bitterness too.

Finally Chauncey's pleadings, conveyed by messenger, made her feel ashamed. With Ann Eliza she hurried back to the house in Salt Lake City. Briefly she was happy taking care of her husband.

But when the four other wives gathered to assist her, the familiar anger welled. "All the heart had gone out of my work," she told her daughter. "Feeling seemed entirely dead. I hadn't the slightest emotion for the man who lay before me there, and I was indifferent to his fate as though he had been an entire stranger… I did not wish that he might die; I was simply indifferent."

Eventually Chauncey's fever broke. The moment that he was on the road to recovery, the first Mrs. Webb took Ann Eliza and fled south to visit relatives. After that the first Mrs. Webb resumed teaching in Payson, spending almost an entire year apart from her husband.

In September of 1860, the first Mrs. Webb reluctantly returned to the family she detested in Salt Lake City. The home-coming was marked by Ann Eliza's sixteenth birthday, and almost immediately after Ann Eliza fell ill of a lung ailment. Physicians being held in low regard in those days, Ann Eliza was treated only by the Mormon clergy, mainly Bishop Taft. His medication consisted of prayer. No recovery appeared evident, and it was feared that Ann Eliza might succumb to consumption. At this point Heber C. Kimball decided that Ann Eliza could only be saved by being given her Endowments or confirmation in advance, a singular honor, since this ceremony was rarely

bestowed on adolescents. As a preliminary step, Ann Eliza was rebaptized by immersion in the water font of the Twelfth Ward meetinghouse. Almost immediately, as if by some miracle, her health began to improve. The final step, that of confirmation, was scheduled to take place in the mysterious Endowment House, on the northwest corner of Temple Square.

The Endowment House was a two-story adobe structure—"with a pent roof and four windows, one blocked up," Burton observed—used for plural marriages, confirmations, and other holy ceremonies. Like the sacred Kaaba of Mecca, the building was off limits to non-believers. Because its rituals were performed behind closed doors, wild rumors of the activities within were spread by anti-Mormons. The Endowment House became notorious in the eastern part of America and abroad as a den of medieval black magic and sexual orgies. P. T. Van Zile, Federal District Attorney in Utah, called it that "sink-hole of iniquity." John Hyde, who claimed to have been initiated into the wonders of the House, wrote: "It is impossible to state all the licentiousness, under the name of religion, that these sealing ordinances have occasioned." According to Burton: "The Endowment House is the place of great medicine, and all appertaining to it is carefully concealed from Gentile eyes and ears: the result is that human sacrifices are said to be performed within its walls." Actually the sacred rites enacted in the House, derived from the Bible, Milton, and Masonry, were tame and harmless.

For confirmation on her sixteenth birthday, Ann Eliza arrived at the Endowment House carrying her lunch and special religious robes that her mother had made for her. After removing her shoes and giving her name and personal data to a clerk, Ann Eliza went inside and joined several other Mormons who were to be confirmed. She was led to a spacious bathroom—a curtain hanging in the center divided male from female—then stripped naked and placed in a tub of water. Now Eliza R. Snow, the poet who was one of Brigham's plural wives, washed Ann Eliza from head to toe, all the while murmuring prayers. After that Ann Eliza's body was thickly covered with olive oil, while Sister Snow blessed the limbs of her body, mentioning "loins" and "breasts" so that "you may bring forth a numerous race." The oil nauseated Ann Eliza, and she could hardly proceed with the ceremony.

Presently she was dressed in a plain white muslin shift, subsequently covered with nightgown and skirt, then the flowing linen ceremonial robe her mother had prepared. After being given the secret holy name of Sarah, Ann Eliza, joined by her fellow Mormons, witnessed and participated in a playlet representing "the Creation, the Fall, and the final Restoration of Man to his first glory." The main actors, although costumed, could be identified by Ann Eliza. Brigham performed the role of Plead God; Heber C. Kimball had the role of Jehovah; Daniel H. Wells was Jesus, and Eliza R. Snow was Eve.

When the playlet was done, a Masonic orientation was offered. "We were

given certain signs, pass-words, and grips, arranged in a circle, and told to kneel," said Ann Eliza. "The women were also required to cover their faces with their veils; then we were bidden to raise our right hands heavenward, and take the oath of implicit obedience and inviolable secrecy."

By the day's end, Ann Eliza's illness had fled, but so had her sense of enchantment. "I was perfectly exhausted by what I had passed through," she said, "and quite dissatisfied. It was so different from what I expected that I was saddened and disappointed by it all. My feelings of the morning had undergone a most radical change. I was no longer buoyed up by the enthusiasm of religious fervor; that had died away, and I was as hopeless and apathetic as I had before been eager and buoyant.

"Soon after I took my Endowments, Brigham Young showed his consciousness of my existence. He had always seen me frequently, but had regarded me and treated me as a child. He seemed suddenly to realize that I had grown to be a young lady, and the first intimation he gave of it was by interfering with my beaux."

In 1861, at seventeen, after mourning the untimely death of Lorenzo Dow, her youngest brother, Ann Eliza Webb had begun to attend social affairs with members of the opposite sex. Her favorite boy friend was Finley Free, a younger brother of Emmeline Free, Brigham's favorite plural wife at the time. Finley Free was a gay extrovert, with many interests in common with Ann Eliza, and she adored him. The Frees had their own residence, and often Ann Eliza visited there. She continued seeing Finley during 1862, her eighteenth year, and enjoyed accompanying him to plays at the recently opened Salt Lake City Theater.

Apparently Brigham twice saw Ann Eliza on Finley's arm at the theater. Out of some inexplicable impulse Brigham called on Ann Eliza's mother and stated that Ann Eliza must stop hanging out with "those Frees" for they were "a low set." He demanded that the first Mrs. Webb intervene and not permit Ann Eliza to see Finley again. The first Mrs. Webb obeyed, and Ann Eliza obeyed. But Ann Eliza was vocal in her resentment at Brigham Young's interference.

One evening Ann Eliza was gossiping with a group of her girl friends, all of whom knew of Brigham's interference in Ann Eliza's romantic affair. One girl thought that the older polygamists always interfered because they wanted the younger women for themselves.

She turned to Ann Eliza. "Perhaps Brother Brigham means to marry you himself."

The very thought was outrageous to Ann Eliza. "But he won't," she snapped. "I wouldn't have him if he asked me a thousand times—hateful old thing."

Inevitably a report of Ann Eliza's declaration got back to the Prophet.

Perhaps he was annoyed; more likely he was intrigued. After that, he watched for Ann Eliza, and one afternoon, riding in his carriage, he saw her walking home. He drew up next to the sidewalk.

"You are some distance from home," he said to Ann Eliza. "Get in and ride with me. I will carry you there."

Ann Eliza had no choice but to oblige. They rode in silence a few moments.

Suddenly Brigham turned to his attractive companion and spoke. "I heard you said you wouldn't marry me if I wanted you to ever so much."

Taken aback, Ann Eliza stammered out an evasive denial.

"I think," wrote Ann Eliza later, "Brigham's mind was made up from that time that I should one day be his wife."

If so, Brigham must have known that it would not be simple to bridge the gap of years between them. This was 1862, when Brigham was sixty-one and Ann Eliza was still seventeen. But in the fall of that year, on Ann Eliza's eighteenth birthday, Brigham Young made a move designed to bring her closer to his watchful eye and to make her a glamorous member of the community.

"He sent for me to come to the theatre as a member of the company," said Ann Eliza, "for he wished to make an actress of me."

Ann Eliza Webb's public career was about to begin.

IV: THE FIRST MRS. DEE

"Do you think that I am an old man? I could prove to this congregation that I am young; for I could find more girls who would choose me for a husband than can any of the young men."

—Brigham Young

"If I were placed on a cannibal island," Brigham Young once remarked, "and given a task of civilizing its people, I should straightway build a theatre for the purpose."

In 1862, before the coming of the railroads, Salt Lake City was as isolated from the refinements of civilization as almost any cannibal island. Fourteen grim years of hardship and toil had been devoted to building up the community. There had been little time for levity, amusement, relaxation. Of course, the men had polygamy, which, if sometimes a trial, was more often a form of enjoyment. As Edith Young Booth, a granddaughter of Brigham Young, informed this writer: "Men had a wonderful time under polygamy." But Brigham was sensible enough to realize that something more was wanted, not only by the men, but by the women and by families, something to relieve the daily drudgery of frontier living. And so Brigham elected to give the population—which had bread but wanted circuses—a form of circus, an extraordinary theater, the largest showcase west of Chicago, a theater the equal in dimension and opulence of those in New York and London and Paris.

On July 1, 1861, construction was begun on what would be formally called the Salt Lake City Theater but was informally referred to as Brigham's Theater. Actually, for all but two years of his life, this theater was the Prophet's personal property. Once, after a dozen years as proprietor, he sold land and building to a corporation of six (that included two of his sons) for $100,000, then, twenty-four months later, bought it back for $116,000. At his death the property was worth $125,000.

Yet, because of a series of fortunate circumstances, the original cost of construction and decoration was low. Since the structure was the Prophet's own, labor was acquired cheaply. A party of sixteen diggers, eight stonecutters, fifteen carpenters, and three millwrights worked under the direction of William H. Folsom, the architect. A year later Folsom would also contribute his daughter to Brigham as the Prophet's twenty-fifth and favorite wife. The building supplies, in charge of Brigham's son Joseph A. Young, were obtained for next to nothing. Except for a quarter of a million adobe bricks, hauled by wagon, most of the materials came from Camp Floyd. After President Lincoln had recalled Johnston's army to the East, to fight in the Civil War, he sanctioned the sale of abandoned government supplies to the highest bidder. Promptly Brigham spent $40,000 in gold to buy $175 army

wagons for ten dollars each, twenty-eight-dollar sacks of flour for fifty-two cents each, and, above all, the discarded building materials for his theatrical project.

In nine months the Salt Lake City Theater was completed. At the suggestion of a visiting London architect, the interior, capable of seating 2,500 persons, was made to resemble the Drury Lane Theater. The proscenium arch was sixty feet deep. The parquet circle or orchestra was furnished with imported chairs with cane backs and seats, including a single rocking chair for the Prophet. The elaborate boxes and galleries were equally comfortable.

When Fitz Hugh Ludlow, the New York critic, short-story writer, drug addict, and promoter of Mark Twain, visited Salt Lake City, he was Brigham's guest at the theater shortly after it opened. Ludlow was astonished by what he saw: "My greatest surprise was excited by the really exquisite artistic beauty of the gilt and painted decorations of the great arch over the stage, the cornices, and the moulding above the proscenium-boxes. President Young, with a proper pride, assured me that every particle of the ornamental work was by indigenous and saintly hands."

Brigham directed Ludlow's attention to the central chandelier—"a richly carved circle," noted Ludlow, "twines with gilt vines, leaves, and tendrils, blossoming all over with flaming wax- lights, and suspended by a massive chain of golden lustre."

"Where do you think we got that central chandelier," asked Brigham, "and what d'ye suppose we paid for it?"

"I suppose you paid a thousand dollars for it in New York."

"Capital! I made it myself!" exclaimed the Prophet. "That circle is a cartwheel which I washed and gilded. It hangs by a pair of gilt ox chains, and the ornaments of the candlesticks were all cut after my patterns out of sheet tin!"

This magnificent homemade showcase was officially opened to the public on the evening of March 6, 1862. The premiere audience attended by invitation only. The first night had more the air of a religious revival meeting than a theatrical opening. To start proceedings, Brigham called the audience to order. A choir then sang, "Lo, on the Mountain Tops Appearing." Then Daniel H. Wells read a prayer of dedication. "O Lord," he beseeched at one point, "preserve forever this house pure and holy for the habitation of Thy people. Suffer no evil or wicked influences to predominate or prevail within these walls; neither disorder, drunkenness, debauchery, or licentiousness of any sort or kind; but rather than this, sooner than it should pass into the hands or control of the wicked or ungodly, let it utterly perish and crumble to atoms."

After the prayer came "The Star-Spangled Banner" and then the principal

speech by Brigham Young. He had, he said, been piously raised to regard the theater as a pit of Satan. There were still Christians who considered all amusement as evil. Yet nothing created by God could be evil—only the frailties of men could make it so. This theater, then, could be a resort of pleasure if it were kept pure as a tabernacle.

During his address Brigham briefly turned drama critic and stated his prejudices. He preferred comedy to tragedy, he made it clear. “If I had my way,” he said, “I would never have a tragedy played on these boards. There is enough tragedy in everyday life and we ought to have amusement when we come here.” Later in his speech, to make certain that he was fully understood, Brigham belabored the point further. “Tragedy is favored by the outside world; I am not in favor of it. I do not wish murder and all its horrors and the villainy leading to it portrayed before our women and children: I want no child to carry home with it the fear of the fagot, the sword, the pistol, or the dagger, and suffer in the night from frightful dreams. I want such plays performed as will make the spectators feel well…” According to Ann Eliza Webb, Brigham also told the audience, “I will not have a Gentile on this stage… I’ll have a Saints’ theatre, for the Saints, and we’ll see what we can do ourselves.” Before the end of the year, however, both Gentiles and tragedies would cross the stage.

After several more orators, a short play *The Pride of the Market* by J. R. Planche was performed. Then the stage was cleared for dancing to the accompaniment of an orchestra of twenty led by a professor from England. On this note of gaiety the dedication ceremony ended.

Two days later, under the management of Brigham’s favorite son-in-law, Hiram B. Clawson, the Salt Lake City Theater was thrown open to the public. The orchestra seats were seventy-five cents each; the seats in the third circle or upper gallery were fifty cents each. The curtain went up at seven o’clock. Between March 8 and April 19, two plays were performed each night, for fifteen nights, to packed houses. This brought the first season to a successful closing, and the theater was darkened through the summer and autumn, to open for its second season early on the evening of Christmas Day. For this second season there were some new faces among the Deseret Dramatic Association’s stock company, and among these one of the most attractive was that of eighteen-year-old Ann Eliza Webb.

Somewhat bewildered and decidedly nervous, Ann Eliza made her stage debut on the night of December 25, 1862, in what was advertised as a “mirth-provoking Irish farce.” The play was entitled *Paddy Miles’ Boy; or, Irish Mischief.* The cast of characters numbered seven, and the seventh, according to the program, was listed as “Jane Fidget… Miss Webb.” Two nights after her Christmas debut, Ann Eliza performed again, this time enacting the role of Caroline Leslie in *The Two Polts.* Four days after that she was seen once

more, playing the juvenile character of Blanche Howard in *Old Phil's Birthday.*

What bewildered Ann Eliza the most was Brigham's motive in ordering her on the stage. Possibly, she may have reasoned, the Prophet wanted to adorn his stage with beauty—at eighteen the brown-haired Ann Eliza was classically lovely and slender—or possibly he was sufficiently attracted to her to want her near his person. Certainly, she knew, no evidence of her ability as a Thespian had prompted his summons. "I had no particular talent or taste for the stage," Ann Eliza admitted, "and I knew absolutely nothing about the art of acting. I never had the slightest training or preparation for it, but plunged into it, entirely ignorant of what I was undertaking. I did 'juvenile business' with an occasional 'soubrette' part as a variation, but in the latter line I was not nearly so successful."

As an adjunct to her acting there had been another change in Ann Eliza's life. Because she was required at the theater for rehearsals in afternoons and performances in evenings, and because her home was a considerable distance from the theater, Brigham had decided that this daily traveling back and forth would be "extremely inconvenient." Therefore he asked the first Mrs. Webb if it would not be wiser to have Ann Eliza stay with his daughters and wives at the Lion House, his main residence near the theater, during the season. Ann Eliza's mother was flattered and agreed that her daughter should spend four nights a week at the Lion House and Sundays and two other days at home.

Reluctantly acceding to the arrangement, Ann Eliza moved into the three-story harem of twenty gables that Brigham had built seven years before. Here, in separate suites, twelve of his numerous wives lived. As often as possible, Ann Eliza avoided the wives and gave her attention to Brigham's daughters, many of whom were her own age. Ann Eliza had much in common with at least ten of the daughters, a buxom, lovely lot who had also been enrolled as members of the theatrical stock company and were starring en masse (their ankles shockingly exposed beneath blue tarlatan skirts) in *The Mountain Sylph.* One of these daughters, Alice Young, who married Hiram B. Clawson, and who became notorious for her love affairs, had sufficient talent to be given leading roles. Despite this honor, she performed, like Ann Eliza, as a duty. "I am not myself very fond of playing," she confessed to a visiting Englishman, "but my father desires that my sister and myself should act sometimes, as he does not think it right to ask any poor man's child to do anything his own children would object to do."

Except for the company of these robust girls Ann Eliza disliked the Lion House. She hated the excessive austerity, frugality, plurality in evidence. She was not seduced by its size and splendor. When the bell for breakfast rang out, Brigham's daughters, as was their rebellious custom, chanted, "Bread and butter and peach sauce!" Ann Eliza always joined them in the derisive chant,

for bread, butter, and peach sauce were monotonously on the table every morning of every day and had been for years. Impatiently Ann Eliza looked forward to the three days at her own home, where she might enjoy her mother's familiar and generous meals and avoid the piercing eyes of the Prophet.

Gradually, during the busy months that followed, Ann Eliza was less and less concerned with the Lion House, as she became more and more absorbed in the art of acting. Appearances on the huge stage were no longer nerve-racking now that she was acquiring experience and skill and had received applause and favorable notices.

However, Ann Eliza never took her minor talent seriously. She would never make "a brilliant success in it," she decided. "Though," she was quick to add, "I was something of a favorite, and had very pleasant things said of me, not only in the Salt Lake, but even in the California papers, by some persons who had seen me act. Whatever it was that kept me from being an absolute failure, I never knew. It certainly was not because I had prepared for my profession, for I had not; and I only went through the parts assigned to me as I fancied they should be given, and I never attempted any stage tricks or mannerisms. If I had, my doom would have been sealed. I fancy that my adherence to nature, and a constant refraining from striving for effect, had a great deal to do with my popularity; for I was liked, even though I was no artist, and it is not egotism for me to say it… My public was like a party of friends, and I was always on the best of terms with them, and grateful to them for giving me so much encouragement." In short, Ann Eliza did not overact, or hardly acted at all, but underplayed her roles, projecting them with simplicity and realism, and achieved success with the general public rather than among more demanding playgoers and critics.

Through the rest of the holiday season, and then during January, February, and March of 1863, the stock company staged a potpourri of mediocre plays such as *Secret Agent, That Blessed Baby, Damon and Pythias,* and *The Good-for-Nothing.* Ann Eliza appeared in several of these as a secondary bit player or ingenue but had stronger roles as Mrs. Fitzalian in *Simpson and Company* and as Emily Wilton in *The Artful Dodge.*

During Ann Eliza's entire acting career, and even for years after, the person of Brigham Young dominated the Salt Lake City Theater, backstage and from the orchestra. It was he who decided that Ann Eliza and the other Mormon players must furnish their own wardrobes and perform without salary. Later, in order to attract prominent outside actors and vaudevillians and lecturers, Brigham learned to pay handsomely. Eventually he paid his homegrown company too. He would allow no liquor, cigarettes, firearms, or infant children in the theater. It was one of the oddities of the showcase that Brigham permitted "merchandise, grain, and home manufactures" instead of

money for tickets. Because silver, gold coins, and greenbacks were not widely circulated in Utah, Brigham allowed patrons to deliver goods and livestock at the box office. The popular comedian, Artemus Ward, recollected, perhaps facetiously, that for a single night's appearance in the theater he received at the box office the following in lieu of cash: "20 bushels of wheat. 5 bushels of corn. 4 bushels of potatoes… 2 hams. 1 live pig. 1 wolf-skin. 5 pounds honey in the comb. 16 strings of sausages… 1 set children's under-garments, embroidered." One avid theatergoer, it is said, paid for his ticket with a turkey and received his orchestra seat and two spring chickens in change.

Brigham's firm hand also guided the plays that were shown and the actors who appeared in them. Of course, he was not without histrionic background himself: in the old days, in Nauvoo, he had enacted the High Priest in a play called *Pizarro;* in the Endowment House he played the lead in the drama of Creation; and from the pulpit, almost weekly, he demonstrated his wide range of dramatic abilities.

Brigham continued to be critical of tragedy and melodrama. Even Charles Dickens was not exempt. In 1869 *Oliver Twist* was presented, starring James A. Herne as Bill Sikes, co-leader of Fagin's gang, and Lucille Western as Nancy, a young street girl. In a climactic scene, played off-stage, Sikes, learning Nancy had exposed him, savagely beat her. Then, battered and bleeding, Nancy staggered on-stage and died before the footlights. On opening night, to make the scene more realistic, Lucille Western, as Nancy, pasted a slice of raw beef to one cheek, to simulate her face ripped to the bone, smeared her forehead with make-believe blood, and messed up her hair. When she staggered on-stage in this fashion, the sensation was immediate. She "was so revolting," reported John S. Lindsay, who saw the scene, "that several women in the audience fainted." Brigham was outraged. He demanded that *Oliver Twist* be withdrawn at once, and it was.

Sentimental romances concerned with monogamy were also frowned upon, not only by Brigham, but by other polygamists as well. According to Artemus Ward: "It will be remembered that when C. Melnotte, in the Lady of Lyons, comes home from the wars, he folds Pauline to his heaving heart and makes several remarks of an impassioned and slobbering character. One night when the Lady of Lyons was produced here, an aged Mormon arose and went out with his twenty-four wives, angrily stating that he wouldn't sit and see a play where a man made such a *cussed fuss over one woman.*"

Public nudity in musicals or dances—and this meant exposure of any area between ankles and knees—was severely censored by Brigham Young. Once, when a real ballet came to the Salt Lake City Theater, the dancers prepared to attire themselves in their regular French-style, below-knee-length bell-shaped skirts, or tutus. Worried, manager Clawson consulted Brigham, who, as expected, refused to let the ballet go on unless the dancers wore flowing skirts

down to their ankles. Clawson's aesthetic sensibilities were offended by this Puritanism, and he made out a traditional case for the revealing skirts but was sternly vetoed. The grumbling ballet opened as scheduled, the female dancers hampered by skirts almost to the floor. Brigham, who was on hand, clucked approval. Having seen the ballet once, he did not come again. Immediately Clawson began his private little war against censorship. Before the corps went on the second night, he took a shears and snipped six inches from each skirt. Every night of the week thereafter, before the curtain was raised, Clawson sliced six more inches from each skirt. On the sixth and final night the corps appeared wiggling and pirouetting airily, thighs and buttocks properly revealed and slender legs unencumbered, and the great audience was as enchanted as if it were in Paris. Not until the ballet was safely on its way East did Brigham learn of the deceit, and it was long before Clawson, consigned to hell's fires, could show his face again.

Brigham's interest in the morals of his players was no less devoted than his interest in the morals of their plays. He was in constant conflict with George Pauncefort, a brilliant English leading man who had made a hit as Armand Duval in *Camille* on Broadway and had excited Salt Lake City with his renditions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth.* When a character actor named David McKenzie played Uncle Tom in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* without a Negro accent, because Pauncefort had ordered him to do so, Brigham immediately rescinded the order and restored the accent. The Prophet tolerated Pauncefort because of his talent, until he learned, as one Mormon historian put it, something of the Englishman's "alleged mode of living." It appeared that Pauncefort and his pretty leading lady Mrs. Florence Bell, whom he had brought from Denver, maintained a behind-the-scenes relationship that was anything but platonic. Since Pauncefort had a contract, Brigham could not dismiss him. At the same time, he refused to condone a pair living in sin. While the Englishman appeared on his boards, Brigham refused to visit the theater or allow his wives, children, or associates to visit it. As soon as he could, Brigham dismissed Pauncefort.

However, long years after, Pauncefort gave other reasons for Brigham's disapproval. In 1897 Frank J. Cannon, son of George Q. Cannon, was traveling in Japan when one day he was startled to observe an English teahouse atop a hill. The teahouse bore a sign reading: "Shakespeare Tavern. George Pauncefort." Inside, Cannon found seventy-year-old Pauncefort with a Japanese wife and a copy of *The Deseret News.* At once the old actor recalled his falling out with Brigham and gave his version of it. "I was coming on magnificently in my art in Salt Lake, but I made two inevitable mistakes. I danced once too often at a party with the lovely Amelia Folsom, who was Brigham's favourite wife; and I fell in love, also, with his charming daughter… Not even my art, to which Brigham was devoted, was sanctified

enough to entitle me to a marriage union with a member of his family."

Over his Mormon players Brigham wielded more direct power. One day when an attractive, diminutive young Mormon convert, Sara Alexander, read lines for a friend who was absent, and was overheard by Brigham, she was commanded to undertake a stage career. As talent scout, Brigham was unerring, for Sara Alexander became the best of the Mormon actresses. Her fame would range from California to New York, and before her death in 1926, at an advanced age, she would appear in motion pictures with Norma Talmadge and William Farnum. But as a young girl, and for a while Brigham's protégée and ward, her romantic life was guided by his whims. When a non-Mormon actor visiting Salt Lake City fell deeply in love with Sara Alexander and proposed, she suggested that he make his intentions known to Brigham. The actor called on Brigham and stated his suit. But the Prophet had already made up his mind. "Young man," he said, "I have seen you attempt Richard III and Julius Caesar with fair success, but I advise you not to aspire to Alexander."

Sometimes, it was said, Brigham's interest in young actresses—as in the case of Ann Eliza Webb—was less fatherly. Once, according to Dr. Wilhelm Wyle, the German researcher, Heber C. Kimball gathered his family about him to pray for Brigham, when suddenly he halted and cried out, "I can't pray for him, but he needs it badly enough, for the greater the strumpet, the more brother Brigham is after her." The story, from an anti-Mormon source, is likely apocryphal, yet, as a matter of recorded fact, Brigham Young did have one protracted and public love affair with an actress. She was the justly celebrated and breath-takingly beautiful Julia Dean Elayne. "Brigham," said Ann Eliza Webb, "was madly in love with her."

Julia Dean was born in Pleasant Valley, New York, during 1830. She was a child prodigy and was put on the stage. At sixteen, appearing on the boards of the Old Bowery Theater in Manhattan, she found fame as Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame.* Her shy charm attracted Joseph Jefferson, the rising young actor only a year her senior and not yet renowned for his *Rip Van Winkle.* She became his mistress for a short period. Then, in 1855, when she was twenty-five, she met Dr. Arthur Hayne in Charleston, South Carolina, and married him. But matrimony was not for Julia Dean Hayne. Restlessly she went on the road, and by 1864, having taken a sailing vessel to Panama, ridden across the isthmus, and resumed her trip by boat, she was in San Francisco. After divorcing Dr. Hayne, she ran into a friend she had known in the East, John S. Potter, a sixty-year-old theater manager who was assembling a troupe to tour the western territories. Julia Dean Hayne joined Potter's company as leading lady and performed through California, then in Idaho, Oregon, and Montana. Wherever the company appeared, its members heard glowing tales of the fabulous and modern Salt Lake City Theater. Determined

to try their luck, the players left Montana in a crowded stagecoach for Utah. On July 26, 1865, the thirty-five-year-old Julia Dean Hayne set eyes on the capital of the Mormons.

An engagement of one week was immediately secured by Potter. On August 11, 1865, before a filled house, Julia Dean Hayne opened as Camille Gautier in Alexandre Dumas' *Camille.* So sensational was her performance that Brigham Young himself led the thunderous ovation that followed. The one-week engagement stretched to many weeks, and it would be eleven months before the Mormons would finally let her go. Along the way Brigham dropped Potter and his players and convinced Julia Dean Hayne to remain alone and act with his Mormon stock company, which was standing by under salary. When Brigham offered the actress $300 a week, an enormous sum in those days, Julia Dean Hayne had no choice but to accede.

Angry at being shunted aside, Potter made up his mind that he would teach the Prophet and his former leading lady a lesson. At a cost of $7,000, all borrowed money, Potter had built in thirty days a competing theater, the Academy of Music. So cheap was the construction that the thin walls were filled with sawdust. His first offering was *Damon and Pythias*—played to a half-empty auditorium. Everything was against Potter: a play that had already been seen too often, a Prophet who disapproved, and a rival female star who was the toast of the territory. At last creditors closed in, and Potter was bankrupt. Brigham bought up the cheap building, tore it down, and used the lumber for farm fences. Broken, Potter fled.

Julia Dean Hayne remained, a bigger attraction than ever. After Camille Gautier she did Peg Woffington, Lucretia Borgia, and Medea. She even had the authority to produce two plays on her own, one of them *Aladdin, or The Wonderful Lamp.* Everyone, it seemed, wanted to write for her. The editor of the Salt Lake City *Herald,* Edward L. Sloan, did an Indian play for her, *Osceola,* in which she enacted a chief's daughter. The Mormon historian Edward W. Tullidge penned *Eleanor DeVere* for her, in which she enacted a lady-in-waiting to Queen Elizabeth. Later she commissioned Tullidge to create *Elizabeth of England.* Apparently it was an excellent play, for Julia Dean Hayne planned to perform it in New York City and Tullidge pinned all his hopes on the venture. By unhappy circumstance the actress arrived in New York City with the play just as the Italian leading lady Ristori opened in *Elizabeth* by Giacometti. Ristori made a hit; Julia Dean Hayne shelved her drama, and Tullidge, it is said, went out of his mind with disappointment and had to he confined.

Just as Julia Dean Hayne won the applause of all Mormon theatergoers, she won the heart of Brigham Young. "Speculation was rife," recalled John S. Lindsay in 1905, "and much surprise and wonder was excited in certain quarters that President Young should go out of his way to show more marked

attention to an actress than he had ever shown to any of his wives."

There seems every evidence that Brigham, at sixty-four, had a deeply romantic involvement with Julia Dean Hayne. For winter sport Brigham ordered a huge green sleigh built and, in bold lettering on its side, he named it "The Julia Dean." The sleigh, decorated with two large swan heads and drawn by six horses, was capable of carrying two to three dozen adults. On two known occasions, Brigham threw glittering parties for the actress at his country residence The Farm House, four miles outside the city, and drove Julia Dean Hayne to the celebrations in the sleigh.

It is said that Brigham tried to convert the actress to the Mormon faith and even proposed marriage. But Julia Dean Hayne would have her patron neither as Prophet nor as polygamist. Besides, she had fallen in love with a non-Mormon. He was James G. Cooper, a tall, strikingly handsome southern gentleman, who had been appointed Secretary of Utah Territory. Cooper, an inveterate theatergoer, had worshipped the actress from the audience during most of the eighty-five evening performances that she gave at the Salt Lake City Theater. Learning that her quarters were next door to his offices, he arranged to make her acquaintance. Their love proved mutual. After a brief affair they married in 1866 and agreed to move east.

On the evening of July 4, 1866, after performing in *The Pope* of *Rome* before Brigham and a packed house, Julia Dean Hayne stepped in front of the curtain and spoke a moving valedictory:

"Ladies and Gentlemen. It is but seldom I lose the artist in the woman or permit a personal feeling to mingle with my public duties; yet, perhaps, in now taking leave, I may be pardoned if I essay to speak of obligations which are lasting. If, during my lengthened stay within your midst, some trials have beset my path, many kindnesses have cheered the way, the shafts of malice have fallen powerless, and the evil words of falser hearts have wasted as the air. And perhaps in teaching me how sweet the gratitude I owe these friends, I should almost thank the malignancy which called their kindness forth. For such, believe me, memory holds a sacred chamber where no meaner emotion can intrude.

"To President Young, for very many courtesies to a stranger, alone and unprotected, I return these thanks which are hallowed by their earnestness; and I trust he will permit me, in the name of my art, to speak my high appreciation of the order and beauty that reigns throughout this house.

"I would the same purity prevailed in every temple for the drama's teachings. Then, indeed, the grand object would be achieved and it would become a school

"'*To wake the soul by tender strokes of art,*

To raise the genius and to mend the heart'

"But I speak too long and pause—perhaps, before the last farewell,

"'A word that has been and must be,
A sound which makes us linger,
Yet, Farewell'"

Julia Dean Hayne's life in the East with her second husband was tragically brief. She returned to the New York City stage, appeared in *Lucretia Borgia* and *The Woman in White,* and was seen for the last time, while pregnant at thirty-seven, during October of 1867. On May 19, 1868, she died giving birth to a stillborn infant girl. She was buried in Port Jervis, New York.

In faraway Utah Territory, Brigham Young grieved her loss. "His regard for her never ceased," wrote Ann Eliza Webb, "and I have heard, on what seemed very good authority—although I cannot vouch for its truth—that after he heard of her death he had one of his wives baptized for her, and then sealed to him for her; so he is sure, he thinks, of possessing her in the next world, although he could not induce her to look kindly upon him here."

The rumor Ann Eliza had heard was, indeed, correct. Since the doctrine of celestial marriage permitted a polygamist to take a woman already dead for a bride, to join his plural household in heaven for all eternity, Brigham decided that he would at last possess Julia Dean Hayne in this manner. Long-forgotten Church records show that, shortly after the actress died, Brigham led his twenty-fifth wife, Amelia Folsom, to the Endowment House and had her stand in for his beloved leading lady. Employing his twenty-fifth wife as proxy, Brigham had Julia Dean Hayne baptized into the Mormon Church and then sealed to him in marriage for all eternity. James G. Cooper may have won the battle, but somehow Brigham must have felt that he had won the war.

But six years earlier, it was a less experienced actress, eighteen-year-old Ann Eliza Webb, who was the center of Brigham's attentions. While the Prophet made no proposal to his protégée, either in the theater or in the Lion House, he continued to be, through the winter of 1862 and early 1863, her most attentive fan. Often Brigham had Ann Eliza and the other actresses driven to the theater in his personal carriages. Ann Eliza was permitted to enter the theater through the private door used exclusively by Brigham's wives and children.

When the curtain was rung up on a new play, Brigham was, more often than not, in attendance. "Brigham Young usually sits in the middle of the parquette, in a rocking-chair, and with his hat on," Artemus Ward observed. "He does not escort his wives to the theatre. They go alone. When the play drags he either falls into a tranquil sleep or walks out." Artemus Ward was only partially accurate. Brigham often allowed wives to accompany him to the theater; rarely did he fall asleep or walk out. According to one of his daughters, Clarissa Young Spencer, the family had a free reserved section in the orchestra. The daughters sat in one row, the sons in another, and most of the wives in the west front section. "Father had the upper box on the east

side," said Mrs. Spencer, "and very often I would go with him and enjoy the performance by his side. Between acts he would take me by the hand and go out on a little balcony that led from the hall back of the box and stand there unobserved, but observing." Usually several wives and children sat with Brigham in his box, and the atmosphere was that of an indoor picnic. On more than one occasion Brigham's favorite was seen peeling and eating apples throughout a performance.

Ann Eliza retired from the stage in April of 1864. For the duration of her stay in Salt Lake City, nine more years in all, she would attend the theater time and again, but only as a member of the audience. During those years, humorous lecturers—Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby—were as much in demand as imported plays. Of the lecturers, the greatest drawing card was the dour, ungainly, consumptive Artemus Ward.

When Artemus Ward arrived in Salt Lake City, from a tour of California, late in 1864, he was already stamped with celebrity. Foremost among his followers was the man in the White House. To Abraham Lincoln, Ward could do no wrong. In 1862 Lincoln had opened a solemn cabinet meeting on the Emancipation Proclamation by reading aloud a funny chapter from Artemus Ward's latest book. Everyone roared with delight, except Secretary of State Seward, who was not amused. On another occasion, after the blood bath at Fredericksburg, Congressman Isaac N. Arnold called on Lincoln to discuss the battle but was treated instead to a reading by the President from another Artemus Ward book. The congressman was shocked. "Mr. President, is it possible that with the whole land bowed in sorrow and covered with a pall in the presence of yesterday's fearful reverse, you can indulge in such levity?" Lincoln lowered the Ward book and exclaimed, "Mr. Arnold, if I could not get momentary respite from the crushing burden I am constantly carrying, my heart would break!"

Artemus Ward was thirty years old when he came to Utah. He had been born Charles Farrar Browne, near Waterford, Maine. His schooling ceased with his father's death in 1846, when he was twelve, and he went to work as a New England printer. Presently he was setting type in Tiffin, Ohio, for four dollars a week and beginning to write and publish amusing squibs on the side. His work came to the notice of the Cleveland *Plain Dealer,* and he was hired, at twelve dollars a week, as reporter and feature writer. Adopting the name of Artemus Ward, he began to turn out a column of humorous commentaries. Often his wit was barbed. When a rival columnist, of repulsive countenance, mailed him a knife to use on himself, Ward replied by describing his rival in print: "He is the homeliest man in America… He has been offered a good salary to stand up in a corn-field as a scarecrow. He is compelled to get up three times every night to rest his face."

Artemus Ward's real fame came when he employed misspelled words, a

pseudo dialect, and broad puns in his writings. Although he had not yet met Brigham Young, he had read about him and about plural marriage and written the following: “In a privit conversashun with Brigham I learnt the follerin fax: It takes him six weeks to kiss his wives. He don’t do it only onct a yere & sex it is wuss nor cleanin house. He don’t pretend to know his children, thare is so many of um, tho they all know him. He sez about every child he meats call him Par, & he takes it for grantid it is so. His wives air very expensiv. Thay allers want suthin & ef he don’t buy it for um they set the house in a uproar. He sez he don’t have a minit’s peace. His wives fite amung theirselves so much that he has bilt a fitin room for thare speshul benefit.”

As Ward’s reputation grew, he accepted a job on the staff of *Vanity Fair* in New York, published the first of five books (it sold 40,000 copies immediately), and finally, in 1861, turned comedian-lecturer. Melville D. Landon described him in that period: “In stature he was tall and slender. His nose was prominent… complexion florid; mustache large, and his voice soft and clear… In his lectures he never smiled—not even while he was giving utterance to the most delicious absurdities; but all the while the jokes fell from his lips as if he was unconscious of their meaning. While writing his lectures, he would laugh and chuckle to himself continually.”

Before delivering his lecture in the Salt Lake City Theater, Ward was invited to meet Brigham Young. Escorted by Clawson, the humorist went to the meeting with some trepidation. Would the Prophet remember the published open letter of his pretended “privit conversashun with Brigham”? But the interview went smoothly, and Ward was able to record later: “When I left the Prophet he shook me cordially by the hand, and invited me to call again. This was flattering, because if he dislikes a man at the first interview he never sees him again. He made no allusion to the ‘letter’ I had written about his community. Outside guards were pacing up and down before the gateway, but they smiled upon me sweetly. The veranda was crowded with Gentile miners, who seemed to be surprised that I didn’t return in a wooden overcoat, with my throat neatly laid open from ear to ear.”

To advertise his lecture, and have fun with polygamy, Artemus Ward prepared special tickets. On each one the legend read: “Admit the bearer and One Wife. Yours Truly, A. Ward.” The night of the lecture the theater was filled with Mormons. The orchestra played an overture; the curtain lifted on a drawing-room set, and Ward stood, as he said, “before a Salt Lake of upturned faces.” His lecture was entitled “Babes in the Woods.” Apparently Ward was satisfied with its reception. “I was never listened to more attentively and kindly in my life,” he wrote. Four years later, when J. H. Beadle came to Salt Lake City to publish a small newspaper, the lecture was still being discussed. Beadle had the impression that it had not been so successful as Ward liked to think. “Old residents tell me that Artemus Ward’s lecture in Salt Lake was,

professionally speaking, a perfect failure," wrote Beadle, "simply because it was 'cut too fine' for the latitude. A few laughed at his broadest jokes, then for a solid hour, while he was doing his funniest, the audience sat 'like a bump on a log,' not giving a smile. It's a wonder it did not kill the sensitive author."

As a matter of fact, Artemus Ward profited enormously from his Utah visit. "The Mormon religion is singular, and his wives are plural," he liked to say. Mormon polygamy, especially, had fascinated him. "I have somewhere stated that Brigham Young is said to have eighty wives," Ward wrote. "I hardly think he has so many. Mr. Hyde, the backslider, says in his book that 'Brigham always sleeps by himself, in a little chamber behind his office'; and if he has eighty wives I don't blame him. He must be bewildered. I know very well that if I had eighty wives of my bosom I should be confused, and shouldn't sleep anywhere. I undertook to count the long stockings, on the clothes-line, in his back yard one day, and I used up the multiplication table in less than half an hour." At last, based on his Salt Lake City adventure, Ward created his most popular and lucrative lecture "A Visit to the Mormons." The Mormon lecture, facetious and broad fun, was delivered against a background of changing slides and called "Artemus Ward's Panorama."

In 1866 Ward took his illustrated lecture to London, appeared at Egyptian Hall, and created a sensation with his mixture of fact and fancy. When a reproduction of the Lion House was thrown on the screen, Ward described it further and then added:

"Brigham Young has two hundred wives. Just think of that! Oblige me by thinking of that. That is—he has eighty actual wives, and he is spiritually married to one hundred and twenty more. These spiritual marriages—as the Mormons call them—are contracted with aged widows, who think it a great honor to be sealed—the Mormons call it being sealed—to the Prophet.

"So we may say he has two hundred wives. He loves not wisely, but two hundred well. He is dreadfully married. He's the most married man I ever saw in my life.

"I saw his mother-in-law while I was there. I can't exactly tell you how many there is of her—but it's a good deal. It strikes me that one mother-in-law is about enough to have in a family—unless you're very fond of excitement.

"A few days before my arrival in Utah—Brigham was married again—to a young and really pretty girl [probably the then twenty-one-year-old Mary Van Cott, wife number twenty-six]— but he says he shall stop now. He told me confidentially that he shouldn't get married any more. He says that all he wants now is to live in peace for the remainder of his days—and have his dying pillow soothed by the loving hands of his family. Well—that's all right—that's all right—I suppose—but if *all* his family soothe his dying pillow—

he'll have to go outdoors to die.

"By the way—Shakespeare indorses polygamy. He speaks of the Merry Wives of Windsor. How many wives did Mr. Windsor have? But we will let this pass."

During his seventh week in Egyptian Hall, Artemus Ward, weakened by tuberculosis, fell gravely ill. On March 6, 1867, at the age of thirty-two, he was dead.

While greater names followed Ward's footsteps into the Salt Lake City Theater in the years after, none was ever greeted with the same affection and bewilderment which had met the gangling humorist. To Brigham's theater came Ole B. Bull, the Norwegian violinist and student of Paganini, to give a concert for $500; Thomas Nast, the *Harper's Weekly* cartoonist who had smashed William Marcy "Boss" Tweed, to enliven his lecture with crayon drawings; Sir Henry M. Stanley, the newspaper man who found Livingston in darkest Africa, to talk about pygmy tribes; George Francis Train, the eccentric millionaire whose trip around the world inspired Jules Verne's Phileas Fogg, to laud the Mormons and their leader (who, listening to the address, saw three oil lamps in the footlights burst into flames and calmly stepped on the stage and fanned them out); Phineas T. Barnum, who had made four million dollars promoting such attractions as Jenny Lind and the original Siamese twins, to speak of the road to riches (and to note with pleasure, "A dozen or so of Brigham Young's wives, and scores of his children, were among the audience"); and General Tom Thumb, the twenty-five-inch midget who had won the heart of Queen Victoria, to perform his imitation of Napoleon (and to later tell the Prophet, "I can understand everything but your polygamy—I can't understand that," to which Brigham would reply, patting Tom's head, "Yes, yes, I know, but you *will* understand it when you get as big as I am.").

Through the years the celebrities continued to parade across the stage of Brigham's theater—Maude Adams making her debut, Buffalo Bill presenting *The Knight of the Plains*, Edwin Booth appearing in *Hamlet*, Susan B. Anthony haranguing for the female vote (which Mormon women already had), Henry Ward Beecher preaching a sermon, and John L. Sullivan staggering through an acting performance in *Honest Hearts and Willing Hands.* Almost every leading entertainer of the nineteenth century appeared in the Salt Lake City Theater—Joseph Jefferson, Tony Pastor, Oscar Wilde, Madame Modjeska, Sarah Bernhardt, James O'Neill, Lillian Russell—to be followed in the twentieth century by John Barrymore, George Arliss, Eddie Foy, Harry Lauder, Al Jolson, Jane Cowl. Finally, after sixty-six years, Brigham's theater was torn down in 1928 to make way for a gasoline station.

Competing against so dazzling a galaxy of colorful stars, Ann Eliza Webb's brief career in the Salt Lake City Theater left little impression on entertainment history. Yet her retirement from acting in April of 1864 was not

for lack of public success but rather for want of time for a private life—since by then she was deeply in love and a bride.

One evening, when the theater was dark, Ann Eliza attended a party at the home of a friend. There she first set eyes on twenty-two-year-old James Leech Dee, a Mormon bachelor who had emigrated from Hanley, Stafford, England. A plasterer by vocation, an amateur actor by avocation, James Dee was ruggedly attractive and tall, possessed of an easy charm with women and a remarkable knowledge of Shakespeare. For Ann Eliza, at eighteen, it was love at first sight. And because, said Ann Eliza, he was "a very great favorite with all the girls," Dee's devotion to her alone was doubly flattering.

"The chance meeting soon ripened into a friendship," said Ann Eliza, "and that into a nearer relation. My whole life was brightened by the new, sweet glory that had swept in in such a torrent upon me. It took on a new look, and even the most common things were invested with a strange, novel interest. Nothing seemed natural. Everything in my life had deepened and broadened in the light of my new experience. Commonplace people grew interesting, commonplace events stirring. The whole world was tinted with the rose-color of my romance. I was very happy."

However, there were young ladies in Ann Eliza's dose circle who were less happy about the match. They knew Dee better, and they disapproved. "They saw that he was in no way my equal," said Ann Eliza, "but I was so blinded that I would not see what they pointed out to me. There was disparity in disposition and in temperament, all of which promised, to those who could see and understand the matter, unhappiness if we came into a closer relationship."

When Ann Eliza announced her engagement to Dee, her parents, Eliza Churchill and Chauncey Webb, were as disappointed as her girl friends. The more they objected, the more Ann Eliza stubbornly clung to her beloved. Both family and friends saw Dee as "selfish, overbearing, and domineering," Ann Eliza admitted, but then she added that "he showed none of that domineering spirit in the days of our early acquaintance; he deferred to me in the slightest matter; he professed to love me very tenderly, and I believe he did love me as well as he was capable of loving anything, or anybody, outside of himself." When marriage was proposed, Ann Eliza's parents gave "a reluctant consent." Not even Brigham Young intervened, for at this time his attentions had been diverted by another. He had, two months before Ann Eliza's wedding, taken his twenty-fifth wife, Amelia Folsom, who would thenceforth dominate his life and his harem.

On April 4, 1863, Ann Eliza and James Leech Dee stood solemnly before their Prophet in a room of the Endowment House. Her bridal gown consisted of a sacklike white robe and green apron; her undergarment had cabalistic designs over her breasts, navel, and right knee. Attending Ann Eliza, as

witnesses, were her mother and several family friends.

Brigham faced the groom. “Do you, Brother James Dee, take Sister Ann Eliza Webb by the right hand, to receive her unto yourself, to be your lawful and wedded wife, and you to be her lawful and wedded husband, for time and for all eternity, with a covenant and promise on your part that you will fulfill all the laws, rites, and ordinances pertaining to this holy matrimony, in the new and everlasting covenant, doing this in the presence of God, angels, and these witnesses of your own free will and accord?”

“Yes,” said James Dee.

Brigham turned to his protégée, Ann Eliza, and smiled down at her. “Do you, Sister Ann Eliza Webb, take Brother James Dee by the right hand, and give yourself to him to be his lawful and wedded wife, for time and for all eternity…?”

“Yes,” said Ann Eliza.

Brigham studied them both and then prepared to seal them. “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the holy priesthood, I pronounce you legally and lawfully husband and wife, for time and for all eternity. And I seal upon you the blessings of the holy resurrection, with power to come forth in the morning of the first resurrection, clothed with glory, immortality, and everlasting lives; and I seal upon you the blessings of thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, and exaltations, together with the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I say unto you, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, that you may have joy and rejoicing in your prosperity in the day of the Lord Jesus. All these blessings, together with all other blessings pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, I seal upon your heads, through your faithfulness unto the end, by the authority of the holy priesthood, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.”

The Endowment House scribe, John Lyon, placed the data of the marriage in the record, along with signatures of the witnesses, and Ann Eliza was officially and glowingly Mrs. James L. Dee.

But the bride also was still an actress, and her wedding evening was spent on the boards of the Salt Lake City Theater, with her husband watching proudly from the audience. All through her courtship Ann Eliza had continued to perform as stock company ingenue. She felt, in fact, that her lover had inspired her. “I grew ambitious,” she said, “and I acted better all the time. I think, perhaps, if I had remained on the stage, and had not lost my ideal, I should have accomplished something in my profession. Love does make a woman ambitious. If she never had before, in all her life, a desire to be, to do, to excel, she has it now. She wants to do something to make herself the better worth his taking.” And so that night, before consummating her marriage, Ann Eliza acted for Dee—and a few thousand more.

On the night of April 4, 1863, the Salt Lake City Theater was presenting three short plays—*Porter's Knot, The Artful Dodger,* and *Bombastes Furioso.* Ann Eliza performed in *The Artful Dodger.* The word of her marriage had spread and, although she had a lesser role, her appearance dominated the stage. Ann Eliza would never forget that evening. "I was greeted, when I made my appearance, with the most tumultuous applause," she said. "Cheer after cheer arose, and it was some minutes before I could speak my lines. Every time I appeared, there was a repetition of this scene, and I was fairly embarrassed, so persistent was the applause. There was the more excitement, probably, because I had kept my approaching marriage a secret, and but very few, even of my personal friends, knew anything about it… For once I was the central figure on the stage, and all my superiors gave way to me with a graceful good nature."

Seven nights later Brigham's stock company closed the season with *The Merchant of Venice,* and with Shakespeare the first phase of Ann Eliza's career as entertainer was ended. Although she continued to visit the theater to rehearse for the next season, when the stock company resumed in October, Ann Eliza was too occupied with histrionics at home to pay heed.

Dee owned a cottage, but it was rented on a long-term lease. His bachelor quarters were too small for the newlyweds. Ann Eliza prevailed upon him to move into a suite of empty rooms in her father's large city home. Dee agreed, and here, despite the watchful gaze of Ann Eliza's mother and the comings and goings of Chauncey's various wives and children, there was a degree of privacy.

For one month after the marriage, Ann Eliza enjoyed Dee's affection and consideration, as well as the security of his pledge that theirs would remain a monogamous union. But soon enough she began to see the side of him that had been previously hidden from her but known to her friends. Marriage vows, Dee felt, should not interfere with his bachelor's privileges, and, complained Ann Eliza, "he soon became quite a noted gallant among the young girls, bestowing on them the attentions that he had given me in our unmarried days…" Ann Eliza would not accept Dee's indifference toward her or his veiled intimidations of another marriage without protest. Terrible arguments followed. According to Ann Eliza, Dee would "indulge in furious fits of anger, which fairly frightened me," and he would "talk shamefully to me, and threaten me with all kinds of ill treatment."

The worst torture to which she was subjected, Ann Eliza later confessed, was Dee's threat to bring home a plural wife. He enjoyed telling her about the comely young ladies he was considering marrying, naming them by name, including several who were Ann Eliza's close friends. "I had one friend," said Ann Eliza, "of whom I was very fond. He became jealous of my affection for her, and in order to win me from her, and to break up our friendship, he

pretended very great interest in her. He would leave me to go home by myself from the theatre, and would go off with her and remain a long time; then, on his return, would tell me what he said was the conversation between them, in which he would represent her as making the most ardent love to him, until, at last, I fairly came to hate her. I would not see her if I possibly could help it, and I was anything but cordial to her when we did meet." Later Ann Eliza realized that Dee had lied to her, yet she could never again resume with the girl on the old friendly basis.

In a desperate effort to hold the marriage together, Ann Eliza decided that she must have a family. Two sons were born to her during the two-and-a-half-year marriage to Dee—the first, James Edward Dee, later known as Edward Wesley Dee, was born in 1864, and the second, Leonard Lorenzo Dee, was born in 1865. Ann Eliza adored the infant Edward, but her hopes that the child would draw Dee closer to her were soon rudely shattered. All through her pregnancy, Ann Eliza heard, from malicious gossips or well-meaning friends, that Dee had been seen at the theater or promenading on the street with some attractive woman. "He used to discuss my callers, and especially the pretty girls," said Ann Eliza, "as most Mormon men discuss women, with reference to their 'points,' as jockeys would talk of horses, or importers of fine stock."

Gradually Ann Eliza's health began to give way under the strain. It grieved her even more that her husband was not sympathetic. Until then their disagreements had always been verbal.

But in the eighth month of her first pregnancy Ann Eliza suffered physical hurt from Dee. "He made some request of me," she said, "which I was totally unable to grant, and in his fury at what he termed my stubbornness and rebellion, he struck me violently, and I fell insensible before him." Immediately, shocked by what he had done and fearing that he had seriously hurt his mate, Dee carried her to their bed and ministered to her. After that he was all contrition and apology. Briefly, until the birth of Edward, an armistice was maintained between the couple. Once the baby had been safely delivered, Dee resumed his old habits. Since the infant child was ailing, Ann Eliza was too concerned to be worried about her husband's neglect.

After Edward's recovery Ann Eliza's life again followed the familiar and unhappy pattern. Left alone with her son, she brooded in the bedroom of her father's house, trying to hide her sorrow from her mother and the various other Mrs. Webbs, while her husband continued to amuse himself about town. Soon, perhaps by accident, perhaps because she persisted in believing a large family would bring her husband closer to the hearth, Ann Eliza was pregnant again. Two weeks before her second confinement her relationship with Dee was brought to a climax.

It was an autumn afternoon. Ann Eliza, swollen with child, sat in a rocker

with Edward on her lap, staring across the bedroom at Dee, who was reading. Chauncey's fifth child by his second wife, Elizabeth Taft, three-year-old Louis Webb, entered the bedroom. Dee glanced up and asked Louis to fetch him an object that stood on a high shelf beside a heavy jar. Ann Eliza interrupted, saying the object was too high for Louis to reach and he might bring the jar down upon his head. Instead, still holding Edward, she rose, offering to fetch the object for Dee herself. Instantly angered at being contradicted, Dee commanded Ann Eliza not to leave her chair.

"Louis will bring me what I desire," he said firmly.

"But he must not," cried Ann Eliza.

"I tell you he shall." Dee turned to the frightened boy. "Louis, fetch it to me instantly."

Ann Eliza stepped forward. "Louis, you shall not."

Enraged, Dee leaped at Ann Eliza. She would never forget what happened next.

"My husband, maddened with fury that I should dare to contradict him, seized me by the throat, and threw me back into the chair. The screams of the terrified child brought my mother into the room at once. She snatched the baby from my arms, which I still held clasped convulsively, while my husband's fingers were tightening about my throat. I was dizzy with pain, and almost suffocated from the grip; but my maternal instinct was stronger than the pain, and I never relaxed my hold on my child.

"My mother called my father, and he came and rescued me from the infuriated man who held me and carried me into my mother's room."

Now, for the first time, Ann Eliza sobbed out the entire story of her ill-treatment at the hands of Dee. At once Chauncey, hacked by Ann Eliza's brothers, Gilbert and Edward Milo, decided that Dee must never see his daughter again. Ann Eliza was kept locked in her mother's room, while Chauncey told Dee to get out of the house at once. Still blind with rage, Dee threatened all manner of vengeance on his wife, but at last he was forced to leave the premises.

Eliza Churchill and Chauncey Webb consulted with Brigham Young and George Q. Cannon, the Mormon delegate to Congress and a friend of the Webbs, about an immediate divorce. Brigham agreed that he could rid Ann Eliza of Dee, but this kind of divorce would only be recognized inside the Church. To protect custody of her children, he suggested that she file for divorce in the Probate Court of Salt Lake County.

On the morning of December 23, 1865, Ann Eliza appeared, with her father and a friend, before Judge E. Smith of the Probate Court. James Dee was not on hand. Testimony of the plaintiff's complaint was taken, and in short order Ann Eliza had her divorce and the custody of her sons. Two days later, she said, she celebrated the merriest Christmas she had known in years.

For the rest of her days Ann Eliza would always refer to James Dee as the man who "blighted" her life. Even thirty years later, speaking to a Michigan compiler of biographies, she would remember Dee as "one of the kind who believe that woman was made to be a slave of her lord… exacting and cruel."

But all of this was strictly Ann Eliza's version of her first marriage. James Dee may have had quite another. There is little doubt that Ann Eliza, nervous of temperament and strong-willed, was not the easiest of wives to manage. Moreover, there is some evidence that Dee may have been subjected to mother-in-law trouble. Ann Eliza did not deny her mother's part in opposing the marriage, yet, unreasonably, she defended it. "My husband knew of her opposition to our marriage, and he did not like what he termed her interference; though why a mother cannot look after her daughter's interest without being accused of interfering is even now a mystery to me."

Ann Eliza had been the first Mrs. Dee, but there was to be a second, and she fared far better. Nine months after Ann Eliza divorced him, James Dee married again, and this time the marriage lasted. On October 2, 1866, Dee took seventeen-year-old Esther Ellen Brown for a wife. The new Mrs. Dee came of a devout and prominent Mormon family. Her father, Captain James Brown, was from North Carolina and was a veteran of the Mexican War. He had helped found the city of Ogden. Her mother was of similar sturdy stock, having been delivered of Esther after a pregnancy that included the long march from Nauvoo to Salt Lake City.

While Ann Eliza went on to fame and notoriety in the distant Gentile world, James Dee was satisfied to remain obscure but prosperous in Utah. He continued to work as a plasterer of log cabins. Then he moved to Ogden and there opened a restaurant and a saloon. Eventually, as his family expanded, he purchased a considerable amount of property—his real-estate holdings were worth $30,000 at his death—and he built a ten-room white stucco house, with an artificial pond and a pasture filled with livestock. He rode about Ogden in an expensive English carriage. And at no time did he display the rakish traits earlier attributed to him by Ann Eliza.

James Dee was the father of two sons by Ann Eliza. Now, by his second wife, Esther Ellen, he had seven more children, four sons and three daughters. Shortly after the birth of the seventh offspring, a boy named Ernest Leon, Esther Ellen died at forty-five. This last child is the only child of James Dee to survive to the present day. He was raised to maturity by a sister, Elizabeth, who died in 1958 at the age of ninety-one.

Ernest Leon Dee, an electrical engineer now retired at seventy-five and a pillar of the Mormon Church, resides in Salt Lake City. To him old memories are very much alive. He believes that Ann Eliza maligned his father, and he cannot forgive her. "Ann Eliza claimed that my father used to beat her," Ernest Leon told this writer. "That's unbelievable. Not once did he ever thrash

one of his children or lift a finger against us. He never swore, smoked, or drank, and he was never a polygamist. I was twelve when he died, and I remember him well. He was a man of vast learning, an amateur Shakespearean actor. In the old days we had a huge dining room in Ogden, and Father, a tall, big-bayed, big-footed man, would strut up and down the room, carrying me on his foot, and waving a sword as he declaimed from King Lear.

"When Father died, there was no will. But it was his wish that his sons by Ann Eliza share his estate equally with all of us. They got $2,000 out of the estate. Eventually my $2,000 got to be worth $32,000—so you can't say my father was a ne'er-do-well. I'm told the real reason Ann Eliza and my father were divorced was not as she stated, but because of her mother, who was aggressive and wanted her daughter in society. Ann Eliza's mother said to her, 'You get a divorce from Dee and I'll get you married to Brigham Young.' And that's what happened."

Ann Eliza's first husband died on June 6, 1897. His second wife, Esther, had preceded him to the grave by four years. Actually, at Dee's death, only six of his seven children by his second wife and one of his sons by his first wife survived to profit from his legacy. Ann Eliza's elder son, Edward Wesley Dee, occupied with mining work, was struggling along in Denver with wife and family when informed that he was one of the seven heirs of James Leech Dee. After signing an assent to sell his father's property, so that these holdings could be converted into cash to pay both debts and heirs, Edward Wesley received his $2,000 share.

By then Ann Eliza, still alive, had experienced two more marriages, yet she never forgot Dee or ceased to attack him. Perhaps, as she always insisted, he had marked her for life by being unfaithful and by beating her, and only in his next marriage did he reform. Or perhaps, as his last son claims, Ann Eliza had fabricated her ill-treatment to gain sympathy and to camouflage her heartless use of him to realize the ambitions of her mother.

However, in 1865 Ann Eliza's freedom from matrimony, for whatever motives, was precious to her. After the Christmas holiday celebration in Salt Lake City, Ann Eliza took her two sons and accompanied her father, mother, and sundry stepmothers to the Webb country farmhouse—a great whitewashed, barnlike structure perched on a hill—in South Cottonwood, Utah, ten miles south of the capital.

The months that followed were placid and happy ones for Ann Eliza. She played with her boys. She shared the household chores. She ate and slept and regained her strength. "I dreamed of nothing beyond this peaceful life," she wrote. "I wished for nothing else. Such a sweet restfulness had taken possession of me, and I pictured myself growing old in this quiet spot, with my strong, brave boys near me… The improvement of my health was a

source of great joy to me. I never was so well in my life. The color had come back to my cheek, the sparkle to my eyes, the smile to my lips, the elasticity to my step, and something of the old life to my spirits, although I had suffered too much to have them quite as light as they were in the old frolicsome day when I had gone merry-making with my old companions, had won friends in the theatre, and had wailed 'with the girls' over the monotonous fare of the Prophetic table."

At twenty-one Ann Eliza was more attractive and feminine than ever. There were suitors, of course, and several proposals of marriage. Ann Eliza rejected them all and explained her refusal to one ardent swain, "I have my children; I shall live for them alone; they are my only loves." When the suitors appealed to Chauncey and the first Mrs. Webb to intervene, they were told that Ann Eliza was of age and knew her own heart and mind.

And so, through the year of 1866 and then the spring of 1867, Ann Eliza remained the retired divorcée. Little happened in South Cottonwood, and for this routine and placid existence Ann Eliza was grateful. But suddenly, early one summer's day, there was excitement in the air. News had come that the Prophet himself, Brigham Young, was making an annual tour of his dominion and was even now en route to South Cottonwood to hold a revival meeting and preach two Sunday sermons.

As he approached South Cottonwood with his Apostles and his retinue, Brigham Young was a vigorous sixty-six and at the height of his powers. Under his directions the Mormon Church was a national force, and recently great advances had been made. One day, cutting the end off an egg and standing it upright on toothpicks, Brigham conceived of a Tabernacle of similar shape, with a giant unsupported roof resting on forty-four sandstone pillars. Now the Tabernacle was nearing completion, after three years in construction. Too, a web of telegraph lines was being built throughout the territory, and in the capital city the University of Deseret was being planned.

Despite all of this outside activity, Brigham had also found time to increase the number of his plural wives. It will be remembered that in 1852, when he announced polygamy to the world, Brigham had been married twenty-two times and was living with nineteen wives. In the fourteen years between 1852 and his journey to South Cottonwood in 1866, Brigham had acquired four more wives.

On October 3, 1852, less than six weeks after revealing celestial marriage to the world, Brigham had married twenty-four-year-old Eliza Burgess, an impoverished emigrant from England who had voluntarily been a servant in his home for seven years. After that the Prophet had waited more than three and a half years before taking his twenty-fourth wife. On March 14, 1856, he had been wedded to twenty-five-year-old Harriet Barney, a divorcée. Harriet, dark-haired, pale, tall, had been married young and briefly and given her first

husband two sons and two daughters. She had born her first husband the last of her daughters and divorced him the year before joining Brigham's harem. Seven years after marrying the Prophet, she gave him a son.

On January 24, 1863, Brigham had finally, after a long and difficult courtship of three years' duration, won the hand of his most electric and demanding wife, Amelia Folsom, the twenty-five-year-old daughter of his favorite architect. Then on January 8, 1865, Brigham had married another divorcée, lovely, affectionate, twenty-one-year-old Mary Van Cott. She had been the child bride, several years earlier, of a man named James Cobb and bore him a daughter, Louella, after their divorce. Years later this daughter of Mary's by her first husband married one of her second husband's sons, an arrangement not quite incestuous but certainly dizzying. Brigham had taken Mary for a wife not half a year before his visit to South Cottonwood. She had been his twenty-sixth wife, and now, entering the village where he was to speak, Brigham had arrived at the place that would provide him his twenty-seventh and last and most difficult wife.

As Brigham and his long entourage of one hundred carriages and wagons, and fifty horsemen, wended their way into South Cottonwood, the entire population, it seemed, poured into the streets to demonstrate and greet their leader. A brass band played. People hoisted high beribboned lances, banners, and signs reading "Hail to the Prophet" and "The Lion of the Lord." Men waved their hats, and women fluttered their handkerchiefs, and among the latter, holding a sign that read "The Daughters of Zion- Virtue," were Ann Eliza and her mother and the plural Mrs. Webbs. "As a matter of course, I helped 'welcome the President' to Cottonwood," said Ann Eliza; "so did all the family; and, as we were all old friends, we were glad to see him personally, as well as spiritually, my mother especially being overjoyed, for there was always the warmest friendship between them." The first Mrs. Webb was doubly grateful because Brigham had helped liberate her favorite child from the clutches of James Dee.

Since there was no tabernacle in South Cottonwood, Sunday services were always held in an open-air Bowery roofed by tree branches. For Brigham's appearance the Bowery was crammed to overflowing with eager Saints, among them Ann Eliza in her best finery and many of her family. From the pulpit Brigham spoke, as usual, without notes or any rehearsed sermon. His words, all fire and brimstone, denounced extravagant female attire in South Cottonwood as well as the alcoholism of the men. On women's fashion Brigham could be particularly scathing. Four years before he had begun his campaign for sensible, homespun, Mormon cottons instead of Gentile frills. On that occasion he had remarked, in almost unprintable language, "The women say, let us wear hoops, because the whores wear them. I believe if they were to come with a cob stuck in their behind, you would want to do the

same. I despise their damnable fashions, their lying and whoring… There is not a day I go out but I see the women's legs, and if the wind blows you see them up to their bodies… Who cares about these infernal Gentiles? If they were to wear a s—t pot on their head, must I do so? I know I ought to be ashamed, but when you show your tother end I have a right to talk about tother end. If you keep them hid, I'll be modest and not talk about them."

In a similar vein, this Sunday Brigham addressed the women of South Cottonwood, but his greater wrath was reserved for the men. They were drunkards, he said, and devils, and they were not following Joseph Smith's rules of health laid down in his Word of Wisdom. And the worst of them was a man named Howard, who operated the South Cottonwood distillery. He had been given permission to manufacture alcohol for Gentiles, yet he was corrupting the Saints.

"This Howard," said Brigham, "he does not have a cent in the world which I did not give him. I even gave the poor, mean scapegrace the very land he lives on."

The discredited Howard, a Mormon, was seated near the Webbs. He leaped to his feet in righteous indignation. "It isn't so, and you know it isn't," he shouted at Brigham. "I bought the land of you and gave you twelve hundred dollars for it."

"You lie!" retorted Brigham. "I gave it to you!"

"Yes, for twelve hundred dollars," persisted Howard.

"I never got a cent for it," roared Brigham.

"You're the liar, and you know it!"

Enraged, Brigham faced the congregation and thundered, "Is there no one who will remove that man from this place?"

Instantly a dozen of the faithful surrounded Howard and forcibly removed him a distance from the Bowery.

Pacified, Brigham resumed his morning sermon. Having chastized the congregation, he now went on in a mellower mood. As he spoke his gaze fell on Ann Eliza, whom he had not seen in more than two years. He was fascinated. The Biblical phrases rolled forth automatically from his tongue, but his real attention was devoted to the twenty-two-year-old divorcée.

Ann Eliza was not unmindful of the Prophet's interest in her. At first she assumed that he was drawn to her face because it was a familiar one. Then it occurred to her that there were other faces in the audience equally familiar to him. Still he sought her eyes, and she became self-conscious.

"I began to be a little uneasy under his scrutiny," Ann Eliza wrote. "I thought that possibly there was something about my appearance that displeased him. Possibly he did not approve of my dress… That he was not looking at me indifferently or carelessly I knew very well, from the bent brows and keen gaze that I felt was making the most complete scrutiny, and I

wished he would look somewhere else. I fidgeted about in my seat, I looked at my little boy who was sitting beside me, and pretended to arrange some articles of his clothing. I did everything but to jump up and run away, and I even wanted to do that, to get out of the reach of those sharp eyes and that steady, unflinching gaze. I am sure he saw my discomfort; but he was pitiless, and all the while the speaking was going on he scarcely turned his eyes from me a moment. I tried to be unconscious, to look in every direction except his, but the steady eyes would always bring mine back again in spite of myself. I felt his power then as I never had felt it before, and I began to understand a little how it was that he compelled so many people to do his will, against their own inclinations."

At last the morning services were concluded and Ann Eliza was freed from the hypnotic stare. Herding her son along before her, she moved with the crowd into the open sunlight. Then it was, emerging from the roof of boughs, that she realized that the Prophet had followed her. As he confronted her, she feigned surprise but was undoubtedly proud that she had been singled out by him and that all eyes were upon her.

According to Ann Eliza's version of what happened next, Brigham Young looked down at her and inquired, "Are you well?"

"As you see," she answered cheerfully.

"May I walk home with you?"

"If you wish. I should be much pleased."

Brigham's retinue and the local church dignitaries hung hack, casting knowing glances at one another, as the crowd parted to make way for the sixty-six-year-old Prophet and the twenty-two-year-old divorcée and her son.

Brigham took the boy by the hand. "A pretty child. What are you going to do with him?"

"Make a good man of him, if possible."

"A better one than his father proved to be, I trust," said Brigham.

"God grant it, else he would not be much of a comfort to me," Ann Eliza said with a show of emotion.

They walked on in silence. Ann Eliza found Brigham looking at her. At last he spoke again. "You are very much improved since you left Mr. Dee. Do you know it? You are a very pretty woman."

Ann Eliza laughed nervously. "Thank you. If you can only tell me I am a good woman, I should like that too."

"Yes, you are that, I believe, and a good mother," said Brigham. "And you were a good wife, only that foolish fellow didn't have the sense to half appreciate you."

"Thank you again. I don't know that I can take all you tell me, since I am not sure that I deserve such high praise."

"You are your mother's girl. There can be but one conclusion to draw from

that. But tell me about yourself—are you happy?”

“Very,” said Ann Eliza quickly. “I never was happier in my life.”

“What makes you specially happy just now?”

“Oh, my children, my mother, my quiet life, after all the trial and weary struggling to make the best out of the very worst.”

Brigham observed her keenly. “Then you don’t regret your divorce?”

“Indeed I do not,” said Ann Eliza firmly. “And now, Brother Young, let me thank you for your kindness in helping me to regain my freedom and above all to keep my children. You must be content with gratitude, for I can repay you in no other way.”

Ann Eliza would always remember that he glanced at her curiously that moment, smiled enigmatically as if trying to make up his mind to say something, then changed his mind. They continued toward the Webb farmhouse in silence.

Abruptly Brigham broke the stillness. “I suppose you have had offers of marriage since your separation from Mr. Dee?”

“Yes, many.”

“Do you feel inclined to accept any of them?”

“No, not in the slightest degree. None of them move me in the least.”

“And you haven’t a preference for any of the suitors?”

“I assure you, no.”

“Never had the slightest inclination to say ‘yes’ to any offer that has been made?” Brigham persisted.

“Not a bit of inclination,” said Ann Eliza. It would seem, at this point, that Brigham’s tenacious inquiries into her love life may have made Ann Eliza suspicious of his motives. But she would always insist that she regarded his questioning as no more than fatherly concern. Now, having reassured him that she had turned away all suitors, she added, “All my lovers have had a rival affection to contend with.”

“For whom?” asked Brigham sharply.

Ann Eliza patted her remarkably tranquil son. “For him,” she said, “and for the other dear child that God gave me. I can have no room for other love while I have them to care for. They fill my heart exclusively, and I am so glad and happy because of it, that I should be jealous if I saw the least hint of regard for anyone creeping in. I couldn’t love anybody else. I wouldn’t.”

Brigham regarded his attractive young companion with a certain air of disbelief. “Then you think you will never be induced to marry?”

Perhaps Ann Eliza sensed his essential cynicism. “Never in my life,” she said strongly.

The Prophet was amused. “I have heard a very great many girls talk that way before,” he said.

“Yes, but I am not a girl. I am a woman; a woman, too, with hard, bitter

experiences; a woman who has lost faith in mankind and hasn't much faith in matrimony; a mother, too, who will not give her children a rival."

"No, but you might give them a protector," Brigham said shrewdly.

"They don't need it. My love is sufficient protection. Besides, they are boys and will be my protectors in a few years. So, you see, I do not need to marry for protection for myself or them."

Brigham would not be turned aside. For a moment he assumed the garb of Prophet. "But supposing it were shown to be a duty?"

"It can't be," she replied instantly. She had seen her mother burdened by years of duty, and she would not assume such a burden for herself. "I should not recognize a duty of that kind. I consider myself old enough, and sufficiently experienced, to judge of my duties without any assistance."

Somewhat taken aback by her outburst, Brigham stared at her a moment, and when he spoke his voice was gentle and paternal. "Child, child, I fear you are very headstrong. Don't let your will run away with you."

"No danger. It is not crossed often enough to make it very assertive."

Brigham continued to stare at her. "A spoiled child, eh?"

"Possibly. My will seems to be everybody's way at home."

"Well, my child," said Brigham benevolently, "I want to give you a little advice. I have known you all your life and have had an interest in you from your birth. Indeed, you seem like one of my own family, you were always in and out so much with my children, and I am going to speak to you as I would to one of my girls. You will probably marry again, some time, though you say now you won't."

"No, I shall not marry. I mean what I say when I tell you so."

"Yes," said Brigham with the easy assurance of one who had been the victor in twenty-six proposals, "I know it. But you will. Now mark my words, and see if you don't."

"Well, don't feel so sure that you send somebody after me," said Ann Eliza warily.

"You needn't be afraid of my sending anybody. I promise you I won't do that."

"Good. Then I shall not be obliged to say 'no' to them and so, perhaps, hurt your feelings as well as mortify them."

They had reached the farmhouse entrance, but the exchange was not yet ended. Brigham would have the last word.

"Still," he was saying, "I believe that you will marry again some time. It is in the nature of things that you should. Women of your age and your looks don't stay single all their lives; not a bit of it. Now, my advice is this: when you do marry, select some man older than yourself. It doesn't make so much difference whether you're in love with him, if you can respect him and look up to him for counsel. Respect is better than romance, any day. You've tried

the one, now give the other a chance. You didn't succeed so well with the other experiment that you care to try that over again, I know. You had your own way, too, if I remember rightly. It wasn't such a smooth one as you thought it was going to be. I knew you was [sic] doing the wrong thing when I saw the man. I could have told you so, but you didn't ask my advice. Now I'm giving it to you without asking, for I don't want you to make another mistake. So, when you choose again, remember what I say, and get a husband whom you can look to for good advice."

Solemnly Ann Eliza thanked him for his interest in her. "I promise to heed your advice if I ever find it necessary, but I am sure I shall not find it necessary. I am determined not to marry again."

Apparently, during the last, Chauncey and Ann Eliza's mother—who were inside the house, having absented themselves from the morning services with the intention of attending the afternoon sermon—had become aware that their daughter's escort was none other than the Prophet. Impressed by this singular honor, the first Mrs. Webb invited Brigham to join the family at noon dinner. Although he had made a previous appointment to dine with a Mormon named Bowman, he accepted the Webbs' invitation at once. Word was dispatched to the Bowery also inviting Brigham's brother, Joseph Young, and Congressman George Q. Cannon, to the meal, and both promptly appeared.

As the table was set, Ann Eliza wondered at Brigham's friendliness. "Brigham was uncommonly jovial that day," she observed, "and made himself particularly agreeable. He was unusually gracious to my father, revived old memories, and joked with my mother; petted and praised the children, and was very paternal in his manner to me. He showed himself, altogether, in his very best light, and made his visit very pleasant." When the meal commenced, Brigham, his brother, and Cannon all remarked on Ann Eliza's blooming health and youthful appearance. Brigham, especially, was lavish in his praise of her. "As I had much improved in every way," Ann Eliza recalled later, "I did not regard his observations as any intended compliment or any indication of what afterwards I learned to be passing in his mind."

After the meal it was time to return to the Bowery for the afternoon services. The entire Webb family, Ann Eliza included, accompanied Brigham into town. Once again the open-air meeting place was crowded. The Webbs were favored with seats down front. Brigham took his stance at the pulpit, and, extemporaneously, he preached on austerity and faith. Perhaps his mind was not on his work, for his afternoon listeners were not criticized for dressing like whores or drinking like Gentiles. The prevailing mood was one of sweetness and light. Several times during his discourse he frankly caught Ann Eliza's eye—smiling, as if to remind her of their long walk and secret conversation—and Ann Eliza returned his gaze without fear.

When the sermon was done and the assembly dispersed, the members of

Brigham's retinue hurried to the line of carriages. The party was scheduled to set out immediately for Willow Creek. But instead of going to his vehicle, Brigham remained behind to talk to Chauncey Webb. He told Chauncey that he had some "important business" to discuss with him. Since the business was private, Brigham thought it best to return with Chauncey to the farmhouse. The carriages and members of the retinue would be kept waiting until nightfall.

At the farmhouse Brigham and Chauncey retired to the library. Elsewhere in the house, Ann Eliza wondered what the Prophet and her father were conversing about. She guessed it might he the matter of the Howard distillery.

The afternoon waned. Still the men remained behind closed doors. Two hours had passed, and Ann Eliza's curiosity mounted. "At the end of the two hours," she observed, "my mother was called into the room, and the discussion was resumed. After a short time, all came out. Brigham went away, bidding us all goodbye with much cordiality, and with an added impressiveness in his manner towards me.

"When he had gone, my father told me the subject of their long conversation.

"Brigham Young had proposed to him for me as a wife."

For the remainder of her life Ann Eliza would not forget the shock that she felt at the incredible news. As she later told the New York *Herald:* "I cannot describe my feelings; I was frightened. The thought of it was a perfect horror. I thought Father had gone crazy, and I would not believe his statement for hours. When I realized that it was a fact I could do nothing but cry. The idea of an old man, sixty-seven years of age, the husband of about twenty wives living, asking me, at twenty-two, to be added to the number filled me with the utmost abhorrence."

As she wept, her mother took her hand and tried to soothe her. "Why, my dear, what is the matter? Are you crying because the Head of our Church—the most powerful and influential man among us—has made you an offer of marriage? Why, it is nothing to cry about, surely."

Nevertheless, Ann Eliza shed her tears. Meanwhile Chauncey attempted, as best he could, to recount the details of his two-hour conversation with Brigham. With incredulity Ann Eliza listened and later reported what she heard to the New York *Herald*. Brigham had told her father, at once, that he wanted to marry Ann Eliza. "He had watched me from my infancy, saw me grow up to womanhood, had always loved me and intended to marry me, but having taken Amelia just after the law was passed in Congress prohibiting polygamy, he feared to take another wife soon after, lest it should make trouble, or he would have taken me then. My marriage with a young man was unlooked-for to him, and when he was made acquainted with it he did not just like to stop it, he said, and so he let it go on, but always hoped that the time

would come when he would have me.

"He wanted Father and Mother to use all their influence with me, as it would be the best thing I could do. He asked Father if a good house, well furnished, and $1,000 a year pocket money would be enough for me, and added that if it was not enough, I should have more."

Ann Eliza heard the details of the proposal in stunned silence. When her father was through, Ann Eliza suddenly asked, "What answer did you make him?"

Actually Chauncey had told Brigham that the house and money "would be sufficient." But now he replied to his daughter, "I told him that I would lay the proposition before you and tell him what your decision was. He said that he had talked with you on the subject of marriage, and that you told him no one had proposed for you whom you fancied; that he was glad you were not easily pleased and suited with every newcomer, for he intended to place you in a position where you would be vastly the social superior of all your present lovers."

Ann Eliza's grief turned to indignation. "Didn't he tell you that I said I never should marry again? That my life was to be devoted to my children?"

Chauncey nodded. "Yes, he said you mentioned something of that sort, but that he didn't take any stock in it; all girls talked so; it was their way of playing the coquette; he understood it, and he liked you better for your coyness."

"I told him decidedly that I was a girl no longer, but a woman, who knew her own mind, who had arrived at the ability to make her own decisions through terrible suffering; that the thought of marriage was distasteful to me." Ann Eliza's anger was complete, at Brigham for ignoring her feelings, at her parents for daring even to entertain the idea of such a marriage. "I wonder if he needs to he told more plainly? If so, you may go to him, since you told him you should leave the decision to me, and tell him that I say to him, No, as I have said it to all my other suitors, and that I do not even thank him for the position he intended to confer upon me, for he knew I did not want it. Does he think I have escaped one misery to wish to enter another? 'Position!' I wonder what he thinks there is particularly fine about being a plural wife even to Brigham Young? I have not seen so much happiness in the system, even among his wives, that I care to enter it. And I never, never can."

Her hysteria had grown again, and her father tried to reason with her. "You are excited now, my daughter. Be calm, and think the matter over reasonably. Don't decide in this hasty manner."

Ann Eliza would not be put off. "I might think it over, reasonably, as you call it, for the rest of my life, and the conclusion I should arrive at would be the same. I never will, of my free will and accord, marry Brigham Young, and you might as well tell him so at once and have the matter settled."

Now Ann Eliza's mother, who desperately wanted the marriage for the standing it would give her daughter and the entire family, intervened. "But, my dear child, suppose it was your duty?"

Ann Eliza looked at her mother wildly as if betrayed. "Oh, Mother, Mother! Have you turned against me too? Am I to fight you all, singlehanded, alone? Won't you, at least, stand by me?"

"I would gladly, my only, my darling daughter, if I was sure that it would be right."

"Do you doubt the right of it? Can you doubt it?" cried Ann Eliza. "Or do you think it would not be wrong to stifle all natural feelings, all aversion to another union, above all, to him? Would it be right, do you think, to give myself to a man older than my father, from whom I shrink with aversion when I think of him as my husband, who is already the husband of many wives, the father of children older, by many years, than myself?"

"But he is your spiritual leader," the first Mrs. Webb said lamely.

"That is no reason why he should be my earthly husband," Ann Eliza snapped. "I cannot see what claim that gives him to my affection."

"The doctrines of our Church teach you to marry."

Determined not to become mired down in a religious discussion, Ann Eliza avoided her mother's line of argument. Her temper was near the bursting point. She glared at her mother, and then, thrusting her words at her mother like a spear, she demanded, "Do you want to get rid of me?"

The first Mrs. Webb fell into her daughter's arms and began to sob. "You know I do not. How can you say that? I was only saying what I did because I thought it was for your good here and hereafter. Did I consult my own feelings, no one should have to except myself, but I think of your welfare before my selfish desires."

"Oh, Mother, I can't, I can't…"

While the two women clung to each other, Chauncey stepped forward and touched Ann Eliza's shoulder. "Don't fret so, child. I will tell Brother Brigham how you feel, and perhaps he will give up the idea. But he seemed to have set his heart on it, and I don't know how he'll take it."

Ann Eliza appealed to her father's weakening resolve. "Why, I belong to you, Father. Tell him so, and that you can't give me away to anybody."

Chauncey permitted himself the ghost of a smile, then frowned at the gravity of his assignment, and at last he departed. And thus ended a scene of nineteenth-century domestic bathos, as recorded by Ann Eliza in her autobiography of 1876, and thus began a series of events that would lead to Ann Eliza's capitulation and to her international celebrity.

However, it is important to remember that this account of Brigham's courtship and proposal is Ann Eliza's version of the affair. Mormon sources take quite the opposite point of view. In 1930 Susa Young Gates, the most

prominent of Brigham's daughters, wrote her father's version of the proposal for her authoritative biography, *The Life Story of Brigham Young*. At the last moment, before publication, she was advised to delete all references to Ann Eliza in order to prevent libel suits, and so the book appeared with no mention of Ann Eliza except a baffling inclusion in the index. However, the original manuscript of Mrs. Gates' biography, unexpurgated, is still in the possession of her descendants, and in it may be found Brigham's version of his courtship with his twenty- seventh wife.

"Of course we all knew, in that inscrutable way girls have of knowing unspoken things, that Father did not want to marry Ann Eliza," wrote Brigham's daughter in the unpublished section of her manuscript. "But Ann Eliza persisted. She was a divorced woman with two sons, and she teased Father through her mother for several years to marry her, suggesting nominal union, 'just to be called by his name, that was all!' He protested that he was an old man and wanted no more wives. She was both determined and persistent. She won.

"Years after, George Q. Cannon, who was Father's first counsellor for years, told me that Ann Eliza and her mother would come up to Father's office and beg him to marry the grass widow. Once Father told George O. to go marry that young woman and give her a home for herself and the two boys. But he replied that the lady did not want him, she wanted Father.

"'I am an old man, Sister Webb, and I have all the wives and children I want. I am too old to be marrying again,' argued Father.

" 'But,' persisted the widow's mother, 'just give her your name; Jet her have the joy of being called by your name.'

" 'She will not be satisfied with that, sister.'

" 'Oh yes, she will,' persisted the mother, while the daughter sat weeping into her carefully arranged pocket handkerchief.

"Well, the upshot of it was that Father finally married her. He was forced to it upon his own theory that women should have the right of choice in matrimony, for they usually could choose but once while a man might have many choices. And so he needs must abide by his own teachings."

Most of Brigham's descendants have not modified this version. Edith Young Booth, one of Brigham's granddaughters, informed this writer that she had heard Ann Eliza was "wild." As a result, "her parents begged Brigham, against his will or hers, to marry her, so she wouldn't get in trouble and would be respectable." Kimball Young, one of Brigham's grandsons, wrote this author: "My mother occasionally remarked that the mother of Ann Eliza 'engineered' the match with Brigham—for the sake of prestige and money." Ernest Leon Dee, who resented Ann Eliza for speaking and writing against his father, also said that the proposal of marriage came not from Brigham but from Ann Eliza's mother. After getting her daughter to leave Dee, Ann Eliza's

mother “went to Brigham Young and said, ‘Look at my poor daughter—she has no means of support—can’t you help her out?’“

Generally Ann Eliza’s version of the affair has prevailed. But occasionally the Mormon version has found its way into print. In 1882 the *Police Gazette* published a booklet by “An Apostle’s Wife.” Of Ann Eliza the anonymous author had this to say: “She was a thorough Mormon, ambitious and intriguing for power. She wanted the glory of being one of Brigham’s wives, and divorced a husband in order to reign supreme over his vast estates and many wives.”

Whose version can one believe? Probably the truth lies somewhere in between. Most likely Ann Eliza’s mother, socially ambitious for her daughter and fanatically devoted to the Church, did intrigue to bring Ann Eliza and Brigham together. And perhaps Ann Eliza resisted less than she later wanted the world to believe. On the other hand, even if the first Mrs. Webb did make the arrangements, there is no reason to doubt Ann Eliza’s account of the Prophet’s love and pursuit of her. In 1867 Ann Eliza was young, pretty, and available—and Brigham, in that year, was actively devoted to his two latest wives, Amelia Folsom and Mary Van Cott, and only the year before he had vigorously attended the actress Julia Dean Hayne. It is likely he would have found Ann Eliza irresistible.

At any rate, according to Ann Eliza, she had no intention of becoming one more addition to Brigham’s harem. Her father had been assigned to transmit her refusal to Brigham in Salt Lake City, and this he did a short time later. “He told Brigham,” said Ann Eliza, “how averse I was; and he only laughed, and said I should get over it, if I only had time. He would not give me up, but he would not hasten matters; he would leave me in my parents’ hands, and he hoped they would induce me to listen favorably to his proposals. The last remark was made with a peculiar emphasis and a sinister smile… He sent a message to me, which, though seemingly kind, contained a covert threat; and I began to feel the chains tightening around me already.”

For almost two years, through messengers and in occasional personal visits, Brigham wooed Ann Eliza, and for two years she resisted him. Once, personally entreating her to succumb, he reiterated that her first marriage to Dee had been “a great shock” to him but he added that now that she was free he must tell her he “loved” her and press his suit. Ann Eliza remained unmoved, though quite alone in her defiance. Her mother and father were openly on Brigham’s side—her mother for reasons of salvation, her father for reasons of survival. But finally it was Brigham’s pressure on her brothers, Gilbert and Edward Milo, especially on the former, who was the elder, that forced Ann Eliza to reconsider her stand.

Late in 1866 Ann Eliza’s brother, twenty-nine-year-old Gilbert Webb, had been adequately supporting his plural household of two wives, Almira and

Kate, by a freight business that consisted of ten wagons and sixty mules. The other brother, Edward Milo, was a farmer and satisfied with one wife, Lizzie Horne. That year Brigham Young summoned Gilbert Webb to his office and offered him an opportunity to increase his income substantially. Gilbert accepted with alacrity.

The opportunity that Brigham gave to Gilbert involved the cutting and shaping of timber for telegraph poles. The year before, Brigham had established a Church program of telegraph-line construction in Utah, to facilitate rapid communication between Mormon settlements. Now he had further agreed to assist in the building of a new transcontinental line by contracting to set up telegraph poles between Salt Lake City and Denver. Brigham had agreed to do the job for a payment of eight dollars for each pole delivered. Instead of supervising the undertaking himself, Brigham sublet the job to his oldest son Joseph A. Young and a friend Bishop John Sharp, promising them three dollars a pole. They, in turn, at Brigham's suggestion, were ready to sublet the job to Gilbert Webb, offering him two dollars and fifty cents a pole.

Since Gilbert needed more freight wagons, mules, and provisions for the thirty men he hired, he borrowed $11,000, at 5 per cent interest a month, part from a Gentile banker named Kerr, and part from William H. Hooper, the Mormon territorial representative in Congress. As security to obtain these loans, Gilbert persuaded his father Chauncey to co-sign the note, placing his property as collateral.

Once he got his crew on the road, Gilbert moved the project speedily and efficiently. Every passing week saw twenty-five miles of telegraph poles delivered. When he had almost reached Denver, Gilbert received a message from Brigham to return to Salt Lake City. Returning, he met with the Prophet and learned that others could easily finish the Denver job. Meanwhile there was an emergency involving the line being constructed from southern Utah to Montana. Brigham desired Gilbert to take over the new job and push it to completion. He offered Gilbert three dollars for every telegraph pole delivered and one dollar for every pole set in the ground. Delighted at the prospect of being even more enriched, Gilbert did not trouble to ask for a formal contract. He shook hands on it and started north with his men, after drafting his younger brother Edward Milo from the plow to hire another crew to set the poles.

The Webbs did their work but became increasingly apprehensive as time went by and money was not forthcoming from Brigham for general expenses, provisions, crew, or their own fees. First, Edward Milo returned to Salt Lake City and tried to obtain the cash from Brigham, his son, or Bishop Sharp and failed, and then Gilbert hurried into town for an explanation. Except for one draft on a New York bank, which Gilbert had to sell at a discount, he could

not get another penny due him. Brigham alleged that Gilbert's poles were rotten, most of them had been condemned, and, anyway, there was no need to honor a contract that did not exist in writing.

According to the Webb family, Brigham had reneged on a business deal and dishonorably connived to get the job done for nothing. According to another of Brigham's legal sons, John W. Young, in an interview with the New York *Herald* in 1873, the fault had been Gilbert's own: "The true fact is that Brigham Young was not interested at all in the financial embarrassment which overtook one of the brothers. It was merely a question of dollars and cents between her [Ann Eliza's] brother and another man. This man, if I remember rightly, was Mr. Hooper, now our representative in Congress. The former had obtained a contract for furnishing telegraph poles, and bought more by several thousands than he could pay for."

In any case, by the spring of 1868, Gilbert Webb was forced into bankruptcy. Liquidating his freight business and real-estate holdings, he paid off his loyal crews and the Gentile banker named Kerr in order to protect his father. Only a small amount was left for Brigham's Mormon friend William H. Hooper. Brigham was annoyed. He accused Gilbert of favoring the Gentiles at the expense of a Mormon. Gilbert countered that Brigham had plotted his ruin to enrich Hooper and himself. Meanwhile, from South Cottonwood, Ann Eliza was viewing the impending catastrophe with alarm.

Now, according to Ann Eliza, Brigham did the expected thing. He traveled to South Cottonwood and delivered a terrible threat to the first Mrs. Webb. Unless she balanced the harm Gilbert had done to him by "counselling" her daughter to become his wife, he would excommunicate or "cut off" Gilbert from the Church.

For once the first Mrs. Webb refused to cower before the Prophet. "If you do that, Brother Young, I shall find it very hard to forgive you," she told Brigham; "although Gilbert may have erred in judgment, he designed to do right. Would you, President Young, like to have his father ruined in the crash? The notes held by Mr. Kerr were signed by him."

"If his father signed the notes, he ought to pay them," retorted Brigham.

"Well, if Gilbert had been paid for his work, he would have been able to have paid all his debts."

Angrily Brigham said, "What do you know about this business, I'd like to know?"

The first Mrs. Webb would not back down. "I know enough to know when my children are ill-used and cheated, Brigham Young. I wonder how you would like to have one of your sons cut off from the Church and treated in the manner in which you have treated Gilbert?"

"I should think it perfectly right if one of my boys had done wrong and needed punishment." He started for the door. "We shall see if Gilbert will be

allowed to pay his Gentile debts in preference to paying the brethren."

With his departure the black threat hung over the household. Gilbert would be excommunicated, destroyed, unless Ann Eliza capitulated. Ann Eliza saw her brother's deep depression and was touched. "There was nothing but ruin in store for us if I persisted in my refusal," she saw. "The loss of property was by no means so dreadful a thing to my brother—brought up to believe that there was no salvation outside of Mormonism—as being cut off from the Church and receiving the Prophet's curse, and he was heartbroken at the prospect." Also, another terrible problem faced Gilbert: inside the Church he was a conforming polygamist; outside he would be a criminal bigamist.

In despair Ann Eliza decided to go to Salt Lake City with a girl friend and make a last appeal to the Prophet. She would try to convince her suitor to be merciful to Gilbert, without demanding the price of her person in marriage. She would humble herself before him, and her eloquence would move him. These were her imaginings as she traveled to the capital.

Once in Salt Lake City, she screwed up her courage and went to call on him at the Lion House. At the very entrance her resolution wavered, and she fled. Twice more she made her way to his doorway, and twice again she turned away. Shortly after, while promenading in the street, she saw Brigham coming toward her. This was the moment, and she determined to speak her heart. They were face to face, and suddenly, under his cold gaze, she weakened and was tongue-tied. Except for "a common-place greeting," she could find nothing to say.

Ann Eliza returned to South Cottonwood in defeat. Chauncey and her mother were anxiously waiting, and the haunted Gilbert too. Ann Eliza could hardly meet their eyes.

"My religion, my parents—everything was urging me on to my unhappy fate," wrote Ann Eliza, "and I had grown so tired with struggling that I felt it was easier to succumb at once than to fight any longer. I began, too, to be superstitious about it; I did not know but what I was fighting the will of the Lord as well as the will of the Prophet, and that nothing but disaster would come as long as I was so rebellious. The thought struck me, in a sudden terror, 'What if God should take my children, to punish my rebellious spirit?' It was agony. 'Not my will, but thine,' was my heart-broken cry,—more desperate than resigned, however,—and I went to my mother and told her that I had decided. I would become the wife of Brigham Young!"

V: THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MRS. YOUNG

"*There* is one advantage in a plurality of wives; they fight each other instead of their husbands."

—Josh Billings

Although he admired the way in which the Prophet managed his many wives, Apostle Heber C. Kimball once saw fit to play seer for Brigham: "Some day there'll be one new wife who'll give you trouble." Brigham was more amused than concerned by his aide's prediction. Not until his marital adventure with Ann Eliza Webb had ended in disaster was Brigham finally able to admit to Kimball, "Yes, I suppose your prophecy had to come true."

But, at the time Ann Eliza accepted Brigham's proposal, there seemed every possibility that this marriage would remain as untroubled as the majority of his previous ones. As the nuptial date approached, there was on Ann Eliza's part finally a certain passivity and eventually an undercurrent of excitement at the prospect of becoming a fractional wife of one of the nation's foremost figures. As for Brigham, all arrogance and threats were put aside. He was attentive and winning. On the eve of the wedding he called on the bride-to-be and presented her with three fashionable dresses—one silk, the other two merino—and with a new purse that contained a fifty-dollar bill.

For the moment the wedding was to be kept secret. This was at Brigham's request. He claimed that he wanted to avoid headlines at a time when the Federal government was again agitating against polygamy. Ann Eliza, however, suspected another motive. The true reason for temporary secrecy, she felt, was that Brigham did not wish to incur the wrath of his twenty-fifth wife, Amelia Folsom.

On April 7, 1869, the sixty-eight-year-old Brigham Young and the twenty-four-year-old Ann Eliza Webb became man and wife. The simple marriage ceremony, in the Endowment House, was presided over by the skeptical Heber C. Kimball and attended by the bride's mother and father and several family friends. It is not recorded whether Ann Eliza's bankrupt brother Gilbert, whose telegraph-pole difficulties had inspired the union, was a witness to his salvation.

After the ceremony Ann Eliza accompanied her second husband to a Mormon conference, presumably as protégé rather than wife. In the evening, because he was not yet ready to face Amelia's outrage and the harem's disapproval, Brigham returned his twenty-seventh wife to her father's home outside the city and then retired alone to his bedroom in the Lion House.

There are two versions of what happened in the month that followed, and they are both Ann Eliza's. In her memoirs Ann Eliza wrote that she did not see her husband for three weeks after the wedding, and when at last he did

appear, it was only for “a few minutes.” But writing to a friend, Ann Eliza admitted that in the first weeks “I had considerable of his attention; his visits were frequent.”

On his second visit that first month Brigham Young invited his bride out for a carriage ride. He seemed anxious not to set tongues wagging by being seen in her company, and to this end he avoided the main thoroughfares. Ann Eliza took delight in his nervousness. She realized that he had not yet told his harem of his latest acquisition. Apparently he was preparing to do so shortly, for now he requested Ann Eliza to live under one roof with a number of the other wives. “He had wanted me to go to the Lion House to live,” said Ann Eliza, “but on that point I was decided. I would stay at my father’s house, but I would not go there…” At last Brigham agreed that if Ann Eliza would do him the courtesy of visiting the Lion House from time to time, he would provide her with a separate residence in Salt Lake City.

Brigham was once heard to remark that, if he had it to do all over again, he would give each and every wife her own bungalow. While such a plan would be costly, and entail considerable leg work on the part of the husband, it would render plural marriage less inhibiting and almost frictionless. Such an arrangement of a private dwelling for a plural wife of Brigham Young was not without precedent. Because of his wealth and energy, Brigham had, from his earliest days in the territory, been able to scatter a number of his wives about in different houses.

However, in 1869 one home held the greatest number of Brigham’s wives, the widely publicized Lion House, located in a central block of Salt Lake City. According to the Mormons, no more than twelve of Brigham’s wives ever slept in the three-story Lion House at any one time. According to Ann Eliza, by the last year of her marriage, the population of the Lion House had been reduced to six plural wives.

Where, then, were the other wives? Adjacent to the Lion House, connected by Brigham’s main office and a corridor, was the residence second in importance. This handsome colonial adobe, coated with yellowish plaster, was known as the Bee Hive House. Built seventeen years before Ann Eliza entered the harem, the Bee Hive House was named after the beehive (denoting Mormon industry) carved above its observatory. This residence was Brigham’s executive mansion in the three years that he was Federal governor of Utah Territory. Distinguished visitors, and they were many, crossed a wide porch, rapped on the imposing oak door, and entered the main-floor hallway. Usually they treated with Brigham in the green parlor downstairs or in his business office. Rarely were they shown Brigham’s small, austere bedroom—sixteen feet square—furnished with bed and bedstand, desk, chairs, and washstand, or any of the many bedroom suites provided for the multiple wives.

Before the ascendancy of the Lion House, the Bee Hive House served most of the harem. Studying its barred windows, Captain Richard Burton had reported: “There is a Moslem air of retirement about the Bee House; the face of woman is rarely seen at the window, and her voice is never heard from without.” Until 1860 Mary Ann Angell, Brigham’s second and only legal wife, his Khadija, dominated the $65,000 residence. But management of the other wives under its roof, of the eighteen male laborers who tended the orchard, gardens, and flour mill to the rear, of the cleaning women (“helpers,” Brigham called them), proved too much for Mary Ann Angell. Retiring from the hustle, she turned the reins over to Brigham’s third wife and first plural wife, Lucy Ann Decker. Finally the harem was transferred to the Lion House and elsewhere, and Lucy Ann had the Bee Hive House to herself.

Meanwhile the legal Mary Ann Angell became the first of Brigham’s spouses to set up a private and monogamous-styled household. After leaving the Bee Hive House, Mary Ann moved to a relatively small, aristocratic, two-story home known as The White House. This residence, located on a hill overlooking the city, had been Brigham’s first important house and the first in all the territory with a shingled roof. Its only shortcoming was a lack of sufficient windows, for it had been constructed at a time when glass was expensive. Here Mary Ann dwelt in lofty isolation until Brigham sold the building to an Englishman for $25,500. After that, the legal wife lived in humbler quarters behind the Lion House.

Numerous others of Brigham’s wives followed in Mary Ann’s footsteps. Emmeline Free, when deposed as favorite, considerately retired to the late Jedediah M. Grant’s house on upper Main Street. This house was sufficiently spacious to hold most of Emmeline’s ten children by Brigham Young. Zina D. Huntington, the eighteenth wife, settled her person and belongings in a cottage on Third South Street. Emily Dow Partridge and some of her seven children by the Prophet were content to live in a modest two-story house on Third East Street. Clara Decker, who had married Brigham at sixteen and had five children by him, was satisfied to reside in a place of her own near the Social Hall on State Street. Two wives, Harriet Barney, the twenty-fourth, and Mary Van Cott, the twenty-sixth, were neighbors in their own separate homes opposite South Temple Gate.

None of these city wives were very long out of touch with harem headquarters in the Lion House. All were expected to join Brigham and their sister or rival wives frequently in dining and prayers. However, several wives were too far removed from the Lion House ever to attend community festivities. These, in a sense, were the expatriates. Four miles beyond the Salt Lake City limits stood The Farmhouse, a two-story residence, situated on a vast rural property, belonging to Brigham. Here, for some years, dwelled Susan Snively, Brigham’s Virginia wife, until she was replaced by a series of

other wives who served on the farm a year or more at a time. The last of these was Ann Eliza herself. In St. George, Utah, Brigham had his elaborate winter mansion—he found time to spend seven winters there in all—managed by Lucy Bigelow, who was transferred there from the Lion House late in 1870. In Provo, Utah, Brigham possessed a stately old colonial house—with the city's telegraph office established in one room— where his English wife, Eliza Burgess, was the mistress.

Just before his death in 1877, the Prophet began construction of the domicile that he desired the most, one that was to supersede all others. This was the $100,000 Gardo House, a towering pile of brick and sandstone, designed somewhat in the manner of Phineas T. Barnum's gaudy Iranistan in Connecticut. Gardo House, with windows of rare plate and wall mirrors imported from Paris, was intended to become Brigham's final official residence and the home of Amelia Folsom, the queen bee of the harem. Since it was planned that Gardo House would know no other hostess than Amelia, the mansion was referred to as Amelia's Palace. Eventually the construction of Gardo House was completed by Brigham's successor, President John Taylor, who made it his official residence.

But in 1869 there was no Gardo House, and the wives who had won their privacy were happy to accept less elaborate lodgings. Since Ann Eliza was aware that most of Brigham's wives were not confined in the Lion House, she was able to assert herself. A month after her marriage, Ann Eliza, accompanied by her mother (who was to live with her as companion), was escorted by Brigham to the new house he had purchased for her in Salt Lake City.

Ann Eliza was stunned by the first sight of her bridal cottage. The quarters were uncomfortably Lilliputian and unattractive. In the living room the furniture was of the cheapest pine wood. The carpet, worn thin in the middle, was a discard from the Lion House parlor. The chinaware in the dining room and pots and pans in the kitchen were the used, battered leftovers from a bakery Brigham had owned and recently sold. Windows, unadorned by curtains or blinds, stared nakedly into the street, until Ann Eliza hastily covered them with her spare bed sheets.

Since she had been so ardently wooed by the great man, Ann Eliza undoubtedly expected to be rewarded with the luxuries of regal living. Her disenchantment was immediate and enduring. Once a month her food rations and supplies were delivered: sparse cuts of pork (rarely beef), five pounds of sugar, one pound of candles, one box of matches, one bar of soap. Several times a month there were deliveries of bread. Once every six months she received "a few yards of calico, and a few yards of both bleached and unbleached muslin." According to Ann Eliza, the promised allowance of $1,000 a year had been verbally raised to $3,000 a year before her marriage—

a sum three times what the other wives had been promised—but at no time did she see a penny of this money.

Meanwhile, the news of Ann Eliza's marriage to the Prophet had been made public. In the Lion House, and in Brigham's other residences, the announcement was greeted coldly. To Brigham's other wives, the newest and twenty-seventh wife represented a domestic threat. The main reason for apprehension was Ann Eliza's age. She was almost eight months younger than Mary Van Cott, the twenty-sixth wife, and six years younger than Amelia Folsom, the reigning favorite, and forty-one years younger than Mary Ann Angell, the legal wife. Most of the wives remembered Ann Eliza as the actress friend of their daughters, and they felt that her youth and beauty would make her a serious competitor for their busy husband's affection. Moreover, with the appearance of Ann Eliza, the economic comfort and security of the other wives would be encroached upon even further. Each additional female partner meant one more sharing of the monthly furnishings, clothes, and food.

Ann Eliza was not unaware of the antagonism felt by many of her sister wives. She dreaded meeting them. But, though she had won the battle against living in the Lion House, she knew that sooner or later she must face her rivals. At last came Brigham's command, couched as an invitation. Ann Eliza recorded her acceptance of the inevitable in a deceptively unemotional statement: "When my marriage to him was known by the other wives, as it was on my removal to the city, he took me to the Lion House, to visit the family there."

Ann Eliza was no stranger to the Lion House. Every nook and cranny of the huge residence was imprinted on her memory. Quite possibly, as she awaited Brigham's carriage and the tense confrontation with the other wives, she recalled the place where once she had been a carefree part-time boarder.

To non-Mormons, and especially to those outside of Utah who had been propagandized by scandal sheets and yellow journalism, the Lion House was synonymous with oriental harem. They imagined the Lion House to be an American khalif's palace with vast and glittering halls, broad staircases, veiled and spangled boudoirs, cushions, peacock tongues on plates of gold, incense, lutes, eunuchs, and an air of voluptuous license and depravity. Ann Eliza knew better. She knew that she was about to attend not a Near Eastern palace but something more accurately described as resembling a strictly regulated female dormitory transplanted from flinty Vermont. The atmosphere of the Lion House was excessively female, of course, but also austere and controlled. By the nature of its organization, sexuality was only faintly implied. Religious duty pervaded every parlor, hall, and bedroom, and somehow this made sex seem a procreative bodily function rather than a pleasurable secret sin. In short, the house exuded an atmosphere of bountiful motherhood rather than unrestrained concubinage. And a large part of this

atmosphere, as Ann Eliza well knew, was generated by the very architecture and layout of the building itself.

The construction of the Lion House had begun in 1855, and the residence was ready for occupancy in the following year. As a matter of fact, Brigham began moving wives into it while the carpenters were still at work. The construction cost Brigham about $35,000 out of pocket. The cost was this low only because many workmen had volunteered or been commanded to offer their services free. The completed house was probably worth closer to $65,000.

The residence was named after the reclining stone lion erected over the entrance. An Englishman and believer, William Ward, had fashioned the lion, as he had the stone beehive next door. (There was later much distress when he defected from the Church.) The shaggy beast above the front door provided anti-Mormons with a subject for much malicious comment. Typical among these was J. H. Beadle's in 1870: "Over the pillared portico in front is a stone lion, a sad misapplication of the emblem, by the way, as that royal brute is ever content with *one mate.* The bull would have been more appropriate…" Actually the lion had been inspired by an emotion no more dramatic than nostalgia. As a young man in New England, learning the trade of carpentry, Brigham Young had been awed by a stone lion decorating a mansion on which he had worked. When at last he could afford it, he appropriated the majestic emblem for his own.

Studying the Lion House shortly after it was built, Captain Richard Burton wrote: "The house resembles a two-storied East Indian tenement." To minds less exotic and cosmopolitan it resembled nothing more than a hundred New England dwellings of colonial design. The material of construction was native sun-baked adobe. The house was not two-storied, as Burton had guessed, but three-storied. The mistake was understandable, since the entry from the street led through a glass vestibule—to keep the cold wind out—into the second story, which was the main floor. The first story was below, out of sight, and the third high above, inaccessible to most outsiders.

This haven for communal living was prepared with meticulous foresight. Descending to the first or basement floor, the visitor was confronted by a warren of varied rooms, all buzzing with activity. The largest room below was the dining room, forty feet long and furnished with three tables that often held fifty women and children at one meal. Recalling her year as an actress, Ann Eliza remembered this room the best—sitting to breakfast with Brigham's daughters and chanting the daily protest against "bread and butter and peach-sauce."

Other rooms in the first-floor basement were a buttery, a weaving room, a pantry, the coachman's quarters, and a temporary schoolroom. There was also a flagstone storage cellar filled with vegetables and other provisions, as well

as a laundry room containing wooden tubs and a pounding barrel.

Anti-Mormon writers liked to say that there was a secret door somewhere on this bottom floor leading to underground cells and passages. Mrs. C. V. Waite had given credence to the lurid rumor in 1866: “There are said to be underground passages from Brigham’s houses… Also apartments under the Lion House, where he secretes his wealth and punishes his refractory wives.” Clarissa Young Spencer, one of Brigham’s daughters by Lucy Ann Decker, was denying the rumor as late as 1940: “I feel reasonably sure that the rumor came from the fact that at one time a large canal ran under a portion of Father’s property.”

On the second or main floor of the Lion House was the long central parlor, used for counseling, prayers, and entertaining, and across the hall the series of bedroom suites occupied for the most by the wives with children. The central parlor was a showcase: a Brussels carpet with floral design, two mahogany tables in the middle of the room, a rosewood piano, a melodeon, a crimson velvet sofa, a large heating stove, and an assortment of gilt chairs custom designed to the varied shapes of the different wives. Here the favorite or senior wives received their friends. The lesser wives saw female callers in their individual sitting rooms.

Beyond the parlor was the only bedroom privately accessible to Brigham from his office. This had been Emmeline Free’s room before Amelia Folsom replaced her as the queen bee. Now Amelia used the room only occasionally. It was richly furnished. A four-poster canopied bed, on the red carpet, dominated the room. Oak chairs, beautiful tables, a sofa, a wardrobe, a wall mirror, and a fireplace completed the furnishings.

Other bedrooms on the second floor reflected not only the personalities of their occupants but their position in the harem as well. Emily Dow Partridge, the eighth wife, from Ohio, had a poorly furnished bedroom for herself but was allowed additional rooms for those of her seven children who lived with her. Before moving to the Bee Hive House, Lucy Decker, the third wife, had a sitting room in addition to extra bedrooms because she, too, had given Brigham seven children. Her sister, Clara Decker, the sixth wife, had the most ornate bedroom of all—a magnificently carved bed canopied with heavy damask curtains, a settee, Venetian blinds on the windows, and an oil portrait of her Brigham on one wall.

The third or top floor of the Lion House was the one evoking the greatest curiosity in sight-seers. From the exterior could be seen twenty gabled rooms, and tourists liked to count the smoking chimneys to try to determine how many wives were in attendance. This top floor did, indeed, have twenty small bedrooms, largely occupied by Brigham’s childless wives and the more mature members of his progeny. Also on the top floor stood a large parlor with partitions to divide it into five smaller parlors.

The upstairs bedrooms were comparatively small, each exactly twelve by sixteen feet in size. Those bedrooms nearest the street were the coldest, and they were provided with fireplaces. The other bedrooms were warmed by heating stoves. Although the Gothic windows beneath the steep roof were narrow, they supplied adequate daylight. Typical of the upstairs bedrooms was the one in which resided Naamah Kendel Jenkins Carter, known to Brigham as Twiss, after her first husband who had died. Twiss, the twentieth wife, was satisfied with an ordinary bed, three oak chairs, a toilet stand, and a small wall mirror. Harriet Elizabeth Cook, the difficult fourth wife, possessed a similar room. Down the hall, Eliza R. Snow's bedroom and sitting room were more grandly furnished to fit her high station. As the venerable former wife of Joseph Smith and as the poet laureate of Mormondom, Eliza R. Snow was permitted fashionable furniture, artificial flowers, and a center table heaped high with imported books. The bedrooms for Brigham's growing children were assigned according to their sex and age: the boys of similar years shared quarters together, as did the girls.

This, then, was the familiar Lion House that Ann Eliza approached in 1869, and approached not as the friend of Brigham's daughters but as their newest stepmother and the Prophet's latest wife. Inside the Lion House, the rival wives waited while Brigham tethered his horses to the post outside the Eagle Gate, then led Ann Eliza past the manned guardhouse, up the outer staircase, through the glass vestibule, and into the hallway and central parlor.

Neither Ann Eliza nor anyone else left a record of all the wives she met that day. Later she mentioned four by name but implied that there were more. Speaking of the wives who greeted her, Ann Eliza wrote: "I was very kindly received by most of them, Emmeline Free and Zina Fluntington being especially my friends. Two of them, however,—Eliza Burgess and Harriet Cook,—would not speak to me."

The two wives who were most cordial to Ann Eliza that trying first day, Emmeline Free and Zina D. Huntington, had both fallen from their husband's favor long before. Emmeline Free, the eleventh wife, had monopolized Brigham for almost two decades after their marriage. She was, said Fanny Stenhouse, "the handsomest of Brigham's wives—tall and graceful, with curling hair, beautiful eyes, and fair complexion." She was also the most prolific child-bearer of the harem, giving Brigham six daughters and four sons. She cohabited with the Prophet at least seventeen years, since her earliest pregnancy was in 1847 and her last in 1864. Significantly her successor, Amelia Folsom, married Brigham in 1863 and had dominance of the Lion House the following year, and after that Emmeline was never impregnated again. Once shunted aside because of Amelia, Emmeline had a nervous breakdown and suffered a long period of illness. Few of the wives sympathized with her, remembering the grief she had caused them.

Ann Eliza's other close friend in the Lion House, Zina D. Huntington, was the eighteenth wife. She had been simultaneously married to Henry Bailey Jacobs and Joseph Smith in Illinois. After the murder of Smith she had taken Brigham for her third husband, just before the trek to the West. A strong woman of sad countenance, extremely religious, and in awe of her third husband, Zina D. Huntington was given much responsibility and little love by Brigham. Using the silkworms that her husband had imported from France, she unsuccessfully managed a large cocoonery outside the city. Also, as official midwife, she delivered the majority of children born in the Lion House.

Apparently for a long time Brigham had wanted Zina D. Huntington out of the way. When her only child by the Prophet, also named Zina, fell in love with an Englishman, Thomas Williams, who already had a wife, Brigham told the groom that he could have one Zina if he would also take the other. The eighteenth wife did not have to be told twice. She moved out of the Lion House and joined her daughter and son-in-law. Later she acquired a private residence from Brigham. Not until after her husband's death did she agree to travel, and then she spent two years on a mission to the Sandwich Islands. But in 1869, at the age of forty-eight, Zina D. Huntington still clung to the Lion House and any ally in bewilderment that she could make, and at once she sensed that the twenty-seventh wife could be a friend.

Besides these two wives, whom Ann Eliza singled out for special mention because of their immediate warmth, there were others she spoke of later as being kindly and affectionate. Undoubtedly, Lucy Decker, custodian of the adjacent Bee Hive House, came over to pay respects to Ann Eliza, and her younger blood sister, Clara Decker, no doubt proved equally friendly.

The Decker sisters were both short, stout, and amiable. Lucy, Brigham's third spouse and first in plurality, was forty-seven when Ann Eliza faced her as wife to wife. Lucy had left her first husband, Dr. Isaac Seeley, to marry Brigham. The first of her seven children by the Prophet, a boy christened Brigham Heber, had been born in 1845 and was the Prophet's first polygamous offspring. When Ann Eliza joined the harem, this boy was a cadet at West Point. Lucy had been happy at being given the sole stewardship of Bee Hive House. This position she enjoyed until the arrival of Amelia Folsom, who, on moving her boudoir from the Lion House to the Bee Hive House, forced Lucy to serve her.

Clara was the younger of the Decker sisters and also the brighter of the pair. At forty-one, she had been Brigham's wife for a quarter of a century. Ann Eliza adored her at once. "She expresses her opinion rarely," said Ann Eliza, "but when she does, they are given decisively, and her husband is not at a loss to understand their meaning… No one can know Clara Decker without loving her."

There were probably six or seven other wives in the Lion House who were well disposed toward Ann Eliza upon her first appearance as wife. Ann Eliza thought that the sandy-haired, freckled, pudgy, forty-eight-year-old Mrs. Twiss, twentieth wife and housekeeper of the harem, was most “amiable.” Ann Eliza found forty-seven-year-old Martha Bowker, the short-tempered, ailing, neatly dressed fifteenth wife, “by no means intellectually brilliant.” Of Martha Bowker, Fanny Stenhouse would write: “Brother Brigham acts towards her as if he had quite forgotten that he has ever married her, and she lives in all the loneliness of married spinsterhood.” Ann Eliza considered Harriet Barney, the twenty-fourth wife who had been married to Brigham for thirteen years, a woman of superior endowments. Harriet Barney was tall and full-figured, yet exceedingly graceful. She loved Brigham deeply, and although Ann Eliza was the third wife to follow her, she accepted each challenge with equanimity.

Among the other more or less friendly wives Ann Eliza may have met on this, her first visit to the Lion House as Brigham’s mate, were forty-six-year-old Margaret Pierce, the seventeenth wife, whose only child, Morris, was Brigham’s fiftieth; thirty-nine-year- old Lucy Bigelow, the twenty-second wife, whose fifteen-year tenancy of the Lion House would come to an end the following year with her move to St. George; forty-five-year-old Emily Dow Partridge, the eighth wife, who had been briefly married to Joseph Smith and been twenty-five years married to Brigham; and sixty- five-year-old Eliza R. Snow, the nineteenth wife, who had become a literary celebrity at twenty-two, a Mormon at thirty-one, a plural wife of Joseph Smith at thirty-eight, a plural wife of Brigham Young at forty-five, and whose role in the Lion House was often—according to Susa Young Gates—to arbitrate “domestic tension” between “unhappy wives.” Ann Eliza regarded the formidable poet Snow as “the most intellectual of all the wives.”

By Ann Eliza’s own admission, two wives displayed antagonism and snubbed her. These were Eliza Burgess, Brigham’s only foreign-born mate, and Harriet Cook, Brigham’s outspoken New York spouse. Eliza Burgess, an English immigrant who had worked as a servant for Brigham and Mary Ann Angell in Illinois, became her master’s twenty-third wife in 1850 and presented him with a son three years later. In the Lion House, Eliza Burgess was a servant once more, acting as assistant housekeeper to Mrs. Twiss. She looked upon Brigham as God. “It is almost painful to see the dumb worship which she accords to her master,” said Ann Eliza, “and the cavalier manner in which it is received.”

The twenty-seventh wife always claimed that she understood the resentment of the twenty-third wife. “Eliza Burgess, though not the first, and never a favorite wife, used to be terribly exercised whenever Brigham added another to the family,” Ann Eliza wrote. “She would go about, crying bitterly,

for days, and would sometimes shut herself up in her room, refusing to see anyone. Her sorrow was the joke of the family, since no member of it could see what reason she had for indulging in it. She had but just got over mourning his alliance with Mary Van Cott, when she was called upon to grieve over his union with me.

"She knew me perfectly well, as she had been an inmate of the Lion House for some years, and used to see me constantly the winter I was at the theatre, and spent so much of my time there; but on the occasion of my first visit after my marriage, she utterly ignored my presence, and would neither look at me or speak to me."

After Ann Eliza's visit had been concluded, and she had departed, Zina D. Huntington, of the pro-Ann Eliza group, took Eliza Burgess aside. "Why did you not speak to Ann Eliza?" she inquired.

"Oh, I will by and by, when I feel like it," replied Eliza Burgess.

It was not until the newest wife had been in and out of the Lion House "several times" that the resentful English wife, tired of sulking and weeping, suddenly confronted her. "Good morning," she said curtly to Ann Eliza, and then she was gone. It was, Ann Eliza concluded, a stamp of official recognition at last.

Ann Eliza's other enemy in the harem, forty-five-year-old Harriet Cook, was less forgiving. Harriet Cook had the seniority of being Brigham's fourth wife, but from all accounts she disliked her husband and he equally despised her. According to Ann Eliza, Harriet was a tall woman, with regular features except for a sharp nose and waspish mouth. During the twenty-six years that she had been married to Brigham, she had acquired a cynical attitude toward her husband's religion. "Mormonism, polygamy, and the whole of it, is humbug, and may go to the devil for all I care," she liked to say to her startled friends.

Whenever possible, Brigham avoided Harriet, and when he had to converse with her, he never discussed theology. "Brigham, finding her so ungovernable, and being quite unable to exact submission or obedience from her, refused to live with her," said Ann Eliza, "and, although she still lives at the 'Lion House' with the other wives, avoids her as studiously as possible, and will not even notice her, unless positively compelled to do so." Ann Eliza cannot be regarded as prejudiced in this judgment of Harriet Cook, since other witnesses confirm her report. In 1866 Mrs. C. V. Waite wrote: "Brigham cares nothing for this woman, and avoids her as much as possible." Eight years later Fanny Stenhouse wrote that Harriet "is an intelligent but not at all a refined woman."

Somehow, in 1846, Harriet and Brigham produced a son named Oscar. According to Mrs. Stenhouse, the Prophet punished his fourth wife by not allowing her any more children. Perhaps it was just as well. The one issue of

their union, Oscar, was described by anti-Mormon writers as an untractable child of ungovernable temper. He called Brigham “the old man,” and Brigham called him “reprobate.”

When Ann Eliza arrived to meet the rest of the harem in 1869, Harriet Cook was working off her aggressions by tutoring the children in the basement and by sewing shirts, coats, and trousers for the numerous boys in the Lion House. She made no effort to conceal her hatred of Ann Eliza. The roots of this hatred were probably in the past. According to Ann Eliza, Harriet “had been a servant in my mothers family in Nauvoo, and Brigham had, indeed, married her from our house. She used to take care of me when I was a baby, and she was so angry when she heard that Brigham had married me, that she wished with all her heart that she had choked me when she had a good chance.”

Four of Brigham’s more important wives were not present in the Lion House on the day Ann Eliza came calling. Mary Ann Angell, the sixty-six-year-old legal wife, was nowhere in evidence. “Quite a number of persons in Utah,” said Fanny Stenhouse, “believe that she is dead, so very little is seen and known of her.” However, she was far from dead in 1869 but would remain alive another thirteen years. Most probably her absence had nothing to do with the appearance of a new wife forty-two years her junior. Mrs. C. V. Waite implied that Mary Ann stayed away from the Lion House because she was “very unpopular” with the other wives. Apparently she was not unaware of her legal position and not given to hiding her feelings toward polygamous wives, and these were the attitudes that antagonized.

Actually Mary Ann Angell, widely respected in Utah, had become a recluse in The White House on the hill. Ann Eliza met her formally on later occasions and thought that “her mind is somewhat clouded.” The oldest wife and the youngest wife seemed to get along well. “She was always kind to me,” said Ann Eliza, “and I have had for her a real regard and sympathy, which increased after I became a member of her husband’s family. She is a very reticent woman, neither invited nor gives confidence, had few intimate friends, and visits but little.”

Also absent from the Lion House was fifty-four-year-old Susan Snively, the thirteenth wife. Susan, a kindly and modest southern woman of German extraction, was living in The Farmhouse, Brigham’s rural estate outside the city. After eight years of isolation in The Farmhouse, personally supervising the production of butter and cheese for the entire Young family, Susan’s health gave way. She was brought back to the Lion House an invalid, and even after her partial recovery, she was treated as an ailing patient. It was during this later period that Ann Eliza finally met her and became her confidante. One day, protesting her involuntary confinement to Ann Eliza, the thirteenth wife exclaimed, “How I should like to drive! And how much good

it would do me! We have plenty of carriages, to be sure, yet I am never allowed to ride."

The most important of Brigham's wives, thirty-one-year-old Amelia Folsom, as well as his most recent bride before Ann Eliza, twenty-five-year-old Mary Van Cott, both failed to welcome Ann Eliza to the family. Mary Van Cott lived in her own cottage and was barred entry to the Lion House at Amelia's insistence. Amelia herself, furious at Brigham's latest marital indulgence, either remained aloof and distant in the Bee Hive House or removed herself to another part of the city for the day. Momentarily, and for this Ann Eliza was grateful, the meeting between the favorite wife and the most recently favored wife was deferred, and fireworks were averted.

Ann Eliza's introduction to the harem in the late spring of 1869 was tense but relatively painless. If Ann Eliza thought that this was to be her first and last visit to the Lion House, she was mistaken. Brigham believed in communal living, and for the entire year that followed her marriage, until April of 1870, Ann Eliza was expected to attend meals, prayers, and social functions regularly in the Lion House. Because she was lonely, and because the harem offered companionship and excitements of its own, Ann Eliza did not object. Besides, the Lion House, for all its severity of design, provided more comforts than Ann Eliza was able to enjoy in the tiny, ancient house, which Brigham had turned over to her.

As an official member of the harem, Ann Eliza saw the daily routine of the wives in the Lion House to be one of well-regulated and constant activity. Brigham instinctively understood what most military leaders learn from experience—that when you have charge of a large number of persons you are required to keep them busy and disciplined.

The day in the American harem usually began shortly after dawn, around seven o'clock in the morning. The wives awakened, dressed their younger children, clothed themselves in bodices and skirts of calico, and made up their beds. At five minutes to eight in spring, summer, and autumn, and at twenty-five minutes after eight in winter, a hand bell shaken by Mrs. Twiss or Eliza Burgess resounded through the second and third stories of the Lion House. Within five minutes the three tables in the basement dining room were filled. The breakfast, prepared by Mrs. Twiss and two outside cooks, most often consisted of eggs, potatoes, baked squash, toasted bread, fruits, and the much detested peach sauce.

As breakfast was being served in the Lion House, Brigham Young was awakening and dressing in the Bee Hive House next door. He preferred to take his breakfast alone, although sometimes Amelia joined him, and in either event he was served by Lucy Decker. Brigham ate hastily and lightly, usually a boiled egg, a bowl of milk and cream taken with bread, and some fruit. When he felt festive, he would order Lucy to bring him a stack of buckwheat

cakes and soak it in syrup made in Vermont.

By nine o'clock Brigham was in his office adjacent to the Lion House. Pinching his tiny, black-rimmed spectacles to the bridge of his nose, he would read *The Deseret News*, his personal mouthpiece, and then the Salt Lake *Tribune*, the leading anti-Mormon newspaper. "He loses his temper every morning over the Salt Lake *Tribune*," Ann Eliza observed. After covering the local press, Brigham attended to his mail, reading all letters directed to him and dictating replies to the most important. At ten o'clock a barber arrived to shave him and clip his beard. The remainder of the morning was devoted to receiving visitors.

Brigham prided himself on his democratic attitude toward callers. The lowliest member of his flock was as welcome as the most renowned Eastern traveler. Even John Hyde, who could find few virtues in the Prophet, conceded his hospitality: "An old lady once went to seriously inquire 'the word of the Lord' as to whether red or yellow flannel was best to wear next to the person, and he has gravely advised her to 'wear yellow by all means.'" After the old lady had gone, the next visitor might have been Dom Pedro II, last emperor of Brazil, or Baron Rothschild, or General William Tecumseh Sherman, all of whom were received by Brigham at one time or another. In fact, during the period of his marriage to Ann Eliza, Brigham entertained the aging Ralph Waldo Emerson, en route to California to deliver a lecture entitled *Immortality.* Although Brigham had one brief exchange with Emerson concerning the most accurate books about Utah, the Mormon leader did not seem aware, or perhaps refused to recognize the fame, of the literary lion from Concord. Most of the conversation took place between Brigham and members of Emerson's party, until Brigham's thin and well-read young secretary could contain himself no longer and blurted, "Is this the justly celebrated Ralph Waldo Emerson? I have read a great many of your books." After that, Brigham requested Emerson's autograph in his guest register and bade him good journey.

Having dispensed with morning visitors, Brigham undertook official business. His eight-hour work day had no break in it, for he always skipped lunch. Through the afternoon he officiated at a few marriages, granted divorces, attended funerals, held conferences (with the Apostles and Bishops on Church policy and immediate problems), and inspected public works.

Meanwhile, in the Lion House, the majority of Brigham's wives were occupied. Rarely would they see their husband in the daylight hours, yet his presence was everywhere, and they toiled as if always under his gaze. The wives began by cleaning their quarters. Hired help did the dishwashing, but the women themselves took turns in shifts of two and three doing the house's entire household and personal washing and ironing. Quilting frames and spinning wheels were in steady use, producing quilts and yarn for children's

attire.

The army of children gave their mothers little time for rest. For a portion of each day they were kept busy in Harriet Cook's schoolroom. Then, as their mothers watched, they were treated to a succession of private tutors. They were instructed by music and dancing masters, French and English teachers, and the girls learned the new shorthand from a professional stenographer. After that, mothers taught the girls to sew, while handy men allowed the boys to assist them in branding and herding livestock. If the day was warm, Brigham's wives led his brood into the back-yard swimming pool, which was supplied with fresh water from a mountain stream. Bathing suits were taboo. The mothers and daughters wore linsey-woolsey dresses over pantalets, and the boys clad themselves in light overalls.

Whenever there was a spare moment in the afternoon, Brigham's wives concentrated on the several sewing machines that had been imported from St. Louis. Although the black silk dresses worn on Sundays and to parties were ready-made and often highly fashionable, most of the wives' attire, especially their headgear, muslin pantalets, and cotton skirts, were homespun. Since Brigham was extremely clothes conscious, the wives who loved him vied for his attention by spending much of their time on creating an attractive wardrobe. Even the wives who were indifferent to their husband devoted themselves to their appearance, for no other reason than that they were women.

Making feminine clothes to parade in before Brigham was usually an exasperating project. His taste in clothes was dogmatic and limited. A decade before he married Ann Eliza he tried to foist his own idea of fashion on his wives. He designed an aberration, which he christened The Deseret Costume. It consisted of a military hat eight inches high, a baggy short skirt that fell to the calves and partially covered trousers invented by that emancipated editor, Amelia Bloomer, and a long, loose jacket of antelope skin. Eliza R. Snow took up The Deseret Costume at once, even going so far as to cut up one of her treasured silk dresses and convert it into the unattractive three-piece garment. Briefly, and unhappily, the other wives followed suit. But then, one by one, they abandoned it.

According to Susa Young Gates, "Mormon women were too truly women to carry such a movement long. They had a love of beautiful colours and pretty clothes, so that a few years saw the matter dwindle into neglect, with only a memory of self-discipline left to strengthen the character of those who participated." Ann Eliza, however, was less indulgent toward the design of "the Mormon Worth." Said she: "It was a very unbecoming dress, both to face and figure; there was nothing graceful or beautiful about it, and probably the female Mormons have never, in all their lives, come so nearly being actually indignant with their Prophet as they were when he endeavored to induce them

to disfigure themselves by wearing this hideous costume."

Defeated by female vanity, Brigham retreated into silence only briefly and was soon heard again on the subject of women's fashion. He deplored fancy hats and praised plain, homemade dresses. When one of his wives would wear a hoop or bustle, or stylish accessories, he would caustically inquire if she was doing so to scare off flies and bedbugs.

Even this less radical campaign of Brigham's had its opponents. One weary husband, bedeviled by his spouses, protested to the Prophet. "Brother Brigham," he said, "we have seen ladies go to parties in plain, homemade cloth dresses, but every man was after the girls who had on a hundred dollars' worth of foll-the-roll, and they would dance with every woman and girl except the one in a plain dress, and they would let her stay by the wall the whole evening."

Brigham replied to the protesting husband in a sermon the following day: "It adds no beauty to a lady, in my opinion, to adorn her with fine feathers. When I look at a woman, I look at her face, which is composed of her forehead, cheeks, nose, mouth and chin, and I like to see it clean, her hair combed neat and nice, and her eyes bright and sparkling; and if they are so, what do I care what she has on her head, or how or of what material her dress is made?"

Most of the wives dutifully paid heed to their master's wishes and bent to their sewing machines, stitching conservative bodices and skirts. But Amelia Folsom, backed by Lucy Decker and Ann Eliza and many of Brigham's older daughters, formed the bloc that held out for fancy feminine wear.

Occasionally, however, for no reason whatsoever, Brigham would reverse his stand. At an evening prayer meeting that Ann Eliza attended, Brigham's twenty-year-old daughter, Fanny, one of his children by Lucy Decker, entered the parlor sporting a black dress gayly trimmed in bright red braid. The conservative Eliza R. Snow, who had been the first to wear the outlandish high-hat-and-bloomer outfit and the last to discard it, and who tried to anticipate her spiritual husband in all temporal matters, sniffed at Fanny's scarlet braid and exclaimed, "Is it possible that I see one of Brigham Young's daughters in a dress trimmed with red? I am more surprised than I can tell."

Annoyed, Brigham turned in his chair and snapped at Eliza R. Snow, "That dress is well enough. Let the girl alone. She shall wear whatever she chooses. I've seen you in more ridiculous finery than that."

At the same time Brigham punished those of his wives who demanded ready-made garments and fancy clothes by refusing to supply them with either money or materials. Amelia, alone, obtained what she wanted. When Clara Decker, rotund wife number six, requested some strips of fur for trimmings, Brigham soundly berated her for her bad taste and intended extravagance. Clara, who had been refused before, would not have it on this

occasion. She lost control completely. “If you think, Brigham Young, that I care anything for you, except for your money and what little I can get from you, you are mistaken. I might have cared more once; but that was a long time ago.” In a fury she wheeled and walked out on him. By nightfall she had her apologetic furs.

Six months after her marriage, Ann Eliza confronted Brigham with a similar request for furs. She had not heard of Clara’s difficulty, and she expected to have the furs at once. Instead, Brigham abused her for her flightiness and expensive demands. Shocked by his outburst, Ann Eliza began to weep, sobbing, “Oh, don’t, Brother Young!” Softened by her tears, Brigham held his tongue. The following day he delivered the furs.

Later, emboldened by her success with the furs, Ann Eliza went to her husband and requested silk to reline a worn hand muff. Again Brigham exploded. She had her furs, he said. Now it was silk. What would it be next? Would she never be satisfied, always be frivolous and demanding? This time Ann Eliza would not give him the satisfaction of tears. She stood firm and listened to his tirade. “I knew that he had several trunks full of silks, velvets, and laces, that he was keeping for some purpose or other,” she said, “and consequently the material for relining my muff would cost him nothing; so I did not feel I merited the lecture I was receiving. I said nothing, however, beyond making my request, and when he had finished he cut off a *quarter of a yard* of narrow silk from an entire piece which he had in one of the trunks, and gave it to me with as many airs and as much flourish as though he were presenting me with a whole dress pattern. It is needless to say that my muff was not lined with *that* piece of silk.”

Ann Eliza’s mood of defiance about what she wore continued. One evening Brigham told his assembled wives, “The very next time I see one of my wives with a dress on sweeping the ground, I will take the scissors and cut it off.” The following evening Ann Eliza appeared in a long dress that swept the Lion House floor. Passing through a doorway, she met her husband. As he moved aside, his foot accidentally stepped on the train of her dress. He looked down, looked up, hesitated, and then walked off without a word. When she saw him next, he did not have a pair of scissors. In the battle of fashion, at least, the twenty-seventh wife knew that she had won.

For nine hours of the day the Lion House was a world of women. At four o’clock in the afternoon this was changed. Brigham arrived for his daily visit with his wives. At five o’clock the dinner bell was sounded. Brigham led his file of wives and children down into the dining room. Tardiness was not permitted; those who were late did not eat.

The wives and children filled the two long tables. Brigham sat stoutly at the center of the short head table, facing his family. In earlier years Emmeline Free had occupied the chair to his right and Eliza R. Snow the one to his left.

Now it was Amelia Folsom who sat to his right and Mrs. Twiss, to give her handy access to the kitchen, to his left. Sometimes Mrs. Twiss gave way to Eliza R. Snow or Clara Decker or one of Brigham's male friends like Joseph F. Smith, nephew of the martyred Joseph, or to a prominent Gentile visitor. Amelia gave way to no one. Usually Lucy Decker, over from Bee Hive House, and Eliza R. Snow headed the long tables. Ann Eliza, when she came to dinner, sat with the childless wives.

After Brigham said grace, Mrs. Twiss bobbed up and down, serving most of the platters. The regular meal consisted largely of corn-meal mush, midget cuts of mutton or beef, baked potatoes, vegetables, bread, milk, and cheese. The desserts varied from baked apples to custard pie. Only at Sunday dinner was chicken served, occasionally being replaced by bear steak or venison. Turkey was saved for Thanksgiving or Christmas.

Ann Eliza noticed that there were really two meals served—the ordinary one for the wives at the long tables, and a more lavish one, with numerous "delicacies" added, at Brigham's table. This disparity was resented by several of the lesser wives. On one occasion an ordinarily meek spouse coveted a dish served to Brigham and Amelia but not to herself. Suddenly, getting up the nerve, she leaped to her feet, strode to her husband's table, helped herself to the luxury plate, and returned to her seat—"amidst looks of consternation from the other wives," observed Ann Eliza, "and of indignant amazement from her husband." Brigham said nothing while at the table. Apparently he had much to say afterward. The act of open rebellion was never repeated.

According to Susa Young Gates, the atmosphere at the dinner table was relaxed but restrained. There was some "good and jovial conversation," she recalled, "yet there was never anything approaching boisterous laughter or unseemly mirth."

After Brigham and his wives had concluded their meal, there was an hour of rest. At seven o'clock, as night fell, Brigham lit the candle in his bedroom, emerged into the hall, opened a glass cupboard, removed a large prayer bell, and rang it sharply three times. Then he proceeded briskly to the second-story central parlor. Brigham sat on a chair in the middle of the room, his face illuminated by the astral lamp on the small table beside him. He watched his wives and children enter and take their regular places about the spacious room. Eliza R. Snow was always allowed to sit to his right.

In the first months of her marriage, Ann Eliza attended these prayer meetings regularly, since all the wives living off the premises were expected to be on hand. Soon Ann Eliza saw that the appearance of the outside wives was "irregular." This gave her courage to absent herself more and more. "I used to go whenever I felt inclined, which was very seldom," she said, "and the longer I was a member of the family, the more infrequent became my attendance."

The evening prayer meeting began with the group singing several hymns. After that, the multitude of wives and children kneeled as Brigham rose with open Bible in hand and read a variety of prayers. Most of the wives enjoyed these prayers; Ann Eliza did not. “He prays with great unction,” said Ann Eliza, “and, I suppose, unconsciously to himself, some of his patronizing manner slips into his appeals to the throne of Divine Grace, until his petitions always seemed to me to be very much like advice to the Deity rather than entreaties for the Divine blessing.”

When, at last, the amen was spoken and echoed, Brigham closed his Bible and sank into his chair, while his wives stiffly lifted themselves erect and gathered about him or mingled with each other. This was the period for domestic informality and togetherness in the Lion House.

At ease after his eight-hour work day, Brigham would chat with the wives surrounding him. He never discussed Church or personal business with his mates. As he had explained to Horace Greeley, “If I did not consider myself competent to transact a certain business without taking my wife’s or any woman’s counsel with regard to it, I think I ought to let that business alone.” However, he liked to discuss the day’s news—the driving of the golden spike at Promontory Point, a gala and drunken affair which Amelia had attended and Brigham had not; the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment (which still did not open the Mormon Church to Negroes); the recent vote given to women in Utah, the first in America; the irritation of enduring the anti-Mormon Ulysses S. Grant in the White House for a second year; the deaths of Robert E. Lee and Charles Dickens; or the defeat of Napoleon III at Sedan.

Sometimes Brigham’s conversations with his wives were devoted to domestic problems. If two of the women had been quarreling, Brigham would encourage them to speak their minds and then serve as judge and peacemaker. If any individual wife had a personal difficulty, Brigham would lead her aside and listen and then offer helpful suggestions. If conversation occasionally bored him, music almost never did. Often, after prayer, Brigham would call out to his older daughters, “Come, girls, let’s have some music.” Then, as the wives listened approvingly and knitted, one of the girls would sit at the piano and play “Silver Threads Among the Gold,” while another daughter sang the lyrics.

During many of these evenings in the Lion House parlor, Brigham devoted his time to his sons and daughters. As father, the Prophet was a strict disciplinarian. When the older of his fifty-six children went out to social affairs, Brigham insisted on inspecting their attire and admonishing them to be home before ten in the evening. He was equally strict about late-hour courting. One Sunday night the older girls had received their boy friends in the central parlor. At Brigham’s order the lamp on the table in the middle of the room remained illuminated. The bright light proved inhibiting to the

various couples. At last one of Brigham's girls, more fearless than the rest, disengaged herself, turned down the lamp, and surrounded it with a wall of books. The room was thrown into semidarkness, and in the shadowed comers the couples embraced. All at once the parlor door was thrown open, and framed in it, like an embodied conscience, stood the Prophet, a revealing candle in his hand. The couples stiffened in their places, then fell apart, as Brigham silently walked to the table, removed the books, one by one, and turned up the lamp. "The girls will go upstairs to their rooms," he announced, "and I will say good night to the young men." Shamefaced, the girls trooped out. Brigham followed them into the hall, to reappear in the parlor a moment later with a mountain of men's hats in his arms. The evening was ended.

Even the youngest of Brigham's offspring could know his wrath. Once, while preaching an outdoor sermon, he became annoyed by two of his little sons, who were noisily racing up and down a nearby slope. Halting in mid-sermon, Brigham left the congregation, strode swiftly to the slope, collared his sons, spanked each one into whimpering silence, and then calmly returned to his pulpit and resumed the words of the Lord.

Soon after her marriage, Ann Eliza acquired strong feelings about Brigham and his children. Although she remained one of her husband's eleven childless wives, Ann Eliza still had her two sons by her first marriage. She had high hopes that Brigham would perform as a valuable and much-needed stepfather. In the courting period Brigham had displayed a fondness for both young Edward Wesley and Leonard Dee. He promised Ann Eliza he would do much to improve their lot. After the marriage, according to Ann Eliza, he treated her sons as "interlopers." He gave each boy a new hat and pair of shoes annually. He would not give them suits but ordered Ann Eliza to make the suits herself. Once, said Ann Eliza, when she asked for new shoes earlier than usual, Brigham replied, "They don't need shoes; children ought always to go barefoot; they are healthier for it." Ann Eliza was all the more to note that Brigham's own sons never went barefooted.

Ann Eliza believed, however, that Brigham's own brood was treated in other ways as badly as were her own sons. She liked to believe the apocryphal story then current among Gentiles. Brigham was in a store talking to a friend when an attractive young boy entered with a shopping list for the clerk. Brigham was charmed by the boy, asked him several questions, and then turned back to his friend. "That's a nice boy," the Prophet said. "Whose child is it?" The friend blinked. "Why, he's one of Mrs. Brigham Young's children, President," the friend replied. Brigham smiled foolishly and changed the subject.

Ann Eliza chose to believe that her husband could not know all of his twenty-five sons and thirty-one daughters, as well as all of his adopted children. "Some of his children are almost strangers to him," said Ann Eliza.

“They know nothing of fatherly affection, and while they feel that they have, socially, a sort of prestige, by being so closely related to him, they feel, personally, only a dread and fear of him. He never invites their confidences, nor shows himself interested in their affairs.”

However, several of Brigham’s daughters, flatly contradicting Ann Eliza, have stated in writing that Brigham was a loving and devoted parent. Certainly numerous letters from Brigham to his grown children away at school exist to attest to his paternal concern. Living relatives remember that he often looked after his children personally, once shepherding six daughters at the same time to the dentist and then bringing them back to his office where six new sleds awaited them.

Frequently, in public sermons, the Prophet showed his interest in the welfare of his youngest subjects. The same year that he was wooing Ann Eliza he advised his flock in a sermon: “When your children arise in the morning, instead of sending them out of doors to wash in cold, hard water, with a little soft soap, and wiping them as though you would tear the skin off them, creating roughness and darkness of skin, take a piece of soft flannel, and wipe the faces of your children smooth and nice, dry them with a soft cloth… Train up your children to be beautiful and fair, instead of neglecting them until they are sunburned and become like the natives of our mountains.”

Brigham did not always confine his wives and himself to the parlor pleasures of the Lion House. Sometimes he would take a party of his wives to the theater. More frequently he would take several of his wives to a social ball. Because dancing was sanctioned by the Bible, and because it was the only physical activity for which he had time, Brigham approved of it for himself, his wives, his Saints. “I want it distinctly understood,” he explained in a sermon, “that fiddling and dancing are no part of our worship. The question may be asked, ‘What are they for, then?’ I answer, that my body may keep pace with my mind. My mind labors like a man logging, all the time; and this is the reason why I am fond of these pastimes—they give me a privilege to throw everything off, and shake myself, that my body may exercise, and my mind rest.”

Balls were almost always held at the Salt Lake City Social Hall. The dancing took place in a room forty by eighty feet in size, dominated at one end by an orchestra seated on a raised platform beneath a plaster bust of Shakespeare, and decorated at the opposite end by a legend of woven evergreens spelling “Our Mountain Home.” Adjoining the ballroom was a large dining room, where late supper was served to the foot-weary guests, often as many as 250 in number.

The festivities began promptly at four o’clock in the afternoon. Brigham arrived, majestic in a broadcloth suit, followed by his wives, who were rarely less than two in number and usually more. At the entrance he paid five dollars

for himself, five dollars for one wife, and two dollars for each additional wife. Inside the hall, after offering up a prayer, Brigham would wait for the orchestra to strike up and then lead the first cotillion, an elaborate, formal square dance that required the exchange of partners.

Of all dances, Brigham approved only of the cotillion and the quadrille. He opposed any dance that might create sexual stimulation or be used as a means of courting and seduction. He considered the polka and the waltz (which Lord Byron had said could "wake to wantonness the willing limbs") as indecent, and both were banned from Social Hall. "Those who cannot serve God with a pure heart in the dance," Brigham liked to say, "should not dance."

During the first cotillion, at least, Brigham always displayed a surprising amount of vigor. "The Prophet is more industrious than graceful as a dancer," Artemus Ward observed. "He exhibits, however, a spryness of legs quite remarkable in a man at his time of life."

After the opening cotillion, Brigham would rest on a splendid sofa, flanked by Amelia Folsom, dressed in silk, feathers, and jewelry, and Mary Ann Angell, dressed in severe plain silk. Other of his wives who had been invited more often than not wore calico; their daughters wore puffed tarlatan.

As the evening progressed, Brigham usually danced first with his favorite wife rather than his senior wife, which was contrary to custom. Then he danced at least once with each of his other wives present and finally devoted the rest of the evening to Amelia.

On one occasion that Ann Eliza could remember, Brigham was forced, because of the dignitaries present, to follow the custom of dancing his first dance with the senior wife at hand. On this occasion Brigham had been undiplomatic enough to escort, as his partners, his old favorite, Emmeline Free, and his new favorite, Amelia Folsom. When the first cotillion began, Brigham tried to evade the issue by remaining immobile on the sofa between his wives. But when the manager of the dance committee confronted him and encouraged him to participate, Brigham knew that he must make a decision. Rising, he faced Emmeline and Amelia. They sat, tight-lipped. All eyes were on Brigham. At last he moved toward Emmeline, knowing the eleventh wife must have precedence over the twenty-fifth. "Come along and dance," he said gruffly to Emmeline, and then, without offering his arm, he hastened to the floor and waited for her to follow. Throughout the dance he spoke not a word to Emmeline. Instead, his attention was concentrated on Amelia, who was vivaciously dancing with another member of the hierarchy. When the number ended, Brigham, still wordless, hastened Emmeline back to the sofa and then went off to seek his favorite. But Amelia, surrounded by admirers, would have none of the Prophet's apologies. At last the music resumed. Despite her husband's soft words Amelia showed no inclination to forgive him. At this critical moment the dance manager appeared once more. He wondered if

Brigham would honor the gathering by participating in the new cotillion. “With pleasure,” said Brigham. “*Now* I will dance with my wife.” He offered Amelia his arm, and this time, somewhat mollified, she accepted it. During the entire number Brigham conversed animatedly with his partner. From the sofa Emmeline Free looked on bitterly.

Although a plurality of partners put a damper on many social evenings, Brigham preferred these irritations to the rebellion that might be provoked by the act of taking only one wife. Once, in the first year of her marriage, Ann Eliza thought that she might succeed in having her husband alone at a ball. The Female Relief Society, a powerful Mormon educational and cultural organization, had announced a reception at the Social Hall and suggested, for a novelty, that ladies select their own escorts.

Ann Eliza decided that she wished to attend. “I ventured to ask Brother Young,” she said. “He was my husband, and whom else should I invite? He accepted my invitation, apparently with much pleasure, and arranged to call for me on the appointed evening to take me to the hall. He was punctual to his appointment, but when he arrived he was accompanied by another wife. I suppose he knew the fact of his being at the ball would be reported to Amelia, and that she would be very angry if he went with me alone. I was very much annoyed at the circumstance, and really a little hurt that he could not take me somewhere just once without someone else along. I said nothing, however, and was as cordial to the other wife as I should have been had she accompanied him at my express invitation.”

While lack of monogamous companionship turned Ann Eliza against these dances, something else irritated her friend, Fanny Stenhouse, even more. The plural wife, wrote Mrs. Stenhouse “has to see and be present when the love-making is going on, when her husband is flirting and saying soft nonsense, or looking unutterable things at silly girls who are young enough to be her daughters… Here in the ballroom you may see men of threescore years and even older joining in the dance with girls of sixteen or even younger—making love to them, flirting with them, marrying them.”

Nevertheless, many wives welcomed the fun of these evenings away from the communal roof. The dancing in Social Hall usually proceeded for four hours, until eight o’clock, when the orchestra blared forth a march and a procession was formed and the men and their wives paraded into the dining room for supper. Later there was more dancing, relieved by vaudeville entertainers and singers. Despite the fact that Brigham’s normal bedtime was midnight, he often liked to stay at these dances until five o’clock in the morning.

For most of Brigham’s wives there were few pleasures at the Social Hall or in the Lion House that could compensate for the dominating presence of Amelia Folsom. Just as she monopolized Brigham at almost every dance, she

controlled him in their twin residences. Ann Eliza knew, from the first moment she had set foot in the Lion House as plural wife, where her main competition lay. She learned that Emmeline Free, the deposed favorite, and Harriet Barney, the wife who had preceded Amelia, had both resisted the new favorite's influence over their husband, and yet each, in turn, had lost out.

For a time the anti-Amelia clique in the harem had hoped that the newest two wives, Mary Van Cott and Ann Eliza, because of their beauty and youth, might overcome Amelia. It was soon apparent that this hope was to remain wishful thinking. Mary Van Cott was too ladylike, too restrained, and she had no stomach for a fight. And Ann Eliza, lacking in confidence and sophistication, did not have enough knowledge of the romantic art—nor did she have the desire—to turn Brigham from Amelia to herself. But even if Ann Eliza had possessed the desire to supplant Amelia, it is unlikely that she could have accomplished the feat. The enemy was practiced and formidable. Amelia was positive, aggressive, ambitious, and somewhat of a hellion. She made it clear to Mary Van Cott and Ann Eliza at once that if either intended to try to unseat her, the challenger would have to battle to the death. Amelia Folsom had been the practical head of the harem for six years, and she intended to remain in that position to her last breath.

Ann Eliza's principal rival had been born Harriet Amelia Folsom in Buffalo, New York, on August 23, 1838. She had dropped the given name Harriet in 1863, when she was twenty-five, shortly after coming into the Lion House, because she found Harriet Cook and Harriet Barney there before her. She determined not to be the third Harriet but the first and only Amelia, and in this she succeeded.

Her background and natural endowments gave her every advantage. Amelia's father, William Folsom, was the brilliant English architect who had helped build the Salt Lake City Theater and the Mormon Tabernacle. He had become a Mormon in 1841, when Amelia was three, and had dutifully transported his family to Nauvoo. After the murder of Smith, when Amelia was eight, he had fled to Keokuk, Iowa.

Not until 1860 did the Folsoms finally move to Salt Lake City. Brigham, accompanied by Heber C. Kimball, drove out in a carriage to greet the distinguished family personally, and on that occasion, for the first time, he saw Amelia as a mature young lady. She was twenty-two years old, tall, stately, poised, and provocatively arrogant in her beauty. A surviving niece who knew her believes that "regal" and "haughty" are the words that might best describe her. Amelia's hair was brown, her eyes translucent blue-gray, her nose tilted, her mouth regular though thin-lipped. Her complexion, the color of cream, was flawless. Her hody was young and graceful, yet full and firm. Women thought that she had "the most beautiful hands in the world." She left nothing to be desired—and so she was desired by all who saw her. In

a short time, more than a dozen ardent swains were at her feet, and soon Brigham Young was one of them.

The Prophet was fifty-nine years old, with twenty-four marriages behind him, when he fell deeply in love with Amelia and tried to make her his wife. Once a reporter asked Amelia, “When did your courtship begin?” She replied, “Immediately after my arrival in Salt Lake.” The reporter inquired, “Did President Young employ peculiar methods of courtship?” Amelia answered, “I think not. I was aware that he was the husband of a number of wives— I did not care to know how many—but that did not affect our courtship in the least. President Young was naturally dignified but was always at ease with company.”

Not until meeting Ann Eliza, eight years later, would Brigham find a second female so difficult to conquer. Daily, it seemed, week in and week out, his carriage was outside Amelia’s father’s door. Church business was neglected as Brigham, in his best broadcloth, sat inside her parlor, enchanted, adoring her, constantly proposing. She was so unlike his other wives. Several of them had once had beauty and still had refinement, but none of them had Amelia’s elegant femininity. She used foreign colognes. She wore lace shawls and jewelry. She owned delicate fans. She played the piano. She sang. Above all, she had spirit. Her instincts were perfect. She treated Brigham not as Prophet but as merely one more suitor, wealthier than the others, more powerful than the others, but a questing male, nevertheless. According to those of her relatives still alive today, what troubled Brigham even more was the knowledge that Amelia was “very madly in love with another young man at the time.”

It is said that Brigham, as well as Amelia’s parents, had to remind her that he was not a mere mortal. He was her temporal and spiritual guardian. It is also said that, when all other approaches had failed, Brigham confronted her with a divine revelation that he had received. “Amelia,” he said, “you must be my wife; God has revealed it to me. You cannot be saved by anyone else. If you will marry me, I will save you, and exalt you to be a queen in the celestial world, but if you refuse, you will be destroyed, both soul and body.” Years later, when Ann Eliza heard of this approach, she remarked bitterly, “This is the same argument he used to win me, and the one he has always in reserve, as the last resort.”

Amelia apparently was impressed by the revelation, but not enough to lose her head. She had her conditions. She would marry him if she would be his “first” wife, not his twenty-fifth, if she would have a private carriage, a box at the theater, a place beside him on all special trips, a wardrobe of expensive imported clothes, an allowance or pin money, and, some day when she wished it, a private mansion of her own. Brigham capitulated on every count. And on January 24, 1863, despite recent Federal legislation against polygamy, Amelia

Folsom became Brigham Young's twenty-fifth wife.

"I remained at home three weeks," Amelia later recalled, "when I took up residence at the Lion House, President Young's home. His wives and children all lived there and each wife, including myself, had her separate room. At that time there were seventy-five of us in the family, including the hired help. We all dined at the same table, over which President Young presided."

When Amelia entered the Lion House, she was Brigham's first new wife in seven years. From the start she performed as if no other wife existed. At dinner she sat at Brigham's right hand. At the ball opening the new Salt Lake City Theater she had the first dance. When attending plays, she most often sat beside Brigham in the box, while other wives had to be satisfied with the orchestra seats. At Brigham's homes, on the road, in St. George and Provo, she was ever beside him, forcing the out-of-town wives, Lucy Bigelow and Eliza Burgess, to serve her.

When she learned that President Ulysses S. Grant was coming to Utah, she requested that she be his hostess and was granted the honor. For the occasion she demanded a formal dress imported from Paris and acquired a $700 item of blue taffeta. Anticipating her future $100,000 mansion, she commissioned a huge, ornately carved bed and other mahogany furniture, and Brigham paid the bill. She reminded her husband of her allowance, and by the time Ann Eliza appeared, Amelia alone, of all the wives, was able to save $10,000 out of her pin money.

Her word was a command. She would brook no compromise. If Brigham dared to dally or equivocate, she would curse him and smash furniture. Once, when she asked for a sewing machine of her own, Brigham bought her one of obscure manufacture. Infuriated, she dragged the machine out of her room and kicked it down the stairs. When Brigham appeared, all consternation, she shouted at him, "What did you get this old thing for? You knew I wanted a Singer." The Singer materialized overnight.

Rarely did Amelia bend to the Prophet's wishes. Beside him in their theater box, and against his entreaties, she loudly chewed apples, threw the peels about, and then focused her binoculars on the audience instead of the actors on the stage. Mrs. C. V. Waite recounted in 1866, the third year of Amelia's marriage, a singular domestic scene in the Lion House. Amelia invited a young lady friend to join Brigham and herself for tea in the parlor of the Lion House. After the tea Amelia ate some candy and then began to crack peanuts, tossing the shells out of a nearby open window. This irritated Brigham. "Amelia, don't do that; put your shells by your plate." Amelia showed defiance. "I shan't do it. I'll throw them where I please." Brigham brooded silently, and Amelia resumed with the peanuts. At last the Prophet spoke again. "Amelia, I wish you wouldn't do that any more." The favorite turned on her husband. "I don't care. I'll throw the shells where I please, and

I'll do as I please, and you may help yourself." She tugged at her friend's dress and stood up. "Come, let's go upstairs, and let him *grunt* it out."

Most of the wives detested her. Emmeline Free blamed a nervous breakdown on Amelia. Only Mary Ann Angell and Eliza R. Snow accepted the inevitability of her presence and became her friends. Eventually, though, through the years, the other wives came around, largely because they saw that only through her influence might they obtain favors from Brigham.

Despite Amelia's power over him, Brigham twice resisted it and succumbed to love and physical attraction. Two years after his marriage to Amelia, he took the pretty twenty-one-year-old widow, Mary Van Cott, for his twenty-sixth wife. And six years after Amelia, he took twenty-four-year-old Ann Eliza for his twenty-seventh wife.

In both cases Amelia had tantrums. When she learned that her husband had married Mary Van Cott, Amelia accosted the bride and groom, it is said, tore at Mary's hair, and pounded her fists against Brigham. She promised that she would murder them both.

Worried about the favorite, Brigham decided not to bring Mary into the Lion House. Instead, he presented her with a separate bungalow, then called for her in his closed carriage and took her to a furniture store. After Mary and Brigham had ordered what they needed, they left the store and started toward their waiting carriage. That moment, Amelia, eyes glaring but hands fortunately weaponless, sailed into view. Before Mary could reach the vehicle, Amelia darted between her and the carriage and stepped inside. She ordered the coachman to drive her to the Lion House. The perplexed coachman glanced at Brigham, who stood helpless and speechless. Amelia stared triumphantly at Mary, who, said Ann Eliza, "was furious at the insult but showed it only by her flashing eyes and deepening color." Still Brigham was silent. Amelia poked the coachman. "Home, I say," she commanded.

The coachman rode off with the victorious Amelia. Mary and Brigham started back to her bungalow on foot. All the way Mary castigated him for his weakness. But a worse scene was waiting for Brigham when he returned to the Lion House. Amelia was on him like the furies, heaping insults on him and attacking that "shameless creature" known as Mary Van Cott.

It was Mary, however, who had the final victory, and she accomplished it with her femininity and in her bed. On January 14, 1870, five years after she had married her husband, she gave birth to Brigham Young's fifty-sixth and last child, a daughter named Fanny. When the happy news was announced, Amelia was never more enraged. She had a tempestuous scene with Brigham and forbade him ever to make love to Mary again or even see her. For several months Brigham sheepishly obeyed. But just as he was about to leave on a trip through southern Utah, the attraction of Mary and his eagerness to see his latest offspring proved too much. Apparently Mary told Ann Eliza what

happened, and Ann Eliza repeated it. “She refused to shake hands with him,” said Ann Eliza, “and told him that if he could afford to stay away so long from her while he was living in the same city with her, she could afford to not shake hands.”

Brigham’s twenty-seventh marriage tried Amelia’s temper almost as much as his twenty-sixth. Amelia, said Ann Eliza, “had not got over her anger at her lord for taking Mary Van Cott—of whom, by the way, she was terribly jealous—when fuel was added to the fire of her fury by my introduction to the world as another Mrs. Young. She was terribly bitter toward us both, though I think she hated Mary with a more deadly hatred than she felt for me. I think she considered Mary her most dangerous rival, but for all that she was not drawn towards me at all. It was not that she disliked me less, but Mary more.”

Amelia was nowhere to be seen the first time Brigham brought Ann Eliza to the Lion House as wife. Several weeks later the rival wives had an accidental encounter, their first. Ann Eliza was taking a young lady friend, on foot, to see the lush gardens behind the Lion House. She and her friend were exchanging “girlish reminiscences” when they realized that another female pedestrian, directly ahead of them, was listening to their chatter. As the woman ahead arrived at the gate to the Lion House garden, Ann Eliza realized that she was none other than Amelia Folsom. The favorite opened the gate and went through just as Ann Eliza caught up. Instead of holding the gate ajar, Amelia slammed it shut and secured it from the inside. “There, madam!” she exclaimed to Ann Eliza, “I’d like to see you get in now.”

Startled, Ann Eliza watched Amelia depart up the garden path. Recovering, she reached inside the wire, unfastened the latch, and led her friend inside. Neither referred to Amelia’s rudeness. Instead, they had resumed their reminiscences, when they came upon Amelia examining a plant and dressing down Leggett, the gardener. Ann Eliza and her friend passed Amelia without comment, strolled through the entire garden, then started back to the street. Amelia was no longer in sight, but Leggett, the gardener, stood among his flowers and bushes with an unhappy expression on his face.

Ann Eliza halted. “What is the matter, Mr. Leggett?”

The gardener sighed. “Oh, it is Mrs. Amelia. Did you hear her scolding me just now? Wasn’t she just awful? She’s that mad because you came in, that she had to let out on somebody, and I suppose I came the handiest. But ain’t she a master hand to scold, though? Why, you ought to hear her give it to me sometimes. I’m pretty well used to it, and don’t mind very much. It’s some consolation to think that Brother Brigham gets it worse than I do, and when he’s round, I’m safe.”

Ann Eliza’s second brush with Amelia was equally brief and one-sided. On June 1, 1870, all the surviving wives gathered in the dining room of the Lion House to help Brigham celebrate his sixty-ninth birthday. Since it was

probably Mary Ann Angell who had taken Amelia's place at the head table for this one festivity, Amelia and Ann Eliza were, through some insensitive mismanagement, seated opposite one another at one of the longer tables. The dinner was strained. No word passed between the two until the dessert. Suddenly, said Ann Eliza, Amelia shoved the cake basket at her "and with as freezing a tone and manner as she could assume, asked, 'Will you have some cake?' I declined, and that ended our conversation."

Even though in the next few years Ann Eliza continued to regard Amelia as an antagonist, she often confessed admiration for the manner in which the favorite treated their husband. "I was once present," said Ann Eliza, "when she wanted her husband to do something for her; he objected, and she repeated her demand, threatening to 'thrash him,' if he did not comply. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to say that she was not obliged to ask him again."

In later years, however, Ann Eliza never had a good word for Amelia. She told audiences throughout the United States that Amelia was neat rather than beautiful, that she had "a terrible temper… hates Brigham… uses the vilest language in her common conversation," and that Brigham was afraid to put her out because of the subsequent scandal and the risk that she might expose his personal business.

Mormon sources were kindlier to Brigham's twenty-fifth wife. In New York, Brigham's son, John W. Young, was asked by a reporter, "Was Amelia the cause of any trouble in the household?" Young replied, "She has always been a worthy member of the family. She has never been the cause of any disturbance, and Ann Eliza's allegations regarding Amelia are entirely without foundation in fact." A pamphlet on Brigham's wives, published by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, called Amelia "queenly" and said of the $100,000 Gardo House: "The family understood that Amelia would live there and was happy that President Young had chosen her to assume the responsibilities of all social affairs." Recently one of Amelia's nieces remarked that Amelia had married the Prophet merely to nurse his gout and that if she seemed domineering it was only because she had to watch over his health strictly.

Perhaps the most objective picture of Amelia, in the period when she was fending off Mary Van Cott and Ann Eliza, was presented by an anonymous Gentile lady visitor to Salt Lake City, who came by train, blanched at plural marriage, and sped back to Philadelphia to publish "A Week Among the Mormons" in *Lippincott's Magazine* for July 1870. The authoress, who signed herself "A.M.," and her party were taken on a guided tour of the city by Joseph W. Young, Brigham's son. One of the wondrous sights was to be a view of Amelia Folsom. At the time, anticipating the construction of her palace, Amelia had moved out of Bee Hive House and was living in an attractive, one-and-a-half story, adobe residence across the street. She was

waiting beside her Steinway piano when her eastern guests arrived. Apparently her appearance was imposing, for the authoress from Philadelphia reported: “Mrs. Amelia became the surroundings: tall and graceful, with a commanding figure and a head worthy of better things, it was hard to realize her position.” The authoress was amazed at Amelia’s “suavity and courtesy.”

During the meeting one of Joseph W. Young’s wives asked her father-in-law’s twenty-fifth wife, “Amelia, are you going to the President’s?” Amelia replied briskly, “That will not be necessary.

I have sent for the President!” Shortly after, Brigham’s carriage arrived without him. But a message to Amelia stated that he would be by later.

To pass the time Amelia took her visitors on a ride through the city. “We were amused,” wrote the Philadelphia authoress, “at the commotion created by Mrs. Amelia’s appearance in the stores on the street. Evidently she was recognized as a power. We watched her closely, curiously. Aware of her history, of the months of suing that Brigham had undergone ere he could bring her to consent to be Mrs. Young No. 40 or 50, or thereabouts, we looked and marveled.”

After the tour Amelia asked the Gentile lady, “What do you think of polygamy *now?* Is it what people have represented it to be?”

“Not exactly,” said the authoress, “but much worse.”

Instantly Amelia was her old fiery self. “Ah, well! I suppose your minds are not educated up to this point, but the day will come when you will see that we are in the right. I am not the only wife of my husband, but I consider myself the *equal, if not the superior, of ANY woman in the United States.* A kinder, more indulgent, more affectionate husband than mine cannot be seen.”

Later, when Brigham arrived—”a short, rotund figure, grayish hair and whiskers, a pleasant face and a mellifluous voice, with a falling cadence in it,” the authoress noted—he returned Amelia’s compliment. “With all my wives and daughters,” he told his eastern visitors, “I have not heard a woman scold these fifteen years. What do you think of that?”

Party manners were observed. “We think it speaks very forcibly,” the Philadelphia authoress replied, and then went east to write one of the few Gentile impressions extant of Amelia Folsom.

If the favorite was invincible against all inroads tried by other wives, as Ann Eliza finally decided, there still remained one area in which Amelia could not control Brigham completely. This was the area of Brigham’s physical love life. Historians of early Mormon phenomena have studiously neglected Mormon sexuality, perhaps less for reasons of prudishness than for the fact that few records were left of bedroom behavior in Salt Lake City.

Yet, during the reign of Brigham Young, the entire non-Mormon population of the United States, it seemed, as well as that of England and European countries, was certain that Mormon men were obsessed with sex.

Captain Mayne Reid called Salt Lake City the “modern Gomorrah.” Mrs. Benjamin G. Ferris, wife of the Federal Secretary for Utah Territory, called Mormon males a “gang of licentious villains.” The apostate, John Hyde, called Brigham’s wives “the companions of his passions, and not of his life; panderers to his lusts, instead of being the partners of his affections…” Everywhere, in the outside world, this was the note.

The Mormons, on the other hand, continued to defend polygamy as a revelation of the Lord. Sexual gratification was incidental, they explained. Procreation was the divine purpose. “I never entered into the order of plurality of wives to gratify passion,” said Brigham Young.

What were the known facts about Mormon sexual behavior in general and Brigham’s love life specifically? Most observers and students of polygamy seemed to think that while the system, by its very nature, invited sexual license, indulgence in sensuality, it was actually practiced with puritanic restraint. Still, there were those who felt that no “divine principle” could curb natural carnal urges.

Theodore Schroeder, the psychologist and liberal who defended the Mormons and then fought them, was concerned—in the words of Sidney Ditzion—with “the ultimate consequences of their preoccupation with sex… This continual thinking, talking, acting and worshipping of sex and procreation in revival excitements was certain to result in a population of hypersexed individuals—the males especially.”

On the other hand, defending the majority opinion, Dr. M. Wilford Poulson, of Brigham Young University, told this author that he had observed many polygamous households in his long life, and not once had he ever seen any evidence of hypersexuality. A colleague of Dr. Poulson’s, however, supported Schroeder, explaining, “When a people prattle so much of their virtue, they are bound to be suspect.”

Most likely Mormon sex life was, indeed, more puritanic than licentious. Conversely it was not entirely devoid of sex, practiced as a form of pleasure. In those pre-artificial insemination days children were conceived solely through sexual intercourse. Often this act of procreation, much as subsequent history averts its head, produced the by-product of physical gratification.

If most love-making in Brigham’s Salt Lake City, especially for the women, was less enjoyable than in modern days, the fact must be blamed not on puritanic polygamy but on the temper of the times. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, in America, one attitude toward corporeal love prevailed. The men had orgasms; the women had children. That was the sum and balance of it. Yet, as everywhere, there were women and women, and some managed to have children and simultaneously enjoy the act leading to conception. There is evidence that this kind of female gratification occurred in nineteenth-century America and in Salt Lake City and in the Lion House.

Some critical aesthetes thought Mormon women so unattractive that Mormon males had to have the “variability of choice” provided by polygamy to stimulate them. Ungallantly Mark Twain considered Mormon women as “poor, ungainly and pathetically ‘homely’ creatures.” J. H. Beadle concurred. “Female beauty is scarce in Utah,” he said.

Yet Captain Richard Burton, who had known women of every nation, was enchanted by “the lofty, thoughtful brow, the clear transparent complexion, the long silky hair, and, greatest charm of all, the soft smile” of the Mormon female. And Phil Robinson, like Burton an English writer, observed that Mormon wives and daughters “have figures that would make Paris envious, and they carry themselves with almost Oriental dignity.”

Ann Eliza, speaking with the superiority of one who regarded herself as an exception, conceded that grown Mormon women were unattractive but defended them by blaming their unhappy features on their married state. “When flippant correspondents,” wrote Ann Eliza, “after a visit to the valley of the Saints, go away and write in terms of ridicule of the Mormon women, calling them fearfully ugly in looks, they little know what bitter, hard, cruel experiences have carved the deep lines round the eyes and mouths, and made the faces grow repulsive and grim… It is no wonder that the women of Utah are not beautiful; there is nothing in all their lives to glorify or beautify their faces…”

Ann Eliza, however, was a woman and herself prejudiced. Mormon men considered their women extremely attractive, and they were not alone. An abundance of case histories exists to show that Gentile men were constantly trying to seduce or marry the ladies of Salt Lake City. One such case history concerns Lieutenant Sylvester Mowry, a young army officer serving under Colonel Edward J. Steptoe in 1854. Mowry and several hundred other soldiers, en route to California, spent that winter in Salt Lake City. Writing to a friend in Rhode Island, he made it clear that he was out to have some fun with the Mormon girls but that the vigilance of Mormon fathers and fiances made it a dangerous game. Nevertheless, Lieutenant Mowry succeeded in meeting one of Brigham’s daughters-in-law—he refers to her only as Mary, quite possibly the first wife of Brigham’s first son, Joseph A. Young—and had almost seduced her when Brigham learned of the heated affair and broke it up.

Lieutenant Mowry was only briefly inactive. In a short time he was able to write his Rhode Island friend: “With the greatest difficulty I persuaded a pretty girl and a great favorite with us to let me take her home from Judge Kinney’s party and when I had got her into the carriage she laid down in my arms let me feel her bust etc etc—Showing that the difficulty is not with the women but with their keepers… Mary is accessible if I can get the opportunity but ‘theres the rub.’ The other little piece that I took home from

the party can be got down I believe, but *alas*, there appears to be no chance."

Brigham Young never underestimated the sex appeal, or the availability, of certain female members of his flock. After the devastating Mowry and his fellow Casanovas had left for California, Brigham addressed himself from the pulpit to women of easy virtue, "If any wish to go to California to whore it, we will send a company of them off; that is my mind, and perhaps some few ought to go for they are indeed bad enough."

Brigham's exasperation with his female subjects gave the New York *Herald* the idea that the non-Mormon Mowrys were the solution to polygamy. The newspaper suggested that if the government would send "a fresh detachment of young, good-looking soldiers" to Salt Lake City four times a year, the ranks of polygamists would be decimated "by female desertions," until the Mormon males would be lucky to retain one wife apiece. Somewhat later the *Nation* suggested a sounder plan to halt polygamy: "Go to work at once to cut off the supply of women from the Mormon community" through special immigration laws.

However, women continued to move to Utah. If the sex life these women engaged in under polygamy was puritanic and restrained, it still did not wither from neglect. According to a journal of the period kept by one Jonathan Baker, as quoted by Kimball Young, a Mormon conference was stirred when "President McAllister spoke of some men bringing on premature decay and an early death by the too frequent use of sexual intercourse."

Polygamy gave little room for privacy, but Kimball Young's research shows that the condition was not entirely inhibiting. In one instance a Mormon husband was forced to live in the same sleeping quarters with three wives. He slept with his first wife in an upper bunk and allowed his second and third wives to sleep in the lower bunk. When he desired either the second or third wife, he would so inform his first wife. She gave automatic permission with the sole stipulation that he return to their bed when he was through. The husband then climbed down to the lower bunk, copulated with one of the wives below, and then climbed up to sleep out the night beside his first wife. The practice was considered quite natural by all parties, and it is unlikely that there was ever any recrimination. In another instance Kimball Young heard of a "first wife who was all right about the second marriage until she could hear her husband's boots drop on the floor in the second wife's room."

Considerable attention was always given by non-Mormons to Brigham Young's love life. The wildest speculations were made in all corners of the world. Actually very little is known about Brigham's romantic relations with his wives. Since he believed that the purpose of intercourse was procreation, he advised husbands to abstain from sexual union with their wives from the moment pregnancy was known until the infant child had been weaned from

the breast. This abstinence was not practiced to the letter by Brigham himself. He had many other peculiar notions about sex. He told Horace Greeley that he believed "that outside of the Mormon church, married men usually keep mistresses." He believed that incest was not a crime, though personally he had a prejudice against it. He believed that the consumption of eggs stimulated virility and helped "beget more children."

Apostate Mormons reported that Brigham usually did not invite a wife to his bedroom but preferred to call on her. According to John Hyde: "… Brigham sleeps alone. He not only practices but publicly advocates this habit, and that, too, without any delicacy of thought or modesty of expression. The reasons he urges are very singular and ridiculous. *'Audit solum ad vocem libidonis.'*" This might be rendered: "One only has to be present to have libidinous desires"—in short, that a man could best control his desires by removal of his person from temptations.

It was said that when Brigham had decided on his bed partner for the night he made a chalk mark on her door. Later, with a certain delicacy of feeling for his other wives, he would softly go down the row of doors, find the one with the chalk mark, and slip inside. Sometimes, it was said, a jealous rival wife, hungering for the Prophet's love, would rub out the chalk mark on the favored wife's door and put it on her own. It is difficult to imagine that Brigham was ever deceived, for he always knew what he wanted—and whom.

His virility, as advertised by the production of fifty-six children, was widely discussed and secretly envied. Brigham had his first child, a daughter, when he was twenty-four and his last, also a daughter, when he was sixty-nine. In a single month of his sixty-second year, three of his wives gave him three children, two sons and a daughter.

There is evidence that Brigham had long sexual relationships with a number of his wives. Lucy Decker, the third wife, had her first child by Brigham in 1845 and her seventh child by him fifteen years later. Clara Decker, the sixth wife, had her first child by him in 1849 and her fifth child by him twelve years later. Emily Dow Partridge, the eighth wife, had her first child by him in 1845 and her seventh child by him seventeen years later. Emmeline Free, the eleventh wife, had her first child by him in 1847 and her ninth and tenth children by him sixteen and seventeen years later. Lucy Bigelow, the twenty-second wife, had her first child by him in 1852 and her third child by him eleven years later.

All of the wives who collaborated with Brigham in bearing his sons and daughters were not necessarily enthusiastic about the process. Most of them welcomed his love, it is true, and all believed that cohabitation was a divine duty, but some were uncooperative, as his great number of childless wives attest. In several cases, notably that of Harriet Cook, the acid fourth wife, a sustained relationship was not attempted, by mutual agreement. When

Brigham was forty-five, and Harriet twenty-one, they had a son. After that he refused to favor her with any intimacy, for which she was eventually grateful. According to one of Harriet Cook's relatives in Salt Lake City, Harriet was "a wealthy and frigid Easterner." She liked polygamy only because "she did not believe in sex," and plural marriage made her lot easier because she knew that Brigham could always be satisfactorily occupied elsewhere and would not bother her, as he might have under monogamy.

Since Brigham loved Amelia Folsom deeply and never ignored or discarded her, it is most likely that their physical relationship was happy and long-lived. Amelia, much to her distress, was said to be barren, and she never gave the Prophet the child they both desired. Amelia's distress was heightened by the fact that, after she married her husband, she had to stand helplessly by while he had five children by four other wives.

Ann Eliza was also childless by Brigham, but since she was fertile, the decision was probably her own. (On the other hand, one of Brigham's granddaughters claims that Ann Eliza was "consumed to have a child with the Young name, but Brigham Young wasn't interested.") In later life, when Ann Eliza tried to disassociate herself from Mormonism, she would sometimes astound listeners by proclaiming that she had never had sexual intercourse with Brigham. On one occasion she informed Jennie Anderson Froiseth, editor of the *Anti-Polygamy Standard,* of Salt Lake City, that her marriage to the Prophet had never been consummated and that by denying him sexual love she had angered him constantly. It was for this reason, she said, that Brigham had begun to treat her badly.

In *The Portrait and Biographical Record of Northern Michigan*, published in 1895, there appeared a four-page account of Ann Eliza's life. Again her second marriage was spoken of as platonic: "… a so-called 'spiritual' ceremony was performed, uniting our subject with the late Brigham Young for the world to come, but without the relations of husband and wife. The wife still remained an inmate of the parental home, and lived in this way for five years." Undoubtedly this information was supplied by Ann Eliza herself. Undoubtedly it was false.

After her marriage to Brigham, Ann Eliza did not live with her father for sixty months but for little more than one month. The rest of the time, except for forays to the Lion House, Ann Eliza dwelt in three different homes provided by Brigham, and she was available to him whenever he called. Neither his potency nor his fecundity was impaired by his great age at the time of their wedding. Brigham took Ann Eliza for wife on April 7, 1869. Yet in that very week, or possibly one of several weeks that followed, Brigham had sexual union with Mary Van Cott, for, nine months later, Mary gave birth to Brigham's fifty-sixth child, the daughter named Fanny. Furthermore, the will Brigham dictated when he was seventy-two clearly indicated his potency

—for it acknowledged as his legitimate heirs all children born nine months after his death.

Ann Eliza was in her twenty-fifth year when she became Brigham's twenty-seventh wife. Earlier, after divorcing Dee, she had been physically ill, but she had rested and recovered and was in the best of health when she became the Prophet's bride. Ann Eliza was the youngest member of the harem and one of the prettiest and most shapely and not a virgin. It seems improbable that Brigham would have wooed her so ardently merely to enjoy her spiritual presence in an afterlife. It also seems improbable that a young lady like Ann Eliza, basically security conscious, would wish, let alone dare, to resist Brigham's advances, especially if she desired ascendancy over Amelia and the other wives. As a matter of fact, several of Brigham's descendants have stated that Ann Eliza was sexually "aggressive" in her relationship with her husband.

In her divorce complaint against Brigham, Ann Eliza admitted: "… for a period of about one year after her marriage, the defendant lived and cohabited with and acted toward the complainant with some degree of kindness and attention." Since *cohabit* means "to live together as husband and wife," implying not only social intercourse but sexual as well, Ann Eliza's legal document would seem an open confession that she and Brigham had physically consummated their marriage.

But consummation of love, like procreation resulting of love, may not be proof of emotional happiness. There was vast curiosity among non-Mormons, at the time the Lion House was most populated, as to whether Brigham's harem wives were happy or unhappy with their one husband and their communal domesticity.

The more vocal of Brigham's wives and daughters, and their friends, made it clear to the world that life in the Lion House was the ideal. When Ann Eliza had been ten months married to Brigham, Eliza R. Snow enlisted several of the older of her fellow wives, and other Mormon female leaders, to prepare and forward a resolution to Congress, where, as ever, new anti-polygamy bills were being debated. In this public resolution, the Mormon wives defended polygamy and other Mormon institutions "as the only reliable safeguard of female virtue and innocence… the only sure protection against the fearful sin of prostitution and its attendant evils, now prevalent abroad, and, as such, we are and shall be united with our brethren in sustaining them against each and every encroachment."

Individual wives also took to the ramparts. Helen Mar Kimball Whitney, daughter of Heber C. Kimball and herself the wife of an Apostle, told the women of monogamy that plural wives had it in their power to declare polygamy "illegal" whenever they wished, but that they had no wish to do so. "The means gathered to assist in reforming the 'Mormons,'" she went on, "in

freeing the ‘poor down-trodden women from their polygamous yoke’ is a most ridiculous farce. It will compare with the collecting of money for the poor heathen, who would have been better off a thousandfold had they never seen a ‘Christian.’”

Susa Young Gates felt that her father and his wives had the perfect relationship. “I was born and reared in the Lion House,” she wrote. “In all my life in that beloved home, I never heard my father speak an unkind or irritable word to one of his wives… Much less did I ever hear or see anything but the utmost courtesy and kindliness between my father and his wives.”

Ann Eliza was the only member of Brigham’s family to dissent publicly. “I must say that… scenes of violence do not often occur in Brigham’s family, as most of his wives feel the dignity of their position too much to allow the world to see any disagreement between them, even when it exists. There are some very fine women among the Prophet’s wives—women that, outside of Mormonism, would grace any social circle. Educated, cultivated women, who by some strange circumstance have been drawn, first into the Church, then into the Prophet’s harem. I think nothing better shows the peculiar power which Brigham Young possesses, than a look at the women who are and who have been his wives… He had the shrewdness to select such women, and the power to win them, but he has not the ability to appreciate them; and I have no hesitation in saying, from my own experience with and knowledge of them, that more unhappy and wretched women do not exist in the world, than the more cultured and delicate wives of Brigham Young.”

Perhaps a more sober judgment, one between the two extremes, was passed by Phil Robinson in 1883, after his tour through Utah. “In polygamy the highest happiness of woman is contentment. But on the other hand her greatest unhappiness is only discontent. She has not the opportunity on the one hand of rising to the rapture of perfect love. On the other, she is spared the bitter, killing anguish of ‘jealousy’ and of infidelity. But contentment is not happiness.”

For Ann Eliza, in that first year as harem wife, contentment was, indeed, not happiness. Her life became a placid routine, divided between the tiny house where she lived with her sons and mother and the Lion House. Brigham visited her erratically and treated her “with some degree of kindness and attention.” Sometimes he would come into the house to relax and share peppermint tea with her. More often he would take her for a ride in his carriage. These were the occasions when they were alone. When he took her to the theater or a ball, they were always chaperoned by one or more of the other wives. Infrequently he invited her to join him on a short trip outside the city. On one such trip Ann Eliza and Emmeline Free accompanied him to a Church conference in Brigham City. It was festive for one day. After that Amelia came storming into Brigham City and Ann Eliza and Emmeline were

left to their own devices.

In the first year, Ann Eliza lived in relative harmony with her husband's other wives. She found herself drawn closer and closer to Emmeline. Her only active enemies in the harem remained Amelia and Harriet Cook; Eliza Burgess would soon be removed to Provo. The main irritant for Ann Eliza was her wealthy mate's growing parsimony. Outwardly he gave the appearance of one who had mellowed and prospered—the look of "a well-preserved Englishman, of the yeoman class," Ann Eliza thought. He blustered less and took more care with his attire. At the same time, she felt, he was becoming more tightfisted. Her demands for pin money were ignored; her requests for extra food and clothes, for herself and her sons, if not flatly rejected, were granted grudgingly. When Ann Eliza complained to her mother, the first Mrs. Webb could only beg her daughter to have patience. By the end of the first year, Ann Eliza had become bored with austerity as well as the proximity of the other wives in the Lion House, and she made her feelings known to Brigham. He promised her a change.

In May of 1870, Brigham announced the change that he had in mind for Ann Eliza. She was immediately apprehensive. He was sending her to his largest out-of-town establishment, The Farmhouse, located four miles south of Salt Lake City. Ann Eliza knew that six of Brigham's wives had taken turns managing Brigham's farm and all had been the worse for it. Susan Snively, the thirteenth wife, had lived at The Farmhouse the longest period, eight years; Lucy Bigelow, the twenty-second wife, had lived there the shortest period, one year. While Ann Eliza was attracted to rural beauty and isolation, she dreaded the ceaseless hours of manual labor that awaited her. Her first instinct was to protest to Brigham that she was too frail for the assignment. But Brigham's mind seemed made up, and she wanted no fight. She accepted the indefinite tour of duty without protest.

In that burgeoning spring of 1870, with her sons and mother beside her, and her personal belongings accompanying her, Ann Eliza traveled the lovely four miles to the two-story house that fronted Brigham's one-hundred-acre farm. She had seen it before, and the exterior always impressed her, with its low windows and vine-draped verandas below and the half dozen gables above. Originally there had been an adobe on the site, but eleven years before Brigham had replaced it with this modern $25,000 house of his own design.

Familiar as it was—New Year's Day was always celebrated by Brigham and his family here—Ann Eliza, now that she was its mistress, inspected The Farmhouse from cellar to top floor with new eyes. The entry led into a large central living room, low ceil- inged to conserve heat in winter, and marred, Ann Eliza thought, by having in one corner the single narrow staircase to be found in the entire house. Off to the right were a sitting alcove with rush-bottomed rockers and a long dining room that could seat seventy guests at a

time. Beyond the staircase to the rear, was the forty-foot kitchen with an adjacent pantry. From the kitchen Ann Eliza observed the rural property, the stately pine trees, the forest of black locust trees and mulberry bushes, the cultivated fields of corn and wheat being worked by the laborers who would be in her charge.

Returning from the kitchen into the hallway, Ann Eliza briefly studied the square gas lamps, brass lined and decorated with jeweled prisms, and then she climbed the steep stairs to the second floor. The family suite consisted of two small bedrooms for the boys and her mother, a tiny study for Brigham's use, and a huge bedroom, with an attractive fireplace, to be shared by Brigham and herself. Other bedrooms were for guests and certain of the hired help.

Making her way to the living room again, Ann Eliza at last descended into the cellar. She observed the well that pumped water up to the kitchen, the loaded log bins, the meat hooks dangling provisions. The cellar walls were of whitewashed rock, and Ann Eliza would remember that here was the only escape from the intense summer heat.

The Farmhouse was impressive, Ann Eliza conceded, but "by no means a desirable place of residence." Certain features of the house irked her from first day to last. Although Brigham had made the walls with adobe, to keep the rooms cool, Ann Eliza complained that the walls were still too thin and consequently the sun was roasting in summer and the snow and winds chilling in winter. Once the first Mrs. Webb protested to Brigham, "The house is hot when we wish it to be cool, and vice versa." Brigham replied, "You have been so long away from civilization that you are not a proper judge of what a house ought to be!" Also, Ann Eliza never stopped complaining of the staircase in the living room. Not only was it an eyesore, but a single staircase was inadequate. If one of the boys or a hired hand was ill upstairs, the constant trudging with medicine and food from kitchen to stairs, and up and down, was exhausting.

Soon enough Ann Eliza and her mother had established their routine. Since The Farmhouse was the source for all milk, butter, cheese, and vegetables consumed in the Lion House and the Bee Hive House, both women were occupied from morning until night overseeing taking milk from the forty cows and churning butter and making cheese. The first Mrs. Webb also did the main cooking for the thirty men on the farm. Ann Eliza assisted with the meals, kept the house tidy and clean, did all the washing and ironing, and tutored her sons.

Once a week, said Ann Eliza, she "was allowed the extreme pleasure of carrying the farm supplies to the other wives." The regular sight of them, in the Lion House, was galling, and Ann Eliza began to dread the eight-mile round trip. Every fourth week, on her visit to the Lion House, Ann Eliza picked up five pounds of sugar, a quarter of a pound of tea, one bar of soap,

and one pound of candles for The Farmhouse.

In the first year at The Farmhouse, and the second of her marriage, Ann Eliza looked forward to seeing Brigham as often as possible. She desperately wanted companionship and stimulation, but she soon found that he gave her neither. Somehow, in this second year, her marriage began to lose whatever little warmth it had once had.

“We had occasional visits from Brigham,” said Ann Eliza. “He was very fond of coming unexpectedly, and at all sorts of irregular hours, hoping, evidently, that some time he might catch us napping. He was so addicted to fault-finding, and so easily displeased, that we took no pleasure in his visits, and I grew to be positively unhappy every time his approach was heralded.”

One day at noon, Brigham marched into The Farmhouse just as the first Mrs. Webb was serving lunch in the dining room to her daughter, grandsons, and the thirty laborers. Brigham stood in the dining-room door, acknowledged greetings, and walked slowly around the long table, surveying the food. At last he signaled the first Mrs. Webb to follow him into the living room.

When they were alone, Brigham said, “You cook too good food for those men. It is too rich for their stomachs.”

The first Mrs. Webb tried to explain. “I wish to give them something which they can eat, and I try to do so. They work hard, and I surely can do no less than give them palatable food; yet if you do not approve of my manner of providing for them, I will make any change you may suggest, if I can satisfy the men with the fare.”

“It don’t make any difference whether they are satisfied or not,” said Brigham. “I say it is healthier for them to have bread and milk, and you must give it to them.”

The first Mrs. Webb was appalled. “Shall I give them this, and nothing else, three times a day?”

“Well, once in a while you may set on a little butter too.”

“But are they to have no meat?”

“Perhaps I will allow them a little occasionally,” agreed Brigham, “but they are much better off without it.”

As if this were not enough, Brigham appeared suddenly late one summer’s afternoon and surprised the hired hands at dinner. Once again he took Ann Eliza’s mother aside. He told her that she was feeding the men their dinner too early. He said they ought to still be in the field, working at least three hours more before dinner. Patiently the first Mrs. Webb reminded him that the day’s work was not done, that after dinner the men would be busy milking and feeding the forty cows and tending other livestock. Brigham replied that the men could work the three hours extra in the field, then have dinner, and still tend to the livestock after dark. He paced angrily. Hard work, he said, hurt no one. All the world, it appeared, was out to take advantage of him—”and my

wives are as bad as the rest," he added darkly. The first Mrs. Webb promised to see what she could do. With Ann Eliza she later approached the overseer. She reported Brigham's demand for three more hours a day in the fields. The overseer bristled. He would not work his men beyond five or six o'clock; they were overworked already. Ann Eliza repeated the overseer's refusal to Brigham. Anxious to avoid a revolt, Brigham backed off and dropped the matter.

For two years Ann Eliza and her mother were the only women in The Farmhouse. In the third year, reacting with a surprise almost as great as Crusoe's at the footprints in the sand, Ann Eliza greeted an elderly woman, bag and baggage in hand, at the front door. She introduced herself as Mrs. Lewis, a spiritual wife of Brigham Young. "Mrs. Lewis is never mentioned among his wives," said Ann Eliza, "yet he was sealed to her about two years after his marriage to me."

Mrs. Lewis was moved into an upstairs bedroom, and some months later, after her disillusionment was complete, she told Ann Eliza her story. She had been a wealthy widow in Provo, living in a beautiful house that she had built. All of her children but one were married. That one was her twenty-year-old son, Thomas, a shy, retiring young man who was the comfort of her old age. One evening Thomas attended a party, fell in love with a girl of his own years, not realizing that she was coveted for plural wife by the local Bishop Snow. When Thomas continued to court the girl, he was waylaid one night by a gang of ruffians and castrated. After that he retired into melancholia and one day disappeared entirely. Mrs. Lewis grieved and was only slightly interested in the factory Brigham was building next to her property. When Brigham's representatives needed her property for a watercourse, Mrs. Lewis sent them packing. One day Brigham himself appeared. He wished to "comfort" her over her son. She was appreciative. Eventually Brigham proposed marriage. Impressed and lonely, Mrs. Lewis accepted. Brigham told her that he could not see her often, so he suggested that she move to The Farmhouse, where she might he more accessible to him and have Ann Eliza's companionship. Over the protests of her children, Mrs. Lewis dutifully moved to The Farmhouse. When she learned that Brigham had confiscated her home in Provo and built a watercourse through the property, she tried to see him at the Bee Hive House, but he was always too busy to receive her. Now she was bitter.

Ann Eliza was bitter, too. While she found Mrs. Lewis "a very kind, patient woman," she also found her an added burden. The Farmhouse itself remained "at once the warmest and coldest house I ever saw." Her mother had fallen ill of overwork, as had Ann Eliza herself, and her responsibilities were greater than ever.

Worst of all, Ann Eliza's relationship with Brigham had deteriorated entirely. His visits were shorter, and so was his temper—largely because she

was not sexually compliant and had frigidly rejected his advances. Ann Eliza pretended not to understand his irritation. “He had said I was the best wife he had,” she told a friend, “for I had never given him a cross word or look. But for that good temper I take no credit, for my silence was all through fear. I never loved him and never said to him that I loved him. I looked upon him as a heartless despot.”

Occasionally Ann Eliza tried to let him know how she felt. There is the story, possibly apocryphal, that once Brigham gave her money to buy thirteen chickens. She returned with twelve roosters and one hen. When Brigham was puzzled at the preponderance of roosters, Ann Eliza explained curtly, “I didn’t want the hen to suffer the way your wives do!”

It was the summer of 1872. Ann Eliza was nervous and worn thin. She had been critical of The Farmhouse in the beginning, but now she despised it. “I lived here for three years and a half—long, uneventful years—and how I hated my life!” she later wrote. “It was dull, joyless, oppressed, and I looked longingly back to the dear old days at Cottonwood, the restful days that never could come again.”

When she found herself apathetic toward her beloved sons, Edward Wesley and Leonard, now growing boys of grammar-school age, she knew that she could not endure another month of this exile. Yet, much as she wanted to pour her heart out to Brigham, she was afraid.

The fact was, and Ann Eliza knew it, that Brigham and his family sincerely felt that she was living well and had no right to complain. A year later, after Ann Eliza had told the world of her hatred for The Farmhouse, a New York *Herald* reporter asked John W. Young, “Was she compelled to be a common drudge?” Brigham’s son replied for himself and his father, “There is not a word of truth about her toil. I will tell you how she lived. The farm on which she resided was the best in the whole territory and had one of the finest farmhouses anywhere to be found. A horse and carriage was at her service and five servants ministered to her wants. She did not have to raise her hand.”

True or not, this was Brigham’s attitude, and Ann Eliza feared that she could not overcome it. Yet she knew that she must. Before she was able to decide what to do, her decision was made for her.

In that summer of 1872, Brigham came calling. He had news for her. He was building a luxurious house in the city, which was to be all her own. She and her mother would be able to move into it within a short time. In her excitement Ann Eliza hardly allowed herself to think of his motive. She suspected that what inspired the change was less his love for her than his desire to get one of his more vigorous wives into The Farmhouse. She did not care. All she knew was that she would be in civilization again, living in a real home, and performing once more as a genteel lady. She was happy. Suddenly she sobered. There was just one thing…

“What is it?” Brigham asked.

“Are there to be chambers in my new house?”

“Yes, certainly.”

“Then will you please not build the stairs from the parlor? Let them go out of another room in the house but do not disfigure that one. Besides being ugly, it is inconvenient and excessively annoying to be obliged to pass through the best room at all times and on every occasion.”

“You can have stairs out of every room in the house, if you want them,” said Brigham cheerfully.

Ann Eliza’s satisfaction was complete.

VI: THE REBEL OF THE HAREM

"It has transpired, since her departure from the family, that her present course is the result of loose principles."

—John W. Young

The stairs in the new Salt Lake City house were built from the parlor.

This architectural abomination was the first interior sight that confronted Ann Eliza as she entered her latest residence in August of 1872. In a way, perhaps, the stairs represented the turning point in Ann Eliza's marriage.

First seen from the exterior, "Ann Eliza's house," as sight-seers would soon call it, standing on the corner of South Temple Street and Second East Street, looked agreeable enough. The two-story adobe dwelling, with its steep green gables, red brick chimneys, stained-glass windows, and small porch, seemed vaguely Gothic. "An exceedingly pretty cottage," Ann Eliza decided, "with an air of cosiness about it." Brigham had designed it in collaboration with Truman O. Angell, architect of the Mormon Temple. Ann Eliza estimated that the house cost her husband $5,000. John W. Young thought it cost $12,000.

Once Ann Eliza had entered her residence, it was the curved staircase from the parlor to the second floor, disconcerting her completely, that forced her to revise her good opinion. After the "bitter disappointment" of the stairs in the parlor nothing seemed attractive. She almost ignored the well-lighted sitting room with its fireplace, the diamond window with its hand-stained golden beehive, and the spacious master bedroom upstairs in her search for faults. The floor plan, she said, was "very inconvenient, and badly arranged." There were many rooms, but they were, for the most, too small, especially the ten-by-six-foot kitchen, which was more suitable for "a doll's house." Also, Ann Eliza learned, no provision had been made for a water supply. From the first day she had to use the wells of her neighbors, and apparently the neighbors were not gracious about her trespassing.

Shortly after settling into the new house with her two sons and her mother, Ann Eliza appealed to Brigham to make certain structural changes in their residence. She accomplished nothing. "Speaking to him concerning these matters was worse than useless," she wrote, "for I never could influence him in the slightest, while every suggestion which I ventured to make irritated him extremely; so I held my peace, after one or two attempts to change things a little, so that the house should be more convenient."

Later, when Ann Eliza made her feelings about the house and her husband's parsimony a public matter, John W. Young strongly defended his father's generosity. "Ann Eliza moved into the city," he told the press,

“because she was not contented on the farm—not on account of any neglect or inattention from my father. I know that she was always furnished money whenever she applied for it. On one occasion my father gave her mother money to make a trip to the East to visit her friends. Upon her stating a desire to come to the city, a cottage was erected for her especial accommodation at an expense of fully $12,000. There is not a more comfortable home in the city.” This was corroborated by Mary Cairns, daughter of Brigham’s housekeeper, who always remembered that Ann Eliza’s cottage was decorated with imported French wallpaper and some furnishings of imported marble.

Nevertheless, the deterioration of Ann Eliza’s marriage, which had begun at The Farmhouse, was now accelerated. She was living, she told a friend, in “the same stingy way.” She complained that for months her table was without fresh meat and that during almost a year in the city she received only two calico dresses from Brigham.

It was her mother, Ann Eliza said, who comforted her and made her lot endurable. But soon continuance of this relationship was challenged by Brigham. Late in 1872 he called on Ann Eliza and told her that he could no longer afford to support the first Mrs. Webb. He suggested that she be sent back to South Cottonwood. Ann Eliza was shaken by the injustice of it—this, after her mother “had worked herself ill in his service”—and she wept “bitterly” at the thought of going on without her mother. After Brigham left, Ann Eliza found herself unable to carry out his order. “In addition to the dread and dislike which had grown up in my heart toward my husband,” she wrote, “I was beginning to lose faith in the religion which he represented.”

Without husband or religious conviction to lean upon, her mother became a necessity for her day-to-day existence. She decided to keep the matter from her mother and plead with Brigham on his next visit.

When Brigham came calling again, he remained adamant. If Ann Eliza would not get rid of her mother, then he would do it for her. She begged him to stay out of it and asked for a little more time. Her request was granted. Knowing, as she did, that her older brother Gilbert was indebted to her for saving him from excommunication, she hurried to see him. She spilled out Brigham’s ultimatum. Promptly Gilbert offered to contribute five dollars a week to his mother’s support. Ann Eliza immediately passed the offer on to her husband. He was satisfied. The first Mrs. Webb remained in the Gothic house beside her daughter.

Ann Eliza never forgave Brigham for the anguish he had caused her. Long after, she remarked, “From the day he told me to tell my mother to go home, I hated him.” Yet that was not all of it. While Brigham treated Amelia to luxuries, and gave her love, and cared to some degree for most of his other wives, Ann Eliza continued to be deprived of material necessities and affection. “I saw I was neglected, insulted, humiliated,” she said. “I was alone

tied to an old man. Others were cared for, and it was more than a woman's nature could stand, to see them thus petted."

Eight months of privation passed, and by March of 1873, Ann Eliza's husband had ceased calling on her altogether. Even worse, she had reached a financial crisis. She wracked her brain for a means of raising money to supplement what little support Brigham gave her, and at last she found a means. She went to the Bee Hive House with her proposal. She informed Brigham that she required more money for the ordinary necessities of life. Furthermore, she wanted one luxury, an organ, for her son Edward, who was "passionately fond of music." Since there were empty rooms in the house, she had been struck by the notion that she could procure money through use of these rooms. Would Brigham object if she took in some boarders? He thought it was a capital idea, and, said Ann Eliza, he agreed to it with "amazing readiness." Did he mind if she took in Gentile lodgers as well as Mormons? He had no objection whatsoever, so long as one and all paid her at least three dollars a week rental.

At once Ann Eliza went to work converting her private dwelling into a public rooming house. By late March of 1873, the spare rooms were filled. "As it chanced," noted Ann Eliza, "all my boarders were Gentiles." One of these was the Civil War veteran, thirty-five-year-old Major James Burton Pond, a reporter for the *Tribune.* Soon Judge Albert Hagan, the ex-Confederate colonel and mining attorney, and his wife would move in. It was a new and alien world for Ann Eliza. With the Prophet's consent she had taken the enemy to her hearth; shortly she would take them to her bosom.

The coming of the boarders did not lighten Ann Eliza's burden. True, she had more money for her guests' food, and a fund set aside for young Edward's organ, but she worked from dawn to nightfall for her tenants. By now she was carrying the load alone. Somehow her mother had finally learned of Brigham's earlier effort to evict her. Hurt, the first Mrs. Webb took tearful leave of her daughter—but not her religion—and departed for South Cottonwood to live again with Chauncey and the other Mrs. Webbs.

Ann Eliza's added income was not sufficient to feed her sons and herself adequately. Late in May she called on Brigham and asked his assistance. "He seemed angry," she said, "and complained that he had so many expenses and that he wanted me to keep myself—to take the money that I had saved to buy an organ for my own son and keep myself and family with it… This interview made me sick and I was in bed for a week." Out of bed briefly, she was stricken by pleurisy. Despite the illness, she suffered her way once more to Brigham's office and demanded fresh meat for her table. She received, she said, "two bits' worth."

Because she was ill in bed so frequently, she found time to read. Until this period she had always dutifully limited her readings to approved Mormon

works. Now, for the first time, she was drawn to read an anti-Mormon book by an old acquaintance who had suffered in polygamy and escaped it. Ann Eliza saw no sin in the act. Brigham often read anti-Mormon literature. She recalled one occasion in particular: “I remember once going into his office, and finding him examining the advertising circular of a book on Mormonism, written by a lady who had for a time been a resident of Utah. He commenced reading it aloud to me in a whining voice, imitating the tone of a crying woman. Yet, notwithstanding this attempt to make a jest of it, I knew that the publication of this book annoyed him excessively, and that he was both curious and anxious concerning the contents, and the effect they would produce.”

The volume that Ann Eliza secretly read, perhaps borrowed from a Gentile boarder, was *Expose of Polygamy in Utah* by Mrs. T. B. H. Stenhouse. It was a slender, black-covered book, brought out by the American News Company of New York City the year before. The first page began: “I was once a Mormon woman, and for over twenty years I have lived among Mormons. Their faith was once mine as truly as any words can express; their thoughts were the same as mine; their hopes were my hopes; their religious opinions were in sympathy with my own. But that was in the time past.”

Avidly Ann Eliza read on. Mrs. Stenhouse’s passage, on page seventy-five, seemed as if it were written to her. “When this little book falls into the hands of some of the women of Utah, they will, I know, acknowledge in their hearts, if not in words, how true my statements are. A man may have a dozen wives; but from the whole of them combined he will not receive as much real love and devotion as he might from one alone, if he had made her feel that she had his undivided affection and confidence. How terribly these men deceive themselves! When peace, or rather quiet, reigns in their homes, they think that the spirit of God is there. But it is *not* so! It is a calm, not like the gentle silence of sleep, but as the horrible stillness of death—the death of the heart’s best affections, and all that is worth calling love.”

On page 192 Ann Eliza found her own name listed as the fifteenth wife of Brigham Young. In minutes she had reached the last paragraph of the book: “I have now completed my task, and am about to lay down my pen. I shall, I know, be condemned by those hymn-singing, devotional women, who, childless and husbandless here, dream of the glories of the world to come, while they never knew the duties, the obligations, the sweet and hallowed sympathies of the world in which they live. In their eyes, I have doubtless committed the ‘unpardonable sin.’ I have written for the suffering and sorrowing women in Polygamy. *They* will understand me, and to *them* I appeal. Before the Great Tribunal I will cheerfully meet their verdict.”

Not unexpectedly, Ann Eliza was deeply moved. *She* understood Mrs. Stenhouse’s touching confession of a life in polygamy. This book, she told

audiences later, “showed me things in a clearer light than I had seen them before. I knew every word was true from my own sad experience, and it encouraged me to leave the hateful polygamic life.”

At about the same time as her reading of Mrs. Stenhouse’s book, Ann Eliza met the Reverend C. C. Stratton at a social gathering, and in him she found a friend who would listen to her troubles. A few weeks later, at her own request, Ann Eliza met privately with the Reverend and his wife and poured out to them the entire saga of her life with Brigham. After that, she met with the Reverend frequently to discuss with him the possibilities of achieving her freedom.

The last week in June, she fell desperately ill again, with only her sympathetic boarders to care for her. Brigham, she said, ignored her appeals for help. With a single exception, no member of his family called on her. This exception, curiously, was one of Ann Eliza’s stepsons, Brigham Young, Jr., the second of the Prophet’s legal sons. Ann Eliza knew him well enough to call him “Briggy.” He was a stout young man, dull but kind, and possessed of three wives. Ann Eliza had special affection for him because he had once bested his father in an affair of the heart. The rivalry had been inspired by the appearance, in Salt Lake City, of Lizzie Fenton, a tall, vivacious Philadelphia girl. “Both old Brigham and young Brigham were smitten with her at once,” said Ann Eliza, “and commenced paying her the most marked attentions, and for a long time a fierce rivalry existed between the father and son.” It had delighted Ann Eliza that the son had won and that Lizzie had become his third and favorite wife.

Now Brigham Young, Jr., visited Ann Eliza and was shocked by her appearance and by her story of the neglect she was suffering at his father’s hands. In a fit of anger, the young man rushed to the Bee Hive House and burst in on Brigham while he was having a meal with Amelia Folsom and Lucy Decker.

“Father, I think it is shameful, the way you are treating Ann Eliza,” the young man shouted. “She is fearfully sick, and if you don’t have something done for her, she’ll die on your hands. I’ve been down to see her, and I know.”

Brigham was too taken aback to make a reply. But later in the day, Ann Eliza received medical supplies and food from the Bee Hive House.

However, from Ann Eliza’s point of view, no medical supplies on earth could repair the emotional damage done to her. She did not try to hide her distress from her boarders. Mrs. Hagan saw it, heard Ann Eliza’s story, and summoned her barrister husband, Judge Hagan. The attorney recommended a divorce action and then went off on a trip to California, hoping Ann Eliza would have her mind made up by his return.

Now Ann Eliza suffered doubts and added nervous ailments. She allowed herself to be rebaptized and further disillusioned in the Endowment House.

She consulted again with the Reverend Stratton. She saw Brigham once more, for the last time, it would turn out, and his rejection of her request for a new stove finally hardened her growing resolve. When Judge Hagan returned from California, Ann Eliza told him that she was ready to divorce Brigham Young.

On July 15, 1873, after the boarders had moved out, her furniture had been turned over to an auctioneer, and her elder son, Edward Wesley, had gone to her parents, Ann Eliza deserted Brigham's house, and, taking her younger son Leonard by the hand, she walked with him to the waiting Strattons. That fearful and lonely night, she resided in the uncertain sanctuary of the Walker House, the renowned Gentile hotel, and fantasied strangulation at the hands of one of Brigham's fanatical Danites. But the first daybreak of freedom found her intact, and though "relieved and hopeful," she wondered what would happen to her. By the time she was dressed she had to wonder no longer.

The morning of July 16, 1873, exploded about Brigham Young's twenty-seventh wife, his apostate wife, like a blast of artillery.

How the news leaked out was never known. Perhaps Judge Hagan and Major Pond had done their publicity work well in the night. Perhaps rumors had spread from the lobby of Walker House and fanned throughout the sprawling city. Perhaps Gentile and Mormon spies were on the run. But with the dawn, the attractive, withdrawn, frightened Ann Eliza Young was on her way to becoming an international celebrity, issue, scandal.

Incredulously she awoke to find herself famous and recorded the sensation of it, as Lord Byron had not.

"The news of my flight from home had gone abroad, and the morning papers were full of it—the Mormon journals abusing, the Gentile journals praising and congratulating me. This part of the experience had never suggested itself to me. It had never occurred to me that it would be made a public matter, and I shrank from the very thought. I felt myself a marked object. Reporters called on me, seeking interviews for the California, Chicago, and New York papers, and questioned me until I was fairly bewildered. I had gone to bed a poor, defenceless, outraged woman, trying to find my way out of a false life into something truer and better, I arose to find that my name had gone the length and breadth of the country, and that I was everywhere known as Brigham Young's rebellious wife. People who were curious to see one of the wives of the prophet swarmed into the hotel. I could not leave my room, nor did I dare do so, nor to allow my child out of my sight for nearly two months. The Mormon papers commenced to assail me in every way, while the Gentile papers came unanimously to my defence."

The first newspaper that Ann Eliza saw that morning was her champion, the Salt Lake City *Tribune,* and in it the writer, probably Major Pond, was discreet. The lead editorial was headlined: "*A S*ign of the *T*imes". The editorial read:

"The *Tribune* has, from time to time, persistently affirmed that Mormon polygamy would die out with the present race of old Nauvoo Mormons, and that the social anomaly formerly known and introduced as 'spiritual wifeism,' or 'celestial marriage,' would speedily adjust itself to the will of the nation if the influences of contact were permitted to do the work, instead of seeking to uproot at one sweep what has been the growth of thirty or forty years…

"An illustration, and probably one of the best that can be afforded of the truth of our position, is the fact that the youngest wife of Brigham Young has so overcome her religious training, her Mormon experience and the fear of the anathemas of the priesthood, as to leave her polygamic associations, and is now said to be the inmate of one of our leading hotels.

"We forbear giving the lady's name or any of the details of the occurrence, or in any way treating the matter in a trifling or carping spirit, as we would encourage the disintegration of polygamy rather than retard its work by assailing the honest but unfortunate women, who are really but the victims of a false conception of religious duties."

On the opposite page, in a column of facetious comments on local news called "Jottings," Pond or one of his colleagues treated the Mormon reaction humorously: "Brother Brigham is forlorn, his *last* rib has deserted his bed and board." The following morning "Jottings" would add: "Brother Young is as well as could be expected in his bereavement."

Another Salt Lake City newspaper of Gentile persuasion, the *Journal,* did not forbear to give the lady's name, and throughout Utah that first morning the Gentile press rejoiced. Typical in gaiety was the Corinne *Daily Reporter:*

"The Salt Lake papers announce that the favorite wife of Brigham Young has deserted him for a life among the ungodly. Mrs. Young that was has taken up her abode in one of the hotels, where she no doubt will be the sensation until a score or more of the remaining hundred throw off their allegiance. In the days of homespun and rustic crockery the old man had a good thing of it, but now, alas! The fashions and follies of heathendom break down the bolts and bars of our peculiar institution. Tithing went first, and now polygamy goes of its own accord."

The rest of the nation's press was less casual and restrained. From coast to coast the "bewildered" apostate wife was page-one news. Everywhere she was incorrectly referred to, or subsequently quoted, as being Brigham Young's seventeenth or nineteenth wife, an understandable mathematical lapse, since the press and Ann Eliza were probably only counting the number of Brigham's wives *alive* at the time. Actually Ann Eliza was Brigham Young's twenty-seventh wife, give or take a few.

In San Francisco the *Evening Bulletin* headlined its front-page story: "Brigham's Wrongs." The lead paragraph read:

"Salt Lake City, July 16th—There was a great sensation here today, upon

the announcement by the *Journal* that Ann Eliza Webb Young, the seventeenth wife of Brigham Young, had left him forever, carrying off furniture and other personal effects. Brigham will endeavor to replevin the goods. Mrs. Young is at the Walker House, and three leading lawyers are about to institute suit for divorce and alimony in a large sum. Great revelations are expected concerning the inner domestic life of the prophet. Mrs. Young is enjoying the sympathy of Gentile ladies, and the polygamous Mormons are a good deal disturbed."

On the more populous and sophisticated opposite coast, the *New York Times* devoted an entire column of its austere editorial page to the news. The editorial was headed simply: "Number Seventeen." The editorial began:

"Polygamy has received a heavy blow, and another *cause celebre* is to be added to the already ample list of the year. The seventeenth wife of Brigham, the Prophet, has thrown off her allegiance, and the knell of Utah's 'peculiar institution' is, perhaps, sounded with the tidings. For, if Ann Eliza Webb Young succeeds in her suit, it is almost certain that some, at least, of her sixteen predecessors, to say nothing of those who came after, will follow her example; and we cannot expect the children and disciples of the Prophet to cleave, under such circumstances, to a practice which, in his person, will have received so signal a blow. The precedent to be established is one of real interest, and will, probably, be of consequence to the social future of the Territory. A suit like that of the Tichborne 'claimant' [wherein the 280-pound Arthur Orton, of Wagga Wagga, Australia, claimed to be the missing Sir Roger Tichborne, heir to a wealthy family estate in England, and wound up in jail for fourteen years for his masquerade] affects only himself and the acknowledged members of the Tichborne family; but a suit like that of Brigham Young's seventeenth wife is of vital moment, not only to her regiment of co-wives, but to all polygamously-wedded females in the whole Mormon community."

But even as the *New York Times* announced the sensation to the East, it sharply rapped Ann Eliza's knuckles, a reprimand that gave her much grief. "The question arises, What kind of social position can be maintained by a lady… who has practically assented to the doctrines of polygamy, and then asks that help from the laws which they are only invented in monogamic cases to bestow?" inquired the editorial. "She cannot say she went into the matter blindfold… What seems remarkable, when we think of all this, is that she should, as witness the telegraph, 'enjoy the sympathy of the Gentile ladies' at Salt Lake, just as though she were an especially ill-used woman whose sufferings she had in no sense brought upon herself. If there is any disgrace in living in a state of concubinage in a Christian country, credit may truly attach to escaping from it; but the odium of having voluntarily entered upon such a state is surely not thus to be entirely overlooked or blotted out."

If Ann Eliza was unnerved by this eastern criticism, she was almost completely shattered by a scurrilous headline and dispatch appearing in the San Francisco *Chronicle* on Thursday, July 17. The headline read: “One of Brigham Young’s Wives Strays From the Path of Virtue.” A portion of the story read:

“There has been considerable scandal in regard to her familiarity with parties outside, and it is generally supposed that one or more of these instigated the present move. It is expected that a suit for divorce will be commenced at once… The *Journal* considers the affair an event that will send a thrill of surprise and terror through many polygamist households, while Mormons generally consider it the natural career of loose principles.”

Immediately Ann Eliza and her backers attempted to locate the source of the scandalous story. According to Ann Eliza, a newcomer to Salt Lake City and a non-Mormon, W. H. Harrington, a copy-reader on the pro-Mormon Salt Lake City *Herald* and a telegraph operator, had filed the story to San Francisco. “Through Brigham Young,” said Ann Eliza, “who, it is alleged, virtually controls the Associated Press and the Western Telegraph Office in Utah, he had access to wires and sent all the scandalous messages which his employer dictated.”

In a lead editorial, the *Tribune* warned Harrington: “It is customary for gentlemen to be very careful with the personal reputation of ladies in this western country—where the code of honor has a very wide and ready application… To go and deliberately publish the lady’s name in full, relating in detail incidents of a former marriage, and making insinuations of *liaisons* with Gentile lovers, evinces a dangerous temerity.” The *Tribune* concluded: “We would suggest to Mr. H. to ‘repent quickly,’ sue at the feet of that lady for forgiveness, publish the sentiments of deep anguish that distract his heart, make his peace with her family, and forever afterwards eschew the bad counselors who furnish him the items to blacken the name of a woman who dared to free herself from a relationship that was irksome and unnatural, even if not degrading to her sense of womanhood.”

The indignant W. H. Harrington, telegrapher, did not take this lying down. In the Salt Lake City *Herald*, he led off by denouncing the *Tribune* as “an abortion in the field of newspaper literature.” Ungallantly he referred to Ann Eliza and her backers as “hybrids” and implied that they could be taught decent behavior only through application of “revolvers and cowhides.” He had filed the San Francisco story, of course, but insisted that it “did not spring from a Mormon source.”

Long years after, Ann Eliza was pleased to write the final word on Harrington: “As a reward for his labor, he was promised a daughter of Mayor Wells as his wife. The young lady would not acquiesce in the arrangement, and the shabby rascal was henceforth despised alike by Mormons and

Gentiles.”

Except for his possible employment of the battered telegrapher, Brigham Young did not deign to recognize officially his last wife’s apostasy or make any statement to controvert her story. Nor, yet, did he make any move to woo her back to his bed or Church. Although in his seventy-second year, mellowed and socially amiable, the Lion of the Lord, as his colleagues called him, could roar when stung. Apparently he at first regarded Ann Eliza’s removal as a temporary aberration, due to a high-strung character, illness, and unfortunate companionship, and he felt that shortly she would see the folly of her ways and return contritely to the fold. But when, four days after her mental lapse, on July 19, 1873, she permitted her three blackguard attorneys to file formally, and in the strongest terms, for civil divorce, Brigham Young was at once dismayed and angered.

“Surprised, as everyone was, by this action, I think no one was more astonished than the Prophet himself,” said Ann Eliza with undisguised glee. “He would have looked for rebellion from almost any other wife sooner than from me. I had been so quiet and acquiescent during all my married life with him. He was annoyed by the publicity of the affair; for, although he likes notoriety, and courts it, he did not care to appear as defendant in a suit for divorce, on the grounds of neglect and non-support. It would not sound well in the Gentile world.”

Just before the divorce suit was filed, Ann Eliza had been engaged in a brief altercation with her lawyers. Judge Hagan and his associates wanted a 50 per cent share of any sum won from Brigham Young. Upon hearing this demand, Ann Eliza’s weakness of the flesh, timidity, and helplessness were momentarily shed. Since a judgment against her husband was her only future security, she was determined not to promise half of it away. She stood solidly on a flat $20,000 legal fee for the action. Judge Hagan could not budge her, and at last he and his associates bent to her will.

With the plaintiff and her defenders once again united, the holy and financial attack was launched on July 19, on behalf of “Ann Eliza Young, by her next friend, George R. Maxwell, plaintiff, vs. Brigham Young, defendant.” The bill of divorce was filed with the Honorable James B. McKean, Judge of the Third Judicial Court, and the complaint papers were also served on Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

After stating that Ann Eliza had been born in Nauvoo, Illinois, been a resident of Salt Lake County since 1848, married Brigham Young on April 7, 1869, possessed two children by a former marriage, the complaint agreed “that for a period of about one year after her marriage, the defendant lived and cohabited with and acted toward the complainant with some degree of kindness and attention, and during that time contributed to her maintenance

and the support of her two children, not, however, in a manner proportionate to his mean nor to her station in life."

Ann Eliza had, she stated, "during all the period mentioned, and ever since then… discharged with fidelity all the duties and obligations incumbent on her as a married woman, and uniformly treated the defendant with the utmost tenderness, ever mindful of her responsibilities as a wife."

Nevertheless, "about a year after his said marriage, for some cause or motive unknown to the complainant, the defendant, regardless of all his marital obligations, commenced toward her a systematic course of neglect, unkindness, cruel and inhuman treatment, ending in an absolute desertion of her, and forcing upon her the conviction that the defendant no longer entertained for her the slightest feeling of affection or respect, and had altogether withdrawn from her his support and protection."

That was the crux of it. Now followed the detail. A year after her marriage, Ann Eliza contended, she was exiled to a large suburban domicile owned by her husband and known as The Farm. There, for three and a half years, she did manual labor, as did her mother, whose health broke down. Brigham Young "rarely visited the place, and on such occasions his visits were of brief duration, lasting from a few minutes to a half hour; that on all such occasions the defendant treated your oratrix with studied neglect and contempt, and gave her to understand that his visits were not for her, but for the purpose of supervising the work on the farm."

Since the autumn of 1872, she had been living in the Gothic house in Salt Lake City, and her marital life had not improved. Brigham Young, she went on, "has wholly absented himself from the complainant, and refused to visit her at her domicile or elsewhere." She had called upon him for money and food. "In answer to her repeated solicitations the defendant had used toward her opprobrious and most offensive language, and only at distant intervals of time since the Fall of 1872 furnished her with a few articles, but not sufficient in quantity or quality for her subsistence and that of her dependent children."

Despite his parsimony, Brigham Young "was, at time of said marriage, ever since then has been, and is yet, the owner, in his own right, of vast wealth, amounting to several millions of dollars, and is in the monthly receipt of an income therefrom of not less than $40,000." Brigham Young had always denied his wealth. Little more than three months before, in an autobiographical telegram to the New York *Herald*, he had explained that if he possessed these phantom millions he "would most assuredly use the means to gather our poor Church members from the old countries and bring them here, where their condition might be improved." But Ann Eliza argued that her husband's fortune was real. In a clarifying affidavit she stated that it amounted to eight million dollars. Of this sum, alas, she had no share. Her own current assets totaled $380. Therefore, she "prayed for a separation,"

asked $1,000 a month until the divorce could be granted, and then requested $200,000 additionally for her children and herself, and $20,000 for her attorneys' fees.

The public disclosures made in Ann Eliza's complaint thrilled the entire world. The reaction began in Salt Lake City, spread through the territory, continued west and east, and crossed even the Atlantic Ocean. In Salt Lake City the pro-Mormon *Herald* contended that Ann Eliza "knowingly and deliberately became the plural wife of a man who had already more than one wife. That marriage, purely an *ecclesiastical affair,* independent of civil ceremony or *legal enforcement,* entitled her to just such care, protection and attention and the faith both parties professed demanded… The laws of the United States recognize no such marriage: the United States Courts cannot recognize such a marriage without recognizing the legality of polygamy." The *Tribune* replied: "When men do not render such aid to their wives as is commensurate with their standing in society, and refuse to supply them with the common necessities of life, then the law comes in aid of the weaker vessel, and compels the man to do his duty. Is this 'affair' above and beyond the very common and plain rules of law and common sense?" Elsewhere in the territory, the Corinne *Daily Reporter* subscribed to the Mormon line. "Under our laws she is no more the wife of President Young than she is of the Persian Shah; and not having the legal status in marriage, surely all talk about divorce must be sheer nonsense."

The San Francisco *Daily Alta* carried the headline on page one: "Summary of Ann Eliza Young's Divorce Bill." The Philadelphia *Public Ledger* gave a concise but complete account of Ann Eliza's alimony demands. The New York *Times,* under the headline, "Brigham Young's Divorce Suit," and the smaller boldface head, "Full Text of His Seventeenth Wife's Complaint and Application," devoted three full columns to the bill of divorce. *The Times* of London, reprinting the news from the *Pall Mall Gazette,* predicted that Ann Eliza's divorce would lead "to a conflict of jurisdiction in America… between the territorial or Mormon and the United States' or Gentile courts."

At last Brigham Young realized the seriousness of the charges and recognized that he had a determined and formidable adversary on the fourth floor of Walker House. Promptly he acted to make his troublesome mate withdraw her complaint. Although an experienced if brusque diplomat, he now performed with all the subtlety of an aroused frontiersman. His first appeal was to Ann Eliza's religious susceptibility.

One afternoon two Mormon Teachers paid a call on Ann Eliza. After being properly screened, no doubt, and it being ascertained that they were not Danites, they were admitted to Ann Eliza's presence.

As on another occasion, one Teacher inquired, "Do you experience the comforts of your religion?"

“I do not,” said Ann Eliza firmly.

“Ah, return,” the Teacher pleaded, “and perhaps the Master will send an angel to whisper in Brigham’s ear, and you may become his favorite wife.”

“Well, I don’t want the angel to do any such thing!” Ann Eliza shouted.

There was little to add. The Teachers crept away in defeat.

Ann Eliza had complained bitterly that, although she was ill, not a single one of her Mormon friends visited her at Walker House. Brigham Young was aware of this. Perhaps he was responsible for Ann Eliza’s first Mormon caller. Or perhaps it happened quite spontaneously. But Ann Eliza thought not.

The Mormon caller was Clara Stenhouse Young. She was the daughter of the celebrated Fanny Stenhouse, author and lecturer, and T.B.H. Stenhouse, publisher and polygamist. When Clara Stenhouse was fifteen, Brigham Young’s eldest legal son, Joseph A. Young, who already had three wives, fell in love with her. At first Clara’s monogamy-minded mother fought the marriage. “Personally I had no objection to Clara’s lover,” she wrote. “I had known him for several years. He was an intelligent, generous-hearted, and handsome man, of very good standing among the Saints, and wealthy. As a friend, I valued and esteemed him; but that he, a polygamist, should wish to marry my darling daughter was very repugnant to my feelings.” Nevertheless, Clara Stenhouse became Joseph A. Young’s fourth wife. “He was a professed polygamist,” said Ann Eliza, who knew him well, “yet in a certain sense he was a monogamist; for although he had three wives, he lived with only one.” The one whom he lived with, his favorite, was Clara Stenhouse. Although he was abusive to her when drunk, which was frequently, and once chased after her with a pistol (whereupon she left him, until he wooed her back), he gratified her with a splendid house, fully furnished, a carriage, jewels, and elegant clothes. Even after her parents renounced Mormonism, fled to the East, and wrote books against it, their daughter remained married to Brigham’s son. Clara and Ann Eliza had been fast friends. “She knew all about my treatment,” said Ann Eliza, “for she boarded with me several months.”

Now Clara Stenhouse Young came to see Ann Eliza at Walker House.

After the amenities Clara frankly remarked that she was surprised at what Ann Eliza had done.

“You know that you would have done the same thing,” replied Ann Eliza, “if you had been treated as I have been.”

“Well, I don’t know but what I would,” Clara finally agreed.

The meeting had been friendly, as in old times, and Ann Eliza hoped that her friend would call again. Clara promised that she would. A short time later, she paid her second visit. But this time there was too little natural warmth, too much curiosity, and considerable strain. Ann Eliza did not invite her back a third time. “The last time she called,” Ann Eliza explained to a Gentile friend,

“I felt sure that she had come to spy.”

Since neither the old faith nor old friends could lure Ann Eliza back to the fold, Brigham Young realized that he must at least persuade her to drop the public divorce suit. Knowing full well that she was destitute, dependent entirely on the charity of supporters, he reasoned that money would prove an irresistible bait.

Brigham Young selected Hiram B. Clawson, a prominent son-in-law, as his representative in a compromise settlement. Many considered Clawson the perfect diplomat with women. He had gained a reputation as manager of the successful Salt Lake City Theater, and, in fact, Ann Eliza had been an actress in his troupe. His fortune was made when he succeeded in winning Brigham Young’s eldest legal daughter, Alice Young, for his third wife, over the Prophet’s objections. As third wife, Alice Young Clawson was not tractable. She had a long record of promiscuity. Once she had been engaged to marry a visitor to Salt Lake City named Tobin. When Tobin left town to continue his business, promising to return and marry her, Alice restlessly took up with other young blades. One lover was actually packed off to the Hawaiian Islands by father Brigham, to serve in exile as a missionary. When Tobin returned and learned of Alice’s inconstancy, he broke the engagement and left the Mormon capital. It may have been a coincidence that his party was ambushed at the Santa Clara River, 370 miles south of Salt Lake, and barely succeeded in eluding their unidentifiable attackers.

On the rebound from Tobin, Alice married Hiram B. Clawson. “The Prophet opposed the union,” said Ann Eliza, “but Alice would have Clawson in spite of her father. Some years after, he married one of her half-sisters. Like other Mormon women, Alice accepted the doctrine of polygamy; practically she hated it, and her married life was very unhappy. She had several children, but was not a good mother.”

As the third Mrs. Clawson, Alice continued to flirt and wear gay, provocative dresses. One day in the street, Brigham Young came upon her and was annoyed by her attire. “Good heavens, Alice!” he fumed. “What are you rigged out in that style for? You look like a prostitute.”

Alice glared at her father. “Well, what else am I? And whose teachings have made me so?”

Shortly after, Alice committed suicide with poison. Clawson mourned her briefly, then turned to his other wives for consolation.

Now, fully restored to the good graces of his powerful father-in-law, Clawson confidently prepared to bribe Ann Eliza into silence. Toward this end he sought out Ann Eliza’s father, Chauncey Webb, and her mentor, the Reverend Stratton, conferred with them, and then together the three men met with the recalcitrant wife. Clawson treated Ann Eliza frankly, intelligently, and without arrogance. The divorce was dangerous to the Church, he

admitted. “If she gained her suit,” he said, “it would do incalculable harm, as hundreds of Mormon women would immediately follow her example.” Consequently, if she were willing to drop the suit, she would have Brigham’s guarantee of $15,000 and safe passage out of Utah Territory for her children and herself.

This offer of security and safety almost dissolved all of Ann Eliza’s good intentions. “I will confess that the offer tempted me,” she wrote later. “I could take my children and go away quietly with them, and avoid the notoriety which I so hated. If it had been my own individual case alone, I should have eagerly accepted the offer and made the compromise. But when I thought how much was involved, how many other lives would be affected by the decision which would be given in my case, I put all thought of settlement aside.”

Later Ann Eliza liked to say that it was she who went to Judge Hagan and General Maxwell, when they wavered, and advised them to reject the cash bribe and go on. But there is evidence to the contrary, indicating that Ann Eliza almost succumbed to Clawson’s $15,000 but was held to the original divorce by her Gentile backers. At any rate, the compromise was rejected, the affable Clawson returned empty-handed to his master, and the bill of divorce remained alive on the court calendar.

Now, at once, efforts were made to intimidate Ann Eliza through her best friends and family. There is no actual evidence that Brigham Young was directly responsible, but Ann Eliza always chose to think that the campaign was directed by him. Since the Reverend C. C. Stratton had been Ann Eliza’s adviser and was cherished by her, it was he who came under the most vicious attack. On August 9, 1873—Ann Eliza was now in her fourth week in Walker House—the San Francisco *Chronicle,* which had been the first to attack Ann Eliza’s virtue, undertook to attack the Reverend Stratton’s piety. The headline read: “The Mormon Scandal,” and the smaller subhead read: “A Clergyman’s Part in Brigham Young’s Divorce Suit.” The story that followed, signed by “an Occasional Correspondent,” possibly a euphemism for telegrapher Harrington, read in part:

“The reverend appears to have been the first to move in the lady’s interest. He it was who spoke to the lawyers and arranged the interviews and preliminaries, and properly he should have appeared in the documents as ‘her first friend,’ but it is said that he once resided in Oregon, and his name was associated with some human affair there that occupied public attention, and which gave him ever afterwards a distaste for unnecessary publicity. He, therefore, very modestly declined the mention of his name as sister Eliza Ann’s [sic] first friend, and on that account the name of that brave soldier, General George R. Maxwell, was given to the public in that capacity.”

Two paragraphs later the *Chronicle* ominously threatened that “if the reverend continues to meddle, he may expect a ventilation of a fraction of

Oregon history." The *Chronicle's* hints of a "human affair" in Oregon, regarded by some readers as meaning adultery and by others as indicating financial malfeasance, was never further elaborated. Nevertheless, the Reverend Stratton felt it necessary to defend his own involvement in the case of the twenty-seventh wife.

Apparently at the Reverend Stratton's request, a reporter for the sympathetic Salt Lake City *Tribune* appeared for an interview, which was published August 21, 1873. The reporter found the hitherto busy reverend now becalmed in his study. After being "courteously invited to a seat," the reporter wondered if the Reverend Stratton knew to what extent he was being publicly involved in the Ann Eliza scandal. The reverend knew exactly to what extent he was being involved. Had he instigated Mrs. Young's separation from Mr. Young? He had not. But he knew Mrs. Young? Yes, before the separation she had called upon him "repeatedly." And he did not encourage her to leave her husband? "My recommendation to her has been to remain as she was, until Congress should legislate for her relief or Providence should intervene." Well, who encouraged her to file for divorce? Her lawyers. Was she not also motivated by a morbid desire to gain notoriety? "By no means. She is a person of womanly instincts, and I believe her present position is exceedingly distasteful to her." Did he ever advise her to leave the Mormon Church? "Never. She has admitted here that she had not been a Mormon in heart for a number of years, although she had been born and reared in that Church. But since the Gentiles had come in she had greatly cooled in her faith." Did the reverend play any role in the Clawson compromise? Yes, indeed. "At the request of her father, and by arrangement with Mr. Clawson, I visited the latter in company with her father, and agreed upon terms of the compromise." But when Ann Eliza, at the behest of her lawyers, rejected it, the reverend "mingled no further in the business."

In fact, so anxious was the Reverend Stratton to protect his tiny Methodist isle in Deseret that he took out a paid advertisement avowing his nonbelligerence. Two days after his interview appeared, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* added a footnote: "Rev. C. C. Stratton has published a card denying that he influenced Ann Eliza to enter the divorce suit, and charging the lawyers with attempting to fleece their client."

Not only were Ann Eliza's Gentile friends under fire, but her family was placed in an untenable position. At last there came to Walker House the word that Ann Eliza dreaded most, the first reaction of her beloved mother, Eliza Churchill Webb, in the form of a personal letter. No prodding from Brigham Young was required to produce this communique. Eliza Churchill Webb's belief in Mormonism had withstood the shock of polygamy, and her awe of the Prophet had survived eyewitness incidents of her daughter's marriage. Desperately now, while there was still time, she tried to save her erring

offspring.

“My Dear Child: You can never know how dear you are to your grief-stricken mother. Your death would have been far preferable to the course you are taking. How gladly would I have laid you in your grave, had I known what was in your heart. I now pray that you be spared for repentance and atonement; for, as sure as you are living, a day of repentance will come; a day of reckoning and of sorrow, such as you have never imagined. Now, let me entreat of you to pause, and retrace your steps before it is too late. The Lord, my Father, grant that you may listen to your mother’s last appeal, and flee from your present dictators, as you would from the fiends of the darkness.

“You will never know the effort I am making to write this. When I first received the blow, it struck me down like a flash of lightning, and the first I remember, I was praying for your death before you sinned past redemption. My much-loved child, come to your mother, and try to smooth her pathway to the grave. I should pray to be laid there at once, if I did not hope to save you yet. The path you are pursuing leads to the lowest depths of woe, and I pray, every moment of my life, that you may speedily be arrested. Oh, how could you turn against us? How could you break our hearts? Your father’s house, and your brother Gilbert’s house, are both filled with weeping friends, who are deploring your fate; and I implore you, in the name of all that is sacred, to come back to us. You seem to be encircled in a cloud of almost impenetrable darkness, but the Lord our God is able to remove the veil, and enlighten you in his own way. I can only pray for you.

“My heart is broken, my dear and much-loved child. I loathe the sight of food, and sleep has forsaken my eyelids. The idol is rudely broken that I have worshipped so long. My fault has been in loving you too well, and having too great anxiety for your welfare.

“I pray you to forgive me for all the wrongs you imagine I have done you in bringing you up as I have done. I have ever been laboring, teaching, and instructing with the best of motives, with an eye to your interests. I shed the bitterest tears I ever did in my life. God grant you may never have cause to shed such tears. If I can ever be the least comfort to you, do not fear to let me know. I close by repeating, come to the arms of your heart-broken but still anxious… Mother.”

Holding the disturbing pages, Ann Eliza suffered her last critical moment of doubt. Her mother’s wavering pen had stabbed her heart. “I longed to fly to her,” she confessed, “but even to make her happy I could not violate my conscience and go back into the old bondage of darkness again.” Agonized though she was, the doubt was pushed aside. The suit for divorce would continue.

Now the war of words between Walker House and Lion House pitched to a crescendo. The divorce announcement, with its guarded, legal exposure of

harem life, brought nationwide demands for more information on the rebellious plural wife. Since human interest had to be satisfied, America's foremost reporters beat a path to Walker House. On the fourth floor of the hotel, in drawing room number 110, the pale and wan Ann Eliza reclined exhaustedly on her chaise longue like a Utah Camille, receiving a succession of wide-eyed journalists.

Within three days, the first week in August, two different reporters representing the San Francisco *Chronicle* came to interview her. The first *Chronicle* man, introduced to Ann Eliza by a mutual lady friend, was immediately impressed by the variety of magazines scattered about her room and by her knowledge of current events. He heard the story of her life with sympathetic interest. "It was deeply interesting to me," he said, "and left the vivid impression on my mind that it is great folly for the Latter-Day apostles and prophets to be guilty of the absurd notion that they can transplant Asiatic manners and habits on this American soil. I have listened to many women here, and heard them denounce polygamy as the grossest outrage to which a free American woman can be subjected to, but I never saw eyes, that were a moment before dull and heavy with weakness and pain, dart out such indignation as those I looked at while some answers were given to the questions I propounded to Mrs. Young. There was nothing of the scold about her, but her language was the inspiration of remembered wrongs."

As to Brigham Young and the Lion House—that "plastered, painted and carpeted prison," as Ann Eliza described it—she was forever done with both. "She could have no further affiliation with the Prophet," the *Chronicle* man was made to understand; "she would sooner die; she would gladly have died any time during the past four years to have ended her misery. She thoroughly detests the Prophet and asserts that he is the most vindictive, cruel man she ever knew of… He is a simple, easy-talking, courteous gentleman before strangers, but the moment that the stranger leaves, if the slightest thing ruffles him, he is harsh and uncouth with those who are dependent upon him, and is utterly reckless with his cutting words."

Apparently this was not enough for titillated San Franciscans. Three days later a second *Chronicle* interviewer met with the reclining Ann Eliza. This journalist, ungallantly, judged her to be "about thirty-five years old." In the same period a New York *Sun* reporter would guess that she was "about twenty-five years old," and a representative of the New York *Herald* would reckon that "the lady is about twenty-eight years of age." She was, in fact, twenty-eight, but only a month from her twenty-ninth birthday.

"Was your first husband a Mormon?" the second *Chronicle* reporter inquired.

Ann Eliza rubbed her forehead and appeared pained by the memory of the humble husband who had preceded the Prophet. "Yes, yes," she replied.

“Did he have more than one wife?”

“No, I was his only wife. He blighted my life and made me ready to make any sacrifice.”

“How did you come to marry Brigham Young? Did you do it of your own free will, or were you forced to it?”

“Well, it is a long story, but if you wish to hear it I will tell you. I was free to do as I wished, and still I wasn’t. You see, in the first place, these men who are leaders in the Church have an almost unlimited power over us. They can do as they please. You have no idea how great their power is. If a man wants to marry a woman, the woman must marry him. They dare not refuse. The story of my marriage to the President will illustrate how these men get their influence and how they exercise it. My first husband rendered me miserable and blighted my life. I felt that I had nothing to live for but my friends, and for them I was ready to make any sacrifice.” One of her best friends, Ann Eliza went on, was one of her brothers. This brother became involved in a business deal with Brigham Young, and when it failed, Brigham threatened to drive the brother out of the Church. To save her brother, Ann Eliza gave in to Brigham Young’s persistent wooing and became his plural wife.

“How many wives did Brigham have when he first offered marriage to you?” the San Francisco reporter wanted to know.

“Fifteen, I think. Let me see; I know all the names. Let me count them up.” For a moment she was absorbed in rapidly counting aloud. “Yes,” she said at last, “fifteen at that time. Mary Van Cott was the sixteenth and I am the seventeenth.”

“Which is Brigham’s favorite wife?”

“Amelia is his favorite and does with him as she pleases,” said Ann Eliza. “She has been married to him twelve years.”

The visiting journalist was curious to know more about Amelia’s power. “What is the particular trait in Amelia’s character which renders her the favorite?”

“I don’t know,” said Ann Eliza, “unless it is her great willpower. She is a perfect virago and carries everything by storm. She has the best of everything, and sometimes she gets mad and smashes things right and left. Then the President buys her more. I understand that Mr. Young says I could have gone to the Co-operative stores and got what I wanted. The statement is untrue. Amelia is the only one of the President’s wives who can go into a store and run up a bill.”

“If Amelia was a favorite of twelve years’ standing, why did Brigham want to marry you?”

“Well, we think it is vanity. They like to show that if they are old men, they can marry young women. It is a false idea that the last wife is always the favorite.”

Suddenly, as if feeling that she had said too much, Ann Eliza glanced nervously at the windows and door. When she turned back to the *Chronicle* reporter, her voice was lower and agitated. “Would you think that they could abduct me from here?” she whispered.

The reporter appeared surprised. “Why, you certainly have no fears of that kind? Mr. Young’s natural policy will prevent any such action as that.”

“Ah, you don’t know them,” Ann Eliza said quickly. “I have taken this room as high up as possible to protect myself. I dare not let my little boy leave the room, and I eat all my meals here.” Then she added angrily, “Well, if they do put me out of the way, my father will attend to them.”

Only the day before, Ann Eliza had expressed the same fears to a correspondent of the New York *Sun.* When she had then mentioned possible abduction, and the startled visitor had wondered if she really worried about it, she had burst out, “You don’t know how powerful they are. I have taken this room up here hoping to be safe, but I don’t know how soon they may attempt to put me out of the way… It is only within two or three days that I have been out on the street, and then I walked to the Reverend Mr. Stratton’s house. When I first came here, I went down to the table once or twice, but I was advised that it was not safe, and since then have had my meals served in my room.” Whether Ann Eliza was, in these moods of fright, play-acting and dramatizing herself, or whether she was hoping to protect herself by passing her plight on to the nation at large because she was genuinely apprehensive for her life, will never be known. But, in those weeks and months in Walker House, she treated her rooms as a fortress and spoke constantly of being kidnapped or murdered.

When Ann Eliza had at last settled down again, the San Francisco journalist resumed his interview. “Has Brigham ever used profane language to you?” he wanted to know.

“I can’t say that he has,” Ann Eliza admitted, “but he has used shockingly insulting and grossly vulgar language to me. Oh, sir, he is a vile old creature. I have heard him swear in the pulpit when talking of the Gentiles.”

“I have heard that he intends to allege adultery against you as his defense.”

Ann Eliza seemed momentarily stunned. “Is it possible! Is it possible!”

“Could they manufacture any evidence of that kind, do you suppose?”

“They could find two thousand Mormons to swear to anything that the President told them,” replied Ann Eliza indignantly. “For that matter, they could find plenty of Gentiles, too. They said that a man brought me to this hotel and was paying my expenses here. It is false. I am the only one responsible for my actions.”

Representatives of the eastern press were equally inquisitive about Ann Eliza’s past, present, and future. It was the Reverend Stratton who brought over the correspondent for the New York *Sun*, and his wife and introduced

them. The New York reporter covered much the same ground as his San Francisco colleague, but once or twice he was tempted to question Ann Eliza sharply.

When Ann Eliza explained how she had been forced to marry Brigham Young, the *Sun* interviewer did not seem entirely satisfied with her explanation. “I suppose,” he said, “you thought it would be better to marry the highest man in the Church and be well cared for, than to marry some one in an inferior station?”

Ann Eliza shook her head vigorously. “No, I had no such thoughts. I felt that my life had been blighted anyhow, and I might as well make a further sacrifice if I could save my brother, so… I married him. And just six months before we were married, he took Mary Van Cott.”

“Who is Mary Van Cott?”

“She is a woman just about my age, and he treated her just about as bad as he has me. Amelia is his favorite.”

Once again Amelia was belabored by her sister wife. The visitor wondered if Amelia had given Brigham any children. Ann Eliza said that she had not.

“Has Mary Van Cott any children?”

“Yes, she had one born about two years ago. It is the youngest in his family.”

The visitor was impressed by the last, and when later he sent his story of the interview to the New York *Sun*, he added a parenthetical note after the quotation. It read: “It may interest the reader to know that Brigham Young is 73 years old.”

On the heels of the *Sun* correspondent there appeared, at the invitation of Judge Hagan, a writer from the younger James Gordon Bennett’s influential New York *Herald*. He thought that Ann Eliza had “a remarkably sweet face” and saw that she was in ill health and was solicitous. “Mrs. Young was in health indisposed,” he told his readers, “and I begged her not to deprive herself of the comfort and aid of the pillow, which I saw she had just used on the couch.” Sensing that her caller was impressed by her, Ann Eliza proved extremely cooperative. The conversation that followed went easily and well.

“Have you been long in Utah?” the New York *Herald* writer inquired.

“I came here when I was four years old.”

“Your parents still live, I am told?”

“Yes, my father and mother live about ten miles south of this city, and I have two brothers older than myself in the territory.”

“Are your father and brothers polygamists?”

“Father has three wives and had two more who are dead; my eldest brother has two wives, but the youngest has only one.”

“You have, therefore, been reared in polygamy?”

“Yes. I have seen it all my life.”

The writer asked if she had preferred polygamy to monogamy. Ann Eliza made it clear that she had always been against plural marriages.

“Why, madam?”

“It looked unnatural, and I viewed it with abhorrence.”

“Are the women in polygamic families unhappy?”

“Mostly. I think all are unhappy, but some of them struggle to conceal it.”

“Did you ever know any women say that they were happy in that relationship?”

“Oh yes, I have heard women say so, but I never believe them.” Soon enough Ann Eliza was pouring out the details of her own adventure in polygamy and her escape from its bondage.

The *Herald* writer noted all of this and then remarked, “Brigham Young laughs at your course, and asserts that he will allow you no alimony.”

Ann Eliza remained unruffled. “I told my lawyers that whether I was defeated or not I would do what I was doing to save other women from falling into the same snare.”

“How does he get along with his other wives?”

“He keeps them so under his thumb that they dare not say anything. To their particular friends they complain. They are very much tried with his course.”

“What do they complain of chiefly?”

“They are mortified by his partiality to Amelia and his prodigal expenditure of money to give her everything she wants, while they live in a very plain way and are forced to earn a good deal of their support.”

“How has she obtained such an influence over him? It certainly cannot be her good looks, for she is not a beauty.”

“It puzzles everyone,” Ann Eliza admitted. “The other wives think that he is afraid of her because she is such a virago. She has threatened to leave him hundreds of times, I suppose.”

“Why should he submit to her to such an extent while he humbles and neglects the others?”

“He thinks, doubtless, it would be a great scandal if she left him. Besides, she is acquainted with a great many things that he would never want brought before the public.”

“Do any of the other wives threaten to leave him?”

Ann Eliza thought that if her own divorce suit was successful, and she was awarded alimony, it might encourage twenty-nine-year-old Mary Van Cott Young to leave him. The writer wanted to know why this wife might follow in Ann Eliza’s footsteps.

“When this lady had a daughter to him,” Ann Eliza explained, “Amelia was so enraged, as she had been childless herself, that she forbade Brigham ever to be a husband to that young wife again.” Incredulous, the *Herald*

wondered if it was Brigham's religion that made him take so many problem wives. Ann Eliza thought this might have once been so, but no longer. Now it was simply a matter of male vanity rather than religion. "I do not think that he believes in his own religion," she concluded spitefully.

On August 8, 1873, the New York *Herald* printed the results of this interview in four and a half columns under sixteen Barnum-style headlines. The largest headline read: "Brigham's Lost Affinity." The next, beneath it, read: "The Story of Mrs. Eliza Webb Graphically Told by Herself." And below that: "The Prophet Of Utah As a Lover."

Ann Eliza's uninhibited revelations created a national sensation. So tremendous was the outcry of sympathy on her behalf, and so unanimous the uproar against her husband, that Brigham Young decided that he could remain silent no longer. Until then he had tried not to dignify Ann Eliza's activities with official comment from himself or his family. But now it was becoming a serious matter. The twenty-seventh wife must be shown to the public for what she truly was, from his point of view—a blackmailer, a liar, a hussy, and a courtesan. New York and San Francisco must be answered at once.

En route to New York at that very time was Brigham's youngest and most sophisticated "legal" son, John W. Young, twenty-nine years old. John W. was legal son insofar as the United States Government might regard his mother, Mary Ann Angell Young, the first of Brigham's living wives, as sole legal spouse. Although most of John W.'s energies were given to representing his father in eastern business deals, he would three years later be sustained as first counselor in the First Presidency. His ambition was to succeed his father as Prophet, and when that dream would fail he would retire from active Church affairs. He was much devoted to polygamy. He eventually possessed four wives, one of them the child daughter by a previous marriage of Mary Van Cott, his father's twenty-sixth wife and his own stepmother. Most of his affection was concentrated on his third wife, Libbie, whom he had stolen from a husband of just one week in Philadelphia.

When John W. Young reached his fourth-floor suite in the St. Nicholas Hotel in New York City, there was evidently word from his father to refute Ann Eliza's damaging testimony in the New York *Herald* of August 8. Since all the press clamored for some word from the Prophet's son, he had little difficulty in finding a suitable platform. John W. Young chose to engage Ann Eliza in the same columns where she had slandered her husband and his father. His interview appeared at great length, in two parts, in the New York *Herald* of August 13 and 14.

The *Herald* reporter found John W. Young "a pleasant-looking, well-built gentleman of about 30 years of age, reclining in a large armchair. Mr. Young wore a black velvet jacket, faced with light blue silk, and appeared thoroughly comfortable. He welcomed the *Herald* man cheerily and expressed his

willingness to answer any questions which might be asked for the sake of gaining information regarding the Mormon faith, mode of life or the present suit now pending. He deprecated very strongly any desire on the part of the newspapers to make a sensational interview out of his conversations and was gratified, he said, to be informed that the *Herald* desired to give his language just as he should utter it. Mr. Young is a man of medium height, rather stoutly built, with a florid complexion, light hazel eyes and dark brown hair. A heavy moustache covers his mouth."

After brief preliminary conversation about "commerce and trade" between Utah and the rest of the country, which interested neither of the two men, the business at hand at last came under discussion.

"Do you find the condition of women in polygamy an unhappy one?" the reporter asked of the multi-wived son of the Prophet.

"On the contrary, I have always observed that they were peculiarly contented," replied John W. Young suavely. Later Ann Eliza would disclose that John W.'s first wife Lucy had so resented the presence of his third wife Libbie that he had been forced to lock her in a "dark closet" until she became more docile. Eventually this same Lucy departed from John W.'s crowded household and divorced him. Perhaps some memory of Lucy made John W. Young say to the reporter what he would say next. "Of course, all women are naturally more or less jealous. If they were not governed by pure religious motives there is little doubt but that their condition would be one of constant vexation. As it is, they have feelings regarding the question of polygamy which appeal to the highest sentiments of human nature and which do not call forth base sentiments of jealousy. Our men and women are as chaste and virtuous as any other class or sect of religious people. More than this, we do not claim… The women conscientiously sanction this doctrine of the Mormon faith because they believe that polygamy is right, and I will venture to assert that one hundred Mormon families taken at random will be found to contain fewer seeds of discord than the same number of families selected from out of any eastern city's population. Family trouble exists more or less everywhere."

The reporter was eager to get to the twenty-seventh wife. "Mrs. Ann Eliza Webb Young stated to a representative of the *Herald* in Salt Lake City that her brother had some business relations with President Young, and that she was rather forced into marriage by these circumstances. Is this the actual state of the case?"

"To begin with, her brothers are both gentlemen of the highest integrity," said John W. Young tolerantly. "They would not, if they could, coerce her into any marriage relation. Regarding the statement that one of her brothers had business relations with my father, I do not hesitate to stamp the whole story as false."

After some further discussion about this brother's lack of business

acumen, the conversation was brought back to the subject of Ann Eliza. The reporter inquired, “You knew Eliza Webb before her marriage with your father, did you not?”

“Yes, from childhood. She is about twenty-nine years old, near my own age. She was born in 1844. We went to school a short time together.”

“She was educated in the faith?”

“Certainly. She had a thorough knowledge of the polygamic usages, and when she contracted the marriage, she did so with her eyes wide open.”

The *Herald* man wanted a peek into the harem. He became bolder. “How do the other members of the family feel about the suit?”

John W. Young was ready for this. “So far as I can learn, all regard her present unenviable position as a result of her own doings. Her past conduct can be characterized in a mild form as very injudicious. It has transpired, since her departure from the family, that her present course is the result of loose principles, demonstrated by her actions in her own home. There is, in Salt Lake, a very obnoxious class of men who have ‘squatted’ upon us, and whose sole attention is devoted to insinuating themselves into our families. Their object in life is to ruin women and to break up all household ties. Such men exist here in New York, doubtless; exist more or less everywhere.” The speaker was, of course, aware that publisher Theodore Tilton’s outrage against clergyman Henry Ward Beecher, for having slept for a year and a half with Tilton’s wife, Elizabeth, was competing on all front pages with Ann Eliza’s defection. Now he added, “The influence of some man is unquestionably at the bottom of Eliza’s actions.”

“Will the suit be compromised?”

John W. Young ignored Clawson’s recent offer of $15,000 to Ann Eliza for a settlement out of court. He answered, “There certainly will not be a settlement in the form of a compromise. My father has no intention of remunerating hungry lawyers, especially such shameless scoundrels as ask $20,000 for their services in a simple divorce case. He is willing to give Eliza anything that is reasonable in the shape of alimony, but he will not be blackmailed.”

“Do the wives of the Prophet have to work, as she asserts?”

“There is not a word of truth about her toil,” John W. Young replied heatedly. He then proceeded to refute Ann Eliza’s story of privations and inattention. She lived in luxury, he insisted, and “the story of her poverty is a fabrication.”

Continuing, John W. Young added that Amelia Folsom was not the troublemaker that Ann Eliza had made her out to be. “On the other hand, Eliza’s troubles have arisen from the interference of fanatics, whose business seems to be to make dissensions in the Mormon Church… If Ann Eliza had only asked for a divorce, if she had gone to President Young and told him

what she wanted, he would have divorced her, and it would not have cost her anything."

"Is this case regarded as an evidence of the falling off of the believers?"

"Not at all," said John W. Young firmly. "It in no way impairs the faith in or efficacy of the system of polygamy. It is merely an evidence of the foolish course of one woman, and it is not the first instance either in the history of the world. There will not be any further trouble in the family, whether she is successful or not. We do not fear an explosion of that sort. Ann Eliza can never come back into the family relations. I am sure, however, that my father will provide for her. Good afternoon."

Meanwhile, in Salt Lake City, the Lion of the Lord had decided that he must speak for himself at last. All the nation's press had been fighting to see him, without success, but now, one of their number, a reporter for the San Francisco *Chronicle,* was awarded the singular honor.

The meeting took place in the Lion House. "I met the seer in his office, a large and elegantly furnished room," the nervous reporter noted. "He was talking with a secretary as I entered. A mutual friend introduced us. He arose, shook my hand warmly, and in a half-social, half-dignified manner waved us to a seat."

The reporter later admitted his tongue-tied terror in the presence of one of America's foremost figures. Brigham Young was not unaware of his role as churchman supreme, trailblazer, colonist, statesman. Once, one of his daughters Maria had asked him if he had read a certain book of history. "No, daughter," he had replied, "I am too busy making history to find any time to read history."

At seventy-two he was still impressive and vigorous. Less than three years before, Bayard Taylor, the poet and diplomat, had met him and decided that he resembled "a successful bank or railroad president… He is both short and broad, but his thickness gives the impression of strength, rather than corpulence… The general expression of his face is at once reticent and watchful." More recently James B. Thayer, accompanied by Ralph Waldo Emerson, had also met him and described him meticulously: "He was a man of not over medium height, full-blooded, and with the look of some stout stage-driver who had prospered and been used to authority. His face was smooth, except for whiskers of a reddish cast touched with gray. His hair, rather thick and of a like color, seemed wet, and was parted behind and brushed or rather rolled up on the top, in a cheap way that one might see on a teamster at a ball… His mouth was close, his nose somewhat aquiline, his eyes quiet but cunning, his manner good, and steady."

Actually Brigham Young was five feet ten inches in height and still erect and imposing except when he was suffering from neuralgia. His eyes were steel gray and unwavering, and his lips thin and usually compressed, and it

was these features that chilled many visitors. Yet he was possessed also of a blustering outdoor kind of vigor and cheeriness, and he had a keen sense of humor and irony. Most of his daughters worshipped him and despised Ann Eliza for speaking against him. The most vocal and longest lived of Brigham's daughters, Susa Young Gates, told Major Pond long years after the scandal, "Ann Eliza was untruthful. She was a jealous and unscrupulous woman! God forgive her and let Him deal with her. I have no bitterness in my heart for her. I love my religion too well to hold enmity to anyone, however willful and wicked they may be. My dear father was one of the purest and most unselfish of men as well as one of the greatest."

Apparently there was no moderation in discussing Brigham Young: to Mark Twain he was the "ignorant savage," and to George Bernard Shaw he was the "American Moses."

Now, seated across from this fearsome yet awesome Matterhorn of a man, the San Francisco reporter was at a loss for words. He stuttered something to the effect that it was "very warm." Brigham Young agreed that it was, indeed, warm but that he had seen it warmer. After a few minutes of socializing, the reporter confessed, "His easy manner reassured me." At last both parties came to grips with the subject to be discussed.

At once Brigham Young launched into a tirade against his enemies. "We have been abused and reviled by lying press agents almost beyond endurance. There is a conspiracy under way to take from us our lands and our money. They will not allow us to live in peace. They have driven us from place to place, and the thieves and robbers have followed us here to our beautiful valley. They want to take from us all we possess. But they had better stop! They will find that we will stand by our own. Not one penny of tribute shall they wrest from us. We have redeemed this land from the grasp of the desert. It was given to us by God and has been consecrated to our holy Church, and we mean to keep it."

The reporter felt that he had his cue. "Do you think," he asked, "that this divorce suit of Ann Eliza Young is part of the general conspiracy against you?"

Brigham Young smiled—"contemptuously," the reporter noted—and nodded. "Well, yes. It is a small part of a great whole. It don't amount to anything except to show how low they will stoop to accomplish their ends. They are beginning to find that they can't retort by the wholesale, and so they are trying to make it up in small parcels. It is simply a case of blackmail, in which they have secured the alliance of my wife. It is not long ago that they formed a bogus indictment against me for living with this same woman in lascivious cohabitation. That conspiracy fell to the ground, and now they find it convenient to recognize her as my wife. They will fail in that as they have in everything else. We shall see, we shall see!"

Since the Prophet had characterized Ann Eliza's divorce action as part of a grand conspiracy, the reporter stated that he would like "to get at the bottom of it." Had President Young seen the papers of complaint? He had, indeed.

"Mrs. Young says that you treated her brutally and cruelly." Brigham Young's face flushed with rage. "That is a lie. I treated her as a wife should be treated. Of course, if she sues for a divorce she must trump up some charge to sustain it. The animus of this thing is shown by the course they have taken. The territorial law makes these cases triable in the Probate Court. Why do they summon me to the United States Court? They want another of McKean's packed grand juries to indict me. They have tried that once and failed, as they will fail again."

"Mrs. Young says that you did not allow her the ordinary necessaries of life."

"I gave her *carte blanche* to get whatever she wanted at the stores of the Zion Co-operative Mercantile Institute," said Brigham Young. "That is what I do with all my wives." Sixty-seven years later, Clarissa Young Spencer, Brigham's fifty-first child, confirmed her father's contention. She wrote that a private family store, for use of the wives, was maintained behind the Bee Hive House, next door to the Lion House. "Each wife had her charge account here, as well as one at the Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution, the leading dry-goods store of the city… As far as I know, the wives were not limited in either account, although I suppose they knew enough to keep their purchases within reasonable bounds."

Now, briefly, Brigham Young regaled his journalistic visitor, and members of his office force, with the story of a Pennsylvania politician who two years before had promised to keep him out of jail on polygamy charges for a fee of $100,000 in gold. When the reporter wanted to know what Brigham had told this politician, the Prophet replied with a roar of laughter, "Well, I just asked him if $100,000 in greenbacks wouldn't do as well!"

After the laughter in the room subsided, the reporter pursued the case of Ann Eliza again. "Mr. Young, supposing the United States Court entertains this suit for divorce, what will be the next step?"

The reporter and clerks in the office waited in silence. Dusk had invaded the room, and Brigham sat very still, staring out at the wall, twelve feet high, surrounding the harem house. At last he turned back to the reporter. His broad face was solemn, and when he spoke, his voice was low. "Adultery," he said. "We have the evidence to prove the facts, and we shall prove them to the satisfaction of all honest men. I dislike to take this course, but the honor and dignity of the Church must be maintained."

When the interview appeared, it appeared on page one of the Sunday *Chronicle.* Four black headlines beckoned the reader. The first read: "The Prophet Speaks." The second read: "An Interesting Conversation with

Brigham Young." The next: "He Denies That He Treated His Wife Brutally." The last: "Simply a Case of Blackmail." And now all San Francisco, and finally all the West and all the East, knew that Ann Eliza Webb had been officially branded an adultress by her husband. No graver charge could have been made by the Prophet, who regarded adultery as a cardinal sin, and who had once remarked in the heat of a sermon, "Suppose you found your brother in bed with your wife and put a javelin through both of them, you would be justified… I have no wife I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do it with clean hands." Now he had hurled the javelin at Ann Eliza.

For Ann Eliza, agitated and sickly in her two cells atop the Walker House, her series of interviews and the rebuttals by Brigham Young and his son brought immediate offers of cash reward. Her name was on the lips of millions—to some a virtuous heroine, to others a scarlet woman. But no matter how she was regarded by her fellow citizens, there was unanimity on one point—everyone, without exception, it seemed, wanted to see and hear her. In four weeks she had become a commodity of value. Show business courted her.

The greatest promoter of entertainment in the world, the sixty-three-year-old Phineas T. Barnum, who had just gone into the circus business with W. C. Coup, bombarded Ann Eliza with cablegrams from Europe. Barnum had made himself a millionaire by converting a half-monkey, half-fish named the Feejee Mermaid into a successful hoax, a twenty-five-inch carpenter's son named Charles Stratton into Tom Thumb, and a colorless, illegitimate Swedish soprano named Jenny Lind into the box-office success of the century. Only three years before, Barnum had offered Brigham Young $100,000 a year if he would allow himself to be exhibited in the East. Now a similar offer was being extended to Brigham's wife.

Equally enticing to Ann Eliza, whose savings had evaporated and whose purse was empty, were the many tempting offers from lecture managers. Of these, the most attractive came from James Redpath of the Boston Lyceum Bureau. Until the advent of Redpath, who had been a friend of John Brown, a consul for Haiti in Philadelphia, a journalist with Union troops, lecturing was a hit-or-miss proposition, and the Midwest was a cultural void. There was a handful of lecturers, of course—Emerson had received five dollars and three quarts of oats to deliver a speech; Horace Greeley had received $193 for a talk; Horace Mann was worth ninety-five dollars—but this form of enlightenment and entertainment proceeded without central organization or plan. One night, after listening to Charles Dickens, Redpath determined to change all that. He decided lecturing could be profitable if properly planned and promoted. He created his Lyceum Bureau, took on Emerson, Mary A. Livermore, and Henry Ward Beecher. Still, his business was not yet big time.

With Ann Eliza Young, he hoped to make the platform topical, exciting, controversial. But, although dazzled by Redpath's name, Ann Eliza was not so easily swayed.

Among her supporters, however, there was one who was even more impressed by Redpath's name. This was the young journalist on the Salt Lake City *Tribune*, Major James Burton Pond, who had known Redpath in the John Brown abolitionist days. While Pond agreed that Barnum was out of the question, he felt that Redpath was quite another possibility. He suggested to Ann Eliza that perhaps she should consider taking "the lecture platform against Mormonism." But for one so long alone and so sensitive, despite her youthful stage career, the idea of a carnival of public appearances was abhorrent. "I shrank from the very mention of it," said Ann Eliza, "and replied to the friends who proposed it that I could not, and would not, do it." As to her future money for her sons and herself, she was still confident that the divorce action would immediately acquire for her the necessary alimony.

But the divorce was mired down in obtuse legalities. The first major issue was one of jurisdiction. Should a territorial or a Federal court hear the case? This issue was important, since, if a territorial court handled the matter, it was felt that the Mormons might have more control over the verdict, while if a Federal court judged it, the non-Mormons or Gentiles would decide it. The wrangle began immediately over service of the divorce papers on Brigham Young. Judge James B. McKean decided that a Federal marshal should act as process server. Brigham's legal counsel, Charles H. Hempstead, a Gentile who had formerly been an anti-Mormon editor and United States district attorney, promptly challenged the procedure. When Hempstead brought the matter before the Third District Court, Judge McKean was ill, and in his place sat Judge P. H. Emerson, who had less judicial bias for Ann Eliza. At once Judge Emerson reversed McKean's decision and agreed that the territorial marshal and not the Federal marshal must do the process serving. It was a setback for Ann Eliza but not yet a major one.

On August 10, 1873, Judge McKean still indisposed, Judge Emerson again sat on the bench to hear a new motion filed by Brigham's attorney. Speaking for the Prophet, Hempstead argued that Ann Eliza's request for temporary alimony and for divorce was a question to be decided by the local Probate Court and not by the United States District Court. Even the *Tribune* conceded that Hempstead's demurrer was presented with "much ability and clearness." Then, on behalf of Ann Eliza, Judge Tilford rose to reply with "graceful rhetoric." The debate lasted two days. A week and a half later, Judge Emerson gave his decision. He explained that the law was on the side of Brigham Young. In 1852 the Territorial Legislature of Utah had passed a divorce bill "giving to the Probate Court in place where the complainant may reside, jurisdiction." Therefore, said the *Tribune,* "from the research His Honor had

devoted to the case, he was led to the conclusion that this [Federal] Court had no original jurisdiction." Brigham had won the second round also. Ann Eliza would have to be heard, not by her friend Judge McKean, but by a local court that might be pro-Mormon. With this point settled, the divorce hearing itself was finally put off until May 1874.

The paradox of her situation made Ann Eliza's head swim. She was almost impoverished, yet almost rich. The alimony she had depended on now would not even be considered by her peers for eight more months. She had no resources, except the charity of her new friends, yet beyond the mountains waited a mine of wealth. She was still imprisoned, afraid to leave her room, fearful even of dining in public, terrified that she would be assassinated in her sleep and her son kidnapped. Neither her purse nor her nervous system could possibly withstand another eight months among her sworn enemies. She must do something. But what?

It was at this crucial moment, apparently, that Major Pond reopened the question of a lecturing career and presented a new proposition. He was tired of Salt Lake City, too, and restless, and he wanted money for his daughter and himself. Instead of considering the offers of Redpath and Barnum, why should not Ann Eliza allow him to represent her? He would leave journalism and become her full-time lecture manager. They would both acquire fame and fortune in a freer and friendlier world.

Ann Eliza listened to the proposition carefully. Why not, indeed? Major Pond was an ally and a friend and entirely trustworthy. He would help her gain liberty and independence until her divorce and alimony demands were judged. It was the answer to all her problems. Yet she was gripped by uncertainty. She had a story to tell, and obviously the entire nation waited to hear it, yet was she capable of telling it properly? Could she stand more notoriety? Could she be so unladylike? "To parade myself and my troubles before the world seemed such an indelicate thing to do!" she protested to Pond. But then the others of her Gentile backers reminded her of how Brigham had treated her, was even now blackening her name, and how the public platform would give her a place from which to retaliate and to hit out at the hateful system of polygamy. It was this argument, Ann Eliza liked to say afterward, that changed her thinking and made up her mind. "When it was shown me that I might make of myself a power against Mormonism which should be felt," she wrote, "and which should open people's eyes to the enormity of the religious system which was tolerated by the government, I hesitated no longer."

Time and again, later, Ann Eliza insisted that she had not undertaken to exhibit herself for money. When the suffragette *Woman's Journal* of Boston accused her of "trying to make capital" out of being Brigham's plural wife, Ann Eliza replied, "Does any one think that, for the sake of emolument, I

could thus open my heart to the rude gaze of a curious public, bear all the slurs, slights, jeers, and aspersions that are cast at me by malicious Mormon and thoughtless Gentile papers, be made a by-word of, have my name on every vulgar lip? Never. My womanhood revolts at the idea. As a means of support, I would never have undertaken it. When I saw it was a duty, I adopted it without hesitation…"

Possessed by her crusade, Ann Eliza bent to the table of her locked parlor, steel-point pen constantly dipping in the nearby vial of ink, as she wrote and rewrote three lectures. The content of these lectures, according to the faithful *Tribune*, were as follows: "The first containing a personal record, in which the circumstances of her marriage with the Prophet are detailed, and many racy incidents of the royal household given… The second lecture grapples with polygamy, and presents to the hearer a woman's view of 'the divine ordinance'… The third lecture… deals in a very able manner with the political condition of Mormondom…"

While Ann Eliza wrote, Major Pond's pen was also busy. His original intention, after conferences with her other Gentile supporters, was to start her off in Washington, D.C. "Our people decided that if Ann Eliza could tell that story in Washington," wrote Pond, "we would get some attention and legislation. Up to that time we had been able to get little attention and no legislation." But when Pond wrote to cities en route to Washington, he learned that his new client was everywhere in demand. And so he arranged her first big booking in Denver, with Kansas City and Chicago and many smaller cities among the scheduled stops.

All through September and October, Ann Eliza and Major Pond worked at their respective tasks. On November 5, the *Tribune* could not resist leaking word of the impending lecture tour. "We understand that Mrs. Ann Eliza starts out next week on her lecturing tour… The Prophet's heart now yearns towards his lost loved one, and he wishes her to stay in the fold and not tell stories out of school." Possibly because of this leak—she was being "kept under surveillance" by the Danites, she thought—or because she was not yet ready, the escape from Utah was postponed.

Now Major Pond, still privately unsure of his client's forensic talents, decided on a public preview of her autobiographical lecture. He told Ann Eliza that other residents of Walker House were eager to hear details of her story from her own lips. Believing the demand was spontaneous rather than arranged by Major Pond, Ann Eliza consented to appear. An evening performance was scheduled, and the word went out.

On the appointed night, Ann Eliza, clutching her manuscript, entered the brightly illuminated large parlor of Walker House. She expected a handful of Gentile friends on hand to hear her. Instead, the room was filled to capacity. All eyes were upon her. "I stood for a moment gazing in sudden

bewilderment," she said; "the blood rushed to my face, and my first impulse was to run away and hide myself in my room. But the applause which greeted me, the smiling, reassuring faces which were turned towards me, and the sympathy which I read in them all, gave me courage."

Nervously Ann Eliza stood at a lectern before the assembly and read aloud the colorful tale of her life with Brigham Young and his wives. As she recounted her sufferings, she peered across her pages to see the effect. Strong men and their ladies wept silently. It was enough for Ann Eliza. She continued to the end with growing resolution.

Her success was immediate and reflected on all faces. "I was surrounded by my newly made friends, all enthusiastic in their demonstrations of sympathy," she wrote. The *Tribune* was encouraging but critical the following morning. Ann Eliza's lecture was "full of interest and instruction, and… delivered with a woman's flowing elocution sustained with becoming action." However: "Reading from manuscript is a bad fault; we wish her to commit her lectures to memory, and address her audiences, looking them square in the eyes, and not concealing one-half of her form behind a reading desk." But Major Pond had no reservations; he was ecstatic. "The most interesting and thrilling story that anybody ever heard," he crowed. "That speech was telegraphed to the Associated Press, and the next day came telegrams from theatrical managers, showmen, and speculators from all parts of the country." But Pond had her to himself, and now, at last, only one obstacle was left. How to get Ann Eliza out of Utah alive?

Ann Eliza had transmitted her fears to Major Pond, and with so much at stake he half believed them. As ever, Ann Eliza considered her peril real, as possibly it may have been. "I discovered, after my arrangements were made, that my intention [to leave and lecture] had become known to the Mormons, who were threatening me with all sorts of vengeance if I insisted on carrying out my plans."

Only one railroad went eastward out of Utah, and that was the Union Pacific line that had been welded by golden spike with the Central Pacific four years earlier. This railroad was laid well north of Salt Lake City, and the main embarkation point was the city of Ogden. To reach Ogden and her freedom train, Ann Eliza would have to travel from Salt Lake City to Ogden on the local railroad that was owned by Brigham Young. This she would not do.

Secret conferences were held in Ann Eliza's rooms. At last it was decided to mislead Ann Eliza's enemies, and possible pursuers, by purchasing Union Pacific tickets at Ogden for the train departing there November 28. This, it was felt, would divert the Mormons toward Ogden—while Ann Eliza, in a private carriage, would race in the night toward the town of Uintah, in northeast Utah at the mouth of Weber Canyon, a brief Union Pacific stop

below and beyond Ogden.

Once the decision had been made, Ann Eliza confided it to her father in person. Her father wished her Godspeed, but her mother, learning of her plan, wept for what could be no better than a journey into Hell. Having the last of the lecture arrangements to complete, Major Pond could not accompany his charge, so he found a companion to travel with her. This was Mrs. Sarah A. Cooke, a large, intelligent, older woman, who had spent twenty years tutoring Brigham Young's many children and acting in his Salt Lake City Theater, without once receiving salary. After her husband, a policeman, had been killed in the line of duty, Mrs. Cooke lost $2,000 of a city pension to Brigham Young. She promptly left the Church, sued the Prophet, and became President of the Women's National Anti-Polygamy Society. When the trip had been broached to her, she accepted with alacrity. In the past she and Ann Eliza had had the theater and the Lion House in common. Now she and Ann Eliza shared a single desire: to avenge the wrongs committed against them by Brigham Young and aid in the destruction of polygamy.

Plans for the final flight continued to develop in utmost secrecy. Ann Eliza left her sons with her family in South Cottonwood. They could be sent to her later. Her railroad tickets were purchased, as planned, in Ogden. No effort was made to remove her trunk from Walker House. Instead, a friend, Colonel J. H. Wickizer, a Federal officer in Utah, acquired a new trunk and kept it in his quarters. Then gradually, piece by piece, and always concealed, Ann Eliza's personal possessions were carried out of the hotel and conveyed to the new trunk. When the trunk was filled, Colonel Wickizer shipped it to Laramie, Wyoming, "as the baggage of another person." But no amount of caution could ease Ann Eliza's apprehension of danger. "Death, incarceration in a madhouse, and many other terrible things had been threatened," she said.

At last the moment of escape arrived.

"On the evening of the 27th of November, I went with my father, and one or two friends, to the house of Mr. and Mrs. Stratton," Ann Eliza wrote. "We left the hotel by the back door, for the front entrance was closely watched, although it was not expected that I would attempt to leave the city until the next morning. About eleven o'clock we left the Strattons', and started, ostensibly to walk home. A carriage was in waiting at the corner. We got in, called for Mrs. Cooke, who was to be my travelling companion, and were driven rapidly out of the city…

"The night was intensely dark; we could not see our hands before our faces, and, as we plunged on through the night and the darkness, we were a gloomy and apprehensive party. We were not sure how closely we had been watched, or whether we had succeeded in eluding Mormon vigilance. Even then, the Danites, those terrible ministers of Mormon vengeance, might be upon our track, and I could not cast off the feeling that every moment brought

us nearer and nearer to some dreadful death."

The Calvary between Salt Lake City and Uintah was forty miles. The rutted dirt road, past shadowed orchards, opened into the Great Salt Lake Valley, with its fen lands, alkali patches, and broad meadows cooling in the winter night, and its cattle and wild fowl hidden behind the curtain of black.

"Twice during the night we were lost," said Ann Eliza. "The last time, we missed our way and went several miles up a canon, and I felt sure that we were betrayed and that our driver was carrying us to certain destruction. I spoke to him without letting him know my suspicions and told him we were going wrong. He turned about and drove rapidly back, and we reached the mouth of the canon just as the day dawned. Confusion vanished with the darkness, our driver found the right road…"

And suddenly, in the November gray of daybreak the ghost town of Uintah loomed before their eyes. Four years before, with the coming of the Union Pacific, Uintah had burst into boom. Because it was a rail point from which freight was transferred to Salt Lake City, and because it was a molasses-manufacturing center, a hundred businesses—hotels, saloons, dry-goods stores—crowded the main streets. But a year later, with the building of Brigham Young's Utah Central to Ogden, Uintah lost its importance as a terminus and, with that, its prosperity. Now only a handful of dying shops remained to serve the heartier settlers, and beyond these and the railroad depot there was nothing.

But to Ann Eliza, Mrs. Cooke, and Chauncey Webb, weak and exhausted in their dust-caked, bumping carriage, Uintah appeared the fairest paradise. Even as they clattered through town, the Union Pacific's extra-fare hotel train from Ogden, headed for Laramie, Denver, and Omaha, could be heard chugging and puffing into the depot.

As Westinghouse's new air brakes brought the cumbersome iron horse to a halt, Ann Eliza's carriage swung into the rough wooden depot. The stopover was only for a minute, it seemed. Already the bewhiskered conductor, in slouch hat and frock coat, was waving to the engine driver and stoker.

Hastily pecking a kiss at her father, Ann Eliza was out of the carriage. One hand in Mrs. Cooke's hand and the other grasping her handbag, she was hurrying to the train. A white-jacketed Negro porter helped first Ann Eliza and then Mrs. Cooke into the George M. Pullman sleeping car, and in a moment the train began to move.

Ann Eliza and Mrs. Cooke had one of the deluxe sleeping car's ten sections. Everything was a wonder: the velvet upholstered seats, the thick floral carpets, the berths, the washroom, the heating stove, the passing train butcher with his wares. And above all, for Ann Eliza in that early morning, the sight of Uintah receding in the distance.

Ahead lay Wyoming and freedom. Ann Eliza was overwhelmed by a sense

of excitement. But as the train picked up speed, jarring and swaying at twenty-two miles an hour, Ann Eliza's high feeling of exultation shook off, and what remained was "utter loneliness."

She turned to Mrs. Cooke, and when she spoke her voice was weak and helpless. "What shall I do?" she asked.

Mrs. Cooke touched her hand. "Keep up a brave heart, and think of the work before you."

Ann Eliza Young, twenty-seventh wife, lay back on the upholstered seat, closed her eyes, and tried to think of the work before her—and at once she thought of the one who would try to stop that work. And now, suddenly, loneliness was compounded by another emotion—fear.

VII: THE ADULTERESS

"The business of ruining a woman's reputation is, of all others, the meanest and most despicable."

—Denver Mirror, 1874

Perhaps every woman is finally a servant of her past, yet there are some few, like Ann Eliza Young, who make their pasts serve them.

When Ann Eliza succeeded in escaping Utah Territory in 1873, she took with her, not merely as her heritage, but as a commodity tangible as the luggage she carried, twenty-nine years of a life already lived. Any other young woman might have preferred to free herself entirely of so strange and painful a past, to blot out every memory of it, to start anew in fresh faith and marriage. But this Ann Eliza could not, or would not, do. For almost a half century, driven by the demons of duty and money, she paraded publicly, over and over again, every intimate detail of the old existence. For Ann Eliza the past was always as alive as the present and would ever be synonymous with the future.

Since Ann Eliza's precious past was what she had to live on and for—and not merely live with—it became a matter of life and death that this commodity be kept marketable and attractive. There were millions of persons, Ann Eliza soon discovered, whose curiosity was crossed with criticism. Wherever she traveled she evoked doubt as well as sympathy. After initial sensationalism and compassion had run their course, there remained the single original question in most minds. This question was cleverly made the lead blurb in all publicity and advertising literature circulated by Ann Eliza's lecture managers. The blurb read as follows:

"The first question asked by everybody is this: If Mrs. Young is so cultivated and able a woman as to write and deliver lectures that rank with the best, why did she become a Mormon, and marry Brigham Young?

"Answer—She was born and educated in the Mormon Church, and consequently had no choice in the matter. She never knew any other religion until after her marriage with the Mormon Prophet."

Thus the heinous thing—polygamist, harem wife, plural wife, concubine—was explained and absolved. In short, the lurid past was not of this frail woman's making; rather, she was its helpless victim—she had "had no choice in the matter."

But had she or had she not? Forever after, millions of persons would wonder. And, this day on the train leaving Utah and for the rest of her days after, Ann Eliza would wonder too…

The ungainly, high-stacked, wood-burning locomotive carried Ann Eliza and Mrs. Cooke northeast at speeds varying between sixteen and twenty-two

miles an hour. To Ann Eliza the pace seemed death-defying, since her last continental crossing, as a child, had been in a wagon that moved two miles an hour. Time zones were a decade away, and Ann Eliza had to remember that every nine miles eastward her watch lost one minute.

The monotony of the grinding journey across the mountains and the plains was often relieved by a reservation Indian hitching a ride on the rods and by male passengers trying to shoot down buffalo and wild game from the engine tender or the rear platform. There were occasional stops at rude wooden depots, and Ann Eliza and Mrs. Cooke descended, with the other passengers, to stretch and walk, surrounded always by old Indians begging for money and enterprising squaws offering to show their papooses for a quarter of a dollar a peek.

The new routine and marvel of the first day in flight soon absorbed Ann Eliza completely. The glittering hotel train offered a buffet in the passenger cars, but luncheon was served in the new diner, where expensive mirrors reflected inlaid wooden walls and the Turkish carpets sank beneath the foot. The menus were lengthy and included many expensive dishes, but it is likely that Ann Eliza did not indulge herself beyond the cheaper one-dollar lunch.

In the afternoon Ann Eliza was emotionally affected by a small incident. Across the aisle was a young mother, a little boy on her lap, and a beautiful eight-year-old girl beside her. At one brief stop, a male passenger boarded the train. As he entered the car, the eight-year-old girl leaped to her feet and cried, “Oh, my dear papa has come!” In a moment the man was kissing and hugging his daughter and wife and fondling his tiny son. Watching the warm scene, said Ann Eliza, “the tears sprang to my eyes, and I had fairly to hide my face, for my cheeks were moist, and my mouth would quiver, as I thought of the father’s love, of which my children were robbed—of which all children in Utah are robbed—*by* a fiendish system…”

At nightfall, beneath the swaying kerosene lamps, the white-jacketed colored porters busily spread crisp sheets on the sleeping berths, as somewhere someone softly played a small organ. Since both sexes slept in the same Pullman car—a topic of scandal in the East—women were expected to retire fully clothed. That first night Ann Eliza primly reclined in her berth armed with muslin blouse, balmoral skirt—and hatpin.

She did not record the thoughts that flickered through her brain that long, restless night. Possibly her two sons were on her mind. Would they be safe with her mother in South Cottonwood? Possibly she worried about her mother and that heart-rending letter she had sent. Did her mother really mean, “Your death would have been far preferable to the course you are taking”? And her father and brothers—would they be punished by the Prophet for her sensational revolt? And her belongings, in the trunk, sent ahead to Laramie—would the shipment ever reach her? And the dependable Major Pond—would

he reach Laramie in a short time? And the first crucial appearance in Denver, and the one later in Washington, D.C., and the many in between—would she really be able to make them? Would she be regarded as an immoral concubine? Or as a persecuted victim of polygamy and a brave champion of monogamy? And Brigham—was she out of his reach?

Laramie proved to be a small, disorganized frontier town, over seven thousand feet above sea level, surrounded on three sides by soaring peaks. In its chilly, frozen, dirt streets there seemed as many cattle, sheep, and hogs as cowpunchers and merchants. For two days Ann Eliza and Mrs. Cooke remained secluded in their heated hotel suite. Their single joy was that Ann Eliza's trunk had arrived safely.

At last Major Pond arrived safely, too, much to Ann Eliza's relief. With him he brought the issue of the Salt Lake City *Tribune* that had appeared the day after Ann Eliza's flight. It carried one news story of interest to her, headlined: "Gone On a Mission." Ann Eliza read on: "Mrs. Ann Eliza Young left town yesterday to start on her lecturing tour in the East… The lady departed without announcement, as her friends had reason to believe that efforts would be made to prevent her carrying out her design. She has some important secrets to tell out of school, and her husband, the Prophet, with his favorite institution, Polygamy, will suffer rather severely at her hands. Her revelations at this particular time will be of immense service to the cause of progress, as her former position in Mormon society will give weight to her utterances… We predict abundant success for this lady in her new field of labor, and do not hesitate to express our belief that she is deserving of all the kindnesses that may be bestowed upon her."

Now that the success of her escape was public, Ann Eliza realized that she had crossed the last boundary of compromise. Her survival depended on her sincerity and talent. Her arrival in Laramie was not long secret. Before she could proceed to Denver, she and Major Pond were besieged by requests for a lecture. Because money and rehearsal were both needed, Major Pond prevailed upon Ann Eliza to try one of her lectures in Laramie. She consented to appear. At once Major Pond rented a classroom of the Wymong Institute, printed and distributed tickets at $1.50 each, and soon the advance sales mounted to $600.

The evening of December 3, 1873, was freezing, and the snow fell steadily. The largest room of the Institute was filled with 400 people, a cheerful and noisy crowd, who waited with eager anticipation as Ann Eliza walked purposefully toward the lectern.

A reporter from the Laramie *Independent* observed her closely and listened carefully.

"Mrs. Young was modestly attired, and her bearing as she approached the stand, was dignified, but unconcerned. Her face is attractive rather than

handsome, and betokens both culture and earnestness. In commencing her story—for it seemed as such—she remarked that a nineteenth wife in the nineteenth century was an anomaly peculiar to American institutions. From the first word that she uttered until the last, the interest of the audience seemed riveted by her earnest, pleading narrative of the wrongs that had been inflicted upon her by Mormonism. There was a frankness in her manner and utterance that won the entire sympathy and assent of her hearers, while her revelation seemed like the opening up of a strange world."

The spell that Ann Eliza wove over her Laramie audience was broken only by the gales of laughter that swept the room when she related incidents of Brigham's parsimony and anecdotes concerned with Amelia's dominance over him.

Like the audience, the Laramie *Independent* reporter was entirely won over by Ann Eliza. In concluding his review of the lecture the reporter wrote: "We say God speed, noble woman! And may the fruits of your labor be made manifest by the downfall of the remaining 'relic of barbarism.'"

In Salt Lake City the following morning, both Brigham and Amelia, as well as the Reverend Stratton, General Maxwell, Judge Hagan, Judge McKean, and the assorted Webbs, read in the *Tribune* of Ann Eliza's success. A dispatch from Laramie informed them that she had been received by "a large and appreciative audience" and predicted that her lecture "is destined to produce an immense sensation throughout the country."

The reception gave Ann Eliza support when she needed it the most. "I felt fresh courage," she admitted after the lecture in Laramie.

Meanwhile every hamlet between Laramie and Denver was telegraphing Major Pond for an engagement with his client. After a conference with Ann Eliza, the amateur manager informed Cheyenne and Fort Russell that she would stop over in both places for one-night stands. The train trip to Cheyenne was only forty miles. Like Laramie, the town of Cheyenne had developed as a byproduct of the Union Pacific and had been in existence only six years. Ann Eliza delivered her Thursday night lecture before "a large circle" gathered in Cheyenne's Presbyterian Church, and the *Daily Leader* found the content of her talk "racy" and her delivery "a woman's flowing elocution, sustained with becoming direction." Cheyenne was followed by a short stay in Fort Russell, and on December 6 Ann Eliza, Mrs. Cooke, Pond, and his daughter arrived in Denver, Colorado, and checked into the Inter-Ocean Hotel.

Denver, perched a mile above sea level in the Rocky Mountains and within sight of snow-capped Pikes Peak, was the capital city of Colorado Territory. Founded by a trapper and his Sioux wife sixteen years before, it had grown into a metropolis through persistent rumors of gold strikes. In 1870 the population of the city was 4,759, and 1,500 buildings had been erected. Now,

three years later, the city was bursting at the seams, and in this blustery preholiday season, the gambling casinos and saloons busied themselves with commerce and crime, and the dudes and squatters and miners in the streets were raucous and alcoholic. The *Daily Register* of rival Central City took its usual dim view of Denver and of Ann Eliza's chances for a success in that rum hole: "We doubt whether her story will excite any public interest, since it appears that she has but little talent, but depends upon the novelty of her theme for success. The Denver papers boast that she preferred to make her debut in that city. In that she makes a serious blunder, for there is no place in the country where the people are so indifferent to lectures and the legitimate drama as in Denver."

If Ann Eliza quaked at the snide warning, Major Pond remained unperturbed and efficient. His advance telegrams had alerted the community and the newspapers, and they clamored to meet Brigham's fugitive wife. Major Pond invited Denver editors and reporters, as well as those of nearby towns, to a press conference in Ann Eliza's suite. The conference was staged the afternoon of her arrival.

Ann Eliza had clad herself in the plainest of dresses, without frills or accessories. Over the dress she wore a simple, lightweight, long, dark purple coat. Although obviously tense, she replied to questions coolly and sincerely. At all times her manner remained restrained and ladylike.

The press conference had begun with a display of Ann Eliza's credentials, letters of a high moral tone praising her personality and motives. The recommendations were signed by the Reverend C. C. Stratton, Judge James B. McKean, C. P. Lyford, pastor of the Methodist Church in Provo, J. H. Wickizer, the Federal officer in Utah who had successfully shipped Ann Eliza's trunk to Laramie, and D. J. Pierce, pastor of the Baptist Church in Laramie. The business of credentials was undoubtedly an early stratagem suggested by Major Pond, who wished to overcome any conservative's suspicion that his client was a lady of easy virtue.

Anxious not to give away the best of her lectures, Ann Eliza was brief in her replies to questions. She spoke fleetingly of her early years in Mormonism, her adventures in the Endowment House, her marriage to Brigham, and her postponed divorce case. She touched on her escape from Salt Lake City and mentioned that she had personally selected Denver for her first major effort, despite the fact that some friends tried to "dissuade" her. She promised two lectures for Denver. She was still in the process of writing a third one on "the political condition of Mormondom." She hoped to deliver her first lecture by early the following week. Major Pond, she said, was still hunting for an available hall. After that and one more lecture, she expected to travel to engagements in Kansas, Missouri, and New York, with her ultimate goal Washington, D.C., where she intended to "tell the people there some

things about Mormonism that were never before dreamed of by them."

The press conference proved a huge success. The Denver newspaper build-up of Ann Eliza began. Major Pond succeeded in renting the largest hall in the city, that of the New Baptist Church, for appearances on December 9 and 10. For Ann Eliza the weekend was a difficult one. She tried not to think of the ordeal ahead. She polished her two set lectures, "My Life in Bondage" and "Polygamy As It Is," continued creating the new one, "The Mormon Religion," and wrote letters to her family. Constantly the fear of a fiasco hung over her head. She had been advised not to open her tour in Denver. For the first time, her lectures would be covered nationally. A half-filled hall, an unruly audience, a poorly delivered talk, would be broadcast far and wide and might bring an end to her tour before it had fairly begun.

Soon enough it was December 9. All through the gloomy day, the snow came down and the temperature dropped. By nightfall the ground was frozen and the city swept by a terrifying white blizzard. From the window of her hotel bedroom, Ann Eliza observed the unkind elements and fell into deep depression. "I was discouraged and despondent," she wrote, "for I had come to consider this first evening as prophetic of my future career, and I saw failure before me. I did not know whether I should be able to reach the church, the storm was so furious; but as a faithful few had promised to be in attendance, let what might happen, I determined to make the trial."

With heavy heart she sat in her whalebone corset and petticoat while Mrs. Cooke worked her brown hair into a magnificent coronet braid. Then, before the mirror, and with her companion's help, she got into a new black silk dress. Except for a point-lace barbe at the neck she wore no further ornamentation. She pulled a white kid glove on each hand, found her coat, her manuscript, and she was ready.

The lecture had been advertised for eight in the evening. An hour earlier Major Pond, resplendent in black broadcloth frock coat, vest, and trousers, wearing a gold, key-winder watch at his vest, arrived at her door to escort her. Perhaps until that moment he had regarded her as an unfashionable drab, but now he was held speechless by her beauty. Even a quarter of a century later, in his memoirs, he would not forget the moment. "I remember the night she was to appear in Denver," he wrote. "I went to the Inter-Ocean Hotel where she boarded, to escort her to the church, and did not know her. She was dressed up, and—well, she looked very pretty."

In the carriage to the New Baptist Church, as the snowstorm swirled about them, Ann Eliza gave voice to her deepest fear. No one would come to see and hear her. What if no one came? Suddenly they were at the church. "My forebodings had been utterly useless," Ann Eliza wrote. "Long before the church doors were opened a large crowd was in waiting, and before the hour for beginning the lecture arrived, the house was full, and hundreds had gone

away unable to gain admission."

Ann Eliza had misjudged the power of her appeal. In an aseptic age, when curiosity about matters sexual was forbidden, Ann Eliza offered an irresistible bait. She could discuss human passion with piety, because the subjects of her lectures were polygamy and religion. For cloistered and genteel women and their churchgoing husbands, in this rough city, Ann Eliza's daring entertainment was permissible and an event. And even for some of the more uncouth citizenry, sated though they were by gambling halls and hell-raising, the inside story of harem life in America was an attraction not to be missed.

While the standing-room-only attendance thrilled Ann Eliza, it opened Major Pond's eyes. For the first time, he fully realized that he had an attraction that might appeal to both sexes equally and to people of every walk of life and degree of wealth and education. Once inside the church and planted in the wings, Ann Eliza peeked out at the large hall. Immediately she suffered an attack of stage fright. Her original fear had been that no one would come; now she feared that too many had come. "As I looked into the crowded house, before I came on the platform, my courage almost left me," she wrote. "But while hesitating, the thought of the poor women whose cause I was to plead, came vividly into my mind, and with firm step, and beating heart, I walked onto the platform, and stood facing my first audience, who greeted me with tumultuous applause."

Ann Eliza had been accompanied onto the platform by the Reverend Winfield Scott, Denver's foremost Methodist minister and by a second clergyman who was also one of her sponsors. Ann Eliza and the second clergyman took chairs in the rear while the Reverend Scott moved to the speaker's desk. His introduction was brief. In a moment Ann Eliza advanced and supplanted him. The overcrowded hall—even the aisles were now filled with customers in folding chairs—welcomed her with a roar. She bowed, and when she looked up the noise subsided. Her lips trembled nervously. And then—strangely—at once she was composed.

"The nineteenth wife of a man living in the nineteenth century, in a heathen country, would perhaps be considered a curiosity," she began in a rich, clear voice that reached distinctly to the farthest corner of the hall. "But in civilized Christian America, where the abomination of polygamy is permitted by the government, she is, of course, no curiosity. In presenting myself as a lecturer for the ear of the public, I feel that an explanation, if not an apology, is demanded. So, at the outset, let me say I cannot lay any claim to the grace of rhetoric or the art of elocution. Nevertheless, I have something to say, and I hope to say it so as to be understood.

"I was born and have been trained in the Mormon Church, therefore I ask your attention to the substance of my communication, rather than to the manner in which that shall be communicated. I cannot expect to gain your

applause. I may not move your feelings; but I do desire to secure your attention, and, if possible, to aid in determining your convictions. My life is but a duplicate of many others, the index to hundreds equally or more dreary."

After defining Mormon words that would be unfamiliar to the Denver audience, words such as *Gentile* and *apostate*, Ann Eliza plunged into autobiography. She spoke of her parents, their early conversion to the Church, their acceptance of polygamy, her own birth and migration to Salt Lake City, her adventures in the Endowment House at sixteen, her career as an actress, and her unhappy marriage to James L. Dee.

Then she went on to tell how Brigham Young and George O. Cannon assisted her in divorcing Dee. "She is specific on this point," the *Rocky Mountain News* reported, "because the Mormons say she was never divorced from her first husband."

At last she had reached the point of Brigham's courtship. Collectively, it seemed, the audience leaned forward. "Some time after coming away from church, I met Brigham Young, who said he thought he had better go home with me, and I replied I would be pleased to have him do so. He went with me, and while on the way, asked me if I had received any offers of marriage since I left my husband, and I told him I had, but that I had not accepted. He then asked leave to give me a little good advice, and told me never to marry again for love, but to marry some good brother whom I could look up to for counsel. By the way, the only good counsel I ever received from him was to practice the strictest economy."

The last was delivered by Ann Eliza with exaggerated disgust, and her listeners responded with a wave of appreciative laughter. Ann Eliza continued the tale of Brigham's suit, of her refusal to go into polygamy, of her eldest brother's telegraph-pole troubles, and of her final decision to save her brother by marrying Brigham. In great detail she described the wedding ceremony in the Endowment House, her life at the Lion House, her miseries at The Farmhouse, her adventures in the boardinghouse, and her escape to the Walker House.

Ann Eliza was nearing the end of her lecture. Haltingly she told of her mother's last effort to restrain her from leaving Brigham and Utah. "The most affecting incident connected with her escape from the great Apostle of Mormonism," stated the Denver *Tribune*, "was a letter from her mother, who seems to have shared her hardships and privations resignedly for the sake of her Mormon religion. This letter besought her, as only a mother can, to come back to those who should be dearer to her than all on earth. In closing, the mother said she had rather her daughter were dead and in her grave than an apostate.

"Mrs. Young read this part of her lecture with suppressed feeling, it being only with great effort that she subdued her emotions."

With difficulty, Ann Eliza said, she had ignored the letter. She had cast her lot with her courageous Gentile friends—the Reverend Stratton, Judge McKean, Major Pond, and others—who protected her in the Walker House and helped to spirit her out of angry Utah.

"A few years ago," she said, "the Gentiles would not have dared to aid me. At last the door of legal redress opened. Once I should have shuddered at the thought of entering; but at length my mind was made up. I would endure everything rather than live on in my life of humiliation. I ventured, and have won, at last, liberty; and I trust, through the guidance of that fatherly hand, which has not since failed me, to be led into paths of future usefulness and peace.

"In this picture of my bondage and hopes, and fears, you have a faithful delineation of the condition of many of the women of Utah. By nature they are just as pure and true as any woman in the world. They endure more self-denial for their religion than any other can. Let the charge of insincerity be the last one brought against them. It is the misfortune and fate of tyrants of every grade to inflict wrongs, which work their own remedy. You have seen it in my personal history. The things which I suffered opened my eyes to the hollowness of Brigham Young's pretensions to sanctity of character, and unveiled the system of which *he* was the head and *I* one of the many victims.

"Under these accumulated sources of distrust and dissatisfaction, I literally forsook father and mother and home and friends. To be sure, I have found them again, and others true and tried have been to me all that I could have hoped and won. Do you wonder, then, at my gratitude for a discipline *however harsh* that has resulted in my freedom? If so, it is because you have never tasted the bitter dregs of polygamy and the contrasted sweets of liberty."

She stood very still, her story concluded, awaiting the verdict. She was confident. "I have never spoken more effectively in my life than I did that night," she said later. "It seemed to myself almost as though I was inspired. I forgot myself in my subject." As she waited, the vast audience, so long absorbed in the bizarre tale, remained momentarily hushed.

Suddenly the applause broke out, caught up, swelled. Scores of men and women rushed to the stage to congratulate Ann Eliza, take her hand, touch her. Hundreds more, observed the representative of the *Rocky Mountain News,* "reluctantly turned away, as though they felt the story had been half told."

Ann Eliza's success was total. Unanimously the press praised her. Even the critical Central City *Daily Register,* which had predicted disaster, printed a choleric congratulation. "We confess our surprise at hearing of the popular ovation tendered her—it came to us in the nature of a revelation. But we fear it was the bits of domestic scandal with which her lecture was seasoned that

excited the craving of the Denverites. At any rate, we are glad to note any improvement that may happen to metropolitan society." Only the Virginia City *Chronicle,* from afar, disapproved. Perhaps Ann Eliza would draw "in the Eastern Cities" as she had in Denver, but she was still no less a concubine. "Would any other woman who had been a resident of any other bagnio of the country have the effrontery to tell the world of her own degradation and crime? There is a great waste of sympathy for her by those who should know better; but they forget, in the woman, her crimes."

News of Ann Eliza's success spread throughout the land. Requests for engagements poured in to Major Pond. Even that giant of the lecture field, James Redpath, was heard from once more. He wanted Ann Eliza for his Star Lecture Course, a series that already included such celebrated names as Frederick Douglass, Edward Everett Hale, Susan B. Anthony, Josh Billings, and Theodore Tilton. Redpath's preliminary bait was a possible $10,000 for fifty appearances. Major Pond replied that he would consider it.

Meanwhile, all fears dissipated, Ann Eliza prepared to deliver her second lecture, this one less autobiographical and instead devoted to the general practice of polygamy. The publicity accorded the first lecture had made the second one another sellout.

This lecture, while less personal than the first, was considerably more lurid. Ann Eliza traced the growth of the plural-wife doctrine from Joseph Smith's revelation in Nauvoo during 1843 to Brigham's public announcement of it in Salt Lake City during 1852.

"The Mormons hesitatingly acknowledged that the thing called love among the Gentiles cannot exist under their system," said Ann Eliza, "but claim that they have instead a purer feeling of respect, support and friendship. The question is often asked, what do the women say about it? Generally they say nothing except that it is a hard faith for women. They feel that their first duty is submission, and their second silence. The Mormons say the most of the opposition or trouble comes from the American or Irish wives, though there are very few of the latter. Their social system is organized selfishness. At the present time, polygamy is principally fed by the foreign element. As soon as an emigrant train arrives, the wife-hunters swarm around it like so many vultures. The new arrivals may be unable to understand a word of English, but love can speak through the eyes, it is said, and these wife-seekers very soon make themselves understood. The inducements of a comfortable house and home to a new arrival, without a friend or acquaintance in the country, is irresistible, and the poor dupe from a foreign shore becomes wife three, seven or ten in haste, to repent at leisure."

As she progressed, Ann Eliza's exposé became more heated. She told of polygamists stealing Gentile wives and justifying their expanding harems by pointing to the Bible. "It was claimed that all the patriarchs were polygamists,

and that Adam, in a previous existence, had many wives, of whom Eve was one. More than this, it was held that the pure and exalted love of Jesus for Martha and Mary, her sister, as well as Mary Magdalene, showed that they were his plural wives, and that the marriage at Cana of Galilee was one of his bridal feasts."

As the audience sat aghast, Ann Eliza pressed her advantage with more sensational disclosures. She described the unhappiness in Brigham's households, the unseemly behavior of his sons in polygamy, the fate of Brigham's first wife and the inevitability of an Amelia, the crudity of Heber C. Kimball in calling his wives "cows," the degradation of a polygamist who had married six of his nieces, the widespread loneliness of children in Utah. To the subject of children, Ann Eliza added an anecdote. She had heard of a sweet girl child, in a plural home, who one night asked her mother, "Mama, I do wish God had made men enough so that every little girl could have a father to love her."

And Eliza apologized for being forced to omit certain spicy details of harem life. "I have but imperfectly told the story of polygamy; much that might be said, under some circumstances, cannot be told in a promiscuous assembly." No outsider, she assured her audience, neither reporters nor congressmen, would ever know plural marriage as it was really practiced. Ann Eliza had reached the final moments of her address. Vigorously she struck at the complacent ones.

"Legislators, in doubt or in dread, give polygamy the benefit of their doubts or their fears, and again the question is laid over for a season. Meanwhile anxious eyes are longing, and burdened hearts are breaking, and children are swarming forth with the blight upon their birth, and a brand upon their brow, and all the country blesses itself, saying, 'We have done no wrong. Let no one object, the women are free to accept this relation or reject it—to live in it or leave it.' They are not free. Their souls are fettered."

She paused, allowing her words to strike home, and then concluded:

"I had encouragement to break away from my faith and its connections, which few others can have. Nevertheless the step required great fortitude, and was attended with many misgivings. How would I be received into society? Would ladies, especially, recognize one who had been a polygamous wife? How far would the authorities of the Church dare to pursue me? That they would try to blacken my character I well knew. Would they go farther and attempt personal violence? How would my old friends and all my blood relations regard my step and me?

"These and many similar questions tortured and perplexed me, before my resolution was made. Imagine, then, the hopelessness of one less favorably situated. I cannot close without expressing my gratitude to the public for the considerate courtesy and kindness with which I have been met since taking

this step. And I should not fully express my feelings did I fail to acknowledge the constancy of the Heavenly Father's care in guarding my untried steps. Let me assure one and all that, whatever fortune the future may have in store for me, I shall never regret the step which brought me freedom of action and conscience."

As on the first night, the address was met with a vast embrace of applause, and once again men and women of every class crowded about Ann Eliza to murmur their appreciation and to grip her hand.

Two days later, on Saturday, December 13, 1873, Ann Eliza, the conquest of Denver behind her, once more climbed aboard a Union Pacific train and headed toward the waiting Midwest. Major Pond had booked her heavily in Kansas, and the immediate destination was Topeka.

Major Pond had rented Costa's Opera House in Topeka and scheduled Ann Eliza's first lecture for Monday, December 15, and her second for the night after. Reserved seats were seventy-five cents each and general admission fifty cents. The Topeka press had publicized her success in Denver, and the *Commonwealth* had hailed her arrival with the headline: "Brigham Young's Recalcitrant Ex-rib." Despite Pond's preparations, Ann Eliza, hair still braided and dress still black silk, faced her first half-filled house. As the *State Record* of Topeka reported it: "The insufficient announcement, or the bad condition of the weather, or both, or something or other, prevented the assembling of a large crowd at the opera house Monday night to hear Mrs. Young… Her lecture, however, was listened to with marked attention and interest, and produced a decided sensation."

The following night, for her general lecture on polygamy, the attendance was greater. After this talk she was mobbed, and the best ladies of Topeka literally and "effusively" took her to their bosoms.

After a three-day rest, Ann Eliza proceeded to Lawrence, Kansas. Here the build-up had been more effective. The citizens of Lawrence responded en masse. Liberty Hall was jammed to the rafters the night of the first lecture. A town elder introduced Ann Eliza, and her performance was at its peak. *The Kansas Tribune* was dazzled by her. "She holds her audience spell-bound," the newspaper said. "There has seldom been a greater treat than was enjoyed by the audience."

Ann Eliza's next stop in Kansas was the city of Leavenworth. The community had been anticipating her arrival for days. Not only were the city's two major newspapers filled with her, but billboards and posters bearing lithographed portraits of her and legends reading "The Rebel of the Harem" were everywhere. Ann Eliza, Mrs. Cooke, and Major Pond arrived in Leavenworth from Lawrence on December 19. As Ann Eliza left the late-afternoon train, she showed fatigue and strain. She told dignitaries and reporters that she was suffering a nervous headache and postponed all

meetings.

Ann Eliza rested in her suite at the Planters House. Later, refreshed, she held a business conference with Major Pond. Dozens of offers from New York publishing firms had come in, and Ann Eliza agreed that she would write a book of her experiences when she felt stronger. Also, she discussed with her manager an invasion of Europe, where interest in the Mormons was high, sometime during 1874, and both agreed to take the idea up at a later date.

After the succession of jolting train berths, the Planters House bed was a luxury. In the morning Ann Eliza awakened fully rested. She informed Pond that her headache was gone, and he notified the press.

A reporter representing the Leavenworth *Daily Times* came hastily to Ann Eliza's hotel reception room. He found her "comely and graceful." Her beauty was not Nordic blonde or Latin brunette, "but of that type which is developed in the atmosphere of mountains." He thought her anything but meek. "We should say from a studied glance of Mrs. Young's countenance, that she is not of the mould that bows gracefully to the yoke of submission.

"Mrs. Young is an agreeable companion in conversation," wrote the reporter, "and quick to note the weakness of any proposition advanced in favor of polygamy. She can readily understand why a man like Mr. Sloan, editor of the Salt Lake *Herald*, who went to Utah with a deep-seated aversion to polygamy, became a convert to the plurality doctrine. Mrs. Young can explain his conversion in two minutes. It takes Mr. Sloan himself two hours. She has lived to some purpose in Utah, and she knows what polygamy is beneath the surface."

During the interview Major Pond appeared. He told the reporter of Ann Eliza's many publishing offers. He discussed the remainder of the lecture tour. "Mrs. Young will probably appear in Washington during the present session of Congress," Pond concluded, "and proceed to give the congressmen some unheard-of information on the vexed question of Mormonism."

Ann Eliza's first lecture was scheduled for the evening of December 22. Major Pond had secured Laing's Hall, which seated 1,000 persons. Leavenworth buzzed with excitement as the time of Ann Eliza's appearance drew near. When, at last, Ann Eliza appeared on the stage, to be introduced by the town's mayor, the largest crowd in Leavenworth history was seated and standing in Laing's Hall.

The lecture was well received. Almost everyone agreed that she possessed enough "spirit" to have been Amelia Folsom's match. During this appearance Ann Eliza seems to have corrected one impression of Brigham that had existed in Kansas. According to the Leavenworth *Commercial*, in a piece reprinted in the Mormon capital: "From the fact that he [Brigham] had so many wives, and he was so fond of having many wives, we supposed he must

be a lecherous, licentious old brute. But this does not seem to be the case. He does not marry wives because he loves them, according to Ann Eliza, but because he is conceited, vain, and fond of showing his power and increasing his importance in this way."

After Ann Eliza's second lecture in Leavenworth, it was predicted by those who heard her that her beauty, shapely figure, sincere elocution, and strange narrative would make her the nation's foremost lecturer and the leading influence in forming public opinion against polygamy. Thus encouraged, Ann Eliza went into St. Louis, Missouri, for two major appearances.

St. Louis was an old city, with a population somewhere between four and five hundred thousand people. The busiest section was located along three miles of the Mississippi River. Not only was it a water and rail terminal, but St. Louis was an important outpost of culture. Those of its natives who attended lectures, and they were many, preferred intellectuals to freaks. Ann Eliza had been made well aware of this, and she was apprehensive.

When she walked out on the stage of the St. Louis Mercantile Library, on Monday night of December 29, her earlier misgivings seemed justified. The auditorium was only one-third filled. But, as she would later be told, her listeners were "some of the most respectable people of the city," and this satisfied her. The reviews that she saw the following morning made her even more cheerful. The critics praised her performance without dissent, and one credited her persuasiveness to "her training for the Salt Lake stage, under the commands of Brigham."

The fine reception in St. Louis was marred only by an altercation between Major Pond and a local booking agent named G. A. Wallace. Because Wallace had earlier represented himself to be an agent of experience and integrity, Pond had contracted with him to set the two dates in St. Louis as well as several others in Missouri. However, after the appearance at Mercantile Hall, Pond learned that Wallace had not paid his proper share of expenses toward the advertising, the auditorium, and Ann Eliza's hotel. Enraged, Pond decided that Wallace was a "fraud," tore up their contract, refused to honor Wallace's bookings in Missouri, and arranged to take Ann Eliza into Iowa and Illinois instead.

Wallace did not take this treatment lying down. In an open letter to the Chicago *Evening Journal,* Wallace wrote: "I must give a most unqualified denial to the statement that I did not pay all the bills connected with Mrs. Young's lectures in St. Louis, amounting to close on $300, although she failed to draw half the rent of the hall in which she gave her old and hackneyed Mormon story to the public. I left St. Louis under the agreement with Pond to raise money, which the temporary absence of a friend from town has prevented me from doing for the present. In a day or two the party referred to will return with ample funds, and although I have been grossly misled by

Pond as to the success which has attended these lectures hitherto, I will discharge the last cent for which I became responsible… Mrs. Ann Eliza's success in the lecture field may be inferred from the fact that in St. Louis, a city of 450,000 inhabitants, *one hundred and sixty-five* persons manifested sufficient interest to attend her *two* lectures… at the 'small charge' of fifty cents each! 'Tis true! ! notwithstanding the lectures were advertised at a cost of $200! !"

Informed of the disagreement between Wallace and Pond, the Salt Lake City *Tribune,* as ever, rushed to Ann Eliza's defense: "Mr. Wallace now avenges himself by publishing lying statements in the newspapers about Mrs. Young. He says she does not draw good audiences. This we know to be false…"

Despite the vengeful Wallace, Ann Eliza had much to be grateful for and to celebrate on New Year's Eve, 1873. Behind her lay the most harrowing and exciting year of her life to date, yet she had survived it and gained celebrity and temporary independence. Still, as she toasted the advent of 1874 with Mrs. Cooke, Major Pond, and some newly made friends, she would not allow herself to relax. For she knew that the year ahead, with all its tensions and promise, would present her with her greatest challenge. Her task was twofold: to prove herself before sophisticated eastern audiences and the highly demanding James Redpath, and to convince legislators in Washington that what she had to tell them was the whole truth and that the practices she was telling the truth about deserved strong legal condemnation. She knew also that her immediate future was not fully in her own hands. She was uneasy about the sudden and surprising silence in Salt Lake City, so much like the eerie stillness before a battle. The deserted enemy in the Bee Hive House and the Lion House was not one to take the blows of a disloyal wife and apostate without retaliation. Fear of Brigham's vengeance, through Mormons scattered about the Midwest and East, was constantly on her mind. Nevertheless, she was confident of her growing reputation and strength.

With the New Year, Mrs. Cooke, who had been ailing, said her farewells and bravely returned to Salt Lake City. She had been replaced as chaperone by Major Pond's young daughter. Ann Eliza's crucial eastern test, before Redpath and Boston's Brahmins, would not take place until mid-February. She had still seven weeks to improve herself as a lecturer and build herself as an attraction. For these weeks, to replace G. A. Wallace's canceled itinerary, Major Pond had booked her on a busy but relatively easy swing through Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. At once this last tryout tour got under way.

In Burlington, Iowa, Ann Eliza learned that, for the first time, she would have competition from another lady lecturer who had just arrived. The other lecturer was the notorious Victoria Claflin Woodhull. At thirty-six, the handsome and much emancipated Mrs. Woodhull had behind her an electric

and eccentric career. By mesmerizing Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, the richest man in the United States, she had been able to open Wall Street's first female brokerage house in 1870. She had published a sixteen-page scandal sheet known as *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly.* In Washington, D.C., she had appeared before the House Judiciary Committee to plead for women's rights. She had brazenly made public the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's seduction of Elizabeth Richards, wife of Beecher's best friend, Theodore Tilton. She had run for President of the United States, although she had no vote, but Ulysses S. Grant had been reelected, nevertheless. She had been arrested, at the instigation of Anthony Comstock, for writing obscene material on Beecher and had served time in New York City's Ludlow Street Jail. Now, with her hussy of a younger sister, Tennessee Celeste Claflin, working as her advance booking agent and publicist, Victoria was lecturing through the Midwest on free love.

At the time of Ann Eliza's appearance in Iowa, Victoria Woodhull was creating her usual sensation. Recently, in Chicago, she had said, "I never had sexual intercourse with any man of whom I am ashamed to stand side by side before the world with the act." Now, in Iowa, she was saying, "Nothing is so destructive as that intercourse carried on habitually without regard to perfect and reciprocal consummation. I need not explain to any woman the effects of unconsummated intercourse. But every man needs to have it thundered in his ears… that the other party demands a return for all that he receives, demands that he shall not be enriched at her expense, demands that he shall not, either from ignorance or selfish desire, carry her impulse forward only to cast it backward…" Iowa was shocked, and the *Herald* of Dubuque agreed with its readers that Victoria "has created more stir, more sensation in our city than any man who ever trod the dust of its streets."

In Burlington, Iowa, Victoria Woodhull crossed paths with Ann Eliza for the first time. Victoria went to Ann Eliza's hotel, in an effort to meet the twenty-seventh wife and enlist her in the free-love movement. Ann Eliza, who knew of Victoria's scandalous reputation, was appalled. She did not wish to be tainted by Victoria's brand of emancipation. Ann Eliza refused to admit the visitor to her rooms, and Victoria left the hotel in a rage. That evening, still somewhat unnerved, Ann Eliza gave her talk. The Burlington *Hawkeye* approved: "She has a pleasant face, clear complexion, and at times an embarrassed manner, which does not at all detract from the personal attractions of the lecturer… She tells a plain story of her life in Brigham's household. It has no pretensions to literary excellence; but the language is clear, well chosen, and forcible."

The next day Ann Eliza was glad to put distance between herself and Victoria Woodhull. Illinois proved a delight. She was pleased that Peoria said she "is in no sense of the word an adventuress." The audience in Springfield

proved “flattering.” In Quincy she “completely dissipated all prejudice that may have existed against her.” The day after her performance in Clinton, the Methodist pastor wrote: “Our people today are talking of the lecture.”

Perhaps Bloomington, Illinois, was the most gratifying of all. Generally Major Pond arranged his bookings through Methodist clergymen and shared the proceeds with them. In Bloomington, however, Pond had made his contract with B. P. Marsh, lecture- committee chairman, and W. W. Wallace, corresponding secretary, both representing the local Young Men’s Christian Association. In return for its sponsorship, the Y.M.C.A. took two thirds of Ann Eliza’s receipts.

One of the largest crowds in many years gathered to hear her in Bloomington’s Burley Hall. The *Daily Pantagraph* extolled her “modest dignity and graceful bearing,” and the *Daily Leader* adored this “earnest woman” who “modestly yet truthfully” revealed the inside story of harem life with Brigham.

After the first lecture, Ann Eliza, Major Pond, and Pond’s daughter rested the night in Bloomington’s Hotel Ashley, and the following day they were entertained by Marsh and Wallace of the Y.M.C.A. Following the second lecture, that evening, Ann Eliza and the Ponds boarded a train and went directly to their respective sleeping berths in order to be completely refreshed for their next engagement in Jacksonville, Illinois. Quickly enough Bloomington became merely one more geographic blur in Ann Eliza’s memory —but soon she would have reason to remember every face in the town and to relive every moment of her stay there and of her departure.

Leaving Jacksonville on January 16, 1874—”She deserves encouragement from every Christian minister,” the local pastor wrote his colleagues—the trio worked their weary way northward to teeming, chilly Chicago. In the Windy City, with Ann Eliza on his arm, Major Pond paid a call to the branch office of Redpath’s Lyceum Bureau. The man in charge of this office was a conservative Australian named George H. Hathaway, one of James Redpath’s most successful booking agents. Apparently Pond and Hathaway appreciated each other’s gifts at once, for later they would become partners and the foremost powers in the lecture field.

Hathaway, impressed by the amateur Pond’s recent grosses and Ann Eliza’s obvious box-office appeal, advised his visitors to join in with Redpath. Pond then explained that Redpath had already agreed to handle Ann Eliza’s appearances in Boston. Pond added that if Redpath could deliver $10,000 worth of further engagements to them they would certainly ally themselves with him. Undoubtedly Hathaway pointed out to them that until his employer, Redpath, had organized American lecturing six years before, performers had been poorly treated and badly paid. Foreign visitors like Charles Dickens—who was estimated to have made $228,000 on his second American tour—

were the only exceptions. Ralph Waldo Emerson, on his own, had often received as little as five dollars for an appearance; under Redpath's guidance he was soon receiving $500 an appearance. Furthermore, it was Redpath who had been able to guarantee Henry Ward Beecher $1,000 for a single night's talk. Major Pond and Ann Eliza needed no more persuading. Once the terms were agreed upon, they said, they would entrust their futures to Redpath's bureau.

In Evanston, Illinois, Major Pond had another bit of personal business to transact. Not wishing to keep his daughter on the road like a gypsy, he enrolled her in an Evanston private school. But now he needed another chaperon and companion for Ann Eliza. In Evanston he found her. She was a thirty-four-year-old spinster, Ruth Storey, who had been the closest friend of his wife Ann Frances, whom he had lost three years earlier. For a nominal fee, Miss Storey agreed to accompany Ann Eliza and Pond on the tour, to share Ann Eliza's bed and to keep her company.

Ann Eliza's critical engagement to appear in Boston's famed Tremont Temple was for the evening of February 19, 1874, still more than three weeks off. Before that time she had a series of small bookings to fulfill in Wisconsin and again in Illinois. Promptly, from Chicago, Ann Eliza invaded Wisconsin. In Madison strong legislators wept unashamedly. In Janesville the audience punctuated the lecture with cheers. In Oshkosh a full house "went to scoff but remained to pray." In Milwaukee there was standing room only.

In Appleton, Wisconsin, although pleased that the city enjoyed her "unstudied eloquence and frankness," Ann Eliza had her mind on other things. Ever since she had left Illinois, there seemed something—some mystery—vaguely forbidding in the air. In Appleton, on February 4, 1874, at the desk of her suite in the Waverly House, she wrote a hasty note to an influential publisher friend named Culver. It read in part:

"Dear Sir: While stopping in Madison I was often questioned as to how I became acquainted with Mr. Pond and how he came to be managing my business and after I left there I received an anonymous letter speaking of these things. While in Milwaukee the same was repeated. You will *greatly* oblige me if you will put the enclosed article in your paper, which answers these questions…

"I would be glad to have a copy of your paper containing this article. Receive my sincere thanks for all your kindness to me. I am most respectfully yours, Ann Eliza Young."

Having finished the troubled letter, Ann Eliza added a postscript in the margin of the letterhead: "You will oblige me by making any corrections needed in this as I am unaccustomed to writing for publication."

The exact questions asked of Ann Eliza in Wisconsin about her connection with Major Pond she chose not to reveal. Their general nature may be

suspected. The article sent to Mr. Culver probably explained that Major Pond, after fighting Confederate guerrillas in Kansas and Missouri during the Civil War, had resumed his profession of journalism in Wisconsin, moved to Salt Lake City to take a job on the *Tribune,* boarded with Ann Eliza after his wife's death, joined the group that urged her to divorce Brigham Young, and undertaken to manage her first lecture tour and display her before congressmen in Washington, D.C. Undoubtedly, Ann Eliza felt, this kind of explanation would underline the fact that her relationship with Pond was purely professional.

Satisfied, Ann Eliza, accompanied by Pond and Miss Storey, returned to her last Midwest engagements in Illinois. Night after night, before masses of intent faces, she read her one-hour-and-a-half autobiographical lecture and her lecture exposing polygamy. With each appearance, as the all-important Boston date drew closer, her confidence was shaken by mounting anxiety.

The final Midwest performance she gave was in Freeport, Illinois. Once again she had a resounding success. The Freeport *Journal* said that "all were delighted with her lecture" and added, "Mrs. Young goes from here to Boston, where we bespeak for her a cordial reception; and may her efforts result to create a strong public sentiment against a giant evil in our land, which is winked at by the powers that be, and misunderstood by all not immediately cognizant of its terrible effects!"

At last Ann Eliza was on a train to the East. Each major lecture behind her —Denver and St. Louis especially—had been a test, but Boston held the future's key. If she failed there in any way, she would be swiftly relegated to mere oddity, nine-day wonder, to be heard no more. But if she succeeded, she might become one of Redpath's influential and high-paid standards, like Julia Ward Howe and Anna H. Leonowens, and then her voice would become an authoritative one in the nation, and her financial security would no longer be dependent on Brigham's still contested alimony.

Boston, and its more than a quarter of a million inhabitants, in that winter of 1874, was still recovering from the catastrophic fire of thirteen months before. The blaze had cost the city 767 buildings, most of them commercial, and an over-all loss of seventy- five million dollars. But there was still money enough and interest enough in Boston to maintain the bay city's position as America's leading cultural center. The day of Ann Eliza's arrival in the city, Wednesday, February 18, 1874, A. E. Sothern was starring in *Dundreary* at the Boston Theatre, little Minnie Madden was the hit of *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room* at the Howard Athenaeum, and a concert was being promised for the benefit of Signor G. Operti at the Boston Music Hall. The stage of Tremont Temple was occupied by fifty-five-year-old Charles Kingsley, the English novelist who was advertised as "Canon of Westminster, and Chaplain to the Queen of England." Under Redpath's management, Kingsley, author of

Westward Ho!, was giving readings (without his usual stammer) before moderate-sized audiences who paid fifty cents a seat. With the arrival of Ann Eliza, he would be removed to Horticultural Hall to lecture on "The First Discoverers of America." Among the coming attractions being advertised were six lectures on "Nervous Force," to be offered by Professor C. E. Brown-Sequard, M.D., at the Lowell Institute, and readings of an original story by Wilkie Collins, author of *The Moonstone,* at the Parker Memorial. But the most prominent front-page advertisement, under "Entertainments," that had been displayed all week, read as follows:

> REDPATH'S LYCEUM
> MRS. ANN ELIZA YOUNG,
> OF SALT LAKE CITY,
> WILL TELL
> "A WOMAN'S STORY OF POLYGAMY,"
> IN TREMONT TEMPLE,
> THURSDAY EVENING, FEB. I9TH.
> MRS. YOUNG was educated in the Mormon faith, and at the age of 24 was married to
> BRIGHAM YOUNG
> as his 19th wife. Her experience of the horrors of the system soon led her to seek a divorce and to begin a crusade for the abolition of the iniquity. She comes *East* with the most *cordial endorsement of all the leading Christian clergy* and prominent Gentiles of Utah. Her success in the West as a lecturer has been equalled only by the temperance movement. The churches everywhere support her with enthusiasm.
>
> Tickets 50¢ with reserved seats. For sale on Tuesday at Russell's Music Store, 126 Tremont Street.

Ann Eliza and Major Pond, with Miss Storey trailing along, checked into Boston's Parker House shortly after the Wednesday noon hour. Having unpacked and eaten, Ann Eliza and Pond went to visit James Redpath at his Lyceum Bureau, located at 36 Bromfield Street.

The forty-one-year-old Redpath, short and weighing 150 pounds, energetic, amusing, colorful, his face adorned with mustache and side whiskers, had made a legend of John Brown, had introduced the interview technique to American journalism, and had made of lecturing a big-time business. Fearless (he had once ignored a Senate subpoena), constantly in motion (he had never taken a holiday), perpetually defending the underdog (he had championed old John Brown, the cause of Haiti, and was now interested in the victims of polygamy and the freedom of Ireland), Redpath

held almost a monopoly on celebrated platform artists. While he handled many successful men for his 10 per cent fee—Henry Thoreau, John B. Gough, Henry Ward Beecher, Mark Twain among them—he prided himself on his ability to sell women to the public. One of his female lecturers, Anna E. Dickinson, the vigorous young suffragette, made $40,000 a year. Even Brigham Young regretted that he had been unable to hear Miss Dickinson when she had visited Salt Lake City during the first year of Ann Eliza's marriage. "I wanted to hear Anna Dickinson lecture here, very much," Brigham remarked to a visitor. "I would gladly have given a dollar to hear her scold. I understand she excels in that…"

While Ann Eliza did not have Miss Dickinson's frank and fiery personality, Redpath sensed in her something else quite as valuable. Ann Eliza looked like a lady and acted like a lady, and this retiring and withdrawn personality contrasted nicely with the basic sexual interest her story held. From a suffering, genteel, and chaste young woman, any talk about promiscuity under polygamy would be acceptable. For her part, Ann Eliza was enchanted by Redpath. "He had never heard me speak," she wrote, "but he was so bitter an enemy to this horrible system, as indeed he is to every wrong, that he was willing to take me for my work's sake." Major Pond, of course, knew Redpath well. As a youngster of eighteen, he had been with Redpath in Kansas and had regarded him "almost as a god." He still held the older man as a deity. Whatever Redpath had in mind for Ann Eliza was agreeable to Pond.

Redpath felt that the entire East would be watching the results of Ann Eliza's Boston lecture. If he was to undertake her career and put her over solidly, he must have a capacity house at Tremont Temple on the evening of February 19. To insure her success, Redpath's billboards displayed not only Ann Eliza's lovely face but also the faces of her rival wives in the Lion House. Redpath had arranged for an immediate series of feature interviews to be given the leading Boston newspapers. And finally, he had decided to present Ann Eliza personally to her audience on Thursday evening.

Exhilarated after the talk with Redpath, Ann Eliza returned to her suite in the Parker House to dress and collect her thoughts. In the afternoon she was joined by Miss Storey and Major Pond. Then the members of the press were admitted one by one.

The first interview of the afternoon was given to a reporter from the Boston *Daily Globe.* The reporter seemed surprised to find himself in the presence of three persons instead of one. He soon sorted them out and later described them: "The central figure, of course, was Mrs. Young, and naturally she ought to be considered first. If all the persons who will read this article are acquainted with the appearance of Miss Agnes Ethel, the actress, who played at the Globe Theatre about a year ago, a description of Mrs. Young's

physique would be unnecessary. The resemblance is really almost wonderful. There is the same slight, upright, well-made figure, narrow but comely face and almost sorrowful expression. The voice, too, distinct, but somewhat tremulous, is wonderfully like Miss Ethel's. Mr. Pond is a large, well-developed man, and apparently a thorough Westerner, accent and all. Miss Storey is of medium size, rather pretty, and is decidedly ladylike in her appearance."

The *Daily Globe* reporter took the chair offered him and began to question Ann Eliza. But, for some reason, she did not feel talkative. "Mr. Pond, my business agent, no doubt can tell you all that you wish to know." The reporter brooded that "to converse with Mr. Pond was not the object of the visit," but, nevertheless, he questioned Pond about the tour. Soon enough Ann Eliza began to interrupt her manager and amend his statements.

Pleased, the reporter turned back to Ann Eliza and questioned her directly about the contents of her three lectures.

"Do these lectures form a regular course, or are they independent of each other?"

"They are entirely independent," said Ann Eliza. "Each one has its own ground to cover."

"How have your lectures been received?"

"Oh, the feeling in places I have visited has been very good—very good indeed," said Ann Eliza quickly and emphatically. "I have been treated with the greatest consideration by newspapermen, ministers, and all." She pointed to the table in the room, heaped high with correspondence. "There is a pile of letters from some of the best people in the West, as strong as they can write. We have had the very finest audiences everywhere, and I have letters of commendation from influential men in all quarters."

"Mrs. Young, do you travel alone?"

"No, I travel with Mr. Pond, my business agent, and Miss Storey of Chicago. When I started on my tour, I was accompanied by an elderly person, Mrs. Cooke of Utah, but her health compelled her to give up travelling."

"Have you seen any Boston people yet?"

"No, no one in particular; we only arrived this noon—"

Major Pond swiftly took over. "Mrs. Young has been resting a little since then," he told the interviewer.

"How long do you propose to remain in Boston?" the reporter asked Pond.

"Well, I don't know. We have made no definite arrangements but, probably, Mr. Redpath will lay out a route for us in this vicinity. We left a good paying business in the West to come here. Mrs. Young had more engagements than she could attend to, at $100 a night. At every one of the twenty-two lectures the people made money, with one exception, and then it was a frightfully stormy night. Mrs. Young drew audiences in the West where

not a lecturer in the country could, except John B. Gough, and you know he's different from all others. You find him so here in Boston, I suppose. I hope, sir, you'll hear Mrs. Young, tomorrow, for you'd be very much interested. We considered this matter thoroughly before leaving the West, but Boston seems to be the centre for a lecturer to start from. We were drawing large audiences in the West, but we thought, and Mr. Redpath wrote us, that we'd better come to Boston, so as to get before the people as much as possible. Mrs. Young wants to go to Washington backed by the people."

"Go to Washington?" the reporter echoed with surprise.

"Yes, sir," said Pond. "Mrs. Young hasn't started out on this tour to make money. Her object is to help the poor suffering women of Utah, and therefore she is going to Washington to see what can be done."

"Yes," added Ann Eliza, revived again, "one of the congressmen in Utah, General Shanks, told me that by telling my story in Washington, in my own way, I would do more good than all the statesmen in Utah."

"But have you any law framed in your mind," inquired the reporter, "or are you just waiting to see what course events will take, so as to be guided by them?"

"Well," said Ann Eliza, taking over completely, "of course I have my own ideas and beliefs upon the subject, but it would not be right for me to pretend to dictate to those great men what laws they shall make. I shall simply tell my story and let them apply such remedies in the way of law as they see fit."

There was more of the same, and then the *Daily Globe* man was off to write his story. Through the long winter afternoon, the parade of interviewers continued, and Ann Eliza obliged one and all. It was early evening by the time the last journalist, representing the Boston *Post,* made his appearance.

The exchange began crisply with the visitor asking Ann Eliza her present opinion of Mormonism. "I think it is one of the greatest humbugs of the age," snapped Ann Eliza, borrowing one of P. T. Barnum's favorite words.

After inquiring about Ann Eliza's beginnings, the reporter wanted to know if most of the Saints were sincere in their religious beliefs. "I know that some of them are sincere as people can be in any belief," said Ann Eliza. "I know that my own parents entertained honest convictions concerning it, and I also know that Mrs. Stenhouse, who is a very intelligent lady, believed it fully till she was satisfied, as I myself have been, that it was utterly false. We all believed it as truth from heaven till, by the most terrible and bitter suffering, we found out our mistake."

"Is the dissatisfaction getting to be quite general?" the reporter wanted to know.

"I think I may say that there are now more than a hundred women in Salt Lake City who are dissatisfied just as I was for four years before I left."

Ann Eliza discussed her escape in detail, telling how she caught the Union

Pacific train “two minutes” before its departure. The reporter interrupted to inquire why Brigham had permitted her to keep Gentile boarders. “He will do anything for money,” said Ann Eliza, “or to have his wives get it for him.”

The reporter was curious about Brigham’s money. How could he afford to keep a harem? What was he worth? “He has $7,000,000 in the Bank of England,” said Ann Eliza, “and his possessions in Utah embrace perhaps one third of all the property there. His monthly income is estimated at not less than $40,000 per month, and is probably much more. He owns the most beautiful farms, all kinds of factories, mills and manufacturing buildings, and those who operate them are obliged to pay him one tenth of all they produce… In addition to this, he, or his sons, own all the railroads there with the exception of the Union Pacific. The Southern, Central and Northern steam railroads, and the street railway in the city are all owned by them, and it is impossible to pass over any of them with the idea of escape without being detected.”

The *Post* man asked the number of Brigham’s wives. “He has only nineteen for time,” said Ann Eliza, “but a great number of women are sealed to him for eternity.”

Would it not be difficult, the reporter wondered, to keep track of so many wives with whom he had no relationship other than spiritual? “It would seem so to you, perhaps,” replied Ann Eliza, “but he supposes that the Lord will keep track of them and that they will all be reserved to await his coming into his kingdom.”

After both parties had agreed that *The Book of Mormon* made fairly dull reading, the reporter returned to the question of the harem. How could Brigham dole out love to so many women and yet keep them all happy? “There are not a dozen exceptions in all Utah to the rule that every Mormon husband has his favorite wife,” said Ann Eliza, “and you may perhaps imagine what unhappy feelings such a state of affairs may create.”

The reporter inquired about Amelia Folsom. Ann Eliza described her as tall, shapely, perhaps too pale.

What about cosmetics? “Does she use arsenic?”

“I never heard that she did. I know nothing about it myself.”

“And her nose?” asked the reporter.

“Turns up slightly. Her mouth is small, and her compressed lips seem to suggest the strong will which she possesses, and which Brigham Young seems inclined to fear. She is not to be thwarted, and Mr. Young knows it.”

“In what style does she dress?”

“She has not good taste in dress. She has everything to gratify her wishes in that respect, but lacks the skill to adopt those styles and colors which would make her more beautiful in appearance.”

The following day, the Thursday of the first lecture, all of the interviews

burst into print, all prominently displayed on front pages, and none of them less than a full column in length. If publicity were enough, Ann Eliza's success seemed assured.

But the Thursday excitement was lost on Ann Eliza. She was, by then, hovering between shock and hysteria. For, late the evening before, her composure and confidence, and perhaps all her good prospects, were shattered by a "shameful article"—as she called it —published first in Chicago and then telegraphed throughout the country.

She had worried about the silence of her enemies while in Missouri and had had a premonition of trouble while in Wisconsin, and now, at last, the blow had fallen. The article consisted of a scandalous expose of Ann Eliza's love life. Published in the Chicago *Times*, date-lined "Bloomington, III., Feb. 17," it was written by a "Special Correspondent."

The "shameful article" began harmlessly, with a resumé of Ann Eliza's platform conquests, a description of her "superb loveliness" and her "well-developed and voluptuous form," and a review of her lecture in Bloomington.

"But this, kind reader, is a digression," the article went on. "Let us come to the most absorbing interest of our story. Like other lady lecturers, No. 19 travels in company with an agent, who looks after her engagements and sees that no Young Men's Christian Association beats her out of her hard earnings. She had the misfortune to have a gay and dashing fellow for her business manager. His name is Pond. He came from Wisconsin, and they call him Major. A handsome man he is, arrayed in the height of fashion and conversing with a fluent and oily tongue. It was noticed soon after their arrival at the Ashley House, by the different guests and house servants, that there existed the greatest familiarity between the fair lecturess and her handsome agent. In the evening, after the lecture, the audience dispersed to their homes and the lecture party to their hotel—one party imagining it an awful thing to be a Mormon, and the other thinking over the receipts of the evening and engagements ahead. In this manner the good hotel Ashley was reached, and soon the city was hushed in the quietness of the hour. As time passed on, the gentlemanly night clerk wondered why the major did not come to the office for the key of his room, as it was locked and the key hanging upon the rack in the office. In the morning the chambermaid and other parties connected with the hotel discovered that the gallant major had remained with the lovely ex-Mormon during the night, no doubt dreaming sweet dreams of the financial success that the tale of Mormon life would surely bring to those engaged in the good cause of exposing the shams and wickedness of the entire system.

"This frail relic of Mormonism and her amorous agent remained in the city until the next evening, when they boarded the Jacksonville train, where she had an engagement to tell her little story.

"And now comes the gist of the narrative. The conductor of the train,

M.L., an old and reliable servant of the company, saw the parties (the fair Mormon and her Don Juan) enter the sleeping car together, but did not know that they had secured a sleeping berth together, which they had done, other parties seeing them retire together; and behind the curtains their licentious conduct was clearly proved, from the conversation that was carried on in a loud whisper, being in substance a kind of curtain lecture. The remarks of Ann Eliza ran thus: 'Major, you must be more cautious; you are getting too prudent [sic], and if you continue to do so we will soon be exposed and our bright but short career be gone forever. Therefore, darling, you must be more on your guard, or our doom is sealed.'

"Alas! fair, but frail Ann Eliza, you, too, should have been more cautious, more prudent, and, above all, more virtuous. Remember you are yet the lawful wife of the great main-spring of Mormonism. No legal tribunal has ever yet dissolved the bonds that unite you together as man and wife. You should consider, as you have renounced the Mormon faith and practices, that the brightest jewel in Gentile life is virtue, and those who practice it shall verily have their reward.'

"The Young Men's Christian Association of this city acted in good faith, supposing her pure, chaste, and a bright star from Mormondom. They took her in, giving her one-third of the gross receipts, and a good Christian endorsement, which was all right for the active young men of the association had not the means or the time to find out the contrary. The startling announcement that the fair Ann Eliza was a creature of frailty was not made known until her departure from the city, and coming as it does from persons whose veracity and truth cannot be questioned, and who have no other motive than to present to the public the plain and unvarnished truth of this woman's relations with her handsome and amorous agent, Maj. Pond, these facts are written with a view of informing the public of the true character of the woman, and to afford protection to all Christian communities from imposition by the wonderful stories and immoral conduct of the frail but beautiful Ann Eliza No. 19."

After reading the scurrilous piece, Ann Eliza sat stunned. Her first words, when she could find words, to Major Pond were "Brigham Young's money is at the bottom of this."

Both Ann Eliza and Pond knew that the article could destroy them. "I was overwhelmed by it," Ann Eliza wrote, "for I feared it would put an end to the career of usefulness which I had marked out for myself." The audiences of 1874, as Ann Eliza had learned, would accept and applaud a woman who spoke of sex in the guise of a religious problem. But their puritanical heritage was too recent to allow them to accept and applaud a woman who, married to one man, made carnal love to another in hotel rooms and sleeping berths. True—as Story, editor of the Chicago *Times*, persisted— or untrue and

libelous—as Ann Eliza and Major Pond loudly proclaimed—the exposé could not go unanswered. It had to be put down and branded false, or Ann Eliza was finished as a big-time lecturer.

All during that terrible night and the following day, Ann Eliza, Pond, and Redpath conferred. There was no time, they realized, to investigate the sources of the story and to discredit the persons involved and refute their allegations. In fact, not until two days later would Pond be sufficiently organized to counterattack. For the moment the question was Boston. How widely had the story been circulated in the city? Apparently it was known, but not by all. Redpath was willing to gamble. Instead of postponing the test while they defended Ann Eliza's virtue, he decided that the lecture must go on at Tremont Temple. Redpath would still stand beside Ann Eliza as her sponsor. If Boston could be won over this night, it would give Ann Eliza a label of respectability, as well as sympathy and support, to aid her fight in the weeks that would follow. Miserable though she was, Ann Eliza agreed it was best to appear.

As the afternoon waned, there was more news from the Midwest, and again it was bad. Another Chicago *Times* story, date-lined Milwaukee, reported that Victoria Woodhull, during a speech on free love, had remarked that she "knew of the truth of the scandal." Afterward Mrs. Woodhull told the press that she had been in Bloomington at the same time Ann Eliza was lecturing there and had been aware of the affair between Ann Eliza and Pond. She had no desire to criticize her fellow lecturer for "preaching one thing and practicing another." As a matter of fact, she heartily approved of the affair. Women should be encouraged to make love with whom they pleased, when they pleased, and where they pleased. Ann Eliza had done no wrong. After all, it was free love, was it not?

Victoria Woodhull's confirmation of the scandal damaged Ann Eliza doubly. But what infuriated her the most was that Mrs. Woodhull had lied about being in Bloomington at the time Ann Eliza and Pond were there.

The chances for a Boston success seemed bleaker than ever. Writing about the crisis two years later, Ann Eliza could still shudder. "The scandal was published on the eve of my first appearance in Boston, and I was greatly distressed lest it should injure my prospects in that city. I wanted my visit there to be a success, as I felt that if I made a favorable impression, I should hold the key to all New England. And it was to the staunch and loyal New Englanders that I looked for assistance in my labors. My new and good friends had taught me to consider Reform and New England synonymous terms… But after the attack by the Chicago paper, I regarded failure as certain."

As the sun set, Ann Eliza, in a state of near collapse, awaited her hour of judgment. At last she pulled herself together, groomed and dressed herself

with Miss Storey's help, and rode with Pond and Redpath to Tremont Temple. Her outlook was worse than it had been in Denver. She approached the auditorium with the optimism of an aristocrat en route in the tumbrel. And, as in Denver, a surprise awaited her.

Tremont Temple was filled to the rafters with an audience of persons. The best families had turned out. No face, in the vast sea of faces, betrayed antagonism. These Boston faces were sympathetic or neutral as they all waited for the star of the evening.

At a few minutes after seven-thirty the hawkers suddenly ceased peddling their pamphlets up and down the aisles. James Redpath led Ann Eliza on stage, seated her, then himself moved to the footlights. He welcomed the huge throng and explained, "I have stepped out of my usual course to introduce Mrs. Young, as I want to be a good Christian as well as a good lyceum manager." He went on to extoll Ann Eliza's virtue, courage, and ability. He hit at the Federal government for delaying action against polygamy. He demanded that Congress pass legislation to this effect. "The Republican Party had, years ago, pledged itself to this work, as well as to the abolition of slavery, the twin relics of barbarism," he said. "I appeal to the ladies of Boston to urge them on and not cease until your petitions are granted."

Now, at last, he introduced Ann Eliza Young.

She rose demurely and walked to the speaker's desk. The applause was protracted, and she bowed in silent humility. A woman who was in the audience wrote to the first Mrs. Webb in Utah: "When Mrs. Young rose and came forward on the platform—the desk had hidden her from my sight while sitting—the moment I saw her face and heard her voice, my heart went out to her in earnest sympathy, not on account of her peculiar domestic relations, but because of the sincerity and purity, the artlessness and womanly dignity that shone in all her demeanor."

Apparently this member of the audience was not alone. All the persons present, it seemed, hung on each of Ann Eliza's words. For the twenty-third time she was telling her story in public. But this night it was not stale to her, for her career and entire future depended on the effect of her narrative.

She was recounting her married life with Brigham. "Subsequently my mother became sick and he wanted to send her away," said Ann Eliza, "to which I would not consent, nor let my mother know of his feelings, for she would not have remained if she had known them. I was neglected, insulted and humiliated in every way imaginable, and I saw that it was impossible for me to ever interest my husband. You may ask why should he take wives in this way to neglect them. I can only say that his vanity was the incentive to the act. He wished to show that though he was so old he could marry young women. During two years I did not go out half a dozen times. The Utah Relief Society gave a ball one evening, and with it came Brigham, with another

wife, to invite me to go. I was mortified that he could not take me once without another, but I said not a word. My purpose was always to make people believe I didn't care. I went to two of these delectable entertainments, one the repetition of the other. During this treatment I began to see the falsehood, misrepresentation and meanness of which he was guilty, and my mind was full of doubt and fear as to the truth of the faith, and I began to lose my ordinary good health."

When Ann Eliza brought her tale to the point of her defection, telling the audience that she had decided "that if I must support myself, I would at last be free," the 2,000 persons in Tremont Temple broke into thrilled applause.

After one hour and twenty minutes, Ann Eliza's ordeal was ended. She stood poised for the verdict.

The applause was thunder. People surged toward the stage. In the wings Pond was ecstatic. "She made a great success," he crowed in a letter to a friend. "Hundreds came forward to congratulate her." The lady in the audience who had reported the event to the first Mrs. Webb in Utah also wrote: "After the lecture I thought to go upon the platform and speak with Mrs. Young, but the crowd prevented, and she presently left."

Ann Eliza left, walking on air. "After the lecture was over, I felt that my hopes were realized, and that New England was open to me." If true, she owed it all to James Redpath, she admitted. His introduction—"so kind, so reassuring, so generous, and above all, so just"—had "fairly inspired" her to speak well.

The next day the five leading Boston newspapers made the verdict official. As one, they enjoyed her, commiserated with her, and praised her moving sincerity. Redpath agreed with Pond that their performer had made "a great success." Yet, to exploit that success properly, her name would have to be cleared. For, as Redpath had guessed, the scandal had not been fully circulated before her opening night. Now it would be, and, while the triumph in Boston would give her a residue of sympathy and support, she must answer charges against her before she could go further.

In the week after the first Boston lecture, the Chicago *Times* calumny was reprinted in many large cities in the East. It was also given widespread space in the West, especially in Salt Lake City, where it was published on February 24, five days after the Boston lecture. The pro-Mormon *Herald* reprinted it in its entirety under a bank of lurid headlines. The first headline read: "Amorous Ann Eliza." The second: "The Nineteenth Vulgar Fraction of Brigham Young's Wife." The third: "Shockingly Improper Incidents of Her Later Career." The fourth: "Flying From Polygamous Utah, She Revels in a "Pond" of Illicit Love."

The anti-Mormon *Tribune*, still true to Ann Eliza, ran a slightly edited version. However, the first headline admitted: "First Class Sensation." The

second: “Ann Eliza and the Major Come to Grief.” The third: “Highly Colored Report of Naughty Doings.” The fourth: “What Is the World Coming To?” In its comments the *Tribune* played it safe. Perhaps the story was not true. “We caution the reader to receive it with several grains of allowance. It has been known that the pair have been dogged on their tracks ever since they started on their lecture tour. The object of this was to start up some scandal, and thus bring their labors to an end. Here is evidence of how the work has been done.” Yet it might all be true. And so the *Tribune* added: “In a day or two we shall hear further of this matter. If any guilty connection has been indulged in by this pair, we hope some time to come across the amorous major, and take a hand in ornamenting his slick sides with a coat of tar and feathers. The lady we more pity than condemn. She is the victim of a false system, brought up in a school of lust and libertinage, and such a finale seems a fitting corollary to such teaching.”

From Salt Lake City the Reverend C. C. Stratton wrote Ann Eliza and Pond that he and other Gentile friends were doing their best to keep public opinion favorable, but much depended on what information would be supplied by Bloomington. “Do not imagine that any of us are unduly excited or that we intend yielding to this new phase of the opposition,” wrote the reverend. “The Mormon papers are maddened by the efforts made to secure congressional action, and will scruple to nothing that promises to slur Judge McKean, myself, or any other whom they recognize as antagonists.”

In Boston both Ann Eliza and Pond had already pitted themselves against the Chicago *Times.* They knew, of course, that the *Times* thrived on yellow journalism. During the Beecher-Tilton adultery case, the *Times* devoted a column to depicting Beecher as “a monster of debauchery and lust.” As to Tilton, the Chicago newspaper had asked Victoria Woodhull about the cuckolded editor. “I ought to know Mr. Tilton,” Mrs. Woodhull was quoted as saying. “He was my devoted lover for more than half a year… so enamored and infatuated with each other were we that for three months we were hardly out of each other’s sight day or night. He slept every night for three months in my arms.” Mrs. Woodhull and Mr. Tilton, it might be added, had been married but not to each other.

Both Ann Eliza and Major Pond began a barrage of letters to offset the damage done by the *Times.* On the one hand, they tried to ferret out the facts about the scandal’s origins. On the other, they tried to enlist friendly newspapers to defend their reputations.

On February 21, 1874, Major Pond dashed off a one-page note to his publishing friend Culver. “Dear Sir: You have probably seen that cruel dirty attack on Mrs. Young & myself in the Chicago Times of the 19th. I cannot imagine its object unless its source comes through Mormon influence. We have no money to work with or I would prosecute the paper for libel at once.

Will you use your paper to defend the character of as pure a woman as the Lord ever made. I have long been looking for a stab in the back from Brigham, but had no idea as to its source. All the evidence you wish as to Mrs. Young's character & mine you can have. I am in haste. Yours, J. B. Pond."

While Ann Eliza left most of her defense to Major Pond, she took pen in hand on March 3 to plead her chastity to Mrs. Culver, the publisher's wife:

"Dear Mrs. Culver: Of course you have seen that dreadful article in the 'Chicago Times.' I have been sick in bed ever since I saw it. It was a terrible shock to me because so undeserved and so unexpected. Mr. Pond has written and sent articles to your husband, but has heard nothing from him in return. I feel so anxious about it. Oh! Mrs. Culver *do not* believe me guilty of this *terrible* thing, be charitable and in a short time my innocence *will* be proven. We have the *most positive proof* of its falsity. I am *so tired* of surmounting difficulties. I am discouraged trying to do so any longer. It seems the whole world are my enemies, ready and glad to believe me capable of any ingratitude, hypocrisy or crime. You are a woman and have a woman's feelings and *must* understand how I suffer under this dreadful accusation.

"Letters are coming from Bloomington by every mail, almost, telling us the Young Men's Christian Association are investigating it thoroughly and can find no truth in it. They have found the man who wrote the article who says he will retract and get it into the 'Times' if possible. Marsh says he will publish our vindication far and wide. We have taken steps toward a suit for libel against the 'Times.' I see Vic Woodhull has come out against me in Milwaukee with the most barefaced falsehood ever spoken. She says she was in Bloomington when I was there and knew all about the affair, but did not like to throw the first stone and denounced me for a hypocrite for preaching one thing and practicing another. She said she believed in those things herself. I think I told you of her attempt to have an interview with me in Burlington, Iowa, and my refusing her request. She takes her revenge in this way. She was in Nebraska when I was in Bloomington. I have always had a lady companion who has not been away from me for five minutes since I left Salt Lake and has always occupied the same bed. At Evanston III. near Chicago I got a lady to travel with me she is indeed a perfect lady and everybody likes her very much. She is about 34 years of age is what is called an old maid. She is very good as a nurse and assists me in every way, her name is Miss Ruth Storey and old and intimate friend of Mrs. Pond's when alive. Mr. Pond's daughter remained at Evanston to go to school. I have had splendid success in Boston, and found many very warm friends, nobody here believes *that story.* I send you a little paper published by Mr. Redpath in my behalf, containing extracts from the Boston papers. Please let me hear from you if it is only a half dozen lines. Trusting your confidence in me remains unshaken I am most sincerely

Your Friend. Mrs. Ann Eliza Young."

In the almost two weeks between Major Pond's letter to Mr. Culver and Ann Eliza's letter to Mrs. Culver a thorough investigation of the scandal had taken place. The investigation, at Pond's suggestion, was conducted by Dr. B. P. Marsh, chairman of the lecture committee of the Bloomington Y.M.C.A., and W. W. Wallace, corresponding secretary of the same Y.M.C.A. While these two played Dupin in Bloomington, Ann Eliza hired one Leonard Swett, probably an attorney, to look into the matter in Chicago. In Kansas, C. N. Shaw, editor of the Leavenworth *Commercial,* and in Utah the staff of the Salt Lake City *Tribune* determined, on their own, to ferret out what facts they could find.

Before proceeding with their investigation, all parties demanded a plain and candid statement from Ann Eliza and Major Pond as to their actual activities in Bloomington and on the train to Jacksonville. In a series of open letters to the press, Pond, as spokesman for Ann Eliza and himself, gave their version of the two nights in question.

According to Pond, he had attended the first Bloomington lecture with an old Salt Lake City friend, Colonel J. H. Wickizer, who had assisted Ann Eliza in her escape the year before and who was now on a vacation in Illinois. After the lecture, around ten- thirty in the evening, the two men deposited Ann Eliza and Pond's daughter in the lady lecturer's suite of the Ashley House. After that, the two men retired to the privacy of Pond's separate quarters next door—it was "cold" in the room that night, Pond remembered—to converse until midnight. Then Pond and the colonel parted and went to their respective beds. The statement in the Chicago *Time*s that he had not used his bedroom key that night, said Pond, was a fabrication.

The following evening in Bloomington, after the lecture, when the traveling trio boarded the Jacksonville train, Ann Eliza was "very sick," and Pond "had to assist her almost constantly" until their destination was reached. This last, presumably, was an explanation for any visits that Pond may have made to his client's berth during the night. In short, he had performed as Florence Nightingale and not as Casanova. Furthermore, said Pond, he had seen no train conductor and no train conductor had seen him until their arrival in Jacksonville at eight o'clock in the morning. The conductor had been sound asleep in his stateroom the entire journey, and the only employee of the train that Pond met was the colored porter who made up his berth.

The Salt Lake City *Tribune* obtained confirmation of Pond's story fiom Colonel Wickizer and was satisfied. The Leavenworth *Commercial* received similar confirmation from an anonymous friend in Bloomington, who had done some sleuthing for the editor and had found the charges of misconduct against Ann Eliza "unwarranted and unfounded." The Bloomington friend added: "There is a small organization of Mormons in the neighborhood and it

is the belief of this entire community that the correspondence of the Times was instigated by the resident saints."

Meanwhile Dr. Marsh and Wallace, of the Bloomington Y.M.C.A., had moved with brisk efficiency. The foul libel had its origins, they learned, in a Bloomington barbershop several days after Ann Eliza and Pond had left the city. A customer remarked, in admiration of Ann Eliza's beauty, "that Pond had a good thing of it." The Jacksonville train conductor, who was present in the shop, nodded agreement and said, "The porter says Pond slept with her on the train, and I believe it." The choice rumor spread, reached the ears of a reporter on the Bloomington *Pantagraph*—"a local Democratic journal"—who wrote it as a news feature and sent it to Editor Story of the Chicago *Times.* Story was delighted to have the feature, being an admirer of Brigham Young and having earlier praised the Prophet as "a man of iron inflexibility, much forecast, extraordinary ability and a vast fund of good humor."

With this knowledge of the scandal's origins, Dr. Marsh confronted the traitorous Bloomington reporter. "He denied it," Dr. Marsh wrote Pond, "but I crowded and scared him and made him own up and give me all the information he had to base his statements upon. The article was written on mere bar-room talk, as I understand it, but the basis of it all comes from the train conductor." When tracked down, the train conductor and the Ashley House clerk both vigorously denied responsibility for starting the odious rumor.

In Chicago, Ann Eliza's researcher, Leonard Swett, supplied her with his findings. She wrote: "George C. Bates, a Mormon lawyer, of low repute, and twenty thousand dollars, induced the Paper to publish the article which originated in the foul imagination of Bates."

While the guilty parties, if such existed, were never prosecuted, the investigation had served its purpose. Dr. Marsh and Wallace prepared, for Redpath, an ecstatic recommendation of Ann Eliza's talents and virtues and then added a vindicating statement:

"As reports tending to injure the character of Mrs. Young have been extensively circulated by designing parties, and as said reports purport to be based upon Mrs. Young's conduct while in this city, we have investigated said reports and find them to be false, and our association has no reason to detract in any wise from the above recommendation."

Most of the nation's press was satisfied. The Leavenworth *Commercial* announced that the scandalous statements "in regard to Major Pond and Mrs. Ann Eliza Young are sensational and false in every particular." The Denver *Mirror* wrote: "The recent 'exposé,' so-called, in the Chicago Times, of alleged disreputable conduct on the part of 'Ann Eliza,' the escaped Mormon (who recently lectured in this place), was a most reprehensible, cruel act, and a burning disgrace to any journal pretending to respectability. Its eagerness to

pander to a depraved public taste prompted the Times to devote its circulation to the crushing of a defenceless woman. Now it appears that there was no foundation for the story…" The Salt Lake City *Tribune,* convinced that the scandal had been proved "lying and libelous," attacked the editor who had printed it: "Storey [sic] of the Times has been publicly whipped upon the streets as a woman defamer. He is naturally a cynical, atrabilarious, cold-blooded creature; shunned by his race, and repaying this aversion with intense hate."

Major Pond had promised to sue both the Chicago *Times* and the Salt Lake City *Herald* for libel unless they retracted. There is no evidence that either sheet retracted, and there is no evidence that Major Pond ever sued them.

In Salt Lake City the fact that the *Herald* had not apologized seemed to trouble no one except Chauncey Webb, Ann Eliza's father. On March 16, 1874, he addressed a letter to the proprietors of the *Herald:*

"Gentlemen: You have published several libellous and false statements concerning my daughter, Mrs. Ann Eliza Young, very damaging to her character, and extremely painful to the feelings of her friends. The falsity of the statements made in your columns has been since abundantly proved, but you have not had the fairness and the manliness to retract. I write to require at your hands a full and fair retraction of the false allegations made, that the denial may be as widely disseminated as the scandal, and that my daughter's name may be vindicated from the vile aspersions cast upon it.

"I ask the favor of an early reply to this. I am, gentlemen, Very obediently yours, C. G. Webb."

Chauncey Webb waited four weeks without receiving a reply, and then angrily he sent a copy of this letter to the more friendly *Tribune.* "Feeling that I am in duty and honor bound to protect my child," he wrote, "and vindicate her character from the vile expressions of unprincipled caluminators and low-bred serfs who have bartered away their manhood for less than a mess of pottage, I ask the insertion of this letter in the *Tribune*, together with my request of the *Herald*, which I herewith furnish so that your readers may at once comprehend the feelings of a father when his child is attacked by worse than assassins. Shame on the cowardly villain who stabs a lady in the back!"

Whether Chauncey's correspondence had been inspired by a surge of paternal affection for his distant daughter or whether it had been encouraged by a plea from the daughter herself was a fact never established. Suffice it that the paternal outburst moved Ann Eliza deeply and moved the *Herald* and Chicago *Times* not at all.

Despite the unqualified endorsement of Ann Eliza given by the Bloomington Y.M.C.A., and the acceptance of it by the press, James Redpath refused to be complacent. When making subsequent bookings, he learned that lecture committees in various towns had received anonymous copies of the

Salt Lake City *Herald* with “the original scandal article, heavily marked.” The inference seemed plain to Redpath. He publicly accused Brigham Young of this guerrilla warfare. Because some timid committees were affected by resurrection of this old literature, Redpath saw fit to publish a broadside entitled *The Mormon Slander.* It consisted largely of letters written by Dr. Marsh and Wallace and their gradual clearance of Ann Eliza’s name.

However, for the most, the flurry of scandal had little effect on Ann Eliza’s subsequent career. After the success of her first lecture in Boston, Redpath and Pond called on every newspaper, frankly displaying the Chicago *Times* article to those editors who had not seen it. The editors, said Ann Eliza, were chivalrous. “They say such a report emanating from such a source,” wrote Pond, “is only a compliment to Mrs. Young in New England.”

With growing confidence, Redpath arranged for Ann Eliza to deliver her second and third lectures respectively in Tremont Temple and in Horticultural Hall. The second lecture, on polygamy in general, was offered on February 24 to “an audience of respectable size.” Though ill, and advised to cancel out, Ann Eliza went on. At the lecture’s end she was heartily applauded.

On March 1, 1874, Ann Eliza introduced the new, third lecture that she had so long been writing. Entitled “The Mormon Religion,” it presented a detailed account of Mormon history, customs, behavior, and much inside information on the leaders of the Church. An absorbed audience listened to Ann Eliza’s ringing finale:

“It may seem strange to you that I, once a member of the Mormon Church, can characterize its leaders and usages so severely. But who could have better right or cause than one whose entire early life was dwarfed and warped by its teachings; whose later life was imbittered and blighted by its practices, and who yet experiences the horror of the nightmare which rests upon the soul?… I had known no other faith and had been taught that this was heaven’s last, best gift. I had no other standard of comparison. I dared not question. The system must be right, and my doubts, when doubts arose, must be wrong. With the spread of Gentile influences came other standards of religion. That was the time of doubt and vacillation, of struggle and agony, and finally of triumph. And now, should I love the religion, which tortured and enslaved me? As well expect the prisoner to love his cell and the captive to hug his chain. At last *I am free!* My bondage is of the past, and I rejoice in my deliverance. I see the false system as it is, and loathe it in all its enormities, and expect to loathe it more and more while I live. I see others in its thraldom and the public looking on in its indifference, and consecrate myself to the work of exposing the cheat, and scattering the apathy, and delivering, as far as my example and voice may, those who still linger in the embrace of death.”

Ann Eliza’s style had been emboldened and impassioned by her recent persecutions. The improvement did not pass unnoticed. The Boston *Journal*

congratulated her in a lead editorial, which was headed: “A Thrilling Narrative.”

Thereafter, Ann Eliza was Boston’s darling. Three more times, during March and April, she appeared in Horticultural Hall and Wesleyan Hall to sizable and enthusiastic crowds. These successes, as well as the growing sympathy for a frail woman so gravely maligned by the Mormon hierarchy, inundated James Redpath with booking requests from Pennsylvania, New York, and the New England states. Reassured at last, Redpath offered her $2,000 for four weeks of lectures outside Boston. He offered Major Pond a full-time job in the Boston office of his Lyceum Bureau. Both Ann Eliza and Pond were happy to accept his offers.

Ann Eliza was on the circuit again. Engagements in South Boston and Springfield in Massachusetts, Titusville and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, and Williamsburg in Virginia were unanimously favorable. Then, a succession of triumphs in New England was climaxed on March 20, 1874, by a meeting—after one of her lectures—with the Vice President of the United States, sixty-two-year-old Henry Wilson, a former shoe manufacturer and senator. Wilson heartily congratulated Ann Eliza and told her that she “would certainly do much good.”

Less than two weeks later, on April 2, 1874, Ann Eliza arrived in New York City for the first time. America’s largest community had over a million inhabitants. This was the playground of William Marcy Tweed, Henry Ward Beecher, Phineas T. Barnum, Jim Fisk, and Horace Greeley. It was also the showcase for every great entertainer or theatrical presentation in the country. Riding through New York, Ann Eliza saw that Niblo’s Garden featured Frank Mayo in *Davy Crockett*, The Colosseum offered a *Cyclorama of Paris by Moonlight*, the Academy of Music was presenting an Italian opera, Booth’s Theatre was starring Adelaide Neilson in *Romeo and Juliet,* and Association Hall advertised the Caroline Singers, a company of slaves singing favorite southern melodies. If Ann Eliza had any misgivings about matching this competition, or about her own exploitability, they were dissipated the moment of her arrival in the Astor House. For the press was waiting.

That evening Ann Eliza agreed to receive a reporter representing the New York *Herald.* She welcomed him, wearing her black silk dress with white ruffles at the neckline.

“I believe, Madam,” said the reporter, “that you are known as Mrs. Brigham Young No. 19, and that you have a divorce suit pending against Brigham Young, the Mormon Prophet?”

“Yes, I have applied for a divorce in the United States District Court of Utah and for alimony; but there is a dispute between the territorial and Federal courts over this case. My name is Anne Eliza Webb, and I was born in Nauvoo, III. I lived five years with Brigham Young as his wife, but I had no

children by him. I was married before and had two children."

After explaining why she had married Brigham and how she had escaped him, she went on to other matters:

"I have been lecturing in different parts of the country—Wisconsin, Illinois, Kansas and other states. The Mormons have received 5,000 converts this year of both sexes, and they have 600 missionaries in Europe who are continually making proselytes. I do not think that Mormonism will fall at any early day, or at least not until Congress shall have legislated it out of existence and legalized the marriages and offspring of the poor women who wish to be liberated. Then the women will become respected and Mormonism will go down. The Gentiles do not go into country places much, only to Salt Lake City. Two or three people have been murdered who were witnesses against Brigham Young, and this gives rise to suspicion of a motive for their deaths. The reason of Mormonism being kept alive is principally in the fact that the missionaries of the sect in Europe visit the most ignorant classes and inform them that the streets are paved with gold and the land flowing with milk and honey. Brigham's son-in-law, Hiram B. Clawson, offered me $15,000 to compromise the suit, but I refused to do it. They thought that if I should succeed in my suit many other women would follow my example. I shall lecture in Baltimore and Washington, but shall lecture in New York City before I go to Washington."

Ann Eliza's debut in Manhattan's Association Hall, the eve of April 9, was a box-office failure and a critical success. According to the New York *Times*, she attracted a "scant" audience, but her discourse was found "intelligent and intelligible." Major Pond worked hard, and succeeding lectures drew larger crowds and greater praise. The New York *Tribune* compared her platform prowess favorably to that of Henry Ward Beecher. The *Sun* thought her as effective as any lady speaker in the land and added: "Mrs. Young has none of the practiced archness or coquettish wriggles of the women of Eastern society. Her manner is subdued, ladylike, and very seldom not entirely self-possessed." In later lectures, the *World* noticed, "many of the audience pressed forward to the platform to congratulate Mrs. Young."

The conquest complete, Ann Eliza moved on. The cities of Rochester, Buffalo, Toronto, and Baltimore fell before her. And at last, after five months, she was on her way to the showdown in Washington, D.C.

In the nation's capital, Ann Eliza had a formidable enemy. This was forty-seven-year-old George Q. Cannon, who had been born in Liverpool, England, had migrated to the United States, and had been the youngest of Mormon Apostles on the day Brigham took over the leadership of the Saints in Illinois. He had also, some years before, helped Ann Eliza divorce her first husband. Earlier in the year 1874, Cannon had been elected territorial delegate to Congress from Utah, after his Mormon's People's Party had overwhelmed the

Gentile's Liberal Party at the polls. In spite of possessing four wives and not being a naturalized citizen, he had been seated in the House of Representatives over heavy protest.

It was Cannon's task at this critical moment to see that Ann Eliza's mission was thwarted. The moment was critical because the strongest anti-polygamy bill yet placed before Congress, introduced at President Grant's suggestion, was still being bitterly debated. The bill had been presented on January 5, 1874, by Representative Luke Potter Poland, of Vermont, Brigham's home state. Poland, farmer, attorney, Republican, enemy of the Ku Klux Klan, ten years married to his dead wife's sister, was a Republican of integrity and prestige. His bill superseded the weak anti-bigamy measure of a dozen years earlier. The Poland Law, as it was popularly called, took from Mormon probate courts all "civil, chancery, and criminal jurisdictions" and turned these cases over to the Federal government. Worse, from Brigham's viewpoint, the Poland Law stated that in cases where polygamists were to be prosecuted, the jurors would be disqualified if they practiced or adhered to a belief in plural marriage.

When Redpath arranged to book Ann Eliza into Washington, D.C., Cannon heard of it at once, and either he or his aides submitted the Chicago *Times* scandal to the religious societies planning to sponsor her. Shocked, the societies tried to cancel their dates. Redpath would have none of it. As he replied to one organization in the capital city:

"You have every indorsement from religious leaders and bodies, and to cancel the engagement is simply to give aid and comfort to those vicious Mormons they above all desire.

"As to her not coming to Washington, that is out of the question. It is her objective point, and there she will go and speak if every paper and reporter are bought up by Brigham in advance. It would be moral suicide to do otherwise.

"If I believed that there was a foundation for the story, I would drop her quicker than lightning, for it would damage me all over the country. But to do so now would be cowardice.

"I have no intention of being sowed by Brigham Young, and on reflection I trust you will not yield to his emissaries either."

After reading this, the wavering organization sent a telegram to Redpath. It read: "Send Mrs. Young; dates agreed upon."

Ann Eliza, accompanied by Major Pond and Miss Storey, and carrying letters of introduction to President Grant and James G. Blaine, Speaker of the House of Representatives, reached Washington, D.C., on the spring day of April 13, 1874. She was met by General Maxwell, her old Salt Lake City friend, who was in Washington to contest the congressional seat that he had lost to George Q. Cannon.

At once General Maxwell escorted Ann Eliza to the Ladies Reception Room of the House of Representatives. The members were in heated session at the time, and James G. Blaine, a wispy, white-bearded former publisher who had been one of the founders of the Republican Party and would be that party's losing presidential candidate two years thence, was in the Speaker's chair, gavel in hand. Ann Eliza sent her calling card and letter of introduction to him. Blaine studied her card, and then he rose. Major Pond would never forget what happened next. "He came out and shook hands with her and was half tempted to be a little bit funny and jocose, but he discovered at once that she was a lady, a woman with a cause, and an earnest one, and in a moment his attention was riveted. He did not go back to his chair but sent word to somebody else to take his place, and in a few minutes *somebody* else came into the speaker's room, and in not over twenty minutes that room was packed with members of Congress."

Representatives continued to pour out of the chamber, milling about Ann Eliza, fighting to hear her and to be introduced. One of the representatives, returning to the chamber, ran into George Q. Cannon.

"I have just seen Mrs. Young," the representative said.

Cannon stiffened. "Did she speak of me?"

"Yes, she did."

"Only to lie about me, I suppose," said Cannon.

"No, she did not lie about you."

Cannon turned on his heel and stalked out of the chamber.

By now Ann Eliza was passing out photographs of polygamous wives to the congressmen, to show graphic evidence of how the system had left its imprint on their once attractive faces. Someone suggested that she be invited inside the chamber. Graciously Blaine led her inside. "There was a stampede on the floor," wrote Pond, "and she held an ovation for two hours. Everybody wanted to see and hear her."

The following day, on the evening of April 14, 1874, Ann Eliza spoke on "My Life in Mormon Bondage" before a hall filled predominately with congressmen and other government officials and their wives.

Her opening words departed from her usual text. Instead, she began:

"I know that you come to hear me from curiosity. I do not know why there should be anything curious in my being the nineteenth wife of Brigham Young. Polygamy is sanctioned by you in the national councils. While George Q. Cannon, of Utah, a polygamist with four wives, sits there, the peer of delegates from the other territories, Congress is responsible for the system which makes a plurality of wives possible in the Mormon country."

With that she had her audience in her hand. An hour and a half later, she was the toast of Washington. With the exception of the *Chronicle*, which Cannon had talked into publishing "a burlesque report," the press was

unanimous in shouting her praises.

The word of mouth spread. It reached the White House. When Ann Eliza, in her black silk gown, came before another huge gathering for her second lecture on “Polgamy As It Is,” she saw in the foremost box the grave countenances of stubby President Ulysses S. Grant and his cross-eyed wife, Julia, flanked by their party and by the Secret Service.

If ever she needed inspiration, this was the night. As applause subsided, she began:

“Polygamy among the savages or Turks does not especially shock us. It harmonizes with their religion and condition. But polygamy in the United States is, to the American mind, a revolting fact. Considered geographically, it is an unwelcome intruder. Considered historically, it is a startling anachronism. Considered in the light of our Christian civilization and ideas, it is an ugly excrescence. Polygamy in the United States! Polygamy among Anglo-Saxons! Who was original enough to conceive the idea? Who was bold enough to inaugurate the practice? And, above all, how could this be done under the guise of religion? Has it, in truth, an existence among us, or have stories which have floated to us from Utah described monsters of the imagination rather than realities of the experience? Polygamy in the United States is no figment of the fancies. It is not the creation of sensational storytellers nor irresponsible Bohemians; it is a prevailing social custom among 100,000 of your citizens. It has been preached among them as an essential article of faith for more than twenty years. It originated with a man of Puritan ancestry and born in the State of Vermont. Its greatest exemplar and strongest exponent is another native of Vermont. Many of its leading advocates are native-born citizens of the United States. I propose devoting this lecture to the origin, spread, extent and fruit of this system. I have been a witness of much that I shall relate; of some things I have been a victim.”

Midway through the lecture, relating details of the harem life prevailing in Utah, Ann Eliza struck back at George Q. Cannon.

“The Congressional Delegate from Utah has four wives, the third being my cousin. Contrary to the usual custom, his first wife rules him as with a rod of iron. She snares his society and is the companion of drives and social hours, has every luxury for her table, while the others are almost entirely neglected. It is now commonly reported in Utah that he has put away all but one to gain his seat in Congress, but the report is without any foundation whatever. He denied through the newspapers that he was living in violation of the law, and explained it to his wives by saying the law was unconstitutional and the lawmakers were the transgressors, not him.” The sensation in the audience was tremendous. Even the President’s face reflected his outrage.

Soon the lecture was done. Applause dinned in Ann Eliza’s ears. In minutes she was surrounded. Suddenly her admirers parted to give way to

President Grant. He took Ann Eliza's hand and congratulated her. "It will be an everlasting disgrace to the country," he said, "if Cannon is allowed to take his seat in Congress."

Cannon was allowed to take his seat in Congress. But perhaps it was not a coincidence that not many weeks after Ann Eliza's appearance, the long-delayed Poland Law against polygamy was passed by congressmen in the Senate and House who had heard Ann Eliza and was signed into being by the President who had congratulated her.

The twenty-seventh wife had successfully accomplished her first mission at last.

VIII: THE SECOND MRS. DENNING

"The Lord brought me up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

—Psalm xI.2
(Ann Eliza's favorite quotation)

Between the time Ann Eliza had presented her polygamy address before President Grant and the period shortly after Congress had passed its first strong anti-polygamy bill, she was at her peak of renown. Her part in the dramatic legislation had not gone unnoticed. "In the great struggle at Washington, during the session of Congress just ended," wrote the Salt Lake City *Tribune,* "Mrs. Young's influence, more than any other, aided in securing the enactment of a salutary law." And, again: "Her denunciation of the polygamous Apostle Cannon was scathing and tremendous, and her exposure of the evils of marriage and the sins of the Priesthood, produced a powerful effect upon Congress. To her visit to the national capital are we mainly indebted for the passage of the Poland Bill."

This accomplishment alone, it would seem, by an accidental feminist in an intentional man's world, should have been enough to make Ann Eliza as self-satisfied as she was famous. This was not the case at all. For Ann Eliza had attained every goal except peace of mind.

"I was comparatively happy, but I was not at rest," she wrote. "There was something lacking in my life—a void which nothing seemed to fill."

Her restlessness was a common condition found in apostates. Perhaps, as Kimball Young has suggested in his psychological study of apostates in general, she felt unconscious remorse and guilt at having turned upon those who once trusted her; perhaps she felt that she would suffer violence for her defection; perhaps she felt that her new friends did not wholly trust her because she had once turned on old friends; perhaps she felt that she was being too sensational in order to achieve acceptance and approval from people alien to her.

Or perhaps Ann Eliza was simply lonely for the mother to whom she had clung so long and for the young sons whom she had not seen since her escape from Salt Lake City.

Mechanically she continued her applauded appearances through the East. Her public face, except for the past suffering she exploited professionally and her frequent nervous disorders, was the face of success and contentment. Her secret second face, the one behind the lyceum mask, remained disturbed and distraught. Gradually she was able to sort out one worry more nagging than the rest. She realized that she had, indeed, been existing like a kind of planet of nothingness, adrift in a void, through which she floated for lack of spiritual

gravity. She had renounced and condemned the rigors and comforts of the highly organized, paternalistic Mormon religion, but she had not supplanted it with a new faith. She was not an agnostic, for she believed in an attentive Creator. But her God was featureless. She could pray to no one.

It was not until Ann Eliza had delivered a lecture before the Methodist Preachers' Meeting in Boston, during the spring of 1875, that she first realized what might be troubling her. She had been aware during her talk that one Methodist clergyman, the Reverend Daniel Steele, of Auburndale, had been listening to her with marked interest. What had interested the Reverend Steele the most, he said later, was that her "address contained not the most distant reference to Jesus Christ."

After the lecture the Reverend Steele was introduced to Ann Eliza. He took her aside.

"Have you found any other religion to take the place of the superstition you have cast off?" he inquired.

"No."

"Do you have any theoretical knowledge of Christ?"

"I know nothing about Jesus Christ; I am a perfect child," said Ann Eliza. "Oh, the distressing sense of vacuity in my soul! How I hunger for something satisfying! Will you not help me?"

The Reverend Steele tried to point the way. "You have read the Gospels, have you not?"

"No, I never read a Gospel in my life, nor have I heard more than two sermons since my escape from that false religion."

Briefly, quietly, the clergyman explained to Ann Eliza the teachings of Christ. Listening to these principles, she said later, "was like a day-dawn after a night of the blackest darkness."

When her instructor was done, Ann Eliza assured him, "This is what I want—this religion of love." She begged for his prayers.

"You shall have them, and such Christian instructions as can be communicated by letter."

As Ann Eliza headed into the Midwest, lecturing steadily, the Reverend Steele's letters followed her. These instructions gave her some relief, but apparently this was not enough. For by now her mind was on another series of letters that she was receiving, these from her mother in Utah.

The first Mrs. Webb finally had been horrified and disgusted by Brigham Young after his attacks on her daughter. Suddenly she was seeing Brigham as her daughter had seen him, and now she was telling Ann Eliza of her "terrible struggles" to give up the Mormon religion. Ann Eliza hoped to solve her mother's problem by sending for her and settling her among relatives and old friends in the East. Also, Ann Eliza planned to send for her sons and place them in a private school near New York. But during her journey into the

Midwest, Ann Eliza once more fell gravely ill. The canceling of lectures and loss of income made her realize that she could not immediately support her mother and sons. The frustration grieved her deeply. She was, she said, "brokenhearted… in great need of comfort."

Having recovered sufficiently to resume her tour, Ann Eliza arrived in Delaware, Ohio. Briefly she roomed on the campus of Ohio Wesleyan Female College as the guest of Dr. Lorenzo Dow McCabe, who had been appointed acting president of the Methodist school two years before. Although the author of *Divine Prescience of Future Contingencies* and other similarly obtuse tomes, Dr. McCabe was a man of human warmth and understanding.

During the week that Ann Eliza stayed on the campus, Dr. McCabe came to visit her daily. At first he was interested in her outer fight against polygamy. Soon he became more absorbed in her inner struggle to acquire peace of mind. What happened next Ann Eliza recorded several months later in a letter to the Reverend Steele:

"I confided to him [Dr. McCabe] all my sorrows and sufferings, and he comforted me by telling me that Jesus stood ready to take them all, and fill my heart with sweet peace if I would believe in Him. He showed me how to do this, and prayed with me until a perfect peace and joy rested upon me and I felt forgiven, and was accepted as one of God's children.

"Only those who have experienced it can know how happy I was, I felt so near to Him who died to save me. I have never felt that terrible despondency since, and think I never shall. I feel sure that God will care for me in the future, as in the past, if I do as near right as I can. I pray to him daily for help, and I have many times received direct answer to prayer."

Ann Eliza's conversion to the Methodist Episcopal faith was printed far and wide. Some cynics sneered that the move had been an opportunistic one. They said that Ann Eliza had become a Methodist to assure herself of continuing church sponsorship on future tours. However, most persons who had seen or heard Ann Eliza accepted the conversion as the natural fulfillment of a deep need. Sensibly she had conformed to a popular and undemanding belief, as they had, because it made life possible—and death less improbable. Thus reinforced, Ann Eliza was able to undertake the one engagement that she had considered and resisted for months—a return to Salt Lake City, to see her family again and to challenge her husband on his own grounds.

Eight months earlier she had fled Salt Lake City in fear of her life. Now she was no longer afraid. Her celebrity was her shield. Furthermore, with every passing month the West was becoming more heavily populated by non-Mormons. A short time before, an apostate's life "was worth absolutely nothing." But now, she was sure, the apostate "is comparatively safe from any deeds of violence on their part." Her enemies might abuse her in print, curse her in the Tabernacle, consign her to hell, but they would not dare to murder

her.

On the Wednesday evening of July 15, 1874, Ann Eliza, after a train trip through the Midwest, with a stopover in Laramie and a transfer at Ogden, returned to Salt Lake City. Major Pond, less vocal since the Bloomington scandal, was beside her. The day before, the *Tribune* had announced her coming as well as the informal reception her Gentile friends planned for her in a parlor of the Walker House. At the depot she was met by General George R. Maxwell, who had recently been her sponsor in Washington, and by a crowd of friends and curious citizens. According to Mormon sources, the general clasped Ann Eliza's hands and murmured between smiles and tears, "Bless you, Ann Elizer; bless you me chee-ild."

En route to the Walker House, the general put his guest on her guard by informing her that Victoria Woodhull was in the city for a series of lectures on the Beecher-Tilton case. Forewarned, Ann Eliza avoided her traducer, and there was no meeting between the two.

Both the street before the entrance to the Walker House and the large parlor inside were filled with "a vast assemblage" of friends and well-wishers. There were cheers and shouting as the twenty-seventh wife made her way from the carriage into the hotel. Dazzled by the welcome, Ann Eliza was led upstairs to the crowded second-floor public parlor where Judge McKean, the Reverend Stratton and Mrs. Stratton, Colonel Wickizer, and dozens of other friends and Federal officials quickly surrounded her.

Even as she stood beneath the massive, carved gilded mirror, accepting congratulations on her successful tour, Ann Eliza heard the sound of approaching music. Outside the National Brass Band marched up to the entrance of the Walker House and serenaded Ann Eliza with the strains of "Home, Sweet Home." Too touched to thank either the musicians or the people in the street, the lady lecturer indicated that she would be pleased if General Maxwell spoke on her behalf.

General Maxwell stepped out on a balcony, and when the band and mob were hushed, he delivered a brief but eloquent address. He recounted some details of Ann Eliza's triumphal procession through the eastern states and added that her victory had been more remarkable than was known because she had overcome "the assaults and libels levelled at her by the mercenary hirelings of the Mormon Priesthood."

The general cited, for the first time, two instances of Mormon opposition. Before her Denver debut, Brigham's agents had offered the publisher of the Denver *Tribune* the sum of $15,000 "for the use of its columns, to traduce and smirch her unblemished reputation." Not only had the Denver publisher rejected the bribe, but he had "manfully" allied himself with Ann Eliza's crusade. Again, after Brigham had succeeded in buying off the Chicago *Times,* one of the Prophet's agents in the national capital—delegate Cannon

was not mentioned by name—had offered Colonel Davidson, editor of the Washington *National Republican,* an undisclosed price if he would reprint the scandalous Chicago *Times* story. Davidson, too, had refused to be bought.

The people in the street exploded with cheers at General Maxwell's disclosure. Inspired, the general went on to chastize the Mormon newspapers of Salt Lake City for their "cowardly assaults" upon Ann Eliza and the general's own wife. At the end of his address, the general signaled to Ann Eliza inside. Modestly she appeared on the hotel balcony, bowing gratefully as a great roar of appreciation erupted and echoed through the warm night. Retiring indoors again, Ann Eliza once more joined the reception. Outside the band continued to serenade her for more than an hour.

Before beginning the first of a half dozen lectures in Salt Lake City, Ann Eliza allowed herself five days of relaxation with her sons, mother, and father in South Cottonwood. Then, on Monday evening, July 20, Ann Eliza appeared at the Methodist Church. The room was filled to capacity. When she walked to the lectern and peered into the orchestra seats, she found a surprise awaiting her.

"Brigham did not attend any of my lectures," she wrote afterward, "but he sent his daughters and daughters-in-law, and bade them sit on the front seats, and make faces at me. They filled the two rows nearest the platform, and, as I saw them there, my heart went out in pity toward them. I knew all of them; many of them had been my dear friends from girlhood, and I had known how unhappy they had been under the cruel system, which I was fighting against. I had been in the confidence of several, and more than one had commiserated me upon my unhappy situation while I was their father's wife. Instead of annoying me, and causing me to falter and break down completely, as the Prophet hoped, it only lent new strength to my purpose, new fire to my words."

All but Brigham's grimacing daughters and representatives from the Mormon press agreed that this was a new Ann Eliza who stood before them. Rarely did she consult the notes before her. She spoke with the assurance of one who had already been crowned a success.

Ignoring her contemporaries from the Lion House, Ann Eliza addressed herself to her Gentile friends. "The feelings with which I again meet you, but for the first time stand before you as a lecturer, are inexpressible," she began. "But one year ago I left my home in this city, a fugitive seeking the protection of your laws and shelter of your charity. I was experienced in the hollowness and miseries of the system I was leaving, but totally inexperienced in the ways of the world to which I was fleeing. The faith of my childhood had proved the nightmare of my womanhood, and to that I could not cling… I ventured with fear and trembling, and what have I experienced? You received me with a generous confidence when I came, you defended me with a

generous charity during my absence, you met me with a generous welcome on my return. If I cannot reward you as I would, let me assure you of this—that whatever happiness can spring from good deeds gratefully acknowledged, and whatever blessings Heaven may visit in answer to sincere and earnest prayer—this happiness and these blessings shall be yours while I live.

"And what shall I say of my experiences during my absence from among you? That I have felt the sting and poison of some Parthian arrows? Yes. That I have had moments of sickness and despondency? Yes. That I have been disappointed with my reception or ever regretted my course? Oh, never!"

Presently Ann Eliza took up the story of her life. During the ninety minutes, said the *Tribune*, she was "repeatedly and heartily applauded." The pro-Mormon *Herald* grudgingly admitted that "her delivery showed much improvement" and hinted that her lecture had probably been written by Major Pond or the Reverend Stratton.

A week later Ann Eliza delivered the second of her lectures at the Methodist Church. Again the hall was crowded. Because the lecture was devoted entirely to a denunciation of plural marriage this time, the *Herald* was considerably less tolerant of her. The audience, it was true, had enjoyed her, "judging from the much stamping of feet and lusty clapping of hands." But the fabric of the talk "was a collection of sensational sentences woven together for recital abroad, but entirely 'too thin' to be accepted as facts by a Salt Lake audience." The improvement of delivery noted in her first appearance was not evident in her second, which was "squarely read from manuscript, in high, overstrained tones, without modulation or inflection." Nevertheless, at the lecture's end, the majority of the audience swarmed about Ann Eliza to shake her hand and to offer felicitations.

During most of August, Ann Eliza spoke steadily in various outlying communities of Utah and in adjacent Nevada. Her visit to Alta, Utah, attracted the greatest gathering in the history of the mining boom town. Many Mormons were present, among them four sons of Heber C. Kimball, the Apostle who had died in a carriage accident six years before. From Alta, Ann Eliza moved on to Provo, where her dear friend, the Reverend C. P. Lyford, was her sponsor. Outside of the lectures in Salt Lake City, the talks in Provo were Ann Eliza's greatest successes in Utah. The Reverend Lyford likened her to "Wendell Phillips in his palmiest days."

After Provo there followed a series of engagements in Bingham, Park City, Tooele, Ophir, Dry Canyon, Evanston, and Ogden. While in Evanston, the mining center that paid $200 to hear her, Ann Eliza remembered her Methodist mentor, Dr. Lorenzo Dow McCabe, in Delaware, Ohio. To express her thanks for the peace of mind that he had helped her find, she purchased a cabinet displaying minerals from the various mines around Evanston and sent it as a gift to the Ohio Wesleyan Female College.

While on the road to Ophir and Stockton, Ann Eliza's tour was enlivened by the news that her long dormant divorce action against Brigham Young had suddenly been revived. The suit brought by Ann Eliza more than a year before had been set aside while the squabble over jurisdiction was settled. Brigham had demanded that the case be tried in a local probate court, dominated by the Mormons, while Ann Eliza had wished that the case be tried in a district court, dominated by anti-Mormon Federal officials. At last the Supreme Court of Utah Territory had made its decision. The case would be fought out in a district court, with Judge McKean, Ann Eliza's friend, on the bench.

Ann Eliza's lawyers renewed their motion for divorce and alimony. Judge McKean then ordered Brigham Young to give his answer. Late in the afternoon of August 25, 1874, in Third District Court of Utah, Brigham finally filed his lengthy reply to his twenty-seventh wife's suit. His reply, through his legal representatives, caused a front-page sensation from coast to coast. In Salt Lake City the *Tribune* gave it seven headlines. They read, successively: "Revelation!… Brigham Young Comes Into Court… And Swears That He Has But One Wife… Celestial Marriage and Social Harlotry Identical… Virtue of Law and Sensuality of Religion… A Wife in the State and Concubines in the Church… The Kingdom of God on Its Last Legs."

In New York City, James Gordon Bennett's *Herald* was even more delirious. Easterners were favored with eight headlines, reading successively: "Polygamy… Brigham Young in Trouble With His Nineteenth Wife… Adultery Sanctified… The Difference Between Legal Marriage and "Celestial Concubinage"… The Prophet Accused of Perjury… He Blindly Repudiates the Supernumerary Wives… Good Mormons Indignant… The Nuptial Ritual as Performed in the Latter-Day Church."

Aware as he was of Congressman Poland's anti-polygamy bill, Brigham had taken the safe course. He denied that Ann Eliza was his legal wife, since she "was, and still is, the lawful wife of the said James L. Dee, never, as this defendant is now advised and believes, having been divorced from the said James L. Dee." Furthermore, stated Brigham, he already had one legal wife, and she was Mary Ann Angell, whom he had wedded in Kirtland, Ohio, on January 10, 1834, and she "then and there became, and ever since has been, and still is, the lawful wife of this defendant…" As to the ceremony with Ann Eliza, said the New York *Herald*, "Brigham does not deny the adultery, but he avers that it was under the name of 'celestial marriage,' a kind of mutual arrangement according to faith."

In his reply Brigham took the time to refute each of those legal complaints which Ann Eliza had been airing for months on public platforms. He flatly denied that he had practiced neglect, cruelty, parsimony, and desertion. "But on the contrary, this defendant alleges that he has always and at all times,

treated the said plaintiff with due kindness and consideration." He had not, he said, forced her to move to The Farmhouse. At no time had he commanded her to get rid of her ailing mother. Not once had he refused to supply her with food or elegant dress. Although he had provided her with a residence in the city, she "voluntarily and without his knowledge or consent and without any cause for fear or violence or hostility or vindictiveness from defendant did leave, desert and abandon defendant's house and premises…" He had not neglected her in the boardinghouse but had visited her whenever he could. He had supported her children by Dee. He had not known that she was ill. Her present demands for settlement, alimony, and court costs were unreasonable. He denied that he was a millionaire or that his monthly income was $40,000. He said that his total holdings amounted to no more than $600,000 and his monthly income was a paltry $6,000.

Brigham's answer concluded: "Defendant further says that at the time of the said alleged marriage this defendant had and still has a very large family, that his said family now consists of sixty-three persons, all of whom are dependent upon this defendant for maintenance and support.

"Whereof the defendant prays judgment of the court that he be hence dismissed with his costs herein."

Brigham's defense brought an immediate reaction from the nation's press. In San Francisco the *Chronicle* remarked: "Brigham's answer is calculated to enlist in his behalf the sympathies of all non-believers in woman's rights. It places the inexorable Ann Eliza in the unlovely attitude of a remorseless persecutor of a meek and unfortunate victim of too much matrimony." In St. Louis the *Republican* stated: "It is very certain the plural wives of the Saints will never forgive the Prophet for thus declaring them to be concubines… On one side is the fact of polygamy, and on the other hand the sanctification of adultery." In New York the *Herald* commented: "The importance of this case cannot be overestimated, as it will become a test question and settle forever what the national Congress is going to permit in this Territory in the name of polygamy. It has another interesting phase, for it will define to the Mormon mind the exact status of the plural wives—what they are and what they are not."

Undoubtedly there were repercussions in the Lion House. For, even though Amelia Folsom and the other wives had been briefed by five lawyers on the necessity for their husband to publicly disown them, still the public announcement of it must have given them sharp feelings of insecurity. However, if Brigham's wives protested or berated him, word of it never reached the public. Only Brigham's first living wife, Mary Ann Angell, obtained any satisfaction from his legal brief. Upon being shown his reply to Ann Eliza, it was said that the old lady wept tears of joy.

Delighted though Ann Eliza was with Brigham's discomfort, she was

indignant at his reply. She said that he had committed perjury in swearing that she had not divorced James L. Dee. She directed Judge McKean and the press to the records of the Probate Court in Salt Lake City, where her divorce from Dee had been filed in 1865. To this Brigham replied in his *Deseret News* that, since the Supreme Court had recently ruled that no Probate Court could handle a divorce case, the decision automatically nullified Ann Eliza's old divorce from Dee. A Constant Reader, in the *Tribune*, went even further: "Ann Eliza was married in the Endowment House, over the same altar, and with the same ceremony, to James L. Dee, as to Brigham Young. If she was married to the former, she was married to the latter. Perhaps Brigham would say she is not married at all. If so, she is only one among the thousands of women seduced through his instrumentality."

However much Brigham's lawyers were satisfied that they had done well by their client, the Mormon hierarchy was less certain of this. When one of Brigham's barristers expounded on the brilliance of his brief, an elder statesman snapped, "You have complied with the law—and knocked hell out of the Kingdom!"

Six weeks after Brigham's reply, Judge McKean summoned the representatives of both sides into court to argue their cases. At the conclusion of the hearing, Judge McKean said that he would announce his decision early in the following year.

By this time, pursuing the lecture timetable laid out by Major Pond, Ann Eliza had finished a speaking engagement in Virginia City, Nevada, and was on her way to a month of appearances in northern California. On the evening of October 9, 1874, Ann Eliza delivered her first lecture in San Francisco. Competing with the stage play, *Davy Crockett*, at the California Theatre, Ann Eliza filled "most of the benches" in Mercantile Library Hall. The following night she drew an even larger crowd. Two days later she was at the Methodist Episcopal Church, and because tickets were lowered to the bargain price of fifty cents each, she had another sellout. So popular was her lecture that the same church hired her to present her entire series of three talks again, at the end of the month, for a flat fee of $ 1,000.

After lecturing in Oakland, San Jose, Sacramento, and other smaller California communities, Ann Eliza, accompanied by Major Pond and one Latimer Prescott, returned to Salt Lake City early in November for her final public appearances there. One of these appearances particularly held high drama for Ann Eliza. She faced a large audience in the Methodist Church. The majority of the audience was Mormon, including some of Brigham's daughters again, but the guest of honor was Ann Eliza's mother. Chauncey and the first Mrs. Webb sat in the front row. While Chauncey had heard his daughter speak before, the first Mrs. Webb had not. It had required, admitted Ann Eliza, "a great deal of persuasion" to woo her to a public place. By now

the first Mrs. Webb's apostasy was known, but she was still ashamed of parading it, especially at an anti-polygamy lecture conducted by her own offspring.

This lecture was one of the final series that Ann Eliza gave in the town of her travail. Soon she was on a Union Pacific train again headed east, but her progress was gradual, for she stopped over in Laramie and Omaha for encore appearances. After that she began an extensive tour of Iowa, speaking in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Newton, Grinnell, Iowa City, Mount Pleasant, Ottunawa, and Creston. From Iowa she made her way into Minnesota, performing in St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Mankato, and then she rode down into Wisconsin, visiting Eau Claire and La Crosse. Her first year of lecturing ended with two engagements in Chicago, where her antagonist, editor Story of the *Times*, was happily silent.

Somewhere between Minnesota and Wisconsin, Ann Eliza had learned that the last cord binding her to the past had been severed. Someone had sent her the issue of the Salt Lake City *Evening News* dated November 19, 1874. Buried near the bottom of a column headed "Local and Other Matters," she found the item that carried her name. "To Whom It May Concern—This is to certify that Ann Eliza Webb Young was cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, by the High Council, October 10th, 1874." The notice of excommunication was signed "Geo. E. Wallace, Clerk of High Council."

Forever after they claimed that they had dismissed her. Forever after she claimed that she had quit them.

Not quite three months later, on February 12, 1875, Ann Eliza's father, Chauncey Webb, in answer to the charge "of apostatizing from the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints," appeared before the Mormon High Council in the Salt Lake City Hall. Among his dozen judges were George E. Wallace, clerk of the council, John T. Caine, editor of the *Herald*, and Angus M. Cannon, one of his oldest friends.

After prayers the accused was asked if he pleaded guilty or not guilty. To this Chauncey Webb replied heatedly, "Not guilty to the charge of apostacy, although I would have preferred that the charge should allege my dissent from the innovations introduced in the Church by so corrupt a leader as Brigham Young." Then Cannon arose to explain that though he loved Chauncey as a brother, and regarded him as a person of the best character and greatest liberality, he had recently "fallen into evil ways."

Chauncey came to his feet at once. No matter what the council's action, he said, he would forgive them all, that is, all but John T. Caine, editor of the *Herald*. "The gentleman will remember," continued Chauncey, glaring at Caine, "that the paper of which he is proprietor and editor, published a whole string of lies and calumnies assailing my daughter's fair name, and repeated

the foul charge with many innuendos. I waited until the libel had been fully refuted, and my daughter stood before the world with character redeemed, and then I addressed a respectful letter to the editor of the *Herald* asking that the charge be retracted and justice done my daughter. There was nothing unreasonable or improper in this. My feelings as a parent led me to ask simple justice to an injured lady, my daughter, and this letter was responded to by the publication of another article in the columns of the *Herald,* even more offensive and injurious than those which had preceded… It does seem a farce to have that man sitting in judgment upon my right to a membership in the Church, when he is himself a convicted liar and calumniator."

Shortly after, the vote for expulsion was taken. The vote was unanimous, and the result was made public three days later. It read: "To Whom It May Concern—This is to certify that C. G. Webb and Eliza Jane Webb were cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, by the High Council of this State of Zion, Friday, February 12th, 1875." The signature was that of the ever-busy George E. Wallace.

And so, finally, for the first Mrs. Webb, at least, what had begun so long ago in Kirtland, and been enjoyed and endured in Nauvoo and on the banks of the Missouri and across the plains to early Salt Lake City, was done and ended. Not many months later, the first Mrs. Webb broke another tie. Her daughter had sent her money to come east with her grandsons. While Chauncey Webb, despite his excommunication, elected to live on in South Cottonwood with his surviving wives, the first Mrs. Webb refused to remain. Having left her religion, she now left her husband.

Early in 1875 the first Mrs. Webb, fifty-eight years old, and Ann Eliza's two growing sons moved to Lockport, New York, near which the first Mrs. Webb had a sister. There, close to the scenes of her birth, the first Mrs. Webb made a home for her grandsons and herself and provided an occasional stopping place for the constantly moving Ann Eliza, first in a boardinghouse, then in a cottage on Walnut Street.

The change seemed to satisfy the daughter more than the mother. A year after it had been made, Ann Eliza wrote of her mother: "I think no one rejoiced in my success more than she did, and certainly no one else has had power to imbue me with such fresh courage and strength. And now that she has abandoned Mormonism, when I think of her, away from the old associations, united in her old age to the friends of her childhood, happy in a home safe from the intrusion of polygamy, every shade of bigotry blotted out, her reason unfettered, her will free, I am happier than I ever can say…

However, the first Mrs. Webb was less ecstatic in describing her lot. In a letter to her son Gilbert, dated January 19, 1876, she wrote: "I do not see much of Ann Eliza she comes about once in six weeks and stays not more than two days, when she is off again to fill her appointments. She is far from

strong and her time all occupied with business, so there is very little time for her to visit

"There is quite as much bigotry, superstition, and fanaticism in with me while here… the east as in the west, and more trouble in monogamic marriage than I had supposed; I find there is a 'skeleton in every closet'; and it really does not seem that the world is nearing the millennium by any means, but rather going the other way… I suppose Heaven knows I have seen enough to disgust me with religious nonsense. I am corresponding with a gentleman who says if he had the making of the Bible, he would change things around, put the New Testament in the forepart of the book, and put the Old Testament in the Appendix, and put the Appendix into the stove. Yet this gentleman thinks the New Testament about right, but I told him I was in favor of both going into the stove together."

If the first Mrs. Webb made the same complaints to her daughter, it is doubtful that her daughter had time to pay heed. For, with her mother settled among old friends, and her sons, Edward Wesley and Leonard, in a private school and within easy reach, Ann Eliza was able to resume her career of full-time lady lecturer. The first season under Pond and Redpath had been an enormous success. She had lectured 161 times, drawn audiences as large as any attracted by such veterans as Anna E. Dickinson and Mary A. Livermore, and she had earned $20,000.

If she worried that her success had been freakish, based only on novelty, this fear was quickly dispelled by her managers. Major Pond felt that her elocutionary abilities alone would keep her on the lyceum circuit for years. James Redpath believed that as long as polygamy continued to be a raging national issue, and as long as Brigham Young existed as his last wife's active antagonist, Ann Eliza would be in demand. Her managers were proved right. Requests for repeat bookings—Boston would hear her fourteen times in all—poured in weekly. Early in 1875 Ann Eliza signed a long-term contract with Redpath, agreeing to perform as a featured member of his Star Lecture Course, and soon she was on the road again.

Ann Eliza had gone into lecturing at the perfect moment in lyceum history. Had she arrived on the scene any earlier, her voice might have been drowned out by the babble of too many other voices more strident and professional. In the half century preceding Ann Eliza's entry into the field, lecturing was still being transformed from a small, erratic, cultural diversion into a highly organized and booming big business.

The first American lyceum group had been formed in 1826 by Josiah Holbrook, a literate Yale man who owned a farm in Millbury, Massachusetts. Holbrook's group met evenings to listen to each other and to hear authoritative speakers from neighboring villages. Slowly Holbrook's idea spread, and by 1831 an American Lyceum Association was created to give

some unity to the groups throughout the East. Men like John B. Gough, Wendell Phillips, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Ward Beecher, and Daniel Webster were the pioneer lecturers. Most often for their services they received not salary but gifts. Emerson's fee of five dollars and oats for his horse was a typical honorarium. Phillips frequently came away with no more than twenty-five dollars and Gough with fifty dollars.

It was James Redpath who converted these amateur cultural meetings into big business. Redpath had traveled a strange road to his calling. At seventeen, with a knowledge of typesetting, shorthand, and authorship (he had written a volume of folklore with his father), he migrated from Scotland to the United States. In Kalamazoo, Michigan, and in Detroit he was a newspaperman. His abolitionist articles caught the eye of Horace Greeley, and at nineteen he was an editor on the New York *Tribune*. For five years he hiked through the South, writing a series of sensational articles entitled *The Roving Editor, or Talks With Slaves.* In Virginia, disappointed over some business ventures, depressed and lonely, he planned to blow out his brains with a pistol but was diverted by the reading of a book, *Alone,* written by Marion Harland. The book gave him courage to live, and he wrote the author that he would repay her by writing and publishing 1,000 notices praising her work. And this he did.

Resuming his travels, Redpath discovered, encamped near a Kansas creek, a gnarled old man and his gang of armed fire-eaters, all pledged to fight slavery. The old man was John Brown, and Redpath made him a legend in his *Tribune* articles—after that the *Tribune* was legally barred from Kansas—and in two books. Talking to his friend, Wendell Phillips, Redpath got the idea of colonizing Haiti with freed American slaves. To explore the feasibility of the idea, he went to Haiti and then published a guide book about the island. Because of his efforts for them, the Haitian government made him their commissioner of immigration in Philadelphia. During the Civil War, Redpath tramped through Georgia with General Sherman and wrote about the experience. In Charleston, South Carolina, Redpath remembered the war dead and originated Memorial Day.

And then, at last, in 1867, he heard Charles Dickens speak in Boston. The following morning at breakfast, he ruminated aloud, "There should be a general headquarters, a bureau for the welcome of literary men and women coming to our country for the purpose of lecturing. They should be made to feel at home among us, and the business of arranging routes of travel and dates for lectures and so forth be in charge of competent workers, and an established fee agreed upon."

Shortly afterward Redpath's Lyceum Bureau was opened in Boston, and the lecture platform had its first genius.

In the half dozen years before Ann Eliza came along, Redpath had acquired a virtual monopoly on the nation's leading speakers. The most

popular of his male clients was John B. Gough, a reformed drunkard and an acrobatic orator, who roared out against liquor and stimulants. So intense were Gough's exhortations that his clothes were soaked through with perspiration after each two-hour lecture. He took to wearing two overcoats at once to fend off pneumonia. In forty-four years Gough delivered 9,600 speeches to nine million listeners. Under Redpath he reached his peak and earned $40,000 in a single season.

Mark Twain signed on with Redpath and eventually made a fortune in lecturing. Twain had a clause in his contract that allowed him to default on any church bookings. "I never made a success of a lecture in a church," Twain told Redpath. "People are afraid to laugh in church." Frederick Douglass, the brilliant mulatto who had been a slave and had also been Victoria Woodhull's running mate when she aspired to the presidency, left the newspaper he published in Rochester, New York, to be handled by Redpath's bureau. Josh Billings, who was widely quoted for his remark "All girls marry Young—in Utah," was another client. His most successful lecture was entitled "Milk." He stood at the lectern, a glass of milk beside him, and delivered an entire talk without once referring to the glass or the milk. Thomas Nast, conqueror of Tammany Hall, sketched cartoons as he spoke and earned $40,000 in his opening tour for Redpath. Wendell Phillips, the polished aristocrat, earned $500 a lecture—twenty times what he had earned on his own—addressing audiences on law, Europe, Indians, and Ireland.

In 1871 there were 150 lady lecturers traveling up and down the land, shrilly dedicated to the suffrage cause, Negro integration, temperance, literature, and the other arts. For his 10 per cent Redpath handled more of these women than any other manager, and he handled far and away the most popular of them. Until the advent of Ann Eliza, Redpath's foremost female lecturer had been Anna E. Dickinson, an explosive young lady with chestnut hair and a boyish figure. She had entered into lecturing quite by accident. One night, attending her Quaker church, she heard a man abuse the feminist movement. Blindly incensed, Miss Dickinson leaped to her feet and, shaking her fist in the man's face, annihilated him with a stream of invective. Thereafter she saved her outbursts for paying customers, speaking out in favor of female and Negro emancipation. It is said that her appearances changed Vermont from a Democratic state to a Republican one. She titillated large audiences by her shocking frankness, using such unheard-of words as "legs." Under Redpath's guidance she earned from $20,000 to $40,000 a year.

Redpath's other female clients included Mary A. Livermore, a former reporter and editor, who preached temperance; Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," who spoke on slavery; Lucy Stone, the Oberlin College graduate, who fought against all odds (hoses of water were sometimes directed at her) to gain women the vote.

By the year 1875, most of these renowned clients had passed their peak and their subjects had grown stale. Slavery in reconstruction days was no longer a burning issue. Temperance had been talked to death. Female suffrage seemed a frivolous fantasy. As to the old speakers, John B. Gough had lost his voice; Anna E. Dickinson had abandoned the platform for the theater and would know failure as an actress; Thomas Nast had returned to drawing political cartoons for his newspaper; Henry Ward Beecher had been reviled as a seducer and still lived in disgrace; and even the perennial Josh Billings was beginning to wear thin.

Yet, in 1875, over five hundred lyceum groups, demanding amusement and education, offered opportunity to new blood. It was the best of times for Ann Eliza. She was a young thirty-one, an attractive and a fresh personality, and her subject of polygamy was more topical than ever. In discussing Mormonism, Ann Eliza had only two major female rivals. One was the admirable Mrs. Fanny Stenhouse, whose book had helped inspire Ann Eliza's escape. The other was Kate Field, who had entered the lecture field four years before Ann Eliza. Miss Field, a pretty clotheshorse, first fascinated audiences with her biographical lectures on John Brown and Charles Dickens. At last she visited Utah and for eight months gave much of her time to interviewing wives in polygamy. This became her favorite lecture subject. She told audiences that Brigham Young was a "vulgar, illogical, wonderful old man." She thought Mormon treason worse than Mormon plural marriage. She exchanged letters with Mark Twain on the subject. She wanted polygamy dissolved by force; Twain felt laughter was better than violence. He wrote Miss Field: "Am I a friend to the Mormon religion? No. I would like to see it extirpated, but always by fair means, not these Congressional rascalities." Not until Kate Field became a cremationist—"because I believe cremation is not only the healthiest and cleanest, but the most poetical way of disposing of the dead"—did she ease up on Mormonism. Yet neither of these two rivals gave Ann Eliza serious competition. Mrs. Stenhouse had been married to a relatively little-known polygamist, whereas Ann Eliza had been married to the Prophet. Kate Field was an outsider, without Ann Eliza's authority, and furthermore, Miss Field only challenged the last year of Ann Eliza's lecturing career.

Soon after Ann Eliza had gone off on her second swing through the East, she learned that Redpath was no longer her mentor. Mercurial as ever, too restless to remain tied to a desk, Redpath had sold his famous Lyceum Bureau on October 5, 1875, to Major Pond and to George H. Hathaway. For Ann Eliza it was a loss. She had developed a great dependency on Redpath, after he had stood firmly beside her in the Bloomington scandal. In the years that followed, she would watch his career closely.

Foot-loose though he now was, Redpath did not entirely divorce himself

from lecture management. He promoted a coast-to-coast tour for Robert G. Ingersoll, the great orator, notorious agnostic, and foe of the Bible. After that he formed the Redpath English Opera Company and introduced Gilbert and Sullivan to the United States. Finally he had a nervous breakdown and gave up the lecture field entirely. After recuperating in the West Indies, he took two trips to Ireland for the New York *Tribune.* Dismayed by the famine that he observed, and by the brutal activities of landlords like Captain Charles Boycott, Redpath acted. He raised $125,000 for the Irish, and then, recalling how tradesmen resisted Captain Boycott by refusing to sell him wares, Redpath coined the word "boycott" as a synonym for "ostracize." Soon he had new American crusades, one against New York slum conditions, another supporting the single-tax theories of Henry George. When Ann Eliza next heard of him, he was busily collaborating with Jefferson Davis, ghostwriting the old Confederate chief's autobiography. He had come a long way from John Brown.

Meanwhile, in Boston, Major Pond, the showman, and Hathaway, the conservative, managed Ann Eliza's tours. For four years there was friction between the partner managers, and in 1879 Pond sold his half of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau to Hathaway, then set up his own office in New York City. Pond retained Ann Eliza and Henry Ward Beecher as his star clients. After this Pond was rarely to travel with the twenty-seventh wife. He arranged her tours by mail and sent her off with a female companion hired in the East. When he did travel, Pond traveled with Beecher. Only through Pond's nervy and astute handling was Beecher able to make a comeback. Pond accompanied the tainted clergyman on trips, which eventually covered 300,000 miles. Between American and English engagements, Beecher lectured 1,261 times for Pond.

The decade after 1873 that Ann Eliza gave to lecturing was a dizzying and exhausting experience. In lecture circles she was called "a paying card," meaning that she attracted large box-office receipts. Even her female competitors felt affection for her. In February of 1875, Mary A. Livermore wrote a lecture committee in Castile, New York: "You will find Mrs. Young a very lovely woman. She is very fine looking, gentle, womanly, and ladylike, utterly removed from the coarseness and ignorance that we associate with Mormon women. I know her personally, and am greatly interested in her, and I can assure you that the people of Castile will not only be pleased with Mrs. Young, but greatly interested in the touching story of her life…"

Ann Eliza lectured eight months out of every twelve. The four free months were spent in Lockport with her sons and mother or in New York City visiting physicians. She delivered between 160 and 180 lectures each year. The Washington correspondent for the New York *Independent,* Mary Clemmer Ames, drew a word portrait of Ann Eliza in this period of her life: "Her whole

presence indicates refinement, sensitiveness, and fineness of organization. She has an acutely nervous temperament, and the delicacy of frame, which always accompanies it. She is slender to fragility, and has the slight throat and small features always apparent where the nervous force predominates over the vital. Her hair is black, and arranged in the heavy coils of the day; her face is colorless, but her complexion remarkable for its purity; her black eyebrows, strikingly defined on her low white brow, are almost horizontal, and from under them look out full, but not large, blue eyes, filled by turns with fire, softness, and sorrow. The prevailing expression of the face is habitual sadness."

Ann Eliza appreciated Mrs. Ames' description and decided that they must become friends. In June of 1876, while in New York City for six weeks under the care of Dr. J. Marion Sims, Ann Eliza wrote to Mrs. Ames: "I have always felt the greatest anxiety to meet you, as I can never forget all you have done for me and I love you very dearly for it. I shall leave here next Sunday night for Lockport, N.Y. where my mother and two little boys are and where I expect to spend the summer. I very much hope I may see you."

In the wake of first Redpath's and now Pond's magnificent four-page circulars—containing her biography, description, successes, and recommendations, as well as photographs of the Salt Lake City Tabernacle, a lithograph of Ann Eliza, and woodcuts of the Bee Hive House, the Endowment House, and the Lion House parlor with the various wives at prayer with Brigham—Ann Eliza paraded her sufferings and indignation across the land. One week she was in Mount Morris, New York, another in Rochester, New York (where the Baptist Sunday School gave tickets to her lecture as prizes to honor students), another in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, another in Mishawaka, Indiana, another in East Minneapolis, Minnesota, another in Quincy, Illinois, another in Columbus, Ohio.

The lecture grind was not an easy life in the 1870s. Wendell Phillips, writing Pond from Iowa, gave a vivid picture of the lecturer's lot: "It has been extremely cold. I have been in the smaller towns and have had poor hotels and a generally hard time, rushed from one train to another, and puffed from station to station. In eleven days I have slept in a regular bed but four nights."

For Ann Eliza the clapboard hotels, chilling in winter, roasting in summer, the hasty meals in dingy restaurants, the strenuous appearances before acres of faces, these were difficult, but not the worst of it. The worst of it was the claustrophobic train life. Endlessly, it seemed, she was on Mr. Pullman's sleeper cars, jolting, bumping, stopping, starting, nauseated by the smell of paint and brass and green upholstery, eyes wearied by the constant shifting of scenery beyond the dirty windows.

Most hateful of all were the crude sleeping berths. Ann Eliza found, upon reading an issue of the *Daily Times* of Leavenworth, Kansas, that she was not

alone in her feelings. To this newspaper a lady traveler registered her complaint: “A woman’s toilet, to be satisfactorily performed, demands some other position than prone upon the face. Likewise, it is somewhat more agreeable to perform portions of the toilet unobserved by the multitude… A woman carefully extinguishes herself behind the curtains, slyly unloosens a lace, envelopes herself decorously in a large waterproof, not daring to lay aside her chignon for fear of a surprise… I think if there could be a lady’s car for sleeping and toilet, exclusive of gentlemen, it would be a great advancement in wayfaring civilization. I thought so this morning, especially when I awoke from uneasy slumbers to find the foot-board fallen, and a group of serene browed men gazing smilingly upon my sleeping beauty. Let us have separate cars, good people…”

Yet, despite these discomforts, Ann Eliza did not waver. As long as the Poland Law was proving ineffective and polygamy persisted, and as long as there were paying audiences, she went on and on. By August of 1875, she had added a fourth lecture to her series. This was “Utah As It Was, As It Is.” Time and again she was brought back to communities for repeat engagements, not only because of what she said but for the way she said it. Through the years her forensic abilities constantly improved. As late as 1901, after almost three decades of handling the world’s finest speakers, Major Pond was able to write of Ann Eliza: “I will say now that in all my experience I have never found so eloquent, so interesting, so earnest a talker. I have heard a great many, too. She had a cause. She was in dead earnest. She could sway audiences with her eloquence.”

From the start the eastern book publishers had been after her to commit her story to paper. At last she complied. In 1876, for whatever personal motives there might have been—to bring her crusade before a larger audience, to make money, to enhance her worth as a lecturer—she put her book before the public. It was a formidable 605-page volume, half autobiography, half diatribe against polygamy and Brigham. The coarse brown linen binding carried the title *Wife No. 19, or A Life in Bondage*… A Full Exposé of Mormonism by Ann-Eliza Young. The publisher was the highly respected Dustin, Gilman and Company of Hartford, Connecticut.

The title of the book invited the first controversy. Was Ann Eliza only wife number nineteen? Actually she was not, and she knew better. When she had married Brigham in 1869, she had become his nineteenth *living* wife. Forever after, from the lecture platform and in print, she gave herself this numerical standing, without bothering to explain how she had arrived at the figure. The absolute total of Brigham’s wives, living or dead, earthly or spiritual, was not known in Brigham’s time, perhaps not even by the Prophet himself, and this absolute total is not known to this day.

One of Ann Eliza’s favorite anecdotes about Brigham and his marriages

seems to support the elusiveness of a correct count. Once, said Ann Eliza, Brigham met a lady in the streets of Salt Lake City and was surprised when she greeted him cordially as Brother Young. He looked at her blankly and remarked, “I know I have seen you somewhere; your face is very familiar, but I cannot recall you.” The lady replied, “You are right; you have most certainly seen me before; I was married to you ten years ago…”

In 1861 Captain Richard Burton said that he had heard Brigham had been married between seventeen and thirty-six times. Most Gentile estimates, at the time and since, ranged between those figures.

Curiously, Mormon sources have been equally inexact. Today in the files of the Archives Room of the Latter-day Saints Genealogical Society—open only to Mormons—in Salt Lake City, there is an official roll call of Brigham’s wives, a list possibly never before made public. According to this record, Brigham had *fifty-two wives,* and the fiftieth was Ann Eliza.

Of the fifty-two wives listed in the Genealogical Society roster, thirty-one of them married Brigham in 1846, the year of the flight from Nauvoo, Illinois, and the settling of the Saints at Winter Quarters. Seven of these women married Brigham in one day, on February 3, 1846, although of these only Eliza R. Snow ever moved into the Lion House. Eight of these women are also listed in the archives as official widows of Joseph Smith. Thirteen were married by Brigham only for their time on earth, their eternity belonging to previous mates.

This roster, while it presents probably the most complete Mormon record of Brigham’s marriages, does not give the most accurate picture of the Prophet’s actual wives. Almost half of the women mentioned were Brigham’s spouses in name only—spiritual wives—joined to him as a means of receiving his protection. Many of these neither lived with Brigham as real wives nor consummated their marriages with him.

According to three of the best Mormon historians of Brigham’s domestic life—James H. Crockwell, Kate B. Carter, and the Prophet’s daughter, Mabel Young Sanborn, who lived to the age of eighty-seven—Brigham had twenty-seven wives, no more, no less.

Despite the fact that the Genealogical Society records give the date of Ann Eliza’s marriage to Brigham as April 7, 1868, and Mabel Young Sanborn gives it as April 6, 1868, Ann Eliza claimed that the marriage had taken place one year later, on April 7, 1869. At this date eighteen of his twenty-six wives were alive, and so Ann Eliza always assumed that she was number nineteen—perhaps because it made her feel less removed than being called wife number twenty-seven. For this reason her long-awaited book was entitled *Wife No. 19.*

The 605-page volume, dedicated “To the Mormon wives of Utah,” carried two introductory notes by lecture-platform celebrities. The first, written a year before publication, was by that enemy of alcoholism, John B. Gough, who

stated: “I need not assure her of my entire confidence in her sincerity and ability to carry out the work to which she has devoted herself, and the talents God has given her. I believe she has been called to this mission…” The other, written by Mary A. Livermore, remarked that the book had been read “with painful interest, which has deepened into disgust and pity,” and added: “I congratulate her on her complete emancipation, on her reunion with her beloved, whose obvious peril weighed too heavily on her filial and maternal heart, and on the possession of ability to give to the world an exposé of the Mormon horror, such as has never been received.”

The forty-one chapters of *Wife No. 19* began with Ann Eliza’s heritage and childhood and ended with her triumphant return to Salt Lake City as a successful lecturer. Once, on page thirty-two, she tried to explain why she had undertaken to write this book:

“It is with a desire to impress upon the world what Mormonism really is; to show the pitiful condition of its women, held in a system of bondage that is more cruel than African slavery ever was, since it claims to hold body and soul alike; to arouse compassion for its children and youth, born and growing up in an atmosphere of social impurity; and, above all, to awaken an interest in the hearts of the American people that shall at length deepen into indignation—that I venture to undertake the task of writing this book. I have consecrated myself to the work, not merely for my own sake, but for the sake of all the unhappy women of Utah, who, unlike myself, are either too powerless or too timid to break the fetters which bind them.”

Although the book purported to relate the story of Ann Eliza’s life, it was so filled with lengthy digressions against various Apostles, against Danites, against polygamy, so crowded with case histories of suffering plural wives, that few personal facts about the author herself came through. Nowhere were given her sons’ birthdays or description of their childhood. Nowhere was Major Pond’s name spelled out. Nowhere was there a chronology of the lectures and difficulties after her first Denver success. Nowhere was there a balanced account of life in a plural household. Instead, page after page was devoted to invective against Brigham Young. “To look at the man,” she wrote on page 269, “rosy and smiling, comfortable in every particular, you would never take him to be the hard, cruel despot he is. He looks clean enough outwardly, but within he is filled with moral rottenness to the very core.”

The prose was marred by unremitting hysteria. A typically anguished passage was that on page 401:

“Why cannot men and women, outside of this terrible system, see the horrors of it, and work for its overthrow? My soul cries out in very agony sometimes, ‘Is there no help for this great evil?’ Everywhere the world seems so dead to it! The enormity does not seem to manifest itself unto them. They speak lightly of Mormonism, as of something to ridicule or laugh at, rather

than to condemn. God knows there is nothing laughable or ridiculous in it to its victims. It is the most pathetic, tragic earnestness and reality."

Nearing the end, on page 591, she defended her outbursts against polygamy:

"I am accused sometimes of exaggeration. In reply to that accusation I would say, that is simply impossible, I could not exaggerate, since language is inadequate to even half unveil the horrors. There are events of daily occurrence, which decency and womanly modesty forbid my even hinting at… Not a word of my story is exaggerated or embellished. The difficulty has been rather to suppress and tone down."

Occasionally, amid the swamps of turgid prose, the overgrown bypaths of repetitive rumor, there grew a valuable fact about Ann Eliza herself or her life with Brigham and his wives. But as the only one of Brigham's wives to make public her story in her lifetime (Eliza R. Snow's autobiography remained unpublished until 1944), Ann Eliza missed her chance for a rare historical contribution by giving way to emotional vengeance. In 1925 M. R. Werner, a biographer of Brigham Young, wrote of *Wife No. 19*: "One turns from its pages disappointed with the authoress, who did not make nearly the most of her opportunities, bored with her attempts to make of herself a martyr, and more than ever sympathetic with the trials of Brigham Young."

If historians were dissatisfied with Ann Eliza's book, her public was not. Dustin, Gilman and Company, the publishers, decided to sell it by subscription, door to door—as Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad* had been and Ulysses S. Grant's *Memoirs* was to be sold—and advertised for agents or salesmen to take on the campaign. "No book ever issued from our press," said the publisher, "has met with such a flattering reception, or given such general satisfaction. Orders are coming in rapidly, and new territory is being engaged day by day; and no time should be lost in securing a field for operation… Agents all over the country are meeting with a success which is *most extraordinary,* frequently taking as many as 20, 30, and even 40 orders daily."

Few, if any, top-flight critics reviewed the book. However, clergymen and educators were quick to comment on it, largely in the secular press. Thomas M. Dill, a school principal in Cincinnati, Ohio, was a typical critic. He found *Wife No. 19* a "necessary, instructive and entertaining contribution to American Literature." Similarly, in March 1876, the editor of *The Christian Standard* reviewed *Wife No. 19* as "a plain, unvarnished tale of a woman's wrongs and sufferings endured in the Mormon church… Ann Eliza's hook is an obstacle in the way of Josephism."

More recent critics have questioned Ann Eliza's authorship of the volume, mainly because her degree of literacy is held suspect, but also because her time between lectures had been so greatly taken up by visits to doctors. According to Brigham's daughter, Susa Young Gates, in that part of the

biography of her father that she withheld from publication: “The book which bore her name, ‘Wife Number Nineteen’ written (according to the testimony of her manager, Major James B. Pond) by Colonel Stratton, who accompanied her on her lectures, was a clever sob-story, with just enough truth in it to get across to a Barnumized public… The Major confessed to me that Ann Eliza did not write one word of her lectures; Major Stanton did that, and he also wrote her book.” The ghost writer Mrs. Gates referred to as “Colonel Stratton” and “Major Stanton” in her only partially proofed manuscript was undoubtedly the Reverend Stratton, who had not accompanied Ann Eliza on her tour, whatever literary assistance he may have provided.

But Stratton is not the only candidate for the actual authorship of *Wife No. 19*. Mrs. John A. Widtsoe, a granddaughter of Brigham Young, heard that Ann Eliza’s autobiography was ghostwritten by Major Pond. Dr. F. W. Cagle, Jr., of the University of Utah, an authority on polygamy, suggests that the book may have been written by J. H. Beadle, a frequently impoverished editor and hack. In 1870 Beadle had published his own exposé of Mormonism entitled *Life in Utah, or The Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism,* and in 1872 he had ghostwritten *Brigham’s Destroying Angel* for the reformed Danite, Bill Hickman. Since Beadle was short of funds in 1874 and 1875, it is possible that he had assumed the task of serving as Ann Eliza’s shade. However, the tone of Ann Eliza’s private letters and impromptu interviews with the press on her lecture tours indicates that, although she may have retained a professional writer to correct and polish it, she undoubtedly wrote or dictated *Wife No. 19.*

Despite the fact that the best sellers of 1876—George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda,* Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer,* and Jules Verne’s *Michael Strogoff*—outsold Ann Elizas *Wife No. 19,* this memoir of a life in harem bondage had a widespread and commendable sale. There were at least three printings. No other confession by a polygamous wife, before or after, sold half as well.

Meanwhile, as Ann Eliza delivered her book to the printer, another important event in her life was reaching a climax, one that would keep her in the public eye and renew interest in her lectures. In Salt Lake City, *The Deseret News* announced that at seven o’clock in the evening of February 25, 1875, Judge James B. McKean would hand down his decision in the divorce case of “Young vs. Young.”

At last the moment of decision for Brigham Young and for his twenty-seventh wife was at hand. Judge McKean summarized the arguments, stating that, in the opinion of the court, Ann Eliza had been legally divorced from James L. Dee, and Brigham’s claims for Mary Ann Angell as his sole lawful wife “must be proved true before they could be admitted as evidence against the plaintiff.” Therefore, continued Judge McKean, the marriage contracted between Ann Eliza and Brigham “was legal and binding according to the laws

of the Territory and of the United States, notwithstanding that the forms of the Mormon Church were used."

In conclusion, said Judge McKean, since Ann Eliza had been the Prophet's legal wife, he was awarding her $3,000 to cover costs of her suit, payable in ten days, and he was awarding her $500 a month alimony, retroactive to the date the suit was filed, or a total of $9,500, payable in twenty days.

Judge McKean's decision in Utah caused an uproar of dismay in government circles in Washington, D.C. Until this moment President Grant had refused to recognize polygamy and had labeled all plural marriages as "licensed prostitution." Now one of Grant's appointees had, speaking for the Federal government, acknowledged that a polygamous marriage was a legal marriage and, by this act, made Mormon polygamy lawful and acceptable. It is possible that, in his eagerness to strike a blow at Brigham, Judge McKean did not understand the far-reaching consequences of his decision. But the press, as one body, castigated him. Wrote the New York *Post:* "by this decision the Judge receded from his own principles and may fairly be hailed by the Mormon Church as a convert to the doctrine of polygamy."

The agitation was soon heightened by Brigham Young's next act. Blessed though he was to find polygamy accepted as legal, he was indignant at the success of Ann Eliza's "extortion." While paying her $3,000 for costs, he refused to deliver the $9,500 due as alimony. Promptly he was summoned into court again.

On March 11, 1875, Brigham, surrounded by his legal staff, faced his archenemy, Judge McKean, once more. Since Brigham had refused to make the alimony payment, the judge wanted to know why he should not be held in contempt of court. Brigham's attorneys argued that they had filed an appeal to the Supreme Court, so there was no reason to hold Brigham in contempt. Judge McKean replied that his decision was "not appealable." Then, after briskly summarizing the arguments, he concluded:

"It is, therefore, because of the facts and premises, ordered and adjudged that defendant is guilty of disobedience to the process of the Court, and is therein guilty of contempt of Court.

"And since the Court has not one rule of action where conspicuous and another where obscure persons are concerned; and since it is a fundamental principle of the Republic that all men are equal before the law; and since this Court desires to impress this great fact, this great law, upon the minds of all the people of this Territory:

"Now, therefore, because of the said contempt of Court, it is further ordered and adjudged, that the said Brigham Young do pay a fine of twenty-five dollars, and that he be imprisoned for the term of one day."

This was not the first time that Judge McKean had sentenced Brigham to imprisonment. Shortly after his arrival in Utah, five years earlier, Judge

McKean had set out to prove that the Gentile Federal courts outranked the Mormon territorial courts. Under McKean, cases heretofore tried before Mormon juries were suddenly being tried before Gentile juries. The first major test came when Paul Engelbrecht, a Gentile, tried to sell liquor without a license. Brigham's police raided the saloon and poured Engelbrecht's liquor into a ditch. The saloonkeeper sued in a Federal court and was heard by Judge McKean and a non-Mormon jury. Engelbrecht was awarded $59,000 in damages, three times his original loss, and the Mormons appealed the judgment to the United States Supreme Court.

While the Engelbrecht case was being appealed, Judge McKean decided to pit himself against the Prophet, who had recently married his twenty-seventh wife. Invoicing the old 1852 antibigamy law, McKean had his grand jury haul Brigham into court, above Faust's Stable, for "lewd and lascivious cohabitation." Released on a bail of $5,000, until a trial date could be set, Brigham traveled to St. George to spend the winter. McKean interpreted Brigham's trip as a flight from justice and immediately demanded that he appear for trial in Salt Lake City on January 2, 1872. The Apostles feared that Brigham would be persecuted, and there was some talk of an escape to Mexico. Brigham would not have it. "God is in court as well as in battles and miracles," he said. "There will be no resistance. I shall obey the summons."

Traveling 300 miles in nine days, using an open buggy and a private train, traveling through the severest winter weather, Brigham returned to Salt Lake City to stand trial. Judge McKean did not hide his bias. "Let the counsel on both sides, and the court also keep constantly in mind the uncommon character of this case," he said. "It is… proper to say that while the case at bar is called 'the People versus Brigham Young,' its other and real tide is 'Federal Authority versus Polygamic Theocracy'… A system is on trial in the person of Brigham Young." Speedily Brigham was found guilty and imprisoned in the Bee Hive House, under the constant guard of one Captain Evans. So handsome was the thirty-five-year-old captain that several of Brigham's older daughters fell in love with him, and one admitted that "we were not at all sorry to have Father under arrest." After three months of confinement, most of it spent in a rocking chair, after three months of being deprived of his pulpit in the Tabernacle, his evenings in the theater, his travels in the kingdom, Brigham's fate was settled by the Supreme Court's decision in the Engelbrecht case, which limited the jurisdiction of Federal courts. On April 15, 1872, Judge McKean received a wire from Washington, D.C.: "Jury unlawfully drawn: summons invalid; proceedings ordered dismissed. Decision unanimous. All indictments quashed." The Mormon police who had raided Engelbrecht's saloon were saved, and Brigham was free of house arrest.

The Sunday following his release, Brigham appeared before his

congregation in the Tabernacle.

"A word to the Latter-day Saints," he called out. "Good morning!"

"Good morning!" the congregation echoed.

"How do you do?"

"Very well!" came the chorus.

"How's your faith in the Lord?"

"Strong!"

"How do you think I look after my long confinement?"

"First rate!"

On the other hand, Judge McKean did not feel first-rate. Patiently he had bided his time, waiting for a new opportunity. Now, on March 11, 1875, acting for his friend Ann Eliza, he had it. For the second time he had sentenced the Mormon leader to imprisonment.

Placed in the custody of United States Deputy Marshal A. K. Smith, Brigham was driven back to the Lion House to share dinner with his wives. Then, after packing a change of clothing, he got into the marshal's carriage and started for the penitentiary, four miles outside the city. Twenty carriages, filled with friends and sympathizers, followed Brigham. At the jailhouse he was led into a cell already occupied by thirteen criminals. However, by nightfall he had been removed to a small, comfortable room next to the warden's office. Brigham's nephew and physician, Dr. Seymour B. Young, as well as Daniel H. Wells, the mayor of Salt Lake City, and a Bee Hive House clerk named William A. Rossiter, spent the night of imprisonment with Brigham. The following day, March 12,1875, his sentence served, Brigham was released.

In the East, between lectures, Ann Eliza briefly enjoyed her victory. Through McKean she had succeeded where all the men who were the Prophet's enemies had failed—she had forced him to serve out a sentence in a Federal penitentiary.

Curiously, at the bar of the nation's press, Judge McKean seemed to be regarded as the villain and Brigham Young as the hero. Not unexpectedly, *The Deseret News* was incensed by the jailing of its leader: "By some few small contemptible people it may be considered a good thing to heap an indignity upon the head of a venerable and much respected gentleman, who has frequently done more for the good of his country and humanity generally in one day than most of his enemies may ever expect to do in the aggregate were they to live to the age of Methuselah."

But, surprisingly, newspapers outside of Salt Lake City concurred with this indictment of McKean. The Omaha *Herald* considered McKean's sentence "a beautiful exhibition of the personal littleness and malice of the Puritan bigot who was kicked out of Congress some years ago." The Pittsburgh *Leader* was of a similar mind: "The plain truth is, 'Judge' McKean has acted like a bigot

ever since he went to Utah." To which the San Francisco *Bulletin* added: "The tendency to become partizan appears to be very strong. The result is that the judge rapidly takes on the character of the prosecutor. This was the trouble with the last judge. McKean succumbed to the same influence."

Five days after Brigham was released from jail, his nemesis Judge McKean was released from his judiciary post. President Grant had suffered through many of his appointee's irregularities—once, when a mining company in which McKean was a major owner was sued, McKean had sat in judgment of himself—but the legalizing of Ann Eliza's marriage and the jailing of the Prophet were too much. McKean was fired, the dispatch from Washington said, because his decisions were "ill advised and tyrannical, and in excess of his powers as a judge." Crushed, McKean retired to a small private law practice in Salt Lake City, which he maintained until his death from typhoid fever in 1879.

McKean's replacement was Judge David P. Lowe, a former congressman from Kansas. Immediately Ann Eliza sued for her back alimony, and Judge Lowe, apparently under firm instructions, reversed the decision of his predecessor on the bench by decreeing that Ann Eliza's marriage to Brigham had not been legal and, therefore, she was not entitled to alimony. The Mormon press took Judge Lowe to its bosom. Said *The Deseret News:* "The ruling is very elaborate, showing the deep attention the Judge has given to the subject, the reasoning being so clear, in every particular, as to appear simply unanswerable, and is considered, by members of the bar generally, to be the most learned opinion ever delivered from the bench in this Territory."

Mormon ecstasy was short-lived. Judge Lowe resigned, and Judge Jacob S. Boreman took over the further disposition of Ann Eliza's suit. What happened next was recounted by Brigham in a letter to Albert Carrington, President of the Mormon European mission: "We had thought that the suit, commonly known as the 'Ann Eliza case,' so far as alimony pendente lite was concerned, would not be resurrected in the courts, but through a technicality of the law, the plaintiff's attorneys were enabled to bring the matter up before Judge Boreman, who issued an order upon me to show cause why I should not be adjudged guilty of contempt of court in not having paid the alimony ordered by Chief Justice McKean… after the matter was argued by counsel, he gave his decision that I must pay the amount claimed, or be imprisoned until it was paid. I was committed to the charge of Marshall Maxwell, who, finding I was too sick to be removed, placed me in the care of two of his deputies. At first some little friction was manifested, but now everything is moving smoothly and kindly."

Eleven days later Brigham wrote Carrington again: "I still remain a prisoner in the care of the United States Marshal, though nobody, saint or sinner, has the least idea that I would run away, if there was not a Marshal or

other U.S. officer within a thousand miles."

Once more Brigham remained imprisoned, under guard, in his harem. Some newspapers considered this cruel and unusual punishment. Others were doubtful that Ann Eliza deserved the $9,500 that Brigham refused to pay her. Among the latter was the *Daily Alta California* of San Francisco, and Ann Eliza must have been distressed when she read its lead editorial of November 3,1875:

"We have no personal friendship for Brigham Young, nor any toleration for his marital crochets, and in many other things we think him reprehensible; but our dislikes of the man, or disinclination for his religious faith should not disqualify us from pointing out the gross injustice which a woman and a coterie of men are seeking to impose upon him at the present time in offering to him the choice of paying to Ann Eliza, who, in the sight of the law is but 'a mistress,' the legitimate and honorable claims of a pure and virtuous wife, or go to prison for disobedience…

"Ann Eliza was old enough to have a good measure of sense for herself. She had experience enough in her father's family, in her brother's family, and in the families of the polygamic Mormons around her; she must have seen enough to know exactly what polygamy was before she joined Brigham Young's lot of women; she was no 'Spring chicken'…

"Had Ann Eliza gone before the Federal Court and represented that she was degraded in polygamy, and asked the Court to deliver her, if it could, from that relationship with Brigham Young, and prayed the Court to grant what aid and protection it could, Ann Eliza would have merited the sympathy of all who could pity the victims of wild enthusiasm…

"To deplete the treasury of Brigham Young any amount of thousands of dollars, in the manner now proposed, is simply to strengthen in the Mormons their accusations against the Gentile Judges of wilful persecution…"

If Ann Eliza thought that, despite a carping press, she was now closer to victory, she was again mistaken. President Grant had nominated J. Alexander White as Chief Justice of Utah, and now he took over her case. When Brigham presented a writ of habeas corpus, Judge White granted it, and after his five months of confinement, Brigham was once more free. On November 18, 1875, Amos Musser recorded in his journal: "… he was this morning released by order of Chief Justice White on writ of Habeas Corpus. Thus his notice again triumphed over tyranny & oppression thank the Lord."

Still the divorce case dragged on. In three months Judge White was gone, the Senate having failed to confirm his appointment. In his stead sat Judge Michael Schaeffer, who decided that Brigham must pay alimony but reduced the monthly sum from $500 to $100, and who stipulated that he pay Ann Eliza $3,600 instead of the $18,000 by then due her. When Brigham resisted, Judge Schaeffer confiscated three span of his horses, three span of mules,

three cows, three carriages, and three wagons and calmly prepared to auction them off. Wearily Brigham agreed to pay the $3,600 to Ann Eliza and did so.

But the last word in the divorce suit was still to be heard. On April 28, 1877, the New York *Times* ran a dispatch filed from Salt Lake City the day before. The first headline read: “A Menial Instead of a Wife.” The second read: “The Divorce Suit of Ann Eliza Young—The Decision in the Case—The Alleged Marriage Null and Void.” After four years of incessant legal fencing, Judge Schaeffer had passed the final decision, one that could not be appealed. Ann Eliza, he said, had not been legally married to Brigham Young. Hence, any alimony allegedly due her was annulled. Brigham must pay her court costs. The suit was closed.

In an editorial on May 2, 1877, the New York *Times* nodded its august approval. “Judge Schaeffer’s decision seems founded in equity and common sense. A woman, to secure legal standing in a suit for divorce, must have been lawfully married. To say that forty-nine women are entitled to lawful separation and divorce from one man, simultaneously, is to say that he was lawfully married to forty-nine wives, and that polygamy is recognized by the statutes. Brigham Young has pleaded that he is living in a condition of mystical concubinage. A United States court confirms that view, so far as the concubinage is concerned. It will be interesting to see what the Mormons, men and women, think of it.”

All parties seemed relieved to be done with it, the Mormons as well as Ann Eliza. Mormon historians called the four-year case a “malicious and vindictive” one, instigated for blackmail, and “a disgrace to those who instituted it.” In winning, Brigham had saved money but forfeited his last chance to give plural marriage a legal status in the nation. Now all but one of his wives were concubines in the eyes of the law. If any one of them left him, she could expect neither social standing nor Brigham’s further financial support. Had Ann Eliza won her suit, it was thought that Mary Van Cott and perhaps one or two more might also have sued for divorce.

With the “Ann Eliza case” settled, there was peace, or resignation, once more in the Lion House.

Despite the stigma of concubinage, Ann Eliza did not mind losing her suit. Although she could no longer honestly advertise herself as the former wife of Brigham Young, the publicity of her defeat attracted larger crowds than ever to her lectures. This rising income was a fair substitute for the alimony she had lost. In defeat she seemed to find the pleasures of a certain victory. As she wrote of Judge Schaeffer’s adjudication in later years:

“No doubt this decision was correct. I lost my suit, but I had compelled the dreaded monster to exhibit his real character in a court of justice, and to save his money by pleading that his whole conduct was contrary to law. Henceforth the decision in regard to the Mormon Prophet’s acts and liability

for them rested with the world at large."

The legal fight against Ann Eliza was Brigham Young's last earthly combat. Four months later the Mormon giant lay dying.

The end came gradually, almost tentatively. On August 19, 1877, he preached a sermon to 2,500 Saints in Brigham City. The following day he returned by train to Salt Lake City. Except for lines of fatigue across his large face, and an inclination to sit more than stand, he did not seem to show his seventy-six years. On August 23 he was at his desk, between the Bee Hive House and the Lion House, as usual, although complaining of nausea. He led the evening prayer for his wives in the central parlor of the Lion House, and afterward he conferred with Eliza R. Snow on the feasibility of sending several of the other wives and two of his daughters on a lecture tour of the country. Eliza R. Snow thought that these happy women might use the recently published book, *The Women of Mormondom,* by Edward W. Tullidge, as their text and even sell copies of it. This was an effort to counteract the anti-Mormonism encouraged by Ann Eliza and other anti-polygamy speakers. Brigham considered the proposal an excellent one. "It is an experiment," he said, "but one that I should like to see tried." He felt weary and picked up his candle. "I think now I shall go and take my rest."

At eleven o'clock that night, in his Lion House bedroom, Brigham was stricken with what was then called cholera morbus—acute appendicitis, one daughter defined it later. Dr. Seymour B. Young, Brigham's nephew, and another physician were summoned, and these two attended him all through the night. In the next two days, there were four doctors. They reported that his bowels were inflamed. He suffered great pain, but occasionally the pain abated, and he made amusing remarks to the relatives gathered about him. By the fourth day, he appeared to be losing ground. Prayers gave way to hot poultices over the heart and hours of artificial respiration. When he groaned in semiconsciousness, someone kneeled close to ask if he was suffering. He replied weakly, "No, I don't know that I do."

On Wednesday, August 29, 1877, it was known that he could not recover. His nephew had filled him with opiates and moved him from the canopy bed to one beside the open window. His brother, Joseph Young, and his son, John W. Young, were beside him, as were "several of his wives, and many of his children." The morning had passed, and it was afternoon. For a moment he seemed to revive. His eyes fluttered open. He stared at the ceiling, his daughter Zina observed, and suddenly he called out, "Joseph! Joseph! Joseph!" Then he lapsed into the last unconsciousness. At one minute after four in the afternoon, as those around him knelt in prayer, he was dead. "Gazing upon that noble face," said Zina, "I thought he looked like a God."

Three days later, at repose in a simple pine coffin, he lay in state beneath the arch of the huge Tabernacle. Organ and orchestra played Mendelssohn's

“Funeral March.” George Q. Cannon preached the final sermon. In two days more than forty thousand persons filed past the coffin to view the one that Cannon had called “the brain, the eye, the ear, the mouth and hand for the entire Church…” On September 2, 1877, his coffin was driven to the vault of the private cemetery behind the Lion House. Four thousand of his followers, eight in a row, all in black, followed him to his grave. Sixteen of his seventeen surviving wives were present—only Ann Eliza, it is said, was missing—and his legal wife, Mary Ann Angell, walked arm in arm with his favorite wife, Amelia Folsom. Most of his forty-four surviving children were also present.

“The name of Brigham Young is familiar all over the globe,” wrote *The Deseret News.* “His greatness is universally acknowledged, but his goodness is known only to the few.” In the East, about to embark on her fourth season of lecturing, Ann Eliza was not one of the few. Respectful mourning did not inhibit her bitterness. Brigham was still “the great deceiver and false Prophet whose teachings brought such strange vicissitudes and misery upon us all… There has probably never existed a more remarkable union of compelling power over men and women and repulsive fraud and meanness.”

In death Brigham returned the compliment. His last will and testament, prepared in 1873 and amended in 1875, rewarded all his living wives except Ann Eliza. Naming George Q. Cannon, Brigham Young, Jr., and Albert Carrington his executors, he designated that they supervise a two-million-dollar trust fund for his wives and children. Since his will was made out the month that Ann Eliza had fled Utah, Brigham was careful to define what he meant by “wife” in it. “To avoid any question,” he wrote, “the words married or marriage in this will shall be taken to have become consummated between man and woman, either by ceremony before a lawful magistrate or according to the order of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or by their cohabitation in conformity to our custom.”

Nineteen “classes” or groups of dependents were named to share the estate. Clara Decker, Harriet Cook, Susan Snively, Eliza Burgess, Margaret Pierce, Eliza R. Snow, Naamah K. J. C. Twiss, and Martha Bowker were willed the Lion House “as their place of residence during their natural lives.” Amelia Folsom and Mary Ann Angell were willed the $100,000 Gardo House. Besides these houses and the cash bequests, Brigham left a $20,000 property to Mary Ann Angell, two properties worth $50,000 and $80,000 to Lucy A. Decker, two properties worth $20,000 and $40,000 to Emmeline Free, a $12,000 property to Emily D. Partridge, two properties worth $30,100 and $5,200 to Clara Decker, a $16,000 property to Zina D. Huntington, and an $18,000 property to Mary Van Cott. Three sons and twenty-seven daughters were also awarded real estate.

Less than two years after Brigham’s death, the executors of his estate

turned over nearly one million dollars of the inheritance to officers of the Church. The executors claimed that Brigham had borrowed that much money from the Church for his personal needs, and now it must be repaid. Seven of Brigham's wives and daughters regarded this action as financial skulduggery, and on June 14, 1879, they sued the executors. The suit was led by one of Brigham's ten children by Emmeline Free, twenty-six-year-old Emmeline A. Young McIntosh. It seemed that Mrs. McIntosh had been disgruntled from the start, since her father had left her, personally, only a $3,000 lot and a small portion of her late mother's $60,000 estate. When the suit gained considerable publicity in the East, especially in the pages of the New York *Times,* the executors agreed to compromise with the seven indignant heirs. Since it was almost impossible to separate Brigham's personal holdings from Church holdings, the seven wives and daughters agreed to share a cash settlement of $75,000. Accordingly, in September of 1879, the suit was withdrawn, and the injured parties, now subdued, did not make their claims of fraud public.

When Brigham died he left behind him seventeen living wives. Except for Ann Eliza, all of them faded into relative obscurity. Mary Ann Angell, as Brigham's legal wife, had the right to claim one third of his enormous estate under the law. She refused to do so. Instead, a constant invalid, she kept to the privacy of her own quarters, the abandoned schoolhouse behind the Lion House, which she shared with a cow who lived in a partitioned stall. On June 27, 1882, at the age of seventy-nine, she died.

Lucy Decker, Brigham's third wife, outlived him by thirteen years and died in January of 1890, at the age of sixty-eight. Harriet Cook, the reluctant fourth wife, gave Brigham a stormy time of it in his last years. In the spring of 1874, she threatened to emulate Ann Eliza and sue for a divorce. According to the Salt Lake City *Tribune:* "*We* learn that to save future litigation and further scandal, the sated old polygamist unloosed his purse-strings, and counted out sufficient ducats to meet his defrauded wife's demand, she took a final farewell of her unloving lord, and did not lose the opportunity of giving the old man her unflattering opinion of his Divine Ordinance."

As much as she detested her husband, Harriet Cook hated Ann Eliza even more. In Chicago she told the press that Ann Eliza's lectures were lies—that the twenty-seventh wife had good clothes, sufficient income, and a house worth $20,000, and that Brigham had given her no grounds for divorce. Harriet Cook returned to Salt Lake City, and after Brigham's death she lived in the Lion House until felled by a heart attack at the age of seventy-four, in November of 1898.

Augusta Adams, wife number five, survived Brigham by nine years. She passed away in 1886, at the age of eighty-four. Clara Decker, wife number six, lived in a private home on State Street, devoted herself to charities, and died in January of 1889, at sixty- one. Emily Dow Partridge, the eighth wife,

gave herself to Temple work. She avoided her sister wives and devoted hours daily to making entries in a private journal which she would show to no one, because it contained “harsh” remarks about Brigham. When she died at seventy-five, in December of 1899, she was living in her large two-story home on Third East Street. Like several other of the wives, it was her wish that she not be buried beside Brigham in his isolated cemetery plot.

Susan Snively, the thirteenth wife, despite her illness, was a widow for fifteen long years before succumbing in November of 1892, at seventy-seven. Margaret Pierce, the seventeenth wife, lived on and on. She survived Brigham by three decades, dying at the age of eighty-five in January of 1907. Martha Bowker, the fifteenth wife, was sixty-eight when she died in Salt Lake City in September of 1890.

Zina D. Huntington, the eighteenth wife, took to travel after Brigham’s death. Following two years of mourning, she departed on a mission to Hawaii. Two years after that, she journeyed to New York to preach the Mormon gospel. By 1901, when she was eighty, she was head of the Relief Societies of the Church and on a tour of Canada. There she became ill and was rushed back to Salt Lake City, where she died in August of 1901.

Lucy Bigelow, Ann Eliza’s old foe, remained in the winter house in St. George, Utah, for fifteen years after her husband’s death. She had been much disgraced in Brigham’s eyes when she permitted Dora, the eldest of her three daughters by him, to marry a Gentile named Morley Dunford and furthermore allowed the wedding service to be performed by an Episcopal clergyman. Fortunately for Lucy Bigelow, Brigham was not alive to learn of daughter Dora’s next marriage, which was incredibly to Ann Eliza’s former divorce lawyer, Judge Albert Hagan, then a widower, by whom she had four children and for whom she turned Catholic. In the years after Lucy lost Brigham, she performed several missions abroad, the most notable to Hawaii. In 1898 she lived in Berlin, where she cared for a granddaughter who was studying voice. In February of 1905, at the age of seventy-five, she passed away.

Eliza R. Snow remained in the Lion House, writing her poems, guiding the other wives, doing good works. In December of 1888, when she was eighty-four, she departed this life with the certain expectation that she would be reunited with her first husband, Joseph Smith, for eternity. Eliza Burgess, the twenty-third wife, had maintained Brigham’s home in Provo while he lived. But the year following his death she moved back to the tumult of Salt Lake City. She survived all of the other women in the harem. Her death did not occur until August of 1915, only a few months after the *Lusitania* had been sunk, Henry Ford had displayed his latest model automobile, and a Hollywood film called *The Birth of a Nation* had been released to the public. Harriet Barney, the twenty-fourth wife, died in February of 1911. Mary Van Cott, who gave Brigham his last child, had remained discontented after Ann

Eliza had left. At one point, on the verge of leaving the Prophet, she was persuaded by her parents to endure her lot. To avoid a second scandal, Brigham soothed Mary by rebuilding her house, adding new furniture, and presenting her with a grand piano. For the sake of her child she gave up the idea of separation. Soon enough Brigham's death gave her the freedom she desired. She survived Brigham by only seven years, dying prematurely at the age of forty in January of 1884.

It was the boast of Mormon historians that none of Brigham's widows, with the exception of Ann Eliza, ever married again. However, some evidence exists that two of his wives remarried, one before his death, and the other afterward.

There are two versions of how Mary Jane Bigelow, the twenty-first wife, obtained her secret divorce from Brigham. According to the Mormon version, Mary Jane found that she did not love her husband and that she was unhappy in polygamy. She bared her heart to her sister, Brigham's twenty-second wife, and her sister advised her to tell the Prophet the truth. This Mary Jane proceeded to do. Brigham proved cooperative and gave her freedom in the present time on the condition that she join him in eternity. According to the Gentile version, Brigham learned that Mary Jane was having a love affair, accused her of adultery, and packed her off to her parents. In either case, Mary Jane separated from Brigham and successively contracted three more marriages, to John Bair, Daniel D. Hunt, and Philander Bell, the last in April of 1868. All of these unions were for time only; eternity was reserved for the Prophet.

The one widow who may have remarried after Brigham's death was his twenty-fifth and favorite wife, Amelia Folsom. On August 26, 1878, a year after the Mormon leader's death, the New York *Times* carried the following dispatch: "A telegram from Salt Lake City, Utah, says that Amelia Folsom, Brigham Young's favorite wife, was married in the Mormon Endowment House, on Thursday, August 15th, to John Leavitt, General Passenger Agent of the Utah Central Railroad. Amelia is represented to be Mr. Leavitt's second affinity." The Mormon press, it might be added, made no mention of Amelia's second marriage, if it did occur, and today Amelia's surviving relatives firmly deny that she ever took a husband after Brigham.

Amelia's widowhood was busy and secure. When the $100,000 Gardo House was completed, she moved into it for a year, then decided that it was too large and ostentatious. She sold it to the Church and moved into a comfortable two-story residence on South First West Street, and this house soon came to be known as Junior Gardo. She kept herself occupied with genealogical research, horticulture, and Church committees, although she would not speak in public. She traveled extensively from California to New York and went abroad, where she spent most of her time in England and

France. In 1886 she attended the wedding of her distant cousin, Frances Folsom, to President Grover Cleveland in the White House.

In 1893, when she was fifty-five, Amelia gave a rare interview to a reporter from the Chicago *Daily News.*

The visitor wondered if her marriage to Brigham had been a happy one.

"I should certainly dislike to think otherwise," said Amelia. "Why not? We were all members of the same family and treated each other as such. I would sacrifice anything for the surviving wives of President Young, and their feeling toward me I think is the same."

"How many times did your husband marry after you became his wife?"

"Twice afterward; I don't know how many times before. His will should show that."

Later the reporter dared to ask, "You have the name of being Brigham Young's favorite wife?"

"I can't say that he had any favorites," Amelia answered. "He was equally kind and attentive to all in his lifetime and left each surviving wife an equal legacy."

"Do you still believe in polygamy?"

"Certainly I do. If polygamy was once right it is still right. There is no reason why a polygamous marriage may not be as happy as the ordinary marriage, if it is entered understandingly."

After some discussion about the future of polygamy the reporter suddenly inquired if Amelia had any children.

"I regret to say I have none," she replied. "I am constantly sensible to the fact that children would have been an inestimable source of comfort and company to me at the present time. I am living alone here, though visits back and forth with the surviving wives of President Young add great pleasure to my home life."

"How many of President Young's widows are living?"

"There are nine of us," said Amelia. She proceeded to name the nine in order of their seniority but carefully omitted the name of the tenth. She refused to mention Ann Eliza, then living in Manistee, Michigan. She concluded the interview by stating, "We all held a reunion on Thanksgiving Day at the residence of one of President Young's granddaughters in this city."

Amelia lived seventeen years after that interview. She died in December of 1910, at the age of seventy-two. A poem by Louisa M. Alcott was read at her funeral, and Richard W. Young used the solemn public occasion to put down forever a rumor that had been long in circulation. "It was one time intimated that by reason of her intimacy with Brigham Young, Aunt Amelia had induced unfair property distribution; but this since has been found to be untrue."

From time to time, after Brigham's death, it was said that various of his

wives had abandoned Salt Lake City for Gentile pastures. Typically Edgar Cayce, the clairvoyant healer, remembered that when he was seven, in 1883, the new schoolteacher who came to board on his aunt's farm in Christian County, Kentucky, introduced herself as a Mrs. Ellison, from the West, "where she had been a Mormon, and so she said, one of the wives of Brigham Young."

But in 1877 the nation was concerned not with the fate of Brigham's widows but rather with the fate of his Church and its system of polygamy. Many fanatics considered this the ideal moment to wipe out celestial marriage by force. In the Brooklyn Tabernacle the Reverend T. DeWitt Talmadge, notorious for his sensationalism, thundered to his flock, "Now, at the death of the Mormon Chieftain, is the time for the United States government to strike… Turn their vast temple into an arsenal. Set Phil Sheridan after them. Give him enough troops and he will teach all Utah that forty wives is thirty-nine too many."

However, the loss of the man who had led them for more than three decades left the Saints saddened but in no way weakened. The 120,000 Mormons in the territory defied the 23,000 Gentiles underfoot and the threatening oratory from the East. A week after Brigham had been laid to rest, the Apostles solemnly met and sustained the leader of their Twelve, sixty-nine-year-old John Taylor, of Milnthorpe, England, as their head. In effect, Taylor was promoted to Prophet without the honor. Not until October 10, 1880, in the festive year of the Church's fiftieth anniversary, did the hierarchy officially elect Taylor to the First Presidency as Brigham's successor.

The selection of John Taylor as the third Prophet in a half century was, in a sense, a reply to the wishful thinking of anti-Mormons who expected the Church to soft-pedal its stand on polygamy after Brigham's passing. "John Taylor was a zealous, unscrupulous Mormon in every way, not least in polygamy," wrote Ann Eliza. "He had altogether seven wives and thirty-four children." And worst of all, added Ann Eliza, the five wives still alive "were required to earn their own support, and in return he honored them with a call now and then."

John Taylor, a tall man with a long white beard and the gift of eloquence, "although for a ruler he listens too much to counsel," said a correspondent of the London *Times*, had been one of Brigham's foremost servants and admirers. Leaving his native England at twenty, he had emigrated to Canada and there had become a Methodist preacher. At twenty-eight he had been baptized into the faith of Joseph Smith, and at thirty he was an Apostle. Thereafter his activities were varied and cosmopolitan. In 1840 he was in Washington, D.C., urging Congress to award the Mormons damages for their persecutions in Missouri. In 1844 he was in the Carthage, Illinois, jail when Joseph Smith was murdered and himself had four bullets pumped into his

body. In 1850 he preached the faith in England, France, and Germany. In New York he published a periodical, *The Mormon,* and in Europe he translated *The Book of Mormon* into French. Now, with forty years as an Apostle behind him, and seven celestial marriages, he could be counted on to perpetuate the tenet of plurality of wives.

From the moment that Taylor had replaced Brigham, Ann Eliza knew that nothing had changed. “American statesmen who were distressed and perplexed by the Mormon problem,” she wrote, “had vainly hoped that when the dictator Brigham Young passed away, the power of the Church would be weakened and its policy changed, and in particular that polygamy would gradually be abandoned. They were dismayed to find the Church as aggressive as ever and polygamy openly advocated and more widely practiced in spite of stringent Federal laws.”

Until 1877 the so-called “stringent Federal laws” against polygamy had been anything but effective. Mormon haters liked to blame the weakness of these laws on Brigham’s lobby in the capital. According to one Gentile source, Brigham was once heard to remark, “When I put my hand into one pocket, I put Congress into the other pocket.” More likely, anti-polygamy laws were soft because hardheaded congressmen were unsure of their ground, aware always that the Constitution carried no specific restrictions on the institution of marriage.

The first anti-polygamy bill introduced in Congress had been written by Representative Justin R. Morrill, of Vermont, and had been passed and signed into law by President Lincoln on July 8, 1862. The Morrill measure made no pretense at being subtle. It began: “An Act to punish and prevent the practice of Polygamy in the Territories of the United States…” The law simply provided that if a man were married to more than one woman at a time, he was liable to a fine of $500 and four years’ imprisonment. However, there were loopholes. In Utah enforcement of Federal law was in the hands of local, not Federal, courts. Since local courts were dominated by Mormons, all cases of polygamy were tried by Mormon juries, who would not convict their own. Furthermore, indicted male polygamists claimed that they had contracted no illegal marriages as defined by United States law, and female plural wives refused to testify against their husbands. Finally, because Lincoln had his hands full with a war, because he was tolerant of the Mormons, and because he was uncertain of the constitutionality of the Morrill measure, he took no steps to enforce it. In the entire history of this law only two polygamists were convicted under it.

A dozen years later, in the summer of 1874, after Ann Eliza’s appearances in Washington, D.C., Representative Luke P. Poland, also of Vermont, sought to strengthen Morrill’s measure with a bill of his own that limited the jurisdiction of the Utah territorial courts and filled the offices of attorney

general and marshal with men chosen in Washington, D.C. While the Poland Law strengthened the position of anti-polygamists like Judge McKean, it still made few inroads on polygamy.

What hampered all enforcement of the Morrill and Poland statutes was the lingering doubt of their constitutionality. At last, in 1874, the Federal government, with the cooperation of important Mormons, decided to test the constitutionality of the anti-polygamy bills. George Reynolds, a thirty-two-year-old Englishman who was Brigham Young's secretary, was selected as the guinea pig. He had just taken a second wife, and now he turned himself over to the authorities as an admitted polygamist. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of $500. A year later, because the first Grand Jury was found to be illegal, he was tried again and again convicted, but this time his sentence was increased to two years' imprisonment at hard labor. Immediately, as they had planned all along, the Mormons appealed Reynolds' case to the United States Supreme Court and sat back to await the opinion that the conviction was unconstitutional.

During the four years that the Supreme Court weighed and debated Reynolds' appeal, the contending parties persistently fought to influence the high tribunal and the nation's chief executive. In 1877 the fifty-five-year-old Rutherford B. Hayes, a former lawyer, Civil War general, congressman, and governor of Ohio, had just moved into the White House, after defeating Samuel J. Tilden for the presidency by one electoral vote.

From her home in Lockport, New York, Ann Eliza determined to communicate with the new President directly. She was hopeful. In the two years past, she had lost her confidence in the retiring President Grant. First, she had been annoyed over reports of President Grant's visit to Utah. He had been greeted by lines of children in the street—clean, healthy, beaming children. According to Mormon sources, Grant had turned to George W. Emery, governor of Utah, and inquired, "Whose children are these?" The governor had replied, "Mormon children." Grant had fallen silent a moment and had then muttered, "I have been deceived." Second, Ann Eliza had been irked by Grant's non-intervention in the first trial of John D. Lee, for the responsibility of leading the Mountain Meadows massacre. The prejudiced trial in Utah had resulted in a hung jury, while the President had basked in the sunshine at the popular summer resort of Long Branch, New Jersey. In a temper over the last, Ann Eliza had written the Boston *Globe,* disowning Grant and appealing to the women of America: "If he is indifferent to the shrieks of the women slaughtered by Lee and Young, let your voice be heard in tones so stern and loud that it will startle him from his slumbers at Long Branch. When assassins are crowned with laurels, it is no time for our rulers to loaf by the sea-side."

Now, the mellowed Grant had been replaced by Rutherford B. Hayes, and

Ann Eliza was once more optimistic that the Mormons would be punished. On September 24, 1877, she addressed a seven-page letter "To His Excellency R. B. Hayes" in Washington, D.C. Her letter read, in part:

"I was born in Mormonism, reared in the firmest of Mormon households, and I know therefore the bondage in which the hearts and consciences of so many thousands of my sisters are held. I was a victim to the power and persecution of the late pretended Prophet, Seer and Revelator, and became his unwilling wife. Then I discovered what an enormous imposition was being practiced upon the sincere believers in this false religion, and so I abandoned it, and I long with all my heart to see broken and dispelled this wicked Mormon despotism and delusion. Oh! How long it had been tolerated! The blood-soaked sod of lonely Mountain Meadows… the thousand murders of the plains… have been crying for vengeance many and many years to deaf ears. Shall the voices that rise out of the gory history of Mormonism, calling for judgment upon it, still be unheeded?

"Do not be persuaded that Mormonism will go down, ere long, under the pressure of Christian competition and execration. It has withstood the competition for forty-seven years, and in that time has risen from a membership of six, to nearly two hundred thousand, and almost monthly, shiploads of deluded recruits arrive without protest or hindrance at the wharves of New York to swell the sorrowful ranks of polygamous wives, or contribute to the working and financial strength of the Church.

"While the Government has tolerated and waited, Mormonism has prospered, until it demands a State to control, and boldly claims recognition as a religious denomination under the constitutional guarantees.

"Nor is it sufficient excuse for ignoring the subject now that emphatic laws against polygamy have already been enacted. I am aware of these laws and enactments, and I also know that Mormons laugh at them as only the impotent frothing of 'Gentile wrath.' They have hindered no plan of the Church; they have frustrated no scheme; they have interfered with not a single one of the hundreds of thousands of polygamous marriages consummated since their enactment. They have been words, idle words only. I beseech you to plead with Congress to put into their laws the breath of life, and make them, being the voice of the people, as terrible as the voice of God, to those who dare disobey. Nor again, should it he believed that the late Brigham Young was such a prop and pillar of Mormonism that it is likely to fall in ruins now that he is removed. His present successor, John Taylor, was the boon companion of the inventor of this great fraud, and for years he has been one of the counselors, advisers and confederates of the late ruler. He is a six-wived 'Saint,' a veteran in Church intrigue, a bitter hater of 'Gentiles,' having been one of the 'persecuted' in the early days of the Church, and being ambitious to win a fame equal to that of his notorious predecessor, it may be expected that

he will indefatigably labor to prosper his evil cause. And the day is soon coming when younger men, with the enthusiasm, daring, energy and ambition of young men, will succeed to the leadership, to begin new eras of proselyting, recruiting and 'building up the kingdom.' Surely, the time to act is today. I pray you, enforce the laws now in existence if they are sufficient; instigate additional legislation if necessary. Mormonism is entitled to no mercy. It invites fire and sword, having defied the force of evaded statutes; it deserves… destruction, having scorned the voice of admonition and warning. Respectfully, Ann Eliza Young."

Fourteen months after Ann Eliza's appeal to President Hayes, 200 other Gentile women met in the Congregational Church of Salt Lake City and drew up a petition to the President's wife demanding that the price of statehood for Utah be the abandonment of polygamy. To counter these moves, 2,000 Mormon women, wives and children of polygamy, met in the Salt Lake City Theater on November 16, 1878. Among the leading speakers was Eliza R. Snow, who told her sisters and the world, in her support of a petition to Congress defending celestial marriage, "I truly believe that a Congress composed of polygamic men who were true to their wives, would confer a far higher honor upon a nation, and would perform better service to the country than a Congress composed of monogamic husbands."

Finally, shortly after this female agitation, the Supreme Court heard both sides in the Reynolds appeal, and on January 6, 1879, rendered its decision—that all anti-polygamy legislation had been constitutional and that Reynolds' conviction and sentence was to stand as rendered. Mormondom reeled under the shock. An immediate effort was made to save Reynolds. Thirty thousand persons petitioned President Hayes to show leniency to Brigham's secretary, but the chief executive ignored these clemency requests. Reynolds was sent to a penitentiary in Nebraska, then returned to one in Utah, where, as a model prisoner, he served out his two years of martyrdom at hard labor.

After this setback given polygamy in the Supreme Court, John Taylor agreed to state the Church's reaction in an interview granted Colonel O. J. Hollister, the Federal Revenue Collector for Utah, who was also a correspondent of the New York *Tribune.*

Colonel Hollister began the interview by asking, "Is it not true that marriage is the basis of society?… And is it not therefore within the legitimate scope of the power of every civil government to determine whether marriage shall be polygamous or monogamous under its dominion?"

Taylor would not have it. "When the Constitution of the United States was framed and adopted, those high contracting parties did positively agree that they would not interfere with religious affairs. Now, if our marital relations are not religious, what is?"

Later, and somewhat sharply, Colonel Hollister inquired, "Do you regard

polygamy as worthy of perpetuation at the cost of perpetual antagonism between your people and their countrymen?"

"We are not the parties who produce this antagonism," said Taylor. "Our revelation, given in August, 1831, specifically states that if we keep the laws of God, we need not break the laws of the land. Congress has since, by its act, placed us in antagonism to what we term an unconstitutional law."

"Do you regard polygamy as superior to monogamy…?" Colonel Hollister wanted to know.

"I regard it as altogether superior to the law of monogamy, in a great many particulars," replied Taylor. "There is in all monogamic countries, the United States not excepted, a terrible state of things arising from the practice of monogamy. We acknowledge our children; we acknowledge our wives; we have no mistresses. We had no prostitution until it was introduced by monogamy. Polygamy is not a crime per se; it was the action of Congress that made polygamy a crime. The British Government allows one hundred and eighty millions of their people to practice it, and by the law protects them in it. It is very unfortunate that our republican government cannot be as generous to its provinces as a monarchial government can be to its colonies."

At the conclusion of the interview, when the colonel wondered what effect the Supreme Court decision would have on the Mormons, Taylor answered, "I don't know that it will have any effect, except to unite us and confirm and strengthen us in our faith." However, Taylor did more than give interviews after the disastrous Supreme Court decision. To counteract the rising tide of anti-polygamy agitation, Taylor decided to show the Gentile world how plural wives really felt about their lot. Instead of memorials he determined to put two of his most attractive exhibits on display.

Early in 1879 Zina Young Williams—daughter of Brigham Young by his eighteenth wife, Zina D. Huntington—married to an Englishman who already had one wife, and Emmeline Wells, plural wife of Salt Lake City's mayor, traveled to Washington, D.C., to call on the First Lady. At the time the First Lady, forty-eight-year-old Lucy Webb Hayes, married to President Hayes over a quarter of a century, was beginning her third year in the White House. Educated at the Cincinnati Wesleyan Woman's College, Lucy Webb Hayes was the darling of the Women's Christian Temperance Union for having banished wine, whiskey, and all stimulants from the White House. Throughout the nation, disgusted imbibers called her "Lemonade Lucy."

The meeting between the First Lady and the two plural wives had been arranged by prominent suffragettes, who tried to ignore the polygamy issue because they were impressed that the Mormons had given their women the vote in 1870. Speaking with the President's wife, Zina Young Williams and Emmeline Wells explained that plural marriage worked, that the various wives lived in domestic tranquillity, that the system gave every wife a

husband and kept every husband from adultery and prostitution, and that enforcement of the old 1862 anti-polygamy law would cause great suffering among the women of Utah. Apparently Lucy Webb Hayes was impressed, perhaps less by the advantages claimed for polygamy than by the evidence that these plural wives were anything but monsters, that they had suffrage, which she did not have, and that, like herself, they were horrified by alcoholic stimulants.

When word of this Mormon lobbying was made public, Ann Eliza was lecturing in De Pere, Wisconsin. She wasted not a moment to counterattack. As once she had passionately appealed to President Hayes, she now sought to open the eyes of Mrs. Hayes. On March 5, 1879, she addressed a long and virulent letter to the First Lady and then released it to the press. It read, in part:

"As an excuse for addressing you in this way, I can urge the fact that the newspapers have lately published the details of a call made upon you by two Mormon women in the interest of the system of Mormon Polygamy…

"Emmeline Wells and Zina Williams came with pathetic pleadings to touch your heart with the picture of what would be the cruel condition of Mormon women and children if the law against Polygamy should be enforced. I recognize the injustice of the law as it now stands and admit that to enforce it would be inequitable and produce great suffering. But these two women came to you with falsehoods in their mouths.

"Polygamy has no brightness such as they described, no excellencies such as they claimed. I could show you a picture out of the polygamous lives of these very women, which would make you shudder and turn heartsick…

"Your late visitors and George Q. Cannon (the husband of six living wives) assert that there is entire harmony in polgyamous families. The assertion is absolutely false! There is not a Polygamous husband in all Utah who does not have a favorite among his wives whom he favors far above all the rest. His time, means, and affection are expended upon her while the other poor souls are left in loneliness and usually in destitution. This fact alone furnishes one of the strongest arguments against the system. The history of thousands of families in Utah proves that it is utterly impossible for a man to love more than one woman at the same time.

"Emmeline Wells is reported to have said that she never quarreled with her husband's other wives. I think that statement is true. She was placed in a miserable little place next door to my house, three or four blocks from the residence of her fellow-wives, and these sisters never went near her but always spoke of her with the utmost contempt. I lived by her one year and her husband of many titles—'Councilor-to-the-President,' 'Commander-of-the-Militia-of-the-territory,' 'Mayor-of-Salt-Lake-City,' and 'one-of-the-Apostles,' never visited her during that time. Her condition was that of

poverty, and disorder reigned supreme in her dwelling. Her appearance was that of a despairing, hopeless, soul-sick woman. I do not say that she appears so now… By some process Emmeline Wells has come to have an object in life, though an unworthy one, and no longer exhibits, or feels, the misery and desolation so noticeable in former years.

"Zina Williams appears not to have spoken very frankly of her own domestic life. She did not say how her husband's first wife *loved* her (the second). She did not mention that the first wife never spoke to her at all, except when she went to the funeral of a child of the former and attempted to go to the coffin to look at the little body, when Mrs. Williams pushed her aside and told her that she should not look at a child of hers. No, these are things to be kept silent—hid from the gaze of the 'wicked Gentile world.' But Zina forgot her condition when speaking of her father Brigham Young. She said he treated his family all alike and was kind to them. What a lapse of memory. Why did she forget to compare her mother's unenviable condition when living in the 'Lion House' with twelve or fifteen of her 'Sisters' with that of his successive favorite wives—first that of Emmeline Free—and after he tired of her—with that of Amelia Folsom, who reigned supreme the last sixteen years of his life. Oh, what folly, what inconsistency, what madness!…

"One of the arguments advanced by these women is false as well as coarse. I refer to the assertion that the system prevents social immorality. In a time called the 'Reformation,' about twenty years ago, Brigham Young, at a meeting at Salt Lake City, called upon all those who had broken their marriage vows to rise, and nearly every one present stood up. He was so startled and taken aback, that he hurriedly told them to sit down, and forthwith, dismissed the meeting. [The incident had occurred in the Social Hall. Brigham requested all the men who had committed adultery to stand up. Immediately three quarters of the hall was on its feet. Certain that his audience had misunderstood, Brigham rephrased his question. The men remained standing.]

"I have been amazed at the endorsement, public as well as private, given to Polygamy by prominent women who favor female suffrage. They do so simply because the victims to the system have the ballot, and without stopping to investigate what effect their voting has upon their welfare, the female suffragists uphold and defend that which defiles and degrades women almost to the level of the animal. Women in Utah are but child-bearing slaves. Every time they vote, they add another rivet to the bonds, which already bind them, for they vote into office such men as George Q. Cannon, who are using all their powers to perpetuate Polygamy. The ballot is no protection to these women, for they vote in utter ignorance of what they are doing and for whom they are voting.

"I voted once—being compelled to do so by Brigham Young—and his

coachman was deputized to take me to the polls and show me how to vote. His instructions consisted in telling me to write my name on a piece of paper, which he handed to me, and to this day I remain in blissful ignorance of whom I cast my only vote for. This instance is only one of the least of the outrageous absurdities perpetrated in Utah in connection with the ballot…

"I know that you cannot endorse every Clique or party. But in all that pertains to the real welfare of women, you have heretofore committed yourself frankly and without fear. You did not hesitate to be known as the uncompromising foe of those drinking habits, which so widely desolate the homes of this country. But Polygamy desolates *every* home which it enters. Surely it will be neither improper nor unwise for you to exert your influence against that vast and increasing crime… I am, dear Madam, Respectfully Yours, Mrs. Ann Eliza Young."

Publication of this letter awakened immediate and favorable anti-Mormon response throughout the East and Midwest. Certainly, like Ann Eliza's lectures, it made itself felt inside the White House. Lucy Webb Hayes, it is true, made no comment except perhaps in private to the President. But in his message to Congress during December of 1880, President Hayes took his strongest position yet against plural marriage. "It is the duty and purpose of the people of the United States," he said, "to suppress polygamy where it now exists in one territory and prevent its extention."

For Ann Eliza the successful finale of a long and exhausting battle seemed near at hand. The enemy, though still defiant, would soon be routed, then annihilated, for word from Washington indicated that a new and powerful anti-polygamy bill was being drafted and that it might soon be passed and enforced.

Through those crucial years, Ann Eliza never ceased lecturing eight months out of twelve. She had left Major Pond, and now, for the most part, she booked her own tours directly out of Lockport, New York. In August of 1880, the *Daily Register* of Central City, Colorado, carried the advertisement of Mrs. Young's latest lecture in the Opera House: "Subject: 'In and Out of Utah.' Embracing a brief sketch of her life From Infancy in Mormondom, Her revolt from polygamy and escape by night from Salt Lake City, and incidents, humorous, and otherwise, in her experience as a lecturer. Admission… 25 cents. Reserved seats… 50 cents."

During 1881, when she was thirty-seven, much of her current tour was reported in the pages of a monogamic house journal known as the *Anti-Polygamy Standard*, published in Salt Lake City. In March, Ann Eliza was engaged on the lecture platforms of Ohio. In April and May, she was in Michigan, where she confessed to listeners in Battle Creek that she was "discouraged and heartsick" at the indifference of Americans at a time when Colorado, Nevada, and Oregon might fall to Mormonism. She recounted story

after story of new Mormon converts in the Midwest and East. She had found "hundreds" of these converts in Georgia, "twenty" in Kentucky, "a number" in Oberlin, Ohio, "one man having six wives, and another two" in northern Michigan, a convert of sixteen in Canton, Illinois, another, a young girl named Gertrude, in Colorado. Entering Covington, Indiana, said Ann Eliza, she found that she had been preceded by "three Mormon missionaries."

Continuing her tour, Ann Eliza arrived in Evansville, Indiana, in June 1881. Here she implored her audience, "Will you not do something? Year by year this evil is growing great and strong and dangerous. Year after year it is producing more baleful fruits. Will you not from this time forth be known as the active enemies of this monster, and do what you can to destroy it?" In June she was also in Polo, Illinois, held over for a week because of an unseasonable summer snowstorm. After her regular paying lectures in the City Hall, she delivered two free lectures—and was rewarded, said the local Presbyterian minister, with the gift of "a purse containing a considerable sum of money as some small souvenir of her visit and labors among us."

The torrent of words directed at Washington by Ann Eliza and her fellow anti-polygamists was beginning to have its effect. President Hayes had served his term and quietly bowed out of the White House. In March of 1881, James A. Garfield, a Republican, had been inaugurated as President with Chester A. Arthur as his Vice-President. In his inaugural address the new chief executive stated, "The Mormon church not only offends the moral sense of mankind by sanctioning polygamy but prevents the administration of justice through ordinary instrumentalities of law."

Before Garfield could act against the Mormons, he was shot down in a Washington railroad station by a despondent office seeker named Charles J. Guiteau, whom the Reverend Talmadge falsely branded as a Mormon. Eleven weeks later, after being in office little more than six months, Garfield was dead. His successor, Chester A. Arthur, took up the polygamy question in a December message to Congress. He spoke of plural marriage as "this odious crime, so revolting to the moral and religious sense of Christendom."

Now the monogamous legislators joined arms with the President. On December 12, 1881, Senator George F. Edmunds of Vermont introduced the strongest law in American history against Utah polygamy. The Edmunds Bill, as it came to be called, attacked the most vulnerable aspects of plural marriage. "Every person," it began, "who has a husband or wife living who, in a territory or other place over which the United States have exclusive jurisdiction, hereafter marries another, whether married or single, and any man who hereafter simultaneously, or on the same day, marries more than one woman, in a territory or other place over which the United States have exclusive jurisdiction, is guilty of polygamy, and shall be punished by a fine of not more than $500 and by imprisonment for a term of not more than five

years.” Furthermore, a juror being considered to try a polygamy case would be disqualified if he either practiced or professed a belief in plural marriage. No polygamist would be allowed to vote in a territory of the United States, and no polygamist would be permitted to hold a Federal office. Amnesty would be granted to all who had engaged in polygamy before the passage of the Edmunds Bill, provided they now complied with the law, and children of polygamists born before 1883 would be legitimitized. Finally, all election laws in the territories were to be revised, and all offices connected with registration and voting were to be vacated until a board of five persons appointed by the President could properly fill them again.

Here was a law that would be accepted as constitutional if passed, and here was a law with teeth. Ann Eliza and her cohorts were jubilant. But effecting passage of the bill in the Senate, as it turned out, would not be easy. A bloc of southern senators, smarting under the persecution their states had suffered throughout northern attempts at southern reconstruction after the Civil War, bitterly opposed its passage.

Senator George Graham Vest of Missouri was one of the most powerful spokesmen against the law. A decade before, in a Warrensburg, Missouri, courtroom, Senator Vest had won a national reputation by defending the value of a foxhound named Old Drum, who had been killed by his client’s neighbor. In his tribute to a dog he had said: “Gentlemen of the jury, the best friend a man has in this world may turn against him and become his enemy. His son or daughter whom he has reared with loving care may prove ungrateful… The one absolute, unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world—the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous—is his dog.” The wet-eyed jurors agreed to the extent of allowing Vest’s client $500 for loss of Old Drum, instead of the $150 requested. Now, on the floor of the Senate, the former defender of a dog spoke out on behalf of an underdog. “While I abhor polygamy,” said Senator Vest, “while I have denounced it, while I have introduced the two first bills introduced in this Senate against it, I revere the Constitution of my country and the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to every American citizen. I tell you now, Senators of the United States, pass the bill and you establish a precedent that will come home to plague you for all time to come. The feeling that exists today against polygamy may exist tomorrow against any church, against any class in this broad land.”

Senator John Tyler Morgan, a former Confederate general and the representative from Alabama, agreed with Vest: “I am not willing to persecute a Mormon at the expense of the Constitution of the United States. I am not willing to go to the Indian tribes where Polygamy is practiced and take up those men and inform them that they shall not have the right to life or liberty because they are polygamists.”

Senator Joseph E. Brown of Georgia echoed the sentiments of his southern

colleagues. “I, for one, shall not be a party to the enactment or enforcement of unconstitutional, tyrannical, and oppressive legislation,” he said, “for the purpose of crushing the Mormons or any other sect for the gratification of New England or any other section… Whether the Baptists or the Catholics or the Quakers will be selected for the next victim does not yet appear.”

Despite much vocal opposition, the Senate overwhelmingly passed the Edmunds Bill on February 12, 1882. A month later, after a similar debate, the bill went through the House of Representatives by a vote of 199 to 42. On March 22, 1882, President Arthur affixed his signature to the bill, and it was law.

The aftereffects were felt immediately in both Washington, D.C., and Salt Lake City. Still residing in the nation’s capital was the English Apostle and husband of seven wives, George O. Cannon, who had been reelected Utah territorial delegate to the House of Representatives by a vote of 18,568 to 1,357 little more than a year earlier. Now his right to sit in Congress was challenged on the grounds that not only was he a practicing polygamist but also an unnaturalized alien. In 1883 the House expelled him. Before leaving, Cannon said farewell to his colleagues from the floor: “I am a resident of Utah Territory and one of those people who are everywhere spoken against and against whom many vile charges are made, as were made against their predecessors, the Church of Christ in the early days… Yet I do respect my oath, and I pity any gentleman who with nothing to sustain him but popular sentiment, is willing to trample upon the Constitution and the law and to strike down a people against whom popular sentiment is strong.”

Few Gentiles dared support Cannon, but one of the few who did was Reverend Timothy Hay. Writing in *The Independent*, the clergyman denounced Congress for its “contemptible hypocrisy,” explaining: “The great crime is not in having many paramours, but in marrying them. A man may keep as many mistresses as he pleases, provided that he acknowledges he is prompted by his own vile lusts and the temptations of the devil. It is only when he claims to be acting conscientiously that his punishment is called for.”

In Utah’s capital polygamists tensely waited for the first blows to fall. According to the United States district attorney in the territory, 100,000 persons out of a population of 144,000 either practiced or believed in polygamy. The London *Times* correspondent in Utah during 1882 thought that only a relative handful of Mormons were practicing polygamists. He reported: “About one-fourth of married Mormons are polygamous, and of these something less than three per cent, are under forty years of age.”

The Federal government moved in with a test oath distributed to potential voters. It read: “I do not live or cohabit with more than one woman in the marriage relation.” By this questionable criterion a respectable Mormon gentleman with two wives was barred from the polls where a Gentile with one

legal wife but who openly kept a mistress was permitted to register. The Saints were embittered. As their historian Brigham H. Roberts wrote: “By this arrangement it will be seen that those who cohabited with more than one woman in adultery or prostitution, were not affected by its provisions. The roué, the libertine, the strumpet, the brothel-keeper, the adulterer and adulteress could vote. No matter how licentious a man or woman might be, all but the Mormons were screened and protected.”

As Federal agents and their spies hunted through Salt Lake City, coercing even frightened Mormon children to inform on their parents, the new Prophet, John Taylor, had just transferred his six living wives and most of their twenty-seven children into a single large home. Now he thought better of this move fearing indictment under the Edmunds Bill, and ordered all but one of his wives back to their separate residences.

The first martyr to the new law was a twenty-seven-year-old Mormon, Rudgar Clawson, who had once heroically saved the body of a dead fellow Mormon from a southern mob and who had gained a reputation for decency and sobriety. Arrested for polygamy, young Clawson was tried and found guilty. Before being sentenced, he was allowed to speak. “Your honor,” he said, “I very much regret that the laws of my country should come in conflict with the laws of God: but whenever they do, I shall invariably choose the latter.” Infuriated, the judge fined him $800 on two counts and sentenced him to four years in the penitentiary. After serving three years, Clawson was freed by President Grover Cleveland.

The Mormon leader Taylor was enraged by the prosecution of Clawson. Had young Clawson engaged in “illicit love,” instead of marrying his loves, said Taylor, and allowed his children to be aborted by Madame Restell (a portly and wealthy Englishwoman who was notorious for practicing illegal birth control in her New York City mansion), then, according to the Edmunds Bill, Clawson would have been regarded as “genteel, fashionable, respectable, Christian-like.” When, on November 17, 1882, a month after the Clawson trial, a Mormon wife, Annie Gallifant, was tried (for refusing to divulge the name of her polygamous husband) and found guilty and sentenced to jail, although in an advanced stage of pregnancy, President Taylor knew that immediate resistance to the Edmunds Bill was impossible. “While the excitement lasts,” he said, “it is useless to reason with the world; when it subsides we can talk to them.”

Despite the “excitement,” convictions for polygamy were difficult to come by, since either confessions or witnesses were required. On the other hand, unlawful cohabitation was easier to prove. Between 1882 and 1889, under the Edmunds Bill, only twenty-four Mormons were convicted for polygamy, but 909 went to jail for unlawful cohabitation. From afar Ann Eliza enjoyed her triumph. But even she confessed to being troubled by some of the strong-arm

methods used by Federal agents, who had broken in on Mormon wives while they were in bed or dressing. “It must be admitted,” she wrote, “that some officials took a malicious delight in harassing Mormon women as well as men.”

By 1883, when she was almost forty, Ann Eliza’s mind had at last been diverted from polygamy, for a dramatic change had taken place in her life.

In the several years before 1883, career as lady lecturer had begun to pall on her. After ten years of this career she had grown bone weary of the rattling, uncomfortable trains, the flea-ridden hotel beds, the unceasing public exhibitions. Besides, with Brigham’s death, and the passage of the Edmunds Bill, her lectures were becoming increasingly outdated, almost unimportant, and her audiences were diminishing. She was beating a dead horse, it seemed. She was leading a crusade against an enemy already on its knees.

Also, Ann Eliza’s private existence had become more complicated. No longer could she rely on her mother to look after her growing sons, Edward Wesley and Leonard, in Lockport. In 1880 her mother had fallen severely ill, and Ann Eliza had been forced to remove her from Lockport to a sanitorium in Battle Creek, Michigan. With all that mattered of her family divided between East and Midwest, her tours away from home had become more difficult to manage. Worse, her own bouts with nervous illness and fatigue were more frequent. Much as she feared the loneliness and obscurity of retirement, after a decade of public turmoil, she knew that one day soon she must face up to it.

She was said to have been financially secure in 1883. The money earned in her nearly two thousand lectures had not been a fortune, but it had been a considerable amount, and Ann Eliza had invested it well. Her most lucrative investment was in Colorado mining. On October 14, 1880, the *Rocky Mountain News* had reported in a dispatch from Dumont, Colorado: “It has never been told that conductor Graham of the Colorado Central is a partner of Mrs. Ann Eliza Young in some of her recent mine speculations at this place. They own valuable property.” It is possible that conductor Graham was her old boarder from Salt Lake City, Malcolm Graham.

But even as she was thinking of retirement, and resisting it because of the bleakness of the prospect, there occurred the series of events that made it all possible. After a lecture in Ohio, perhaps in 1881, Ann Eliza was introduced to a male admirer who had been one of her audience. He was a big, outgoing, middle-aged man with a crippled hand. His name was Moses R. Denning. He was a wealthy and prominent resident of Manistee, Michigan, who had come to Ohio on a visit. Although long married and the father of at least five grown children, Denning made no secret of his interest in Ann Eliza. He invited her to be his house guest the next time that she spoke in Manistee, and Ann Eliza accepted the invitation.

Shortly afterward Denning returned to his home town and Ann Eliza continued with her tour. Though preoccupied with the lady lecturer, Denning did not discourage his wife, Annie Ralston Denning, when she planned a large and lavish celebration for their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. The party took place on May 6, 1881, in the Denning mansion in Manistee, and 150 guests were in attendance. Reporting the festive gathering, the Manistee *Advocate* wrote: “Twenty-five years ago Mr. and Mrs. Denning were married in the state of Pennsylvania, and moved to this city about 15 years ago, where they have remained ever since, winning new friends every day by their sociable, friendly disposition. Their house was brilliantly lighted, and the numerous friends seemed to enjoy themselves in the happiness of those whom they had come to send with joy on their journey toward their golden wedding.” To this was added the good wishes of the Manistee *Times and Standard:* “May no great misfortune or misery mar the happiness of coming years and may the anniversary of their golden wedding find an unbroken family and continued prosperity.”

With Ann Eliza’s arrival in the quiet northern Michigan town, probably late in 1881, the prospect of a golden anniversary for the Dennings was shattered forever. Their silver anniversary was their last celebration together. For fifty-three-year-old Moses R. Denning, lumber and coal tycoon, and director of the Manistee National Bank, and thirty-seven-year-old Ann Eliza, veteran of ten years on the nation’s platform, had fallen deeply in love.

A year passed before Ann Eliza returned to Manistee to give her last lecture there, in December of 1882. By this time Moses R. was in the process of divorcing Annie R. Apparently he had earlier proposed marriage to Ann Eliza, and she had accepted. On February 7, 1883, while Ann Eliza was on her final tour of the Midwest, the marriage of the Dennings was formally dissolved in Manistee. Annie R., who had charged Moses R. with “severe acts of cruelty,” won the divorce and $20,000 in alimony. Two and a half months later, on April 24, 1883, Ann Eliza delivered her farewell lecture—“Utah’s Curse and the Nation’s Shame”—to an audience in Napoleon, Ohio. Thereafter the platform would know her no more.

On May 19, 1883, Ann Eliza and Moses R. met in Lodi, Ohio, where they had mutual friends, and by early afternoon the twenty-seventh wife of Brigham Young was the second Mrs. Denning.

The news of the union was trumpeted throughout the land. The Chicago *Tribune*, carrying a Lodi, Ohio, date line, told its readers: “Mrs. Ann Eliza Young, of Mormon fame, nineteenth wife of Brigham Young, was married at 1 o’clock this afternoon, to Mr. Moses R. Denning, a prominent banker of Manistee, Mich. The ceremony was performed at the residence of Dr. A. E. Elliot. The Rev. E. A. Stone of Galion, O., officiated. There were a large number of guests present, among whom were some of the most prominent

citizens of this vicinity. Miss Julia F. Lee, a noted elocutionist of Utica, N.Y., was also among the number. Mr. and Mrs. Denning will make their home in Manistee."

As far away as Albuquerque, New Mexico, Ann Eliza's third marriage created excitement. In *The Daily Democrat* the wedding was noted: "It affords us unusual pleasure to announce the recent marriage of Ann Eliza (Brigham Young's 19th flame) to an Ohio man. Not only does it relieve the country of a female lecturer, but at the same time a long suffering nation gets even with the irrepressible Ohio man."

The greatest sensation of all was seen in Manistee. There "the newsstands were besieged" by citizens who demanded copies of the out-of-town newspapers carrying accounts of the wedding. As for local papers, *The Weekly Times* reflected a certain civic disapproval: "Everybody wanted to know how it all came about— how and when the parties first became acquainted—and numerous other things which even Mrs. Grundy was unable to explain in a satisfactory manner." Evidently many of the women of Manistee looked askance at the news that a former harem concubine and home wrecker would soon be in their midst. Only the editors of the Manistee *Times and Standard* philosophically adjusted themselves to the whims of domesticity. Two years earlier they had wished the first Mrs. Denning a golden anniversary with "an unbroken family and continued prosperity." Now they wished the second Mrs. Denning luck and fortune and told her in print: "Congratulations are in order."

In Toledo, Ohio, on her honeymoon, Ann Eliza looked forward, perhaps with trepidation, to an arrival in Manistee, not as lady lecturer but as Christian and monogamous housewife. Perhaps she sensed that it would be her last adventure.

IX: THE RELIC OF BARBARISM

"Resolved… it is both right and the duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy and Slavery."

—Republican Party Platform, 1856

Late on the evening of May 21, 1883, Ann Eliza Denning arrived in Manistee by train. Although she had sprung from a pioneer environment and spent most of her ten years as lecturer in and out of the cruder small communities of expanding America, she was yet unprepared for the atmosphere that awaited her in her newest home.

The rough and booming town of Manistee was located in northern Michigan, between Lake Michigan to the west and Manistee Lake to the east, with heavily trafficked Big Manistee River winding through the city like a life-giving artery. This location, so remote from civilized urban centers, gave Manistee the appearance, and often the license, of an uninhibited frontier settlement. The Chippewa Indians had called the region "Manistee," which meant "spirit of the woods" in their language. The white inhabitants retained the appellation but as often referred to their town by the nickname "Sawdust City." Visitors were reminded by either name that they were in lumber country.

More than twenty thousand people populated the town in 1883, and the majority of these were hard-working, hard-drinking, roistering, and prospering Polish lumbermen. Besides the Poles there were large groups of Swedes, Norwegians, Germans and French. Some of these emigrants toiled in the community's thriving salt industry; others were employed in the local tannery, electric-light plant, harness factory, bedspring company, or in one of several breweries, but the greatest number of these by far worked in the forests beyond Manistee. Inside the abundant pine woods, hearty men with enormous thirsts steadily felled the big trees, sawed them into logs, then floated these down the Big Manistee River into the landlocked harbors of Manistee Lake. In more than a dozen sawmills, the timber was again cut by sash saws and circular saws and run through the planing mills. After that the new lumber was transported down river, through the town, to Lake Michigan, where it was loaded on Great Lakes transports.

The mentality of Manistee's foreign-born lumbermen, mainly the laborers, was Klondike. As a class they lived riotously, from day to day, sating animal appetites. The imports most in demand were whiskey and women. If Moses R. Denning's Manistee National Bank and the city council building nearby gave the main thoroughfare of River Street an island of respectability, and if elsewhere the leading hotel, known as Dunham House, and the $18,000 Civic Opera House and the fourteen churches tried to give the town a facade of

distinction, these were not enough to disguise the fifteen hotel bars and forty-two saloons. Often many of the latter set their open kegs of whiskey in the streets.

Still, Manistee had its so-called “400.” In the mammoth Victorian frame houses, on the hill overlooking the sawmills, harbors, and beaches, and in equally expansive residences along the fashionable section bordering on Manistee Lake, dwelt the rich men of the community, and Moses R. Denning was one of these. The two-story frame house that he had erected thirteen years before, and had now prepared for his second wife, was simpler, more graceful and classical than the ornate Victorian houses of his neighbors. The Denning house was Grecian in design and spacious in size.

When Ann Eliza Denning took possession of her latest dwelling on the night of May 21, 1883, she was impressed. From the outer porch, she walked into an entry hall, then moved into a parlor. A sliding door opened into a second parlor, and this led to the formal dining room, expensively wainscoted in walnut. Of the thirteen rooms in the house, seven were downstairs and six, including the main bedrooms, upstairs. The Denning house, called “palatial” by newspapers, had many advanced conveniences, among these a constant flow of hot water, especially appreciated by Ann Eliza when she would use the wood-enclosed copper bathtub.

The spring morning after her arrival Ann Eliza explored the grounds of the property. The house was guarded in front by four trees and numerous rosebushes. To the rear stood an impressive coach house and a small grape arbor. A block away, at the edge of Manistee Lake, she found her husband’s wharf surrounded by forty-foot canoes of whole cork pine logs, which his crews used to drive logs down the river.

At first, Ann Eliza felt that she would be welcomed in Manistee by its social leaders. Certainly the Manistee *Standard*, as ever, was courteous. Having noted the arrival of “the happy couple,” the weekly newspaper went on: “Mrs. Young, after traveling the world over, did Manistee the honor of selecting one of its citizens for a life partner, and Manistee for a permanent home… It is said that her health has been failing from overwork, and her marriage will of course afford a much needed rest.”

However, any feeling of well-being that Ann Eliza may have possessed, engendered by the *Standard* and the town’s five other newspapers, was soon dispelled by the haughty members of its wealthy society class. Living descendants of Manistee’s old settlers recall that “Ann Eliza was cold-shouldered by the city’s society women, who regarded her as someone notorious and something of a freak.”

During this brief ostracism, Ann Eliza did not permit herself the indulgence of self-pity. Within six weeks she had her sons and mother with her in the new house. The younger boy, Leonard Dee, now eighteen, had

preceded his mother to Manistee and was working as a clerk in the local post office. The older boy, Edward Wesley Dee, nineteen, had a traveling job but came up from Chicago to Manistee to join his mother for a short time. The first Mrs. Webb, who had been invalided in a Battle Creek sanitorium, was soon put aboard the Great Lakes steamer *Ludington* and sent to the care of her daughter.

The reunion of mother and daughter was of short duration. During the fourteen months that followed, the first Mrs. Webb's health steadily declined. On August 16, 1884, at the age of sixty-seven, she died "of paralysis" in her daughter's house. She was buried two days later in an expensive casket trimmed in black velvet. Long after, Ann Eliza, apparently unable to remember the exact location of her mother's grave, placed it "in Western New York, near her birthplace." Actually the first Mrs. Webb's forgotten grave still exists in Manistee's Oak Grove Cemetery.

With the loss of her mother, Ann Eliza depended more than ever on her husband of a little over a year for companionship. There is evidence, however, that Moses R. Denning, or "Old Mose," as the townfolks called him, was anything but a homebody. Born in the lumbering district of Maine during 1828, he was raised on a farm. After some elementary schooling, he moved to Pennsylvania and became a lumberman on the Susquehanna River. In 1856, when he was twenty-eight, he met and married Annie Ralston. At the outbreak of the Civil War he tried to enlist on the Union side, but, according to the Manistee *Democrat*, he was rejected "on account of a crippled hand." Nevertheless, he participated as a noncombatant. He organized the "Bucktail Regiment" and led it to Camp Curtin. He then organized the 84th and 110th Pennsylvania Regiments and delivered them to the front lines. On several occasions he risked fire "to care for the sick and wounded."

After the war Denning engaged in driving logs on various rivers. Gradually he invested in business, buying and selling timberland, farm acreage, and coal mines, in Florida, Arkansas, and finally in Michigan. In 1866 Denning, then thirty-eight, settled in Manistee with his first wife. His logging business was immediately successful, as were his various other investments, and he founded the Manistee National Bank. He was civic minded, serving on the school board and as city alderman, and he opposed the evil of saloons.

Neither the crippled hand, which he self-consciously kept tucked into a coat pocket, nor his new wife inhibited his restless activity. He traveled constantly—to Wisconsin and Pennsylvania to visit his children by his first wife, to lumber camps in northern Michigan to supervise his workmen, to Arkansas to check on his "large and valuable coal interests," to Washington, D.C., to confer with Democratic Party leaders.

In 1890 these Democratic Party leaders persuaded Denning to compete for

a seat in the State legislature. After a brief campaign, Denning won his seat by 245 votes, and in January of 1891 he went to Lansing to represent Manistee County in the Michigan House of Representatives. Denning served one term in the House, occupying himself with several committees, but was not sufficiently stimulated by the experience to compete again for public office.

During these same seven years, Ann Eliza was equally active. Besides occasional trips with her husband to Ohio and the South, she accompanied him to Manistee's social events—an open-air concert, a visiting opera company, a performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* a masquerade ball, a new roller rink, an excursion-boat party, a clergyman's lecture at Union Hall on "The Mormon Question."

Rarely did she communicate with the press in these years. However, on August 20, 1887, when she was forty-three, she broke her unnatural silence to write a letter to the editors of the *Evening Journal.* The newspaper had informed Manistee residents that Ann Eliza had undertaken a fast to improve her health, and she wished to correct some portions of the story.

"I have been a great sufferer for more than eight years with nervous dyspepsia, brought on by years of sorrow and strain of 10 years of lecturing," she wrote. "I have never known of so severe and, apparently, hopeless a case as mine. For six years I have been unable to digest even a crumb of food without taking full as much pepsin, or other digestive medicines, as I did of food. I heard of this fasting cure and nutrient and what cures were being done by it, and I determined to try it. I wrote to some of the doctor's prominent patients and ascertained that it was a genuine thing, and then I communicated with the doctor."

The doctor was a Washington, D.C., physician who had discovered a liquid called Nutrient, which curbed its users' appetites. Ann Eliza took three teaspoons of the medicine a day, for fifteen days, and limited her food intake to watermelon, muskmelon, graham bread, and baked potatoes. Ann Eliza's weight dropped from 120 pounds to 100 pounds, but although considerably weakened, she was never "dangerously ill," as the newspaper had erroneously reported.

"I should not lose faith in this treatment for most persons, even though it did not cure me," Ann Eliza concluded. "I desire to thank you for the very kind words you spoke of me and my work against Mormonism and polygamy. It is pleasant to know that my long struggle and efforts have been remembered so long."

The press was happy to report that the fast had been, "successfully accomplished," and that once more Ann Eliza was "able to enjoy carriage drives around the city."

During the years between 1883 and 1890, Ann Eliza was as busy with her

sons by her first husband as was her lumberman husband with his children by his first wife. Ann Eliza's elder son, Edward Wesley, had married a redheaded southern belle named Mabel Rose in Savannah, Georgia, over the objections of her parents, who did not want a northerner or former Mormon in the family. Edward Wesley and Mabel Rose took up residence in Tallahassee, Florida. In 1885 Edward Wesley brought his younger brother, Leonard, down from Manistee, and they went into the cigar-manufacturing business together. By this time Mabel Rose was pregnant, and she traveled to Manistee to have her child, a boy named Rollins Lewis Dee, and Ann Eliza was now a grandmother. Five years later, in 1890, Edward Wesley and Mabel Rose were living in New York City, where he continued in the cigar business. There they had their second son, Edward Clifton, and Ann Eliza hurried from Manistee to New York to see her newborn grandson.

In all these years of intensive domesticity Ann Eliza never lost her interest in polygamy and Mormonism. For one thing, she still had one parent alive, near Salt Lake City. Her father Chauncey G. Webb had been excommunicated by the Mormon Church in 1875, but now it seemed that he had repented and was back in the good graces of the Church after being rebaptized a Mormon. He was deeply devoted to his second wife, Elizabeth Taft, and had had eleven children by her—all Ann Eliza's half-brothers and half-sisters—and among these were triplets who had died at birth. Besides the link with her father, Ann Eliza's interest in Utah was kept alive by the continuing existence of polygamy, which had survived the Edmunds Bill of 1882.

But now the end of plural marriage was in sight. From afar Ann Eliza watched its death throes. In January of 1885, a Gentile grand jury voted to prosecute the current Prophet John Taylor. Before he could be arrested, Taylor preached a last sermon in the Tabernacle and then fled to a farmhouse hideout several miles northwest of Salt Lake City, near the community of Kaysville. The hideout, referred to in code as the D.O., was elaborately guarded by sentries, who warned Taylor to disappear whenever inquisitive Federal deputy marshals were sighted.

Other Mormon polygamists emulated their leader by going underground in remote villages of Utah and neighboring states. The homes where polygamists secreted themselves often had trap doors in the living room floors that led into dirt cellars stocked with provisions. Many of the plural wives were scattered about, the majority going to live near Franklin, Idaho, and others going to Canada and England. Some polygamists went on extended foreign missions—Joseph F. Smith spent almost six years abroad at this time—and some removed themselves and their possessions to Mexico.

Now that polygamists were on the run, the government decided to crush them completely. In March of 1887, at the instigation of J. Randolph Tucker of Virginia, Congress passed a revised version of the Edmunds Bill to be

known as the Edmunds-Tucker Bill. The measure was the last Federal legislation aimed at celestial marriage. It provided that, in all plural-marriage cases, witnesses be compelled to appear in court, that polygamous wives be permitted to testify against their husbands, that voters and office-holders be forced to sign an oath promising to obey anti-polygamy laws, that convicted polygamists be disfranchised and their children declared illegitimate, that records of new Church marriages be publicly filed in court, that female suffrage and local territorial militia be abolished, that the Mormon Church, as well as its emigration fund, be disincorporated, and, severest measure of all, that all Church property in the excess of $50,000 (including the Lion House and Amelia's Palace, but not buildings used "for the purpose of the worship of God") be forfeited to the Federal government.

"All this happened in the United States in the year 1887, not in Spain or Holland in the dark ages or the days of the Inquisition," wrote Mormon historian Joseph Fielding Smith.

As more and more Federal agents swarmed into Utah to enforce the Edmunds-Tucker Bill, and the Church buckled in defeat, John Taylor, attended by two of his wives and his two counselors, died in his hideout on July 25, 1887. According to the Church, he had been "killed by the cruelty of officials who have, in this territory, misrepresented the government of the United States."

Even though its leader was dead, polygamy itself remained alive. So certain had Congress been that plural wives, once given the opportunity, would abandon their harems that the lawmakers had authorized the construction of a $112,000 Woman's Industrial Home in Salt Lake City to give shelter and work to "homeless and destitute polygamous wives and their children." At no time were there more than ten polygamous wives in this Federal home—and they, for the most, wives of apostates—and after a decade the government abandoned the white elephant at auction for $22,500.

Despite this surface show of resistance, the Mormons were ready for truce terms. In 1887, applying for statehood, the Mormons finally proposed a constitution that outlawed plural marriage. This constitution was ratified by a vote of 12,195 to 504. Two years later, in April of 1889, the Apostles selected eighty-two-year-old Wilford Woodruff, the mild Connecticut man who had first shown Brigham Young the site of Salt Lake City, as their Prophet. Woodruff knew the sentiments of his people. He also knew that the present state of affairs could not long continue. Almost all Church leaders were still underground, their families demoralized, and over three quarters of a million dollars of Church funds lay in the hands of the Federal government.

In 1890 Woodruff sent emissaries to Washington, D.C.—among them the son of George Q. Cannon, the youthful Frank J. Cannon, who would later be excommunicated for announcing that the Mormon hierarchy secretly

advocated polygamy—to treat with 260-pound President Grover Cleveland, a Democrat elected despite the fact that he had fathered an illegitimate child. President Cleveland listened and then offered his deal: amnesty for old polygamists, return of escheated property, legitimatizing of all children born of plural marriages, and statehood for Utah—in return for complete abolishment of polygamy.

Woodruff made his decision, razed the old Endowment House as a show of goodwill, then summoned members of the hierarchy out of hiding and informed them that "in broken and contrite spirit" he had asked judgment of the Lord, and the Lord had advised him to relinquish the practice of celestial marriage. Someone in the room asked if that meant the end of all plural unions. Woodruff said that it did. Someone else wondered if it meant separation from wives long wedded. Woodruff said that it did. One by one the Apostles protested, and then, one by one, they submitted.

"Not a petty word was uttered," wrote Frank J. Cannon, who was present at the crucial meeting. "Their thought was not for themselves. Their grief was not selfish. Their protests had a dignity in pathos that shook me in spite of myself." The last to speak was Joseph F. Smith, tears on his cheeks. "I have never disobeyed a revelation from God. I cannot—I dare not—now."

On September 25, 1890, Woodruff issued a manifesto or proclamation to the world press. It read, in part:

"Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress, forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of the Last Resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise… And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-Day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land."

Officially, polygamy in the United States was dead, and six years later, on its seventh attempt, Utah was admitted to the Union.

Under the pressure of public opinion created by Ann Eliza and others, polygamy was forced to capitulate to conformity, but this public opinion was opposed, in the years following Woodruff's manifesto, by a sizable number of non-Mormons who regretted the abolishment of plural marriage. Elbert Hubbard, the sage of East Aurora, New York, wrote: "Polygamy, under certain conditions, the biologists recognize, is eminently right and proper, because it is natural. Plural wives are happy wives. Brigham Young did not depress his women." In 1903 George Bernard Shaw wrote: "Polygamy when tried under modern democratic conditions, as by the Mormons, is wrecked by the revolt of the mass of inferior men who are condemned to celibacy by it; for the maternal instinct leads a woman to prefer a tenth share in a first rate man to the exclusive possession of a third rate."

In 1936 Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, authority on the sexual history of women, wrote: “Physiologically, polygamy is, next to agamy, the best adapted mode of mating, from the viewpoint of variability of choice.” In 1947 John Gunther wrote that polygamy “contributed greatly to the sternly moral standards and high level of citizenship that prevail in Utah today,” largely because it eliminated adultery and juvenile delinquency. Gunther claimed that “the position of women was often bettered by plural marriage rather than the opposite,” since polygamy gave every female a chance to marry, gave every female a wide choice of husbands, gave every female more economic protection, “since only the more courageous and capable men, with considerable earning power, could afford more than one wife.”

Even polygamy’s modern enemies have conceded that it was not quite so monstrous an institution as Ann Eliza and her emotional crusaders made out. According to a statistical study prepared by Stanley S. Ivins in 1956, most male polygamists had not possessed twenty-seven wives but merely two, most were not bearded patriarchs marrying child brides (the average male ceased marrying at forty), most did not marry large numbers of women at once, most (90 per cent) did not marry pairs of sisters, most did not produce more children with each wife than monogamists (polygamists had six children per woman, and monogamists had eight).

“The composite polygamist,” wrote Ivins in 1956, “was first married at the age of twenty-three to a girl of twenty. Thirteen years later he took a plural wife, choosing a twenty-two-year-old girl. The chances were two to one that, having demonstrated his acceptance of the principle of plurality, he was finished with marrying. If, however, he took a third wife, he waited four years, then selected another girl of twenty-two. The odds were now three to one against his taking a fourth wife, but if he did so, he waited another four years, and once more chose a twenty-two-year-old girl, although he had now reached the ripe age of forty-four. In case he decided to add a fifth wife, he waited only two years, and this time the lady of his choice was twenty-one years old. This was the end of his marrying, unless he belonged to a three per cent minority.”

Such were the historical afterthoughts. However, in 1890 the majority of the non-Mormon population rejoiced at the beheading of the plural dragon. In Manistee, especially, there was joy, as Ann Eliza, at the age of forty-six, celebrated the victory of national monogamy toward which she had contributed so great a part. But her pleasure was to last no longer than seventeen months, when marital difficulties, superimposed upon a personal tragedy, gave her reason to hate monogamy as much as she had once hated polygamy.

In September of 1889, because her younger son, Leonard, was suffering from tuberculosis, Ann Eliza took him to the more healthful climate of Pima,

Arizona, to live with her older brother Gilbert, who in turn lived under a cloud. Six years earlier Gilbert and his surviving polygamous wife Kate had conducted a general store in Pima, and Gilbert had been sufficiently respected to be elected the town's mayor. During that heady period Gilbert had succumbed to one Gentile vice—in a second house he had kept a second family, consisting of a woman who was not his wife and their illegitimate child. At that time his respectability had remained intact. But in May of 1889, just four months before Ann Eliza's arrival with ailing Leonard, Gilbert had been accused of enacting a role in the notorious Wham robbery, considered by many the West's greatest road crime.

Major Joseph W. Wham, a paymaster in the United States Army, and his escort of eighteen soldiers had been riding through the mountains of Graham County, carrying a military payroll of $28,000 to Fort Thomas. En route they had been ambushed by twenty bandits and had lost the entire payroll. Shortly afterward eight men were indicted for the crime, and among these were Gilbert Webb and one of his sons, Wilford T. Webb. Their trial lasted thirty-three days, and 165 witnesses gave testimony. However, the jury was predominately Mormon, and Gilbert and his son were acquitted. There were those who said that Gilbert participated in the robbery to obtain funds for Ann Eliza and Leonard. According to Joe T. Place, of Duncan, Arizona, who had known Gilbert well: "He worshipped the ground his sister walked on." The Mormon Church took a dimmer view of such charitable acts and excommunicated Gilbert.

Despite his recent travail, Gilbert played the gracious host to Ann Eliza and Leonard for six months. In March of 1890, satisfied that her brother's care and the climate would repair Leonard's lungs, Ann Eliza left Pima to return to Manistee. Four weeks later she received word that her twenty-five-year-old son had died of tuberculosis. Her grief was terrible, but even as she mourned Leonard's premature passing and arranged for his burial next to her mother in Manistee, she was becoming aware of serious domestic problems under her roof.

Behind the serene facade of the Denning mansion in 1891, there raged a bitter conflict between Ann Eliza and Moses R. Denning. The conflict had its roots in the same problem that had marred Ann Eliza's marriage to Brigham Young—sexual incompatability. Denning "was a man of unreasonable passion and lust, apparently making no effort at self-control," Ann Eliza would later charge, "so that by living with him, the health of your oratrix became weak and impaired and broken."

When Ann Eliza began to deny him her bed, Denning sought solace elsewhere. There were several young and attractive servant girls in the house, and Denning decided to enjoy their presence fully. Ann Eliza observed that he "was in the habit of caressing, handling and lewdly conversing with such

hired help.” On one occasion she came upon her husband and a serving girl, Mamie Larsen, engaged in carnal activity in the maid’s bedroom. Ann Eliza berated her mate, but Denning was not cowed. Counterattacking, he called his wife “bitch” and “whore” and accused her of wanton behavior with half the male population of Manistee.

Despite her anguish, Ann Eliza did not leave Denning. A permanent marriage in monogamy had too long been her goal, and she was not ready now to separate herself from its advantages. Instead, she tried to forget her marital troubles, as well as her recent bereavement, by plunging wholeheartedly into a relatively new religion.

A quarter of a century before, Mary Baker Eddy, daughter of a Congregational deacon, had begun to practice mental healing after curing herself of an injury from a bad fall on an icy street. In 1879 she had established the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, and now, in 1891, the seventy-year-old, three-times-married Mrs. Eddy had practitioners gaining converts everywhere in the Midwest. In March of 1891, Ann Eliza invited a Chicago practitioner, Miss S. B. Bauer, to be her house guest in Manistee for two weeks. During Miss Bauer’s stay and Ann Eliza’s conversion from Methodism to Christian Science, Moses R. Denning kept his distance, attending a mining lawsuit in Arkansas and a Democratic Convention in Lansing, Michigan.

Ann Eliza sponsored the three free Christian Science lectures that Miss Bauer gave in the basement of Manistee’s Union Hall. Then Ann Eliza invited friends to her parlor to attend a course of Science lessons, given on twelve successive evenings. Before her marital problems came to a climax, Ann Eliza tried to keep busy with Christian Science work and woman’s suffrage meetings. In 1891 she visited Ludington, Michigan, on Science work and later attended a Women’s Congress in Grand Rapids. However, mental healing was not enough to overcome the mental suffering Ann Eliza was undergoing because of Moses R., and the following year their conflict came to a head.

In 1892 Moses R. Denning was sixty-four and Ann Eliza forty-eight, and they had lived together as man and wife for almost nine years. Early in that year, their domestic differences became unendurable. Although Denning still had intimate relations with his wife, these moments were too infrequent to satisfy him. As a result, his infidelities became more numerous. He blamed his peccadillos on Ann Eliza’s frigidity. She blamed his sins on his inhuman sexual needs. Whatever the motive, Denning’s philandering continued both under his roof and in the city. One afternoon Ann Eliza discovered him petting a complaining German maid named Minnie in a corner of the downstairs hallway. Soon enough Ann Eliza learned that outside the house he was associating “with lewd, immoral and unchaste women and was frequently guilty of improper and criminal conduct with such women.”

Humiliated, Ann Eliza fled to New York to seek refuge with her son Edward Wesley and to sulk, and when she returned to Manistee in February of 1892, she refused to resume marital relations with her husband. The first night home she locked her bedroom door against him, and in a rage of frustration Denning pounded at the door, then tried, but failed, to break it down. After threatening Ann Eliza with mayhem, discoursing on her alleged adulteries, and cursing her in the foulest language, he left to find his pleasures among more hospitable women. The bedroom door remained locked that night and every night thereafter.

For two more months the Dennings were at odds, and at last Denning decided that he had suffered enough. In a fit of cold anger he sold four lots he owned in Manistee to a friend, George M. Burr, a cashier in the Manistee National Bank. On Friday morning, April 22, 1892, Denning walked out on Ann Eliza, informing the press that he was going to Pennsylvania to care for his ailing mother.

Gossip was everywhere, and so were reporters. On April 28 the Manistee *Advocate*, under the headline, "Somewhat Sensational," made public the separation:

"From outward appearances there seems to be considerable discord in the Denning household, and as a consequence many merchants are somewhat anxious in regard to the immediate settlement of sundry bills that Mrs. Denning contracted last week.

"Mrs. Denning was formerly Ann Eliza Young, nineteenth wife of Brigham Young, the Mormon leader and prophet, and was well known throughout the country by her lectures and writings on the underside of Mormon life. She was married to Mr. Denning several years ago, and to outward appearances lived happily. Last week Mr. Denning went around to the several trades people the family had been in the habit of dealing with and paid up all bills, in some places gave checks for a little more than was due, and when his attention was drawn to the fact, said it was all right, 'credit it up.' At Mr. Russell's [Edwin Russell, the grocer], he said that as he was going out of town, and possibly would not be back soon, they might have to wait a little longer than usual for the payment of the next month's bill.

"Mr. Denning went away Thursday. Next day Mrs. Denning consulted her attorney, and acting on his advice started on an extensive shopping tour with the evident purpose of piling up as big a stack of bills as possible to greet Mr. Denning on his return. As he was well known to be a man of large wealth and paid bills promptly, merchants were willing to sell her all she wanted, and in consequence she bought about a thousand dollars worth of groceries and provisions, dry goods, shoes, slippers, furniture and hardware in a couple of days."

When Denning learned of this shopping spree, he hastily mailed an

advertisement from Pennsylvania to the Manistee *Daily Democrat.* Without making any charges against Ann Eliza, his published notice warned "the public not to trust her on his account as he would pay no bills of her contracting."

The Manistee *Times-Sentinel*, eager to hear Ann Eliza's side of the disagreement, sent a reporter to call on her at her residence some six days after Denning had departed. The reporter found Ann Eliza "calm and collected." When he questioned her, she gave him a statement for publication.

"It is unnecessary for me to enter into the details of Mr. Denning's life," said Ann Eliza. "I will leave his own acts to speak for themselves. Any reference that I may make to them is made without the slightest bitterness or ill-feeling. Nothing shall be set down in malice. I speak of our affairs only, because it seems better to do so than to allow unfounded and untrue surmisings of people to be published as facts. I have borne a burden for nine years which came near crushing me, and but for the goodness of God, would have done so. I have become perfectly fearless and am strong to meet the irresistible, for I have the utmost faith in the ultimate triumph of right and justice. The course of conduct pursued by Mr. Denning has been one that I could not countenance, and when I returned from New York, last February, I refused to sustain the relation of wife to him any longer, while he indulged in that he was doing. He offered to give me all he had if I would leave Manistee, which I refused to do. Of course this made him very angry, and when he become convinced that I could not be moved from my position, he began to make preparations to leave. I was perfectly aware of what he was doing, but made no move to prevent him. The messages he has sent me are entirely unbecoming a man—such as, 'Now she can starve, and see how she likes that'; and similar remarks. He left early Friday morning, April 22nd, and I have not seen him since. I am greatly relieved by his absence, and sincerely glad that he has gone, so long as it seems to be impossible for him to live a normal and respectable life. My worst wish for him is, that he will awaken to the truth, that there is a better and happier way to live, and that his last days may indeed be his best days."

After this remarkable outburst, Ann Eliza lapsed into nine months of silence, and then, in January of 1893, she filed suit for divorce, making public her third husband's alleged extracurricular sexual excursions. On August 14, 1893, the divorce was granted on the grounds of extreme cruelty. Ann Eliza was awarded $400 for her attorneys and $5,000 to cover all alimony and interests she might have in Denning's properties.

Denning did not attend the dissolution of his marriage. After leaving Ann Eliza, he had gone to Curwensville, Pennsylvania, to visit his mother. Then, with two of his sons by his first wife, he had continued to Ronceverte, West Virginia, the noisy lumber town on the Greenbrier River, and established

residence there.

After the divorce from Denning, Ann Eliza lived on alone for four trying years in Manistee. To sustain her senses she gave herself more fervidly than ever to Christian Science. In 1895 she was honored by the appearance of a four-page biography in a book otherwise devoted exclusively to males. *The Portrait and Biographical Record of Northern Michigan*, published in Chicago, contained "sketches of prominent and representative citizens, together with biographies and portraits of all the Presidents of the United States." The biography of Ann Eliza recounted her flight from Utah, her lecture career, and her three marriages. "Of late years," it said, "she has led a quiet and secluded life, honored and respected by all who know her." There was mention of her older brother Gilbert living in New Mexico. There was also a reference to her two sons: "Edward W., whose home is now in New Mexico; and Leonard L., who died in young manhood."

Ann Eliza's surviving son, Edward Wesley, had moved to New Mexico from New York City for two reasons: first, for causes unknown, he had separated from his wife, Mabel Rose and probably wanted to put distance between them; second, he had learned that, like his late brother, he was suffering from tuberculosis and required a different climate. In 1897, while Ann Eliza was traveling in the East, Edward Wesley again made a change of locale, transporting himself from New Mexico to Denver, where he moved into a house that Ann Eliza had owned there since 1895.

No sooner had Edward Wesley settled in Denver than Ann Eliza decided to join him. Returning to Manistee from Philadelphia, she sold her heavily mortgaged mansion, then proceeded to Denver and there rented a bungalow near her son. In 1899, perhaps from lack of money, she sold her Denver property and was forced to dispossess her son.

After that, for more than a decade, Ann Eliza lived in obscurity, leaving only a few clues as to her movements.

In 1900 she saw the new century in—a year in which many of America's seventy-nine million people were talking about William Jennings Bryan, Upton Sinclair, Eugene V. Debs, Theodore Roosevelt, Jack London, Carrie Nation, Casey Jones. It was also a year in which Mormonism, if not Ann Eliza, was in the news. The new Prophet was eighty-seven-year-old Lorenzo Snow, brother of Ann Eliza's sister harem wife, Eliza R. Snow. The congressional delegate to Washington from Utah was Brigham H. Roberts, but because he had three wives, the House of Representatives voted 268 to 50 not to seat him.

The following year there was a fleeting glimpse of Ann Eliza. On Monday, April 22, 1901, Ann Eliza's niece, Effie Webb—who was a daughter of Ann Eliza's brother Gilbert and was housekeeper for Ann Eliza's father in Salt Lake City—made a notation in the diary that she kept. It read: "Ann Eliza and

Eddie have not yet arrived." According to Effie Webb, "Eddie" was Ann Eliza's older son, Edward Wesley, alive but ill in 1901. A short time before, because he was still suffering from tuberculosis, Ann Eliza had convinced her son to leave Denver with her and visit Texas for his health. After a vacation in El Paso, the pair, mother and son, were expected in Salt Lake City, where an inheritance of $2,000 left by James L. Dee four years before was to be collected by Edward Wesley. Recently a granddaughter of Chauncey Webb's second marriage remarked of Ann Eliza's return to Salt Lake City in 1901: "I understood she had come back to Utah very repentant."

Following that one visit to Utah—her son Edward Wesley died shortly after—Ann Eliza disappeared again for over a year, to reappear in 1902 in El Paso. Presumably she went there to be near her elder brother, Gilbert, who was working on railroad construction in the State of Chihuahua in Mexico. Ann Eliza lived a secluded life in this hot, rough city on the Mexican border. Few Texans knew anything of her earlier fame and notoriety. However, Mormon polygamists living in exile in the Mexican towns of Chuichupa, Colonia Juarez, and Pearson (founded by the millionaire Englishman, Weetman Pearson, later Lord Cowdray, who had built the port of Veracruz, the dam across the Blue Nile in Egypt, and the tunnels under the East River in New York) excitedly gossipped over the rumor that Brigham Young's twenty-seventh wife was somewhere in El Paso.

Ann Eliza occupied four different residences in five years, all located near El Paso's downtown business district. During 1902 and 1903 she rented a small new adobe bungalow on Magoffin Street, a highly respectable address in a district otherwise inhabited by bankers, professional men, and engineers. The following years, because her purse was becoming depleted, Ann Eliza was forced to live in three duplexes. During these years Ann Eliza's neighbors knew her only as "Mrs. Anna E. Denning, widow of Moses R.," although Moses R., very much alive in West Virginia, would have resented his premature decease.

During 1907 Ann Eliza was less "repentant" than she had been a half dozen years before in Utah. She had decided that the seventeen-year-old Woodruff manifesto, abolishing polygamy, had not been entirely observed by the Saints. "Their President, Wilford Woodruff, in 1890 issued a hypocritical proclamation suspending polygamy, and then went on and practiced it as before," said Ann Eliza. "So did his faithful lieutenants, Apostles and Bishops and Elders, and what not. So did their deluded followers." And now a hard core of Saints, said Ann Eliza, in Utah, Arizona, Idaho, and Canada were still practicing polygamy, because they claimed that John Taylor, while in hiding during 1886, had received a secret revelation from the Lord to continue celestial marriage.

In February of 1907, Mormon polygamy became a national issue in

Congress for almost the last time, and Ann Eliza watched the proceedings closely. Four years earlier, after Joseph F. Smith (whose uncle had been the founder of Mormonism) had succeeded Snow to the Presidency of the Church, the Utah legislature elected Reed Smoot as United States senator. Immediately the Protestant ministers of Salt Lake City filed a protest in Washington. Even though Reed Smoot was a conservative Republican with only one wife, his enemies pointed out that he was an Apostle of the Church and a believer in polygamy.

Under pressure, the Committee on Privileges and Elections in the Senate undertook to examine the thorny case. Thousands of petitions against Smoot—arguing that he was a tool of the Mormon hierarchy, and that he and other Apostles encouraged underground polygamy—bombarded the committee. For his part Smoot denied everything. At last the Senate sent subpoenas to the Prophet Joseph F. Smith and to other members of the hierarchy. Smith created a sensation by confessing that his five wives had given him eleven children since the outlawing of polygamy by the Woodruff manifesto. He tried to explain to the committee that new plural marriages were not permitted in the Church—anyone found making such a marriage was excommunicated—but that it was impossible for old polygamists to abandon the wives they had once married. “I was placed in this position,” he told the senators. “I had a plural family, if you please; that is, my first wife was married to me over thirty-eight years ago, my last wife was married to me over twenty years ago, and with these wives I had children, and I simply took my chances, preferring to meet the consequences of the law rather than to abandon my children and their mothers; and I have cohabited with my wives—not openly, that is, not in a manner that I thought would be offensive to my neighbors—but I have acknowledged them; I have visited them. They have borne me children since 1890, and I have done it, knowing the responsibility and knowing that I was amenable to the law.”

In 1906 the committee reported to the Senate that the majority of its members were against the seating of Reed Smoot. On December 13, 1906, the whole matter went before the Senate for debate and vote. Smoot came under heavy attack but was defended by Senator Albert J. Hopkins, of Illinois, who said that Smoot had opposed polygamy “even from his infancy.” Several senators also attacked President Theodore Roosevelt for supporting Smoot, suggesting it was simply because the Mormons had backed him in the presidential election. The day before the Senate vote Smoot spoke out for himself. He declared that new plural marriages were rare in Utah and made without Church sanction. Every such marriage, since 1890, “has the express condemnation of the church.” As to himself, he was flatly against polygamy.

On February 20, 1907, the Senate voted. It required a two-thirds yea vote to expel Smoot. After the roll call the vote stood twenty-eight yeas, forty-two

nays, and twenty not voting. Smoot retained his Senate seat—and would retain it for five successive terms, until 1932, when he would be buried under the Franklin D. Roosevelt Democratic landslide.

Following the Smoot case from a distance, Ann Eliza's worst fears were confirmed. She decided that plural marriage, no matter how sporadic, was still being practiced in Utah. Either because she wanted to fight the old enemy once more, or because she was tired of obscurity and longed again for the limelight, she set to work revising her forgotten book, *Wife No. 19*, that had been published thirty-one years before.

Diligently she worked. She wrote a new preface: "Many years have passed since, as a fugitive from Mormon slavery, I first related the story of my bondage and escape to the wondering Gentile world… I gave ten years of my young womanhood to lecturing and writing of the facts with which I was only too familiar, until failing health compelled me to retire to private life… I cannot help thinking that these years of labor did accomplish some good. Bills making polygamy a crime against the United States were passed in Congress and signed by the President. These, I was assured, were a direct result of my work."

But now, she realized, her work was not finished—polygamists still thrived. "Against this yet unsubdued host of evil-doers," she wrote, "I venture again to raise my voice and wield my pen, which may be blessed by God as a humble instrument, for the pulling-down of the stronghold of error. To the new generation which has arisen I appeal as I did to their fathers and mothers, to arouse and exert themselves against the portentous evil still threatening our peace, our homes, our lives."

The book that followed was 512 printed pages in length. Until page 452 the text of *Wife No. 19* was followed fairly closely. But the last sixty pages consisted of new material. In refurbishing her old book, Ann Eliza made changes not only in sentence structure but in facts and added considerable information on what had happened to her cast of characters and herself between 1876 and 1907. Now she was able to tell the whole story of the Mountain Meadows massacre and of Lee's eventual execution. Now she could bring up to date the lives of Brigham's children and several wives, as well as those of Mormon congressional delegates like George O. Cannon.

In the revised book, Ann Eliza discussed only two of her three husbands. The story of her unhappy first marriage to James L. Dee was repeated but was severely cut and modified. In the old book a page and a half had been given to the episode where Dee had attempted to choke Ann Eliza. In the new version this attack was condensed to a single sentence: "At last my parents were eyewitnesses of my husband's brutal violence toward myself." Perhaps by 1907 Ann Eliza had mellowed with age, or perhaps she wished to repay Dee for having left $2,000 to her son Edward Wesley. The polygamous marriage

to Brigham Young was repeated with all its original details, but now Ann Eliza was able to add the story of his death and reprint a copy of his will. Too, she was able to report the whole story of her long divorce case. As for her third marriage to Moses R. Denning, this was omitted entirely from the new book.

At the end of the old material that she had revised Ann Eliza wrote: “I have told my story as simply as I could. I have added nothing, but I have left much untold. Another volume, as large as this, would not contain all I could write on this subject. My life is but the life of one, while thousands are suffering, as I suffered, and are powerless even to plead for themselves; so I plead for them. The voices of twenty thousand women speak in mine, begging for freedom both from social and religious tyranny.”

The new material in the book began with an account of Brigham’s death, then contained short biographies of his successors, Taylor, Woodruff, Snow, and Smith. Ann Eliza discussed the Edmunds Bill, happily, and the seating of Reed Smoot, unhappily. Throughout, her style was gaudy as ever. On page 500 she wrote: “I was one of many thousands of victims of that accursed system; and fortunately have not only escaped from its thraldom, but have been enabled by voice and pen to expose its terrible dangers to the American people. The despotic ruler from whom I suffered directly and chiefly has passed away to a higher tribunal to receive righteous judgment. But the dreadful system which he moulded and controlled so long still exists and in spite of all the measures by which an aroused people have sought to restrain and suppress it, still flourishes and spreads its baneful influences over many parts of our beloved country and even on foreign nations.”

At last Ann Eliza had reached the end of her final appeal to the public that had forgotten her. “I have been absent from Utah for many years,” she wrote, “but I am none the less deeply interested in its welfare, for it was my early home, endeared by fond recollections. I love its people and wish to see them freed from the intolerable bondage of a false and malignant religion. Every report that I get from that State verifies the statement that polygamy is rampant… The American people must therefore continue their holy crusade against this anti-Christian system. They must grapple with it in its strongholds. They must sustain those heroic souls who are engaged in this divine warfare. They must educate their sons and daughters to constant vigilance and unrelenting hostility against its insidious approaches. They must be ever on their guard lest by some trick or stratagem the cunning dangerous enemy enter and desecrate their hearths and homes.”

Ann Eliza found her publisher in Philadelphia, where she may also have taken up residence between 1908 and 1911. The publisher was William S. Jackson, who conducted a vanity house called the Aldine Press in the Witherspoon Building, and who also had an office in Boston. Actually

Jackson divided his time between printing books and selling real estate. It is likely that Ann Eliza paid him most or all of the costs of publication of her second book.

The 512-page, red-covered volume appeared in 1908. The title page read: *Life in Mormon Bondage*… A Complete Expose of its False Prophets/Murderous Danites/Despotic Rulers and/Hypnotized Deluded/Subjects… by Ann Eliza Young… 19th Wife of Brigham Young… Limited Edition.

While 1908 was a year of many popular best sellers, Ann Eliza's *Life in Mormon Bondage* was not one of them. People were reading Mary Roberts Rinehart's *The Circular Staircase* and John Fox, Jr.'s *The Trail of the Lonesome Pine* and Lucy M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables.* Few people could any longer become aroused over the relic of barbarism. It seemed as if the last public interest in polygamy had been expended on the Reed Smoot case over a year before. It was a dead issue. Only 1,000 copies of Ann Eliza's new book were published. It is doubtful if half of them were sold. However, there is some evidence that the handful that did sell made an impression on this limited number of readers. Margaret Hatch Haycock, of Salt Lake City, remembers that, when she and her husband were on a Mormon mission to Los Angeles in 1908, there was a considerable number of persons who resisted conversion by quoting anti-Mormon sentiments from Ann Eliza's *Life in Mormon Bondage.* It is Mrs. Haycock's recollection that Ann Eliza was "living in Southern California at that time, and I think she wrote short stories about the church and polygamy, or maybe it was just the book, but it made it awfully hard for us." Unhappily for Ann Eliza, there is no evidence that her California sales were duplicated elsewhere.

But if the apathetic public would not be aroused, at least Ann Eliza could have the satisfaction of letting her family and old friends know that she was still alive and vigorous at sixty-four. Yet who was there left of her kin and old associates to read and enjoy *Life in Mormon Bondage?*

In 1908 her mother Eliza Churchill Webb had been dead almost a quarter of a century. Ann Eliza's father, Chauncey G. Webb, after indulging himself in six marriages, had been dead five years. He had passed away on the morning of April 7, 1903, but not before advising his doctor from his deathbed, "No matter what the Church authorities tell you to do—do it. If it's right, it's right. If it's wrong, they'll be accountable, not you." His funeral service, before a large host of relatives and friends, had taken place at the Ninth Ward meetinghouse in Salt Lake City, with a Bishop presiding, a close friend, Angus M. Cannon, who had once excommunicated him, delivering the eulogy, and a Church choir singing. The *Deseret News* published his epitaph, He "built the wagon… used by President Young in which he entered the valley." His plot in the Salt Lake City cemetery would be shared, in 1909, by

his second wife, Elizabeth Taft Webb.

In 1908 only one of Ann Eliza's three husbands was still alive. Moses R. Denning lived on in Ronceverte, West Virginia, where he would die at the age of eighty-two in 1910.

In 1908 both of Ann Eliza's sons were gone, but her two grandsons, Rollins and Edward Clifton, were very much alive. Rollins, working as a secretary, had been married two years in 1908, and he and his wife, Aline Yard, were living in California, with his mother, Mabel Rose. Rollins lived until 1941. The younger of Ann Eliza's grandsons, Edward Clifton, was a bachelor and a clerk in a wool company in Oakland during 1908. Later he served in World War I, then was a successful real-estate broker until his death in 1948.

In 1908, two of Ann Eliza's three brothers were still alive. Seventy-one-year-old Gilbert, for whom she had once married Brigham Young and who had been at her younger son's deathbed, was busily at work as general contractor for the 595-mile Mexican stretch of the Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railroad, then being laid through the State of Chihuahua. Among his foremen, at the head of 200 peons, was Pancho Villa, who supervised grading operations. Four years later, old and penniless, Gilbert would join 1,500 fellow Mormons in fleeing his former employee, Pancho Villa, to find a refuge in El Paso. At last, Gilbert would return to Mexico and become manager of the foreign sawmills in Pearson. In 1922 he would be restored to the Mormon Church. A year later, at the age of eighty-six, Gilbert would die in Pearson—today known as Mata Ortiz—and be buried, in the full glory of his Temple clothes, on a bench of earth in the hills above Colonia Juarez.

Ann Eliza's other brother, seventy-year-old Edward Milo, was a contractor and cattleman in New Mexico during 1908. He had left the Mormon Church almost four decades before because of a violent quarrel with Brigham Young. Learning that his sister was being ill-treated by the Prophet, Edward Milo had gone to Brigham's office to protest. Infuriated by the protest, Brigham—"a big man," Edward Milo would ruefully record in his diary—lifted Ann Eliza's brother off his feet and bodily threw him out of the office. Edward Milo would die in May of 1927, at the age of eighty-nine, and be buried near his father in Salt Lake City.

In 1908, besides Ann Eliza, only three of Brigham Young's twenty-seven wives were still alive. The seventeenth wife, Margaret Pierce, had died the year before, but Amelia Folsom would live two more years, Harriet Barney three more years, and Eliza Burgess seven more years. The institution of plural marriage, which they had shared in common, would not die at all, at least not officially. A hard-core minority of Mormons, known as Fundamentalists, despite Woodruff's manifesto and the threats of excommunication if exposed, continued to practice plural marriage in secret.

Defiantly they practiced it in 1908, and defiantly, still, they practice it today. They flourish in Short Creek, Arizona, in Juab County, Utah, in Los Angeles, and, above all, in Salt Lake City itself. In 1959 a high official of the Mormon Church admitted to this writer that there were 2,000 polygamists in Salt Lake City; an attorney connected with the city administration placed the figure at closer to 5,000 polygamists. Their leading apologist was alleged to be an attorney named Joseph W. Musser, whose pamphlet *Celestial or Plural Marriage* defended the celestial system.

Of the male friends who had assisted Ann Eliza in shedding polygamy in 1873, and who had helped her escape to celebrity, only one was alive in 1908. The Reverend C. C. Stratton, a decade after assisting Ann Eliza, had left his Methodist flock in Salt Lake City to become president of the University of the Pacific and later president of Portland University, and he was still active in 1908. He would die in 1910.

In 1908 Ann Eliza was more alone than she had ever been. No one was interested in the windmill at which she tilted. Her second book failed in every way because polygamy had become a curiosity instead of a cause. And, in a year when people were talking about Elinor Glyn and the forty-seven-story Singer Building in New York, and Mischa Elman and Orville Wright and Jack Johnson and Henry Ford's Model T, the twenty-seventh wife of Brigham Young was an anachronism.

It is rare in history that a celebrated person disappears completely, totally, from the public view. It has happened, of course, but infrequently. Yet, from the time Benjamin Bathurst, English diplomat in Vienna, disappeared on November 25, 1809, at Perleberg, Germany (he walked around his carriage horses toward an inn and evaporated from sight forever), until the time Ambrose Bierce, celebrated American author, entered Mexico in 1914 and was never seen or heard of again, there have been instances of well-known people who have dropped from sight with almost no clues as to their ultimate fate. Ann Eliza Young was one of these.

In 1908, when she was sixty-four, she published her book, and from that year on history knew her no more. She had vanished into thin air, or so it seemed.

No major research source in the United States or England, Mormon or Gentile, carries the story of Ann Eliza's last years or the date of her death or the place of her grave. The Mormon Church Historian's office, in Salt Lake City, has meticulous obituary records of Mormons and apostate Mormons, but its files (which have been examined) do not reveal Ann Eliza under Webb or Dee or Young or Denning. The huge Genealogical Library, in Salt Lake City, has extensive accounts on James L. Dee's wives and children, and on Brigham Young's wives and children, and Ann Eliza is noted in these, but her death date is missing.

No pro-Mormon or anti-Mormon book, past or present, furnishes the date of Ann Eliza's demise. Even Kate B. Carter's authoritative *Brigham Young—His Wives and Family,* published by the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, concludes its brief sketch of Ann Eliza by saying: "The date and place of her death are unknown."

The great libraries of the world—the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., the New York Public Library, the British Museum—do not know the year of Ann Eliza's passing. The specialized or local libraries in those places where Ann Eliza lived—the Library of the Utah Historical Society and the Manistee Public Library—are also without information. The many histories of lecturing and lecturers, the extensive files of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau in Chicago, the encyclopedias of the world, do not have the date. Dozens of advertisements have brought replies from old-timers, both Mormon and Gentile, but not the final date; hundreds of letters to newspapers and cemeteries, everywhere, have furnished information but not the final date.

All that is known of Ann Eliza's end are scattered rumors, but none can be confirmed. The unpublished portion of Susa Young Gates' biography of her father, Brigham Young, concluded its section on Ann Eliza as follows: "What became of her? She married a business man in the East and lived until recent years, in comparative obscurity." Since this was probably written in 1925, the phrase stating that Ann Eliza "lived until recent years" might imply that she died in the early 1920s.

Mrs. John A. Widtsoe, of Salt Lake City, granddaughter of Brigham Young and Lucy Bigelow, and daughter of Susa Young Gates, had once heard that Ann Eliza "died in poverty, in California, unloved and unknown."

Helen Spencer Williams, of Salt Lake City, granddaughter of Brigham Young and Lucy Decker, had another locale for Ann Eliza's interment. "I've always understood that she died in Arizona and the Mormon bishop there buried her."

Gaylen Snow Young, of Salt Lake City, grandson of Brigham Young and Margaret Pierce, supported the more popular recollection that Ann Eliza had ended her years in the East. "The family gossip," he said, "was that Ann Eliza had died in New York and been buried in a pauper's grave, but I don't know under what name."

Margaret Hornung Perron, of San Jose, California, possessed an unpublished leather-bound diary of 400 typescript pages dictated by her father in 1935. Her father was John Hornung, who had been married to a niece of Ann Eliza. In his diary Hornung, who had met Ann Eliza in Manistee and considered her the most intelligent woman he had ever known, concluded several pages about her with a single line devoted to her death. "She died some years ago in Rochester [New York]," Hornung stated.

Dr. J. Edgar Lyon, of Salt Lake City, whose grandmother had been a

housekeeper at the Lion House and the Gardo House, and whose mother had been acquainted with Ann Eliza, remembered an incident that shed some light on Ann Eliza's last days. "Several years ago I was giving a lecture. There was some person present recently come from the East. That person commented that at the end Ann Eliza was so poor, unwell, and with no one to take care of her, that she finished her days in a rest or mental home."

In the early 1930s, a woman researcher, working for the Work Projects Administration in Utah, was assigned to learn what had finally become of Ann Eliza. She interviewed Mabel Young Sanborn, Brigham Young's daughter, "who related that Ann had died in poverty, and that the Church had put up some money for her burial, so she would not be buried in potter's field." The researcher then interviewed a member of the Mormon Church Historian's Office, "who confirmed the story." It was thought that Ann Eliza had died in Brooklyn.

Finally, in the summer of 1959, while doing research in Salt Lake City, this writer heard the strangest story of all. In a meeting with Ernest Dee, the surviving Dee born of James L. Dee's second marriage, this writer inquired when Ann Eliza had died. Ernest Dee did not know, but he did know when she was last seen alive. Sometime between 1928 and 1930, Dee had gone to New York City on business for General Electric. Entering the Equitable Life Insurance Building, Dee found himself face to face with Rollins, Ann Eliza's older grandson. Both men were surprised. "My goodness, Rollins, what are you doing here?" Dee asked. Rollins said that he was just about to leave for New Jersey on business. Dee inquired after several members of Rollins' family and then wondered what had become of his grandmother, Ann Eliza. "Why," said Rollins, "I just ran into her here a few minutes ago. She's gone up the street toward 42nd and Broadway. Let's go catch her." Dee said that they then hurried through the crowds for several blocks, trying to locate Ann Eliza, but she was nowhere to be found. At last they gave up. Rollins was not disappointed to have missed her. "I hope to hell I never see her again," he told Ernest Dee.

If Dee's story is accurate, Ann Eliza would have been eighty-six when he almost saw her in New York City. However, Rollins' daughter, who lives in Burlingame, California, doubts the time in which Dee placed the story. "My father would not have been in New York thirty years ago," she says; "it would have been closer to thirty-five years ago—for he was not in New York after 1925— and he had made several business trips to New York from 1921-1925.

Based on such dim memories, it seems that Ann Eliza may have died at any time between 1909 and 1930 and anywhere from California to New York.

Perhaps it no longer matters where and when she died—for she was most alive when there was a fight to be fought, and after it was won, and the American harem was dead, then, figuratively, her life was ended too.

The gravestone is missing, but Ann Eliza Young's monument still stands. Susan B. Anthony gave women the vote. Mary Walker and Victoria Woodhull gave women a career. But Ann Eliza Young, twenty-seventh wife, gave women the best gift of all— monogamy triumphant—one wife for one man, one wife and no more, to exclusively love, honor, and obey her mate to her heart's content…

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Because Mormon history has so long been a matter of heated controversy, it seems to me that any new writer in this field should (even as a juror must) state his preconceived notions on the subject. I came to Ann Eliza Young and her story as a non-Mormon, with no preconceived notions about the Latter-day Saints. During close to three years of intensive research on Ann Eliza, and on her Church, I became neither anti-Mormon nor pro-Mormon.

I chose to write about the heroine of this biography, who had once been an orthodox Mormon and had then become a bitter anti-Mormon, only because I was fascinated by the woman herself, by her little-known adventure in polygamy, by her subsequent career, and by her important contribution, in her time, to the downfall of plural marriage in America. Beyond performing as storyteller, I had no conscious ax to grind.

I believe I emerged from my researches as I had entered them, with my objectivity unblurred. If I enjoyed or suffered any deviations from neutral observer, they were slight, and they were these: I was even more favorably impressed than heretofore by Brigham Young and by the remarkable saga of the Latter-day Saints; and, though it may be paradoxical to say it, I was even more favorably impressed than heretofore by Ann Eliza's relentless and emotional crusade against polygamy in the United States. As to Western polygamy itself—it may, indeed, have been an evil on the land, as Ann Eliza and the vast majority of her contemporaries believed, but I cannot persuade myself that it was quite as harmful an institution as its enemies made it appear. Consideration of divine revelation aside, I am certain that polygamy had its good points, too—but then, I am a male.

While researching this book in Salt Lake City during the summer of 1959, I inquired of an important member of the Mormon hierarchy as to how his Church would regard a biography of Brigham Young's twenty-seventh and apostate wife. He replied, "We would have no objections whatsoever. The only factor that would worry the Church would be if you whitewashed Ann Eliza completely."

I have made no effort to whitewash Ann Eliza or, for that matter, Brigham Young—but have tried to adhere to the two-sided facts as I found them. I tried to interpret these facts and recounted her story, with all its contradictions, as truly as I could tell it

Only after I had undertaken this project did I fully realize how difficult it was going to be. Most biographies—my own past creations included—draw upon a central well of previously written works, old, new, for clues and material. The majority of books of fact derive from earlier books of fact, secondary material to some extent, like egg cells dividing themselves in halves. The worth of each new biographer, talent and perception taken for

granted, usually depends on how resourceful, original, imaginative, and persistent he is in locating less accessible wells of information in the periphery of his central well. But usually, in the beginning of any research, there *is* the central well. In the case of Ann Eliza Young there was, alas, none. Once I realized this, she seemed a mirage. The life path she trod lay trackless, almost untouched by other literary spades. Therein lay the difficulty—and the challenge.

Since Ann Eliza's birth in 1844, to the best of my knowledge, no full-length book had ever been written about her. With one exception, no collective biography ever contained a chapter on her. No major encyclopedia ever mentioned her. And, as to histories of the Saints or of leaders of the Saints, by Mormon or non-Mormon, no volume of the past or the present that I could find ever gave her more than passing reference. Clearly any biography of Ann Eliza Young would have to be written largely from primary source material—contemporary memoirs, letters, scrapbooks, diaries and journals, newspapers and periodicals, as well as personal recollections of the descendants of her family, friends, enemies.

And that, indeed, is how this book was written.

The most fruitful sources on Ann Eliza Young remain in her own two memoirs. The first of these was *Wife No. 19*, published in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1876, when the author was thirty-three. The second of these, a slight revision of the original book with some new material added, was the now rare *Life in Mormon Bondage*, published in Philadelphia in 1908, when the author was sixty-four. On certain aspects of her life, before and during her time as plural spouse, these memoirs offer priceless fragments of fact and gossip. But, too often, chronological autobiography is omitted and the precious pages are given over to an almost continuous diatribe against the horrors of polygamy, the beastliness of Brigham Young, and the dangers of Mormonism. Except for a handful of anecdotes, these memoirs record far too little of life with the Prophet and too few facts of her own physical existence and that of her family. On the subjects of the colorful Gentiles who surrounded and assisted her, on the details of her ten-year lecture career, on the scandal that almost destroyed her, there is next to nothing. Her third marriage and later years up to 1908 are entirely ignored.

Only one other source made any sustained mention of Ann Eliza. In *The Bold Women*, published in 1953, Helen Beal Woodward included a twenty-six-page chapter on Ann Eliza, as one of fifteen rebellious American ladies of the past. Three other books gave brief but valuable glimpses of Ann Eliza: *Portrait and Biographical Record of Northern Michigan*, published in 1895; *Eccentricities of Genius* by Major J. B. Pond, published in 1901; and *The Life of James Redpath* by Charles F. Horner, published in 1926.

In preparation for this biography I found a great number of books, which,

if contributing little to Ann Eliza's own story, offered information and insights into Brigham Young, into polygamy in America, and into Mormonism in general. A selected list of these works will be found in the bibliography. However, a handful of books are worthy of special mention for their research value. Among the numerous volumes on Ann Eliza's second husband, one of the best by a non-Mormon was *Brigham Young* by M. R. Werner, published in 1925, and one of the best by a Mormon was *Brigham Young* by Preston Nibley, published in 1937. Of the many accounts touching on the Prophet's home life, the most useful were the biographies written by two of his daughters, *The Life Story of Brigham Young* by Susa Young Gates, published in 1930, and *One Who Was Valiant* by Clarissa Young Spencer, published in 1940.

Authors of the nineteenth century were prolific in producing books on plural marriage. One of the best of these, aside from Ann Eliza's own memoirs, was *Tell It All* by Mrs. T. B. H. Stenhouse, published in 1874. In modern times a more objective and comprehensive study of celestial marriage was presented by Kimball Young in his book, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* published in 1954.

On Mormonism in general, one of the finest early narratives was *The City of the Saints* by Richard F. Burton, published in 1861. Of the recent histories of the Church, I found particularly enlightening *Kingdom of the Saints* by Ray B. West, Jr., 1957, *Essentials in Church History* by Joseph Fielding Smith, 1959 edition, and *Among the Mormons*, edited by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, 1958. It goes without saying that no book with a Mormon background could be written without consulting the writings of Brigham H. Roberts and the collected discourses of Brigham Young. On the subject of Joseph Smith I found two of the most authoritative biographies to be *No Man Knows My History* by Fawn M. Brodie, 1945, and *Joseph Smith The Prophet* by Preston Nibley, 1944.

I owe my greatest debt, however, to countless individuals throughout the country who gave so selflessly of their time and energies to collaborate with me in my attempt to preserve a remarkable woman for history. First and foremost, I wish to thank two research assistants for more than two years of tireless and imaginative detective work. One of these was Elizebethe Kempthorne, of Arlington, California. The other was Luise Johnson, of Salt Lake City, Utah, and now of Indianapolis, Indiana. Both ladies pursued, by the writing of hundreds of letters, by the combing of hundreds of old newspapers, by the tracking down and interviewing of dozens of old-timers, every elusive source available to us on Ann Eliza Young. Also, I wish to thank their husbands, Walter Kempthorne and Robert Johnson, for their own assistance and for their patience in loaning their monogamous wives to me for the hunt.

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