

**BUCHANAN
ROBERT
WILLIAMS**

SAINT ABE AND HIS SEVEN
WIVES

Robert Buchanan
Saint Abe and His Seven Wives

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Saint Abe and His Seven Wives / A Tale of Salt Lake City, With A
Bibliographical Note:*

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Robert Buchanan

Saint Abe and His Seven Wives / A Tale of Salt Lake City, With A Bibliographical Note

TO OLD DAN CHAUCER

Maypole dance and Whitsun ale,
Sports of peasants in the dale,
Harvest mirth and junketting,
Fireside play and kiss-in-ring,
Ancient fun and wit and ease, —
Gone are one and all of these;
All the pleasant pastime planned
In the green old Mother-land:
Gone are these and gone the time
Of the breezy English rhyme,
Sung to make men glad and wise
By great Bards with twinkling eyes:
Gone the tale and gone the song
Sound as nut-brown ale and strong,

Freshening the sultry sense
Out of idle impotence,
Sowing features dull or bright
With deep dimples of delight!

Thro' the Motherland I went
Seeking these, half indolent:
Up and down, saw them not:
Only found them, half forgot.
Buried in long-darken'd nooks
With thy barrels of old books,
Where the light and love and mirth
Of the morning days of earth
Sleeps, like light of sunken suns
Brooding deep in cob-webb'd tuns!
Everywhere I found instead,
Hanging her dejected head,
Barbing shafts of bitter wit,
The pale Modern Spirit sit —
While her shadow, great as Gog's
Cast upon the island fogs,
In the midst of all things dim
Loom'd, gigantically grim.
Honest Chaucer, thee I greet
In a verse with blithesomefeet.
And ino' modern bards may stare,
Crack a passing joke with Care!
Take a merry song and true
Fraught with inner meanings too!

Goodman Dull may croak and scowl: —
Leave him hooting to the owl!
Tight-laced Prudery may turn
Angry back with eyes that burn,
Reading on from page to page
Scrofulous novels of the age!
Fools may frown and humbugs rail,
Not for them I tell the Tale;
Not for them,, but souls like thee.
Wise old English Jollity!

Newport, October, 1872

ST. ABE AND HIS SEVEN WIVES

Art thou unto a helpmate bound?
Then stick to her, my brother!
But hast thou laid her in the ground?
Don't go to seek another!
Thou hast not sin'd, if thou hast wed,
Like many of our number,
But thou hast spread a thorny bed,
And there alas! must slumber!
St. Paul, Cor. I., 7, 27-28.

O let thy fount of love be blest
And let thy wife rejoice,
Contented rest upon her breast
And listen to her voice;
Yea, be not ravish'd from her side
Whom thou at first has chosen,
Nor having tried one earthly bride
Go sighing for a Dozen!
Sol. Prov. V., 18-20.

APPROACHING UTAH. – THE BOSS'S TALE

I – PASSING THE HANCHE

"Grrr!" shrieked the boss, with teeth clench'd
tight,

Just as the lone ranche hove in sight,

And with a face of ghastly hue

He flogg'd the horses till they flew,

As if the devil were at their back,

Along the wild and stony track.

From side to side the waggon swung,

While to the quaking seat I clung.

Dogs bark'd; on each side of the pass

The cattle grazing on the grass

Raised heads and stared; and with a cry

Out the men rush'd as we roll'd by.

"Grrr!" shriek'd the boss; and o'er and o'er

He flogg'd the foaming steeds and swore;

Harder and harder grew his face

As by the ranche we swept apace,

And faced the hill, and past the pond,

And gallop'd up the height beyond,
Nor tighten'd rein till field and farm
Were hidden by the mountain's arm
A mile behind; when, hot and spent,
The horses paused on the ascent,
And mopping from his brow the sweat.
The boy glanced round with teeth still set,
And panting, with his eyes on me,
Smil'd with a look of savage glee.

Joe Wilson is the boss's name,
A Western boy well known to fame.
He goes about the dangerous land
His life for ever in his hand;
Has lost three fingers in a fray,
Has scalp'd his Indian too they say;
Between the white man and the red
Four times he hath been left for dead;
Can drink, and swear, and laugh, and brawl,
And keeps his big heart thro' it all
Tender for babes and women.

He
Turned, smiled, and nodded savagely;
Then, with a dark look in his eyes
In answer to my dumb surprise,
Pointed with jerk of the whip's heft
Back to the place that we had left,
And cried aloud,

"I guess you think
I'm mad, or vicious, or in drink.
But theer you're wrong. I never pass
The ranche down theer and bit of grass,
I never pass 'em, night nor day,
But the fit takes me jest that way!

The hosses know as well as me
What's coming, miles afore we see
The dem'd old corner of a place,
And they git ready for the race!
Lord! if I *didn't* lash and sweer,
And ease my rage out passing theer,
Guess I should go clean mad, that's all.
And that's the reason why I call
This turn of road where I am took
Jest Old Nick's Gallop!"

Then his look
Grew more subdued yet darker still;
And as the horses up the hill
With loosen'd rein toil'd slowly, he
Went on in half soliloquy,
Indifferent almost if I heard,
And grimly grinding out each word.

II – JOE WILSON GOES A-COURTING

"There was a time, and no mistake,
When that same ranche down in the brake
Was pleasanter a heap to me
Than any sight on land or sea.
The hosses knew it like their master,
Smelt it miles orf, and spank'd the faster!
Ay, bent to reach that very spot,
Flew till they halted steaming hot
Sharp opposite the door, among
The chicks and children old and young;
And down I'd jump, and all the go
Was 'Fortune, boss!' and 'Welcome, Joe!'
And Cissy with her shining face,
Tho' she was missus of the place,
Stood larfing, hands upon her hips;
And when upon her rosy lips
I put my mouth and gave her one,
She'd cuff me, and enjoy the fun!
She was a widow young and tight,
Her chap had died in a free fight,
And here she lived, and round her had
Two chicks, three brothers, and her dad,
All making money fast as hay,

And doing better every day.
Waal! guess tho' I was peart and swift,
Spoonin' was never much my gift;
But Cissy was a gal so sweet,
So fresh, so spicy, and so neat,
It put your wits all out o' place,
Only to star' into her face.
Skin whiter than a new-laid egg,
Lips full of juice, and sech a leg!
A smell about her, morn and e'en,
Like fresh-bleach'd linen on a green;
And from her hand when she took mine,
The warmth ran up like sherry wine;
And if in liquor I made free
To pull her larfin' on my knee,
Why, there she'd sit, and feel so nice,
Her heer all scent, her breath all spice!
See! women hate, both young and old,
A chap that's over shy and cold,
And fire of all sorts kitches quick,
And Cissy seem'd to feel full slick
The same fond feelings, and at last
Grew kinder every time I passed;
And all her face, from eyes to chin,
Said *'Bravo, Joe! You're safe to win!'
And tho' we didn't fix, d'ye see,
In downright *words* that it should be,
Ciss and her fam'ly understood
That she and me would jine for good.

Guess I was like a thirsty hoss
Dead beat for days, who comes across
A fresh clear beck, and on the brink
Scoops out his shaky hand to drink;
Or like a gal or boy of three,
With eyes upon a pippin-tree;
Or like some Injin cuss who sees
A bottle of rum among the trees,
And by the bit of smouldering log,
Where squatters camp'd and took their grog
The night afore. Waal!" (here he ground
His teeth again with savage sound)
"Waal, stranger, fancy, jest for fun,
The feelings of the thirsty one,
If, jest as he scoop'd out his hand,
The water turn'd to dust and sand!
Or fancy how the lad would scream
To see thet fruit-tree jest a dream!
Or guess how thet poor Injin cuss,
Would dance and swear, and screech and fuss,
If when he'd drawn the cork and tried
To get a gulp of rum inside,
'Twarn't anything in thet theer style,
But physic stuff or stinking ile!
Ah! you've a notion now, I guess,
Of how all ended in a mess,
And how when I was putting in
My biggest card and thought to win,
The Old One taught her how to cheat,

And yer I found myself, clean beat!"

III – SAINT AND DISCIPLE

Joe Wilson paused, and gazed straight down,
With gritting teeth and bitter frown,
And not till I entreated him
Did he continue, – fierce and grim,
With knitted brow and teeth clench'd tight.

"Along this way one summer night,
Jest as I meant to take the prize,
Passed an *Apostle*— dern his eyes!
On his old pony, gravel-eyed,
His legs a-dangling down each side,
With twinkling eyes and wheedling smile,
Grinning beneath his broad-brimm'd tile,
With heer all scent and shaven face.
He came a-trotting to the place.
My luck was bad, I wasn't near,
But busy many a mile from yer;
And what I tell was told to me
By them as were at hand to see.
'Twam't every day, I reckon, they
Saw an *Apostle* pass their way!
And Cissy, being kind o' soft,
And empty in the upper loft,
Was full of downright joy and pride
To hev thet saint at her fireside —

One of the seventy they call
The holiest holy – dern 'em all!
O he was 'cute and no mistake,
Deep as Salt Lake, and wide awake!
Theer at the ranche three days he stayed,
And well he knew his lying trade.
'Twarn't long afore he heard full free
About her larks and thet with me,
And how 'twas quite the fam'ly plan
To hev me for her second man.
At fust thet old Apostle said
Little, but only shook his head;
But you may bet he'd no intent
To let things go as things had went.
Three nights he stayed, and every night
He squeezed her hand a bit more tight;
And every night he didn't miss
To give a loving kiss to Ciss;
And tho' his fust was on her brow,
He ended with her mouth, somehow.
O, but he was a knowing one,
The Apostle Hiram Higginson!
Grey as a badger's was his heer,
His age was over sixty year
(Her grandfather was little older),
So short, his head just touch'd her shoulder;
His face all grease, his voice all puff,
His eyes two currants stuck in duff; —
Call thet a man! – then look at *me!*

Thretty year old and six foot three,
Afeard o' nothing morn nor night,
The man don't walk I wouldn't fight!
Women is women! Thet's their style —
Talk *reason* to them and they'll bile;
But baste'em soft as any pigeon,
With lies and rubbish and religion;
Don't talk of flesh and blood and feeling,
But Holy Ghost and blessed healing;
Don't name things in too plain a way.
Look a heap warmer than you say,
Make'em believe they're serving true
The Holy Spirit and not you,
Prove all the world but you's damnation,
And call your kisses jest salvation;
Do this, and press'em on the sly,
You're safe to win'em. Jest you try!

"Fust thing I heerd of all this game,
One night when to the ranche I came,
Jump'd down, ran in, saw Cissy theer,
And thought her kind o' cool and queer;
For when I caught her with a kiss,
Twarn't that she took the thing amiss,
But kept stone cool and gev a sigh,
And wiped her mouth upon the sly
On her white milkin'-apron. 'Waal,'
Says I, 'you're out o' sorts, my gel!'
And with a squeamish smile for me,

Like folks hev when they're sick at sea,
Says she, 'O, Joseph, ere too late,
I am awaken'd to my state —
How pleasant and how sweet it is
To be in sech a state of bliss!'
I stared and gaped, and turned to Jim
Her brother, and cried out to him,
'Hullo, mate, what's the matter here?
What's come to Cissy? Is she *queer*?'
Jim gev a grin and answered 'Yes,
A trifle out o' sorts, I guess.'
But Cissy here spoke up and said,
'It ain't my stomach, nor my head,
It ain't my flesh, it ain't my skin,
It's holy *spirits* here within!'
'Waal,' says I, meanin' to be kind,
'I must be off, for I'm behind;
But next time that I pass this way
We'll fix ourselves without delay.
I know what your complaint is, Ciss,
I've seen the same in many a miss,
Keep up your spirits, thet's your plan.
You're lonely here without a man,
And you shall hev as good a one
As e'er druv hoss beneath the sun!'
At that I buss'd her with a smack.
Turn'd out, jump'd up, and took the track,
And larfing druv along the pass.

"Theer! Guess I was as green as grass!"

IV – THE BOOK OF MORMON

"Twas jest a week after thet day
When down I druv again this way.
My heart was light; and 'neath the box
I'd got a shawl and two fine frocks
For Cissy. On in spanking style
The hosses went mile arter mile;
The sun was blazing golden bright,
The sunflowers burning in the light,
The cattle in the golden gleer
Wading for coolness everywheer
Among the shinin' ponds, with flies
As thick as pepper round their eyes
And on their heads. See! as I went
Whistling like mad and waal content,
Altho' 'twas broad bright day all round,
A cock crow'd, and I thought the sound
Seem'd pleasant. Twice or thrice he
crow'd,'

And then up to the ranche I rode.
Since then I've often heerd folk say
When a cock crows in open day
It's a *bad sign*, announcin' clear
Black luck or death to those thet hear.

"When I drew up, all things were still.

I saw the boys far up the hill
Tossin' the hay; but at the door
No Cissy stood as oft afore.
No, not a soul there, left nor right,
Her very chicks were out o' sight.
So down I jump'd, and 'Ciss!' I cried,
But not a sign of her outside.
With that into the house I ran,
But found no sight of gel or man —
All empty. Thinks I, 'this is queer!' —
Look'd in the dairy – no one there;
Then loiter'd round the kitchen' track
Into the orchard at the back:
Under the fruit-trees' shade I pass'd...
Thro' the green bushes... and at last
Found, as the furthest path I trode,
The gel I wanted. Ye... s! by – !

The gel I wanted – ay, I found
More than I wanted, you'll be bound!
Theer, seated on a wooden cheer,
With bows and ribbons in her heer,
Her hat a-swinging on a twig
Close by, sat Ciss in her best rig,
And at her feet that knowing one,
The Apostle Hiram Higginson!
They were too keen to notice me,
So I held back behind a tree
And watch'd'em. Never night nor day

Did I see Cissy look so gay,
Her eyes all sparkling blue and bright,
Her face all sanctified delight.
She hed her gown tuck'd up to show
Embrider'd petticoat below,
And jest a glimpse, below the white,
Of dainty leg in stocking tight
With crimson clocks; and on her knee
She held an open book, which he,
Thet dem'd Apostle at her feet,
With her low milking stool for seat,
Was reading out all clear and pat,
Keeping the place with finger fat;
Creeping more close to book and letter
To feel the warmth of his text better,
His crimson face like a cock's head
With his emotion as he read,
And now and then his eyes he'd close
Jest like a cock does when he crows!
Above the heads of thet strange two
The shade was deep, the sky was blue,
The place was full of warmth and smell,
All round the fruit and fruit-leaves fell,
And that Saint's voice, when all was
still,
Was like the groanin' of a mill.

"At last he stops for lack of wind,
And smiled with sarcy double-chinn'd

Fat face at Cissy, while she cried,
Rocking herself from side to side,
'O Bishop, them are words of bliss!'
And then he gev a long fat kiss
On her warm hand, and edged his stool
Still closer. Could a man keep cool
And see it? Trembling thro' and thro'
I walked right up to thet their two,
And caught the dem'd old lump of duff
Jest by the breeches and the scruff.
And chuck'd him off, and with one kick
Sent his stool arter him right slick —
While Cissy scream'd with frighten'd face,
'Spare him! O spare that man of grace!'

"'Spare him!' I cried, and gev a shout,
'What's this yer shine you air about —
What cuss is this that I jest see
With that big book upon your knee,
Cuddling up close and making sham
To read a heap of holy flam?'
Then Cissy clasp'd her hands, and said,
While that dem'd Saint sat fierce and red,
Mopping his brow with a black frown,
And squatting where I chuck'd him down,
'Joe Wilson, stay your hand so bold,
Come not a wolf into the fold;
Forbear to touch that holy one —

The Apostle Hiram Higginson.'
'Touch him,' said I, 'for half a pin
I'd flay and quarter him and skin!
Waal may he look so white and skeer'd
For of his doings I have heerd;
Five wives he hev already done,
And him – not half the man for one!
And then I stoop'd and took a peep
At what they'd studied at so deep,
And read, for I can read a bit,
'The Book of Mormon' – what was writ
By the first Saint of all the lot,
Mad Joseph, him the Yankees shot.
'What's the contents of this yer book?'
Says I, and fixed her with a look.
O Joe,' she answered, 'read aright,
It is a book of blessed light —
Thet holy man expounds it clear \\
Edification great is theer!'
Then, for my blood was up, I took
One kick at thet infernal book,
And tho' the Apostle guv a cry,
Into the well I made it fly,
And turning to the Apostle cried,
Tho' thet theer Scriptur' is your guide,
You'd best depart without delay,
Afore you sink in the same way!
And sure as fate you'll wet your skin
If you come courting yer agin!"

"At first he stared and puff'd and blew, —
Git out!' I cried, and off he flew,
And not till he was out o' reach
Shook his fat fist and found his speech.
I turned to Cissy. 'Cicely Dunn,'
Ses I, 'is this a bit of fun
Or eernest?' Reckon 'twas a sight
To see the way she stood upright,
Rolled her blue eyes up, tried to speak,
Made fust a giggle, then a squeak,
And said half crying, 'I despise
Your wicked calumnies and lies,
And what you would insinuate
Won't move me from my blessed state.
Now I perceive in time, thank hiven,
You are a man to anger given,
Jealous and vi'lent. Go away!
And when you recollect this day,
And those bad words you've said to me,
Blush if you kin. Tehee! tehee!'
And then she sobbed, and in her cheer
Fell crying: so I felt quite queer,
And stood like a dern'd fool, and star'd
Watchin' the pump a going hard;
And then at last, I couldn't stand
The sight no more, but slipt my hand
Sharp into hers, and said quite kind,
Say no more, Cissy – never mind;

I know how queer you women's ways is —
Let the Apostle go to blazes!
Now that was plain and fair. With this
I would have put my arm round Ciss.
But Lord! you should have seen her face,
When I attempted to embrace;
Sprang to her feet and gev a cry,
Her back up like a cat's, her eye
All blazing, and cried fierce and clear,
You villain, touch me if you deer!
And jest then in the distance, fur
From danger, a voice echoed her, —
The dem'd Apostle's, from some place
Where he had hid his ugly face, —
Crying out faint and thick and clear,
Yes, villain, touch her if you deer!

So riled I was, to be so beat,
I could have Struck her to my feet
I didn't tho', tho' sore beset —
I never struck a woman yet.

"But off I walked right up the pass,
And found the men among the grass,
And when I came in sight said flat,
What's this yer game Cissy is at?
She's thrown me off, and taken pity
On an Apostle from the City.
Five wives already, too, has he —

Poor cussed things as e'er I see —
Does she mean *mischief* or a *lark*?
Waal, all the men at thet look'd dark,
And scratch'd their heads and seem'd in
doubt.

At last her brother Jim spoke out —
Joe, don't blame *us*— by George, it's true,
We're chawed by this as much as you;
We've done our best and tried and tried,
But Ciss is off her head with pride,
And all her thoughts, both night and day,
Are with the Apostles fur away.

"O that I were in bliss with them
Theer in the new Jerusalem!"

She says; and when we laugh and sneer,
Ses we're jest raging wolves down here.
She's a bit dull at home d'ye see,
Allays liked heaps of company,
And now the foolish critter paints
A life of larks among the Saints.
We've done our best, don't hev a doubt,
To keep the old Apostle out:
We've trained the dogs to seize and bite him,
We've got up ghosts at night to fright him,
Doctor'd his hoss and so upset him,
Put tickle-grass in bed to fret him,
Jalap'd his beer and snuffed his tea too,
Gunpowder in his pipe put free too;
A dozen times we've well-nigh kill'd him,

We've skeer'd him, shaken him, and spiff'd
him;

In fact, done all we deer,' said Jim,
Against a powerful man like him;

But all in vain we've hed our sport;

Jest like a cat that *can't* be hurt,

With nine good lives if he hev one.

Is this same Hiram Higginson!'"

V – JOE ENDS HIS STORY. – FIRST GLIMPSE OF UTAH

Joe paused, for down the mountain's brow
His hastening horses trotted now.
Into a canyon green and light,
Thro' which a beck was sparkling light,
Quickly we wound. Joe Wilson lit
His cutty pipe, and suck'd at it
In silence grim; and when it drew,
Puff after puff of smoke he blew,
With blank eye fixed on vacancy.
At last he turned again to me,
And spoke with bitter indignation
The epilogue of his narration.

"Waal, stranger, guess my story's told,
The Apostle beat and I was bowl'd.

Reckon I might have won if I
Had allays been at hand to *try*;
But I was busy out of sight,
And he was theer, morn, noon, and night,
Playing his cards, and waal it weer
For him I never caught him theer.
To cut the story short, I guess

He got the Prophet to say 'yes,'
And Cissy without much ado
Gev her consent to hev him too;
And one fine morning off they druv
To what he called the Abode of Love —
A dem'd old place, it seems to me,
Jest like a dove-box on a tree,
Where every lonesome woman-soul
Sits shivering in her own hole,
And on the outside, free to choose,
The old cock-pigeon struts and coos.
I've heard from many a one that Ciss
Has found her blunder out by this,
And she'd prefer for company
A brisk young chap, tho' poor, like me,
Than the sixth part of him she's won —
The holy Hiram Iligginson.
I've got a peep at her since then,
When she's crawl'd out of thet theer den,
But she's so pale and thin and tame
I shouldn't know her for the same,
No flesh to pinch upon her cheek,
Her legs gone thin, no voice to speak,
Dabby and crush'd, and sad and flabby,
Sucking a wretched squeaking baby;
And all the fun and all the light
Gone from her face, and left it white.
Her cheek 'll take 'feeble flush,
But hesn't blood enough to blush;

Tries to seem modest, peart and sly,
And brighten up if I go by,
But from the corner of her eyes
Peeps at me quietly, and sighs.

Reckon her luck has been a stinger!
She'd bolt if I held up my finger;
But tho' I'm rough, and wild, and free,
Take a *Saint's* leavings – no not me!
You've heerd of Vampires – them that rise
At dead o' night with flaming eyes,
And into women's beds'll creep
To suck their blood when they're asleep.
I guess these Saints are jest the same,
Sucking the life out is their game;
And tho' it ain't in the broad sun
Or in the open streets it's done,
There ain't a woman they clap eyes on
Their teeth don't touch, their touch don't pison;
Thet's their dem'd way in this yer spot —
Grrr! git along, hoss! dem you, trot!"

From pool to pool the wild beck sped
Beside us, dwindled to a thread.
With mellow verdure fringed around
It sang along with summer sound:
Here gliding into a green glade;
Here darting from a nest of shade
With sudden sparkle and quick cry,

As glad again to meet the sky;
Here whirling off with eager will
And quickening tread to turn a mill;
Then stealing from the busy place
With duskier depths and wearier pace
In the blue void above the beck
Sailed with us, dwindled to a speck,
The hen-hawk; and from pools below
The blue-wing'd heron oft rose slow,
And upward pass'd with measured beat
Of wing to seek some new retreat.
Blue was the heaven and darkly bright,
Suffused with throbbing golden light,
And in the burning Indian ray
A million insects hummed at play.
Soon, by the margin of the stream,
We passed a driver with his team
Bound for the City; then a hound
Afar off made a dreamy sound;
And suddenly the sultry track
Left the green canyon at our back,
And sweeping round a curve, behold!
We came into the yellow gold
Of perfect sunlight on the plain;
And Joe, abruptly drawing rein,
Said quick and sharp, shading his eyes
With sunburnt hand, "See, their it
lies —
Theer's *Sodom!*"

And even as he cried,
The mighty Valley we espied,
Burning below us in one ray
Of liquid light that summer day;
And far away, 'mid peaceful gleams
Of flocks and herds and glistening streams,
Rose, fair as aught that fancy paints,
The wondrous City of the Saints!

THE CITY OF THE SAINTS

O Saints that shine around the heavenly Seat!

What heaven is this that opens at my feet?

What flocks are these that thro' the golden gleam

Stray on by freckled fields and shining stream?

What glittering roofs and white kiosks are these,

Up-peeping from the shade of emerald trees?

Whose City is this that rises on the sight

Fair and fantastic as a city of light

Seen in the sunset? What is yonder sea

Opening beyond the City cool and free.

Large, deep, and luminous, looming thro' the heat.

And lying at the darkly shadowed feet

Of the Sierrasy which with jagged line

Burning to amber in the light divine,

Close in the Valley of the happy land,

With heights as barren as a dead man's hand?

O pilgrim, halt! O wandering heart, give praise

Behold the City of these Latter Days!

Here may'st thou leave thy load and be forgiven,

And in anticipation taste of Heaven!

AMONG THE PASTURES. – SUMMER EVENING DIALOGUE

BISHOP PETE, BISHOP JOSS, STRANGER

BISHOP PETE

Ah, things down here, as you observe, are getting
more pernicious,

And Brigham's losing all his nerve, altho' the
fix is vicious.

Jest as we've rear'd a prosperous place and fill'd
our holy quivers,

The Yankee comes with dern'd long face to give
us all the shivers!

And on his jaws a wicked grin prognosticates
disaster,

And, jest as sure as sin is sin, he means to be
the master.

"Pack up your traps," I hear him cry, "for here
there's no remainin'."

And winks with his malicious eye, and progues
us out of Canaan.

BISHOP JOSS

It ain't the Yankee that *I* fear, the neighbour
nor the stranger —

No, no, it's closer home, it's *here*, that I perceive
the danger.

The wheels of State has gather'd rust, the helm
wants hands to guide it,

Tain't from without the tiler'll bust, but 'cause
of steam inside it;

Yet if we went falootin' less, and made less
noise and flurry,

It isn't Jonathan, I guess, would hurt us in a
hurry.

But there's sedition east and west, and secret
revolution,

There's canker in the social breast, rot in the
constitution;

And over half of us, at least, are plunged in mad
vexation,

Forgetting how our race increased, our very
creed's foundation.

What's our religion's strength and force, its

substance, and its story?

STRANGER

Polygamy, my friend, of course! the law of love
and glory!

BISHOP PETE

Stranger, I'm with you there, indeed: – it's been
the best of nusses;

Polygamy is to our creed what meat and drink
to *us* is.

Destroy that notion any day, and all the rest is
brittle,

And Mormondom dies clean away like one in
want of vittle.

It's meat and drink, it's life, it's power! to
heaven its breath doth win us!

It warms our vitals every hour! it's Holy Ghost
within us!

Jest lay that notion on the shelf, and all life's
springs are frozen!

I've half-a-dozen wives myself, and wish I had a

dozen!

BISHOP JOSS

If all the Elders of the State like you were sound
and holy,

P. Shufflebotham, guess our fate were far less
melancholy.

You air a man of blessed toil, far-shining and
discerning,

A heavenly lamp well trimm'd with oil, upon the
altar burning.

And yet for every one of us with equal resolu-
tion,

There's twenty samples of the Cuss, as mean as
Brother Clewson.

STRANGER

St. Abe?

BISHOP JOSS

Yes, *him*— the snivelling sneak — his very *name*
provokes me, —

Altho' my temper's milky-meek, he sours me
and he chokes me.

To see him going up and down with those meek
lips asunder,

Jest like a man about to drown, with lead to sink
him under,

His grey hair on his shoulders shed, one leg than
t'other shorter,

No end of cuteness in his head, and him — as
weak as water!

BISHOP PETE

And yet how well I can recall the time when
Abe was younger —

Why not a chap among us all went for the
notion stronger.

When to the mother-country he was sent to wake

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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