

VARIOUS

HEROINES OF
MORMONDOM

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Various Heroines of Mormondom The Second Book of the Noble Women's Lives Series

PREFACE

IT affords us much pleasure to be able to present a second book of the "NOBLE WOMEN'S LIVES SERIES" to the public. It will, we feel confident, prove no less interesting than its predecessor, and the lessons conveyed by the articles herein contained will doubtless be as instructive to its readers as any ever given.

The remarkable events here recorded are worthy of perusal and remembrance by all the youth among this people, as they will tend to strengthen faith in and love for the gospel for which noble men and women have suffered so much. The names, too, of such heroines as these, the sketches of whose lives we herewith give, should be held in honorable remembrance among this people, for no age or nation can present us with more illustrious examples of female faith, heroism and devotion.

We trust that this little work may find its way in the homes of all the Saints and prove a blessing to all who scan its pages. This is the earnest desire of

THE PUBLISHERS.

A NOBLE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch, married Jerusha Barden, November 2, 1826. They had six children, viz: Lovina, Mary, John, Hyrum, Jerusha and Sarah. Mary died when very young, and her mother died soon after the birth of her daughter, Sarah. Hyrum, the second son, died in Nauvoo, in 1842, aged eight years. The Patriarch married his second wife, Mary Fielding, in the year 1837, she entering upon the important duty of stepmother to five children, which task she performed, under the most trying and afflictive circumstances, with unwavering fidelity. She had two children, Joseph and Martha. Thus, you see, Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, was really a polygamist many years before the revelation on celestial marriage was written, though, perhaps, about the time it was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith; but not exactly in the sense in which the word is generally used, for both his wives were not living together on the earth; still they were both alive, for the spirit never dies, and they were both his wives – the mothers of his children. Marriage is ordained of God, and when performed by the authority of His Priesthood, is an ordinance of the everlasting gospel and is not, therefore, merely a legal contract, but pertains to time and all eternity to come, therefore it is written in the Bible, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder."

There are a great many men who feel very bitter against the Latter-day Saints, and especially against the doctrine of plural marriage, who have married one or more wives after the death of their first, that, had their marriages been solemnized in the manner God has prescribed and by His authority, they themselves would be polygamists, for they, as we, firmly believe in the immortality of the soul, professing to be Christians and looking forward to the time when they will meet, in the spirit world, their *wives* and the loved ones that are dead. We can imagine the awkward situation of a man, not believing in polygamy, meeting two or more wives, with their children, in the spirit world, each of them claiming him as husband and father. "But," says one, "how will it be with a woman who marries another husband after the death of her first?" She will be the wife of the one to whom she was married for time and eternity. But if God did not "join them together," and they were only married by mutual consent until death parted them, their contract, or partnership ends with death, and there remains but one way for those who died without the knowledge of the gospel to be united together for eternity. That is, for their living relatives or friends to attend to the ordinances of the gospel for them. "For, in the resurrection, they neither marry nor are given in marriage," therefore marriage ordinances must be attended to here in the flesh. Hyrum Smith, however, was a polygamist before his death, he having had several women sealed to him by his brother, Joseph, some of whom are now living.

At the death of the Patriarch, June 27th, 1844, the care of the family fell upon his widow, Mary Smith. Besides the children there were two old ladies named respectively, Hannah Grinnels, who had been in the family many years, and Margaret Brysen. There was also a younger one, named Jane Wilson, who was troubled with fits and otherwise afflicted, and was, therefore, very dependent, and an old man, named George Mills, who had also been in the family eleven years, and was almost entirely blind and very crabbed. These and others, some of whom had been taken care of by the Patriarch out of charity, were members of the family and remained with them until after they arrived in the valley. "Old George," as he was sometimes called, had been a soldier in the British army, had never learned to read or write, and often acted upon impulse more than from the promptings of reason, which made it difficult, sometimes, to get along with him; but because he had been in the family so long – through the troubles of Missouri and Illinois – and had lost his eye-sight from the effects of brain fever and inflammation, caused by taking cold while in the pineries getting out

timbers for the temple at Nauvoo, Widow Smith bore patiently all his peculiarities up to the time of her death. Besides those I have mentioned, Mercy R. Thompson, sister to Widow Smith, and her daughter, and Elder James Lawson were also members of the family.

On or about the 8th of September, 1846, the family, with others, were driven out of Nauvoo by the threats of the mob, and encamped on the banks of the Mississippi River, just below Montrose. There they were compelled to remain two or three days, in view of their comfortable homes just across the river, unable to travel for the want of teams, while the men were preparing to defend the city against the attack of the mob. They were thus under the necessity of witnessing the commencement of the memorable "Battle of Nauvoo;" but, before the cannonading ceased, they succeeded in moving out a few miles, away from the dreadful sound of it, where they remained until they obtained, by the change of property at a great sacrifice, teams and an outfit for the journey through Iowa to the Winter Quarters of the Saints, now Florence, Nebraska. Arriving at that point late in the Fall, they were obliged to turn out their work animals to pick their living through the Winter, during which some of their cattle, and eleven out of their thirteen horses died, leaving them very destitute of teams in the Spring.

In the Fall of 1847, Widow Smith and her brother, Joseph Fielding, made a trip into Missouri, with two teams, to purchase provisions for the family. Joseph, her son, accompanied them as teamster; he was then nine years of age. The team he drove consisted of two yokes of oxen, one yoke being young and only partially broke, which, with the fact that the roads were very bad with the Fall rains, full of stumps in places, sometimes hilly, and that he drove to St. Joseph, Missouri, and back, a distance of about three hundred miles, without meeting with one serious accident, proves that he must have been a fair teamster for a boy at his age.

At St. Joseph they purchased corn and other necessities, getting their corn ground at Savannah, on their return journey. Wheat flour was a luxury beyond their reach, and one seldom enjoyed by many of the Latter-day Saints in those days. On their journey homeward they camped one evening at the edge of a small prairie, or open flat, surrounded by woods, where a large herd of cattle, on their way to market, was being pastured for the night, and turned out their teams, as usual, to graze. In the morning their best yoke of cattle was missing, at which they were greatly surprised, this being the first time their cattle had separated. Brother Fielding and Joseph at once started in search, over the prairie, through the tall, wet grass, in the woods, far and near, until they were almost exhausted with fatigue and hunger, and saturated to the skin; but their search was vain. Joseph returned first to the wagons, towards mid-day, and found his mother engaged in prayer. Brother Fielding arrived soon after, and they sat down to breakfast, which had long been waiting.

"Now," said Widow Smith, "while you are eating I will go down towards the river and see if I can find the cattle."

Brother Fielding remarked, "I think it is useless for you to start out to hunt the cattle; I have inquired of all the herdsman and at every house for miles, and I believe they have been driven off." Joseph was evidently of the same opinion, still he had more faith in his mother finding them, if they could be found, than he had either in his uncle or himself. He knew that she had been praying to the Lord for assistance, and he felt almost sure that the Lord would hear her prayers. Doubtless he would have felt quite sure had he not been so disheartened by the apparently thorough but fruitless search of the morning. He felt, however to follow her example: he prayed that his mother might be guided to the cattle, and exercised all the faith he could muster, striving hard to feel confident that she would be successful. As she was following the little stream, directly in the course she had taken on leaving the wagons, one of the drovers rode up on the opposite side and said, "Madam, I saw your cattle this morning over in those woods," pointing almost directly opposite to the course she was taking. She paid no attention to him, but passed right on. He repeated his information; still she did not heed him. He then rode off hurriedly, and, in a few moments, with his companions, began to gather up their cattle and start them on the road towards St. Joseph. She had not gone far when

she came upon a small ravine filled with tall willows and brush; but not tall enough to be seen above the high grass of the prairie. In a dense cluster of these willows she found the oxen so entangled in the brush, and fastened by means of withes, that it was with great difficulty that she extricated them from their entanglement. This was evidently the work of these honest (?) drovers, who so hurriedly disappeared – seeing they could not turn her from her course – perhaps in search of estray honesty, which it is to be hoped they found.

This circumstance made an indelible impression upon the mind of the lad, Joseph. He had witnessed many evidences of God's mercy, in answer to prayer, before; but none that seemed to strike him so forcibly as this. Young as he was, he realized his mother's anxiety to emigrate with her family to the valley in the Spring, and their dependence upon their teams to perform that journey, which, to him, seemed a formidable, if not an impossible, undertaking in their impoverished circumstances. It was this that made him so disheartened and sorrowful when he feared that the cattle would never be found. Besides, it seemed to him that he could not bear to see such a loss and disappointment come upon his mother, whose life he had known, from his earliest recollection, had been a life of toil and struggle for the maintenance and welfare of her family. His joy, therefore, as he looked through tears of gratitude to God for His kind mercy extended to the "widow and the fatherless" may be imagined, as he ran to meet his mother driving the oxen towards the wagons.

CHAPTER II

Joseph was herd-boy. One bright morning sometime in the Fall of 1847, in company with his herd-boy companions, whose names were Alden Burdick, (almost a young man, and very sober and steady), Thomas Burdick, cousin to Alden, about Joseph's size, but somewhat older, and Isaac Blocksome, younger, he started out with his cattle as usual for the herd grounds, some two miles from Winter Quarters. They had two horses, both belonging to the Burdicks, and a pet jack belonging to Joseph. Their herd that day comprised not only the cows and young stock, but the work oxen, which for some cause were unemployed.

Alden proposed to take a trip on foot through the hazel, and gather nuts for the party, and by the "lower road" meet the boys at the spring on the herd ground, while they drove the herd by the "upper road" which was free from brush. This arrangement just suited Joseph and Thomas, for they were very fond of a little sport, and his absence would afford them full scope; while his presence served as an extinguisher upon the exuberance of their mirth. Joseph rode Alden's bay mare, a very fine animal; Thomas, his father's black pony, and Isaac the pet Jack. This Jack had deformed or crooked fore-legs, and was very knowing in his way; so "Ike" and the Jack were the subjects chosen by Joseph and Thomas for their sport. They would tickle "Jackie," and plague him, he would kick up, stick his head down, hump up his back and run, while Isaac struggled in vain to guide or hold him by the bridle reins, for like the rest of his tribe he was very headstrong when abused. No harm or even offense to Isaac was intended; but they carried their fun too far; Isaac was offended, and returned home on foot, turning loose the Jack with the bridle on. We will not try to excuse Joseph and Thomas in this rudeness to Isaac, for although they were well-meaning boys, it was no doubt very wrong to carry their frolics so far as to offend or hurt the feelings of their playmate, and especially as he was younger than they; but in justice to them it is fair to say they were heartily sorry when they found they had given such sore offense.

When Joseph and Thomas arrived at the spring they set down their dinner pails by it, mounted their horses again, and began to amuse themselves by running short races, jumping ditches and riding about. They would not have done this had Alden been there. They had not even done such a thing before, although the same opportunity had not been wanting; but for some reason – ever fond of frolic and mischief – they were more than usually so this morning. It is said that not even a "sparrow falls to the ground" without God's notice, is it unreasonable to suppose that He saw these boys? And as He overrules the actions of even the wicked, and causes their "wrath to praise Him;" would it be inconsistent to suppose that the Lord overruled the frolics of these mischievous, but not wicked boys on this occasion for good, perhaps for their deliverance and salvation? We shall see.

While they were riding about and the cattle were feeding down the little spring creek toward a point of the hill that jutted out into the little valley about half a mile distant, the "leaders" being about half way to it, a gang of Indians on horseback, painted, their hair daubed with white clay, stripped to the skin, suddenly appeared from behind the hill, whooping and charging at full speed toward them. Now, had these boys turned out their horses, as under other circumstances they should, and no doubt would, have done, they and the cattle would have been an easy prey to the Indians, the boys themselves being completely at their mercy, such mercy, as might be expected from a thieving band of savages. In an instant, Thomas put his pony under full run for home, crying at the top of his voice, "Indians, Indians!" At the same instant Joseph set out at full speed for the head of the herd, with a view to save them if possible.

He only could tell the multitude of his thoughts in that single moment. Boy as he was, he made a desperate resolve. His mother, his brother and sisters and their dependence upon their cattle for transportation to the Valley in the Spring, occupied his thoughts and nerved him to meet the Indians half-way, and risk his life to save the cattle from being driven off by them. At the moment that

he reached the foremost of the herd, the Indians, with terrific yells reached the same spot, which frightened the cattle so, that with the almost superhuman effort of the little boy to head them in the right direction, and at the same time to elude the grasp of the Indians, in an instant they were all on the stampede towards home. Here the Indians divided, the foremost passing by Joseph in hot pursuit of Thomas, who by this time had reached the brow of the hill on the upper road leading to town, but he was on foot. He had left his pony, knowing the Indians could outrun – and perhaps would overtake him. And thinking they would be satisfied with only the horse, and by leaving that he could make good his escape.

Joseph's horse was fleeter on foot, besides, he was determined to sell what he had to, at the dearest possible rate. The rest of the Indians of the first gang, about half a dozen, endeavored to capture him; but in a miraculous manner he eluded them contriving to keep the cattle headed in the direction of the lower road towards home, until he reached the head of the spring. Here the Indians who pursued Thomas – excepting the one in possession of Thomas' horse, which he had captured and was leading away towards the point – met him, turning his horse around the spring and down the course of the stream, the whole gang of Indians in full chase. He could outrun them, and had he now, freed from the herd, been in the direction of home he could have made his escape; but as he reached a point opposite the hill from whence the Indians came, he was met by another gang who had crossed the stream for that purpose; again turning his horse. Making a circuit, he once more got started towards home. His faithful animal began to lose breath and flag. He could still, however, keep out of the reach of his pursuers; but now the hindmost in the down race began to file in before him, as he had turned about, by forming a platoon and veering to the right or left in front, as he endeavored to pass, they obstructed his course, so that those behind overtook him just as he once more reached the spring. Riding up on either side, one Indian fiercely took him by the right arm, another by the left leg, while a third was prepared to close in and secure his horse. Having forced his reins from his grip, they raised him from the saddle, slackened speed till his horse ran from under him, then dashed him to the ground among their horses' feet while running at great speed. He was considerably stunned by the fall, but fortunately escaped further injury, notwithstanding, perhaps a dozen horses passed over him. As he rose to his feet, several men were in sight on the top of the hill, with pitchforks in their hands at the sight of whom the Indians fled in the direction they had come. These men had been alarmed by Thomas' cry of Indians, while on their way to the hay fields, and reached the place in time to see Joseph's horse captured and another incident which was rather amusing. The Jack, which did not stampede with the cattle, had strayed off alone toward the point of the hill, still wearing his bridle. An old Indian with some corn in a buckskin sack was trying to catch him; but "Jackie" did not fancy Mr. Indian, although not afraid of him, and so would wheel from him as he would attempt to take hold of the bridle. As the men appeared, the Indian made a desperate lunge to catch the Jack, but was kicked over, and his corn spilt on the ground. The Indian jumped up and took to his heels, and "Jackie" deliberately ate up his corn. By this time the cattle were scattered off in the brush lining the lower road, still heading towards town. The men with the pitchforks soon disappeared from the hill continuing on to the hay-fields, and Joseph found himself alone, affording him a good opportunity to reflect on his escape and situation. The truth is, his own thoughts made him more afraid than did the Indians. What if they should return to complete their task, which he had been instrumental in so signally defeating? They would evidently show him no mercy. They had tried to trample him to death with their horses, and what could he do on foot and alone? It would take him a long time to gather up the cattle, from among the brush. The Indians might return any moment, there was nothing to prevent them doing so. These were his thoughts; he concluded therefore that time was precious, and that he would follow the example, now, of Thomas, and "make tracks" for home. When he arrived the people had gathered in the old bowery, and were busy organizing two companies, one of foot and the other of horsemen, to pursue the Indians. All was excitement, his mother and the family were almost distracted, supposing he had been killed or captured by the Indians. Thomas had told the whole story

so far as he knew it, the supposition was therefore inevitable; judge, therefore, of the happy surprise of his mother and sisters on seeing him, not only alive, but uninjured. Their tears of joy were even more copious than those of grief a moment before.

But Joseph's sorrow had not yet begun. He and Thomas returned with the company of armed men on foot to hunt for the cattle, while the horsemen were to pursue the Indians, if possible, to recover the horses. When they arrived again at the spring no sign of the cattle could be seen; even the dinner pails had been taken away. On looking around, the saddle blanket from the horse Joseph rode was found near the spring. Was this evidence that the Indians had returned as Joseph had suspected? And had they, after all, succeeded in driving off the cattle? These were the questions which arose. All that day did they hunt, but in vain, to find any further trace of them; and as they finally gave up the search and bent their weary steps towards home, all hope of success seemingly fled. Joseph could no longer suppress the heavy weight of grief that filled his heart, and he gave vent to it in bitter tears, and wished he had been a man.

It is said, "calms succeed storms," "and one extreme follows another," etc. Certainly joy followed closely on the heels of grief more than once this day, for when Joseph and Thomas reached home, to their surprise and unspeakable joy, they found all their cattle safely corralled in their yards where they had been all the afternoon. Alden, it seems, reached the herd ground just after Joseph had left. He found the cattle straying off in the wrong direction unherded, and he could find no trace of the boys or horses, although he discovered the dinner pails at the spring as usual. When he had thoroughly satisfied himself by observations that all was not right, and perhaps something very serious was the matter, he came to the conclusion to take the dinner pails, gather up the cattle and go home, which he did by the lower road, reaching home some time after the company had left by the upper road in search of them. He of course learned the particulars of the whole affair, and must have felt thankful that he had escaped. A messenger was sent to notify the company of the safety of the cattle, but for some reason he did not overtake them.

In the Spring of 1847, George Mills was fitted out with a team and went in the company of President Young as one of the Pioneers to the Valley; and soon, a portion of the family in the care of Brother James Lawson, emigrated from "Winter Quarters," arriving in the Valley that Fall.

In the Spring of 1848, a tremendous effort was made by the Saints to emigrate to the Valley on a grand scale. No one was more anxious than Widow Smith; but to accomplish it seemed an impossibility. She still had a large and comparatively helpless family. Her two sons, John and Joseph, mere boys, being her only support; the men folks, as they were called, Brothers J. Lawson and G. Mills being in the Valley with the teams they had taken. Without teams sufficient to draw the number of wagons necessary to haul provisions and outfit for the family, and without means to purchase, or friends who were in circumstances to assist, she determined to make the attempt, and trust in the Lord for the issue. Accordingly every nerve was strained, and every available object was brought into requisition. "Jackie" was traded off for provisions; cows and calves were yoked up, two wagons lashed together, and team barely sufficient to draw one was hitched on to them, and in this manner they rolled out from Winter Quarters some time in May. After a series of the most amusing and trying circumstances, such as sticking in the mud, doubling teams up all the little hills and crashing at ungovernable speed down the opposite sides, breaking wagon tongues and reaches, upsetting, and vainly endeavoring to control wild steers, heifers and unbroken cows, they finally succeeded in reaching the Elk Horn, where the companies were being organized for the plains.

Here, Widow Smith reported herself to President Kimball, as having "started for the Valley." Meantime, she had left no stone unturned or problem untried, which promised assistance in effecting the necessary of preparations for the journey. She had done to her utmost, and still the way looked dark and impossible.

President Kimball consigned her to Captain – 's fifty. The captain was present; said he, "Widow Smith, how many wagons have you?"

"Seven."

"How many yokes of oxen have you?"

"Four," and so many cows and calves.

"Well," says the captain, "Widow Smith, it is folly for you to start in this manner; you never can make the journey, and if you try it, you will be a burden upon the company the whole way. My advice to you is, go back to Winter Quarters and wait till you can get help."

This speech aroused the indignation of Joseph, who stood by and heard it; he thought it was poor consolation to his mother who was struggling so hard, even against hope as it were, for her deliverance; and if he had been a little older it is possible that he would have said some very harsh things to the captain; but as it was, he busied himself with his thoughts and bit his lips.

Widow Smith calmly replied, "Father – " (he was an aged man,) "I will beat you to the Valley and will ask no help from you either!"

This seemed to nettle the old gentleman, for he was high metal. It is possible that he never forgot this prediction, and that it influenced his conduct towards her more or less from that time forth as long as he lived, and especially during the journey.

While the companies were lying at Elk Horn, Widow Smith sent back to Winter Quarters, and by the blessing of God, succeeded in buying on credit, and hiring for the journey, several yokes of oxen from brethren who were not able to emigrate that year, (among these brethren one Brother Rogers was ever gratefully remembered by the family). When the companies were ready to start, Widow Smith and her family were somewhat better prepared for the journey and rolled out with lighter hearts and better prospects than favored their egress from Winter Quarters. But Joseph often wished that his mother had been consigned to some other company, for although everything seemed to move along pleasantly, his ears were frequently saluted with expressions which seemed to be prompted by feelings of disappointment and regret at his mother's prosperity and success – expressions which, it seemed to him, were made expressly for his ear. To this, however, he paid as little regard as it was possible for a boy of his temperament to do. One cause for annoyance was the fact that his mother would not permit him to stand guard at nights the same as a man or his older brother John, when the Captain required it. She was willing for him to herd in the day time and do his duty in everything that seemed to her in reason could be required of him; but, as he was only ten years of age, she did not consider him old enough to do guard duty at nights to protect the camp from Indians, stampedes, etc., therefore, when the captain required him to stand guard, Widow Smith objected. He was, therefore, frequently sneered at as being "petted by his mother," which was a sore trial to him.

CHAPTER III

One day the company overtook President Kimball's company, which was traveling ahead of them; this was somewhere near the north fork of the Platte River. Jane Wilson, who has been mentioned as being a member of the family of Widow Smith, and as being troubled with fits, etc., and withal very fond of snuff, started ahead to overtake her mother, who was in the family of Bishop N. K. Whitney, in President Kimball's company, supposing both companies would camp together, and she could easily return to her own camp in the evening. But, early in the afternoon, our captain ordered a halt, and camped for that night and the next day. This move, unfortunately, compelled poor Jane to continue on with her mother in the preceding company.

Towards evening the captain took a position in the center of the corral formed by the wagons, and called the company together, and then cried out:

"Is all right in the camp? Is all right in the camp?"

Not supposing for a moment that anything was wrong, no one replied. He repeated the question again and again, each time increasing his vehemence, until some began to feel alarmed. Old "Uncle Tommie" Harrington replied in good English style, "Nout's the matter wi me; nout's the matter wi me;" and one after another replied, "Nothing is the matter with me," until it came to Widow Smith, at which, in a towering rage, the captain exclaimed, "All's right in the camp, and a poor woman lost!"

Widow Smith replied, "She is not lost; she is with her mother, and as safe as I am."

At which the captain lost all control of his temper, and fairly screamed out, "I rebuke you, Widow Smith, in the name of the Lord!" pouring forth a tirade of abuse upon her. Nothing would pacify him till she proposed to send her son John ahead to find Jane. It was almost dark, and he would doubtless have to travel until nearly midnight before he would overtake the company; but he started, alone and unarmed, in an unknown region, an Indian country, infested by hordes of hungry wolves, ravenous for the dead cattle strewn here and there along the road, which drew them in such numbers that their howlings awakened the echoes of the night, making it hideous and disturbing the slumbers of the camps.

That night was spent by Widow Smith in prayer and anguish for the safety of her son; but the next day John returned all safe, and reported that he had found Jane all right with her mother. Widow Smith's fears for his safety, although perhaps unnecessary, were not groundless, as his account of his night's trip proved. The wolves growled and glared at him as he passed along, not caring even to get out of the road for him; their eyes gleaming like balls of fire through the darkness on every hand; but they did not molest him; still, the task was one that would have made a timid person shudder and shrink from its performance.

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