

THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER

and The Cotton Plant.

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ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

X.—In "The Promised Land" of the Latter Day Saints.

Utah is a beautiful country. A more traveled and more cultured people than the Mormons might well call it a Promised Land. One rarely sees a prettier view than that of Salt Lake City, with the protecting walls of the Wasatch Mountains on one hand and the smooth waters of Great Salt Lake on the other. A remarkably clean-looking and well built city, its massive Temple and the terrapin-back Tabernacle seen distinctly from afar, it makes an impression on the traveler he cannot soon forget.

Floating Like Corks on Salt Lake.

Without waiting to inspect the Mormon capital, however, our party first took the cars for Saltair, the famous bathing pavilion on Salt Lake. This pavilion, 1,200 feet in length, is owned by the Mormon Church and was built twelve years ago at a cost of \$350,000. After walking nearly a quarter of a mile to our dressing rooms, our North Carolina party donned their suits and we waded out into this American Dead Sea. And this indeed was one of the most remarkable experiences of our entire trip. Six times saltier than ocean water, in Great Salt Lake you float like a cork, and you can't sink if you try. People sometimes float around holding umbrellas over them, and I take it you could lie on your back and read the latest novel if you had skill enough to avoid occasional splashes of brine in your eyes. This is the only trouble one has, except in trying to get his feet under the water when he gets ready to stand up. The water is said to contain 20 per cent of saline matter, and the evaporation as the water dries leaves crusts of salt everywhere. My own face as I came out was about as badly salt-coated as a last year's side of bacon. Of course, no fish can live in the Lake, and the manufacture of salt from the brine is quite an important industry.

The Mormon Temple and Tabernacle.

The same afternoon after our salt bath the Mormons took us in tow again, carrying us through the main part of town, past the statue of Brigham Young, to Temple Block, the site of the famous Temple and Tabernacle of the Latter-Day Saints, as the Mormons call themselves. The Temple is built of granite, is 186 feet long and 107 feet high, with towers 200 feet high. In this Temple the baptisms and other secret church ceremonies are performed, no Gentile (all non-Mormons are

called Gentiles) ever being allowed to enter the building. The bloody oaths of which the country heard something during the recent Congressional investigations, are taken here by the communicants of the Church.

No Gentile, as we have said can enter the Temple; but the services in the Tabernacle are always open to the public. The only restriction is that if you go into this or any other Mormon Church, you must stay until the services are over; at the beginning the doors are locked and remain closed until the benediction. This Tabernacle will seat 8,000 people, and the roof consist of a single wooden arch. The structure is in the shape of a terrapin shell, which gives it wonderful acoustic properties.

It was an organ recital that we had in the Tabernacle this afternoon, after which some of the Mormon leaders belabored us with arguments as to the grandeur of the Mormon Church, the greatness of Brigham Young, and the right of the Mormon oligarchy to rule Utah just as it pleased. I reckon Utah is the only place in the United States where the entertainment of a general public body like the National Editorial Association would have been thrown into the hands of a religious sect. This in itself was an unintentional illustration of the constant meddling of the Mormon Church in secular affairs.

A Wonderful Organ and How It Deceived Us.

But I set out to tell of the organ recital; and of the music they gave us, there certainly can be no word of criticism. This great pipe organ, 30 x 33 x 58 feet, is said to be the finest instrument of its kind in America, and this I am well prepared to believe. With 110 stops and accessories and 5,000 pipes, it has a range of tone that is simply marvelous. It is natural enough perhaps that it should enable the organist to imitate an orchestra or military band, but how he gets the effect of a full choir of human voices from a dead, mechanical instrument is something harder to understand.

As I left the street car, my Mormon fellow-traveler spoke of these human notes. "You will be ready to swear," he said, "that there is a full chorus of voices." We were at the other end of the hall, 200 feet from the organ, in front of which sat our Mormon hosts. At the end of the first number, the young woman by my side commented on "the beauty of the hushed voices" accompanying the organ; and with the third piece even I was ready to declare without hesitation that I heard men and women singing in full harmony with the instrument. I learned later, however, that every note came from the organ itself.

The Business Affairs of the Mormon Church.

On Main Street in Salt Lake City we passed the famous Z. C. M. I.—Zion's Co-operative Mercantile Institution—with "its all-seeing eye, emblem of Mormon authority," encircled by the words, "Holiness to the Lord." This great million-dollar department store was founded by Brigham Young nearly forty years ago, and its President is Joseph F. Smith, President of the

Mormon Church. This is only one of a score of business enterprises of which Smith has been chosen President since he became President of the Mormon Church four years ago. For the Mormon Church is a great business institution, as well as a religious sect. Every good Mormon gives tithes—a tenth of his earnings—to the support of the Church, and these amount to \$1,600,000 a year. The object in making Smith nominal President of a corporation, of course is to get the support of the Church. Mines, banks, railways and factories all court Mormon favor by making the Church head their President and paying him tribute. "Viewed commercially," says a writer in Leslie's Monthly, "the Mormon Church is a menace to all other business institutions which attempt to compete with it." Here is an illustration: While there are several salt factories partly owned by the Church, a few years ago two of the "Saints" decided to establish an independent institution. Getting into debt to a Mormon bank, the President of the Church sent for them and brought them to terms by threatening to crush their business.

A Business and Political Autocracy.

Talk about your opportunities for graft in New York or Philadelphia—the opportunities in the Church of Latter-Day Saints would make Tammany green with envy. The cold truth is, as the Salt Lake Tribune, an able anti-Mormon paper, declared on the morning of our arrival, that Utah is ruled by a social, business and political autocracy. In business and in politics the influence of the Church is almost despotic. A good story which we heard from a Utah editor was of a Salt Lake City apostle who somehow accumulated an enormous quantity of green paint. And just then one of the other apostles had a convenient "revelation" that it was "the will of the Lord" that all the elect should paint their fences and front gates green. Whereupon, of course, our merchant apostle sold his paint at a good profit—and it is not entirely inconceivable that our prophet apostle also became a richer man.

We believe in religious freedom, for our part. We believe in letting a man worship God in any way he chooses—or in no way, if his mind and heart do not permit him to worship. For this reason we were at first inclined to oppose the expulsion of Apostle Reed Smoot from the United States Senate. Now, however, it seems to us that this might be a proper way to rebuke this Mormon ecclesiastical machine for its meddling in politics.

How the Mormon Church Controls Politics.

That it does meddle no man well-informed about Utah affairs will deny for a minute, unless he wish to shield the Mormon Church. And here again I may quote from the article by W. M. Raine and A. W. Dunn in Frank Leslie's Monthly for last February:

"It may be asked how it is possible for the Mormon Church in communities and States where it does not have a majority of the votes to control elections. It is because it unites with one party or another, with sometimes this and sometimes

(Continued on Page 8.)