

UTAH'S UGLY DUCKLINGS: A PROFILE OF THE SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRANT

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UTAH'S Anglo-Scandinavian population, as everybody knows, is the fruit of over a century of Mormon proselyting abroad. To thousands of Biblically minded Europeans, America seemed the land of Zion, with Deseret's adobe and sagebrush community the visible Kingdom to which a latter-day Israel was being gathered, particularly from "the land of the north." From 1850 to 1900, when "the gathering" was most ardently preached, thirty thousand Scandinavian Mormons came to Utah's rainless but dedicated valleys. They became hardy grass roots settlers on a frontier far beyond the rich and comfortable acres their countrymen were homesteading in Minnesota and Wisconsin and well ahead of the Scandinavian invasion of Nebraska and the Dakotas.

In the 1850's over three-fourths of Denmark's total emigration to the United States was Mormon, and nearly two-fifths in the 1860's. Of six counties in the United States in 1870 numbering 500 or more Danes, Utah had four. In 1890 still only Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota exceeded Utah's Danish-born. More Swedish-born lived in Utah just prior to 1880 than in any other mountain state. In 1910 Utah, coming within a fraction of Dakota and Nebraska, emerged as the fifth highest state in per cent of total population formed of Swedish stock. Norwegians in actual numbers were few, but they were locally important and historically the oldest Scandinavians on the scene: Ellen Sanders Kimball, one of the three women to enter the Salt Lake Valley with the pioneer vanguard in 1847, was a Norwegian convert from the

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famous Fox River settlement in Illinois, where a Norwegian congregation had been founded in the days of Joseph Smith; a remnant of that congregation came west in 1849, in time to be numbered, thirty-two strong, in Utah's first census, when the Danes numbered but two and the Swedes one.¹

By 1900 Scandinavians formed 34% of Utah's foreign-born; and Scandinavian stock that year formed 16% of the total population. Two years later Anthon H. Lund, Danish immigrant of 1862, could tell a big reunion of Scandinavians in Brigham City, "We are now 45,000 and are a great power in our state."² His own appointment the year before to the high office of counselor in the First Presidency of the Mormon Church was a recognition of that power, an official acknowledgment of the role his countrymen were playing in Utah's affairs. For him, as for his people, it marked a rise from humble beginnings.

Most of them came from the compact villages of Denmark and southernmost Sweden. In far-stretching Norway and northern Sweden the needle of emigration to America was already oriented, and Utah seemed a meager offering alongside the riches of Minnesota's "New Scandinavia." Though Denmark was actually enjoying agricultural prosperity, the religious unrest was considerable, in part the product of the discouraging strife over Schleswig-Holstein in which many read God's disfavor with Denmark, and in part product of dissatisfaction with the Establishment.³ The times were ripe for the Mormons, who still found many poor.

On the sandy peninsula of Jutland, less fertile than the Danish isles, particularly in the barren province of Vendsyssel

¹Ellen Kimball's Norwegian name was Aagaata Ystensdatter Bake. Canute Peterson and his wife Sarah, among the founders of Lehi and later prominent in Sanpete County, were Fox River converts. See my forthcoming article, "Norwegian Forerunners among the Early Mormons," in *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*.

²*Utah Korrespondenten*, August 1, 1902. The U. S. Twelfth Census (1900) shows 24,751 inhabitants of Danish stock, 14,578 of Swedish, and 4,554 of Norwegian in Utah for a total of 43,883 of Scandinavian stock, or very close to Lund's 45,000.

³P. S. Vig notes that economic conditions improved in Denmark after 1850, especially for farmers, only indirectly for laborers and artisans. Three factors making for emigration from Denmark, he says, were Mormonism, gold fever, and America letters. *Danske i Amerika* (2 vols., Minneapolis, 1907), I, 284ff.

at its tip and in the countryside around Aalborg, Aarhus, and Fredericia, they won their largest following outside Copenhagen itself.⁴ In proportion to its population, Vendsyssel, it was said, yielded more converts than any other part of Scandinavia—a hardy, independent stock, descendants of Jutes who had resisted Catholic Christianity centuries before and made Lim Fjorden, which separated them from the rest of Jutland, renowned as “the northernmost frontier of righteousness.”⁵ Visiting Apostle Amasa M. Lyman, who in 1861 toured Jutland by carriage and found “a good Danish shake of the hand . . . no sickly, indifferent affair,” compared the flat country beyond Lim Fjorden with “the prairies of the great West,” treeless except for occasional isolated islands of growth, the green foliage framing the white walls of the better farmhouses. In contrast to Utah’s valleys, he found the soil poor, the “hardy husbandmen” only partially repaid for their toil and their habitations very primitive:

Yet in these hovels . . . with all their indications of squalor and poverty, the spirit of genial friendship shed its cheering light; and, although there were no bedsteads, a liberal supply of fresh clean straw, placed on the earthy floor of the best apartment, afforded the traveler an opportunity to think of the rude and humble entertainment extended to the Sinner’s Friend . . .⁶

The island of Fyen, on the other hand, where the Mormons numbered but 170 compared with Vendsyssel’s 600, reminded him of the richest country districts of England and Scotland, the whole “a sea-girt picture of rural loveliness and beauty.” Everywhere in Scandinavia—in Malmo, Oslo, Copenhagen, Odense—he received “most expressive proofs of the hospitality and brotherly love” of the Saints, though it was clear the gospel “at present finds its votaries” among the hardy poor, “sound

⁴More than half, or 53%, of the Danish converts were won in Jutland—27% of the total Scandinavian membership. The Copenhagen Conference (representing the whole of Zealand as well as the capital) produced 37% of the Danish membership—21% of the Scandinavian total.

⁵“Tale af Aeldste Andrew Jenson,” *Morgenstjernen*, IV (1885), 179.

⁶Letter, August 21, 1861, MS., in Scandinavian Mission History, L.D.S. Church Historian’s Library. Hereafter cited as Mission History.

material for the development of that worldwide nationality, in the broad shadow of which the saved of the world shall repose"⁷

Even a satirical missionary like Joseph W. Young, in whose eyes Jutland had "a very hungry appearance" and who thought the stables connected to the dwellings bred "the finest fleas in the world," was of the same opinion: the country people might be plain and simple with their black bread and strong coffee, their age-old wooden shoes and homespun; and their "hornspoon and finger" manners might be as primitive as their dress, but they were industrious "and certainly the most strictly honest that I have ever met with."⁸

Most early proselytes in Sweden were made in the equally rural province of Scania or Skaane just across the Sound from Zealand and historically and culturally an extension of Denmark. But Stockholm and its environs soon rivalled Copenhagen's successes.⁹ Franklin D. Richards, visiting Stockholm in 1867, noted "an insatiable thirst on the part of the people, that is growing with the ruler and sovereign also, for an extension of human rights, and freedom of thought, of speech, of the press, and of conscientious worship of almighty God"¹⁰ That spirit predicted the welcome changes of the ensuing years, a far cry from the days when in some places in Sweden meetings had to be held privately and at night, as Carl Widerborg remembered: "We assembled at midnight, enjoyed much comfort of the spirit, transacted our business, and dispersed quietly at five o'clock in the morning."¹¹

Norway, though it had given Mormonism forerunners like the Illinois converts, turned a cold shoulder to Zion's invitation.¹²

⁷*Loc. cit.*

⁸Letter, February 4, 1858, in *New York Times*, March 10, 1858, under the heading "The Mormons in Europe—Progress of Mormonism in Northern Europe."

⁹By 1905, when it became a separate mission, Sweden furnished altogether 16,695 converts, or 36% of the Scandinavian total. A little over a third, 36%, came from the Stockholm Conference; another third, 34%, from Skaane, each of these areas contributing about 11% of the whole Scandinavian membership.

¹⁰Letter, February 6, 1867, in *Mission History*.

¹¹Letter, June 25, 1858, *ibid.*

¹²From 1850 to 1905 Norway contributed but 6,360, or 14%, of all converts and 2,556, or 11%, of all the emigrants. To recapitulate: altogether, of the 46,497 converts which Scandinavia yielded between 1850 and 1905, slightly more than 50% were Danish, slightly less than 36% were Swedish, and not

But the Norwegian proselytes, largely from Christiania (later called Oslo), proved a highly articulate minority, producing an intelligentsia easily distinguished among the Scandinavian converts, who were in the main the "respectable farmers and mechanics, with their families," as Daniel Spencer observed in 1855, "who have embraced this work . . . and were constantly inquiring and being baptized wherever we went."¹³

All prevalent notions to the contrary, these converts by and large embraced Mormonism in families. Lurid stories of abduction to supply women for Utah's supposed harems had their germ in occasional runaways and desertions, but the statistics and the accounts of the converts themselves provide a convincing, not to say startling, corrective of folklore. Of 10,565 converts making up 31 representative companies¹⁴ which left Scandinavia between 1853 and 1882, 7,785, or 74%, were in family groups ranging from married pairs to flocks of eleven, with couples most common—560 of them—followed by 470 families of three, 345 families of four, and so on, in descending order as the families grow larger. The majority of the emigrants, as the family structure would predict, were in their vigorous thirties and forties. Unmarried girls and women (at the "spinster" age of 14 years and over) numbered 1,515, or 15%, and the eligible boys and men (at the apprentice age of 14 years and over) numbered 1,184, or 12%, a difference so slight it renders ridiculous the public headshaking in both Scandinavia and America, where it was assumed "the females were in the majority" in every boatload. Critics, besides, did not realize that a great many of the eligible young women

quite 14% were Norwegian. Of the 22,653 of these "members of record" who emigrated (over 30,000 counting children under eight years of age, who were not baptized and hence not recorded as members), 56% were Danish, a little over 32% were Swedish, 11% were Norwegian, and a fraction Icelandic.

¹³"A Visit to Scandinavia," *Millennial Star*, XVII (November 10, 1855), 705.

¹⁴This count includes every company to leave during the 1860's, when Mormonism was at floodtide in Scandinavia and most characteristic; beyond this, the count—which takes in over a third of the total emigration, a generous representation—samples companies leaving in the 1850's, 1870's, and 1880's as recorded in the Scandinavian Mission Emigration Records, MS., Books A-G (1854-86), L.D.S. Church Historian's Library, supplemented by passenger manifests from the National Archives of certain vessels whose records were missing from the Mormon files.

in the emigrant companies married the young men, their own countrymen, before journey's end.¹⁵

"The people wherewith you plant," Francis Bacon had advised America's first English colonizers, "ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, labourers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with some few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks and bakers."¹⁶ Except for the "apothecaries and surgeons" the Scandinavian proselytes would have strengthened the "plantations" of the New World as they did in fact strengthen Zion. Although the Collector of Customs at New Orleans, on March 17, 1853, indiscriminately labeled the first shipload of converts "Labourers and Shoemakers"—and had them coming from "Ireland"—they were in reality Danish farmers and artisans representing the same variety of skills which marked the whole emigration.¹⁷

Farmers and their families (including an occasional shepherd and a few called gardeners or agriculturalists) made up fully half the emigration in the 1850's—57% in one company. In the 1860's they made up about a third, their numbers steadily diminishing with each decade as the proportion of laborers rose—the S. S. Nevada company in 1882, for example, counted 12% farmers, 37% laborers, and 16% servant girls, reflecting a shift from rural to urban membership. The "farmers" of the shipping lists were small farmers, Europe's familiar peasants—free

¹⁵Females did, in fact, predominate—by a slim margin. Of 12,477 emigrants—a somewhat larger sampling of Mormon companies leaving during the half century—5,796 were males, 6,681 females, a difference of 885, or 7%. The difference is significant enough because the general emigration from Denmark was 60% male from 1869 to 1900; from Norway 57% for the same period; and from Sweden 54% between 1851 and 1900. (See Imre Ferenczi, *International Migrations* [2 vols., New York, 1929], I, 667-78, 748-50, 757-58.) Among Scandinavian Mormons the ratio was essentially reversed: 46.5% male, 53.5% female.

¹⁶"Of Plantations," *Bacon's Essays* (Cornell Series, n.d.), 178.

¹⁷Records of the Bureau of Customs, Office of the Collector of Customs, Port of New Orleans, Passenger List of the *Forest Monarch*, March 17, 1853. Microfilm from the National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D. C. Danish immigrants were such a novelty the customs officials must have mistaken their tongue for Gaelic. The original Mormon roll of the *Forest Monarch* company has not survived, but a partial reconstruction in the L.D.S. Church archives from extant journals kept by members of the company mentions several weavers and blacksmiths, a tailor, wagonmaker, seaman, miller, wheelwright, carpenter, cabinetmaker, cooper, a government clerk, a former Baptist lay preacher, a village choirmaster, a school trustee, and a good many farmers. See the Forsgren Company, MS. compilation, L.D.S. Church Historian's Library.

holders, tenants, or simply journeyman hands. Their peasant ancestry would figure years later in directives from the Genealogical Society of Utah outlining "how we must go to work if we want to construct a genealogical table of a farmer-family," a matter "of particular interest in Utah because most of the Latter-day Saints of Danish origin have come from the country districts."¹⁸ They included a few like the well-to-do Peter Thomsen of Bregninge on Falster Island, so prominent his conversion rocked the village, and the landed Anders Eliason of Ennerkulen, Sweden, who provided a hundred of his fellow converts with passage to America. At the other extreme were young hands like Christian Lund, who remembered herding cattle one winter for his board and a pair of wooden shoes, and Hans Christensen, whose sole possession was the sheep his father gave him as his share of the family property. In between were freeholders like Jens Nielsen, who at thirty years of age could buy five acres of land and build a cottage enabling him to be "looked upon as a respectable neighbor and many times invited to the higher class of society."¹⁹ The great majority in the 1850's and 1860's —decades of Mormonism's largest rural following in Scandinavia —were independent enough to pay their passage to Zion, at least as far as the frontier where wagons from Utah Territory awaited them, and to assist those without enough salable goods to scrape their passage together. They were, besides, a vanguard which, once established in Zion, sent help to the Old Country and made possible the greater emigration, proportionately, of the 1870's and 1880's.²⁰ The well-to-do farmers were few enough to be especially noticed, though of course wealth was relative: James Jensen remembered that owning a cow gave his parents "some

¹⁸T. H. Hauch-Fausboll, "How is Genealogy to be Studied?" *Utah Genealogical Magazine*, XXII (January, 1931), 6.

¹⁹*Scandinavian Jubilee Album* (Salt Lake City, 1900), 228; "Across the Plains in 1863," *Heart Throbs of the West* (12 vols., Salt Lake City, 1939-51), IV, 351; C. N. Lund, *Autobiography*, MS., typescript in Brigham Young University Library; Hans Christensen, *Memoirs*, MS., microfilm in Utah State Historical Society; Jens Nielsen, Letter to son Uriah, in Albert R. Lyman, "Sketch of Bishop Jens Nielsen," MS., Utah State Historical Society, WPA Writers' Project Biographies.

²⁰For the story of this self-help and assistance see my article "Mormons from Scandinavia, 1850-1900: A Shepherded Migration," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXIII (August, 1954), 227-46.

recognition socially" in the village of Haugerup.²¹ Certainly the farmers of those early years were far from the indigent serfs they were commonly imagined to be. They were seed corn for Zion, supplying it with a skill most sorely needed. Better fitted for an agrarian experience than the urban British migration, they were destined to make the valleys where they settled known as the granaries and creampots of Utah.

Like the farmers, the artisans, who outnumbered the unskilled laborers, included the prosperous and the poor. Among them were masters, journeymen, and apprentices—at one extreme, established proprietors like Hans Jensen, whose blacksmith works in Aalborg was valued at \$4,000.00, and tailor Jens Weibye of Vendsyssel, who kept fourteen employees busy in his shop; at the other extreme, a journeyman carriagemaker like Jens Christopher Kempe, who had nothing but the tools of his trade. Others, like weaver Hans Zobell, owned their cottage worksteads, which they could sell when they emigrated. Ola Nilsson Liljenquist, Copenhagen tailor, whose wife could afford silks and a servant, was one of the few early converts enjoying the privileges of burghership.²²

Among the artisans, carpenters and related craftsmen like cabinetmakers, coopers, wheelwrights, joiners, turners, and carriagemakers made up a considerable group, 11% of reported occupations in the 31 companies being sampled; in the *John Boyd* company in 1855 they formed 17%. The next largest group of artisans were the tailors, seamstresses, dyers, and weavers (7%). Smiths—blacksmiths, ironfounders, coppersmiths, tinsmiths, and an occasional machinist—followed these (6%), with shoemakers, tanners, saddle- and harness-makers almost as large a group (5.6%), not far outnumbering stonecutters, masons, and bricklayers (4.5%). Speaking of early converts among the workmen in Oslo's factory district along the Aker, Carl Fjeld

²¹J. M. Tanner, *Biographical Sketch of James Jensen* (Salt Lake City, 1911), 6.

²²Hans Peter Jensen, *Biographi and Jurnal [sic]*, MS., in possession of Le Roi C. Snow; Jens Weibye, "Dagbog," *Morgenstjernen*, III (1884), 152; J. C. Kempe, *Autobiography*, MS., typescript in my possession; Hans Zobell, *Autobiography*, MS., typescript in possession of A. L. Zobell, Jr.; O. N. Liljenquist, "Autobiography," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, I (July, 1881), 564.

recalled that "From the foundrymen the gospel went round among the smiths, good and solid material, and from there to the stone masons," a sequence readily illustrated: himself an ironfounder, Fjeld passed his psalmbook and tracts around until they became as black as the workers themselves. They convinced Jonas Otterstrom, a smith who could no more keep silence, the newspapers noted, than he could from using a sledgehammer. And among those who heard him was stonemason Gustave Andersen, whose wife sold milk on the square, a capital opportunity to proclaim Mormonism at the same time.²³

There were about the same number of butchers, brewers, bakers, and millers (only 17 in the sample companies) as there were fishermen and seamen (only 16). The sailors were few. Landlocked in Zion, they might on some glorious Fourth of July climb the community flagpole like a mast or, like bargeman Hans "Pram Stikker" Larsen, work the block and tackle to hoist the stone for meetinghouses and temples.²⁴ Four ropemakers, two house painters, a miner, a matmaker, a hairdresser, a hunter, a bookbinder, a printer, a thatcher, a sailmaker, a shipbuilder, five watch- or instrument-makers, four clerks, four potters, and a furrier complete the inventory of occupations. Three musicians—all members of the *Monarch of the Sea* company in 1861—alone saved the day for the professions, though the *B. S. Kimball* emigrants included a homeopath. For a budding artist like young Carl Christian Anton Christensen, whose expert silhouettes won him a scholarship to Copenhagen's Royal Academy until he joined the Mormons, Zion had at first no call. He had to content himself with farming when he emigrated in 1857, though he kept his interest alive as an amateur, painting scenery for the Salt Lake Theatre and creating a traveling panorama of church history which won him at last a kind of fame.²⁵

The basic skills were all there; others would be developed in the settlements. "I would never have believed," wrote Christensen in 1872 after visiting the Utah Territorial Fair, "so much talent could be found among us as a people who are nearly all gathered

²³Carl M. Hagberg, *Den Norske Misjonshistorie* (Oslo, 1928), 23-26.

²⁴Arthur Schmidt Larsen, *Life Sketch of Hans Larsen*, MS., Utah State Historical Society, WPA Writers' Project Biographies.

²⁵C. C. A. Christensen, "Levnedsløb," *Digte og Afhandlinger* (Salt Lake City, 1921), 329-81.

from among the poor and most downtrodden classes of mankind." Someone from his hometown, the Danish settlement of Ephraim, had won the silver medal for a landscape painting showing several children gleaned corn in the field just outside "our town"; a Swedish sister had received the premium for "haararbeide" or hair artistry; "our friend W." (without doubt the Norwegian painter Dan Weggeland) had received the silver medal for his portraits; a young Norwegian brother had taken the prize for wood-carving; a Swede for an artistic watch; "and many others won premiums It's only a small part of what can be accomplished."²⁶ Twenty years later Christensen observed that he met Scandinavians "nearly everywhere" in his travels and found his countrymen in many places holding "the most responsible positions both in church and civic affairs," which he found "a greatly satisfying witness to our national character by the world's most practical nation—the Americans."²⁷

II

But the acceptance had come slowly. For years both Europe and America took a dim view of the convert-emigrants. They were an embarrassment to Scandinavia, a trouble to the United States, where Secretary of State William Evarts, for example, in 1879, felt uneasy about Utah's "accessions from Europe . . . drawn mainly from the ignorant classes, who are easily influenced by the double appeal to their passions and their poverty."²⁸ Utah, already outlandish enough as the Mormon refuge, seemed all the more un-American with its alien population, recruited, it was feared, to strengthen Mormon subversion of federal authority and Christian morality.

Villification of the convert in this respect was most vicious in Utah itself, among the gentiles, who made Mormon immigration

²⁶Letter, November 10, 1872, *Stjerne*, XXII (January 15, 1873), 123-24.

²⁷Letter, December 29, 1891, *Nordstjarnan*, XVI (February 1, 1892), 47.

²⁸William M. Evarts, "Diplomatic Correspondence, Circular No. 10, August 9, 1879, Sent to Diplomatic and Consular Officers of the United States," *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1879* (Washington, D. C., 1880), 11.

a major issue in their campaign to bring the church to its knees and the territory to unsullied statehood. "The local journalistic maligner," as the *Deseret News* called the *Tribune*, talked "with frequent scorn about the Scandinavian element, as though the . . . presence of such people was sufficient to show the degraded character of Utah's population."²⁹ In the bitter anti-Mormon *Handbook on Mormonism*, Mormons were foreigners by definition, "low, base-born foreigners, hereditary bondsmen . . . serf blood . . ."³⁰ The Rev. J. Wesley Hill's patriotism erupted in odious images of the converts: they were "gathered from the slums of Europe; . . . brought from the fetid fields of the Old World . . . refugees" who endeavored "in the name of Religion to undermine our liberties and destroy our government . . ."³¹ Governor Caleb West's animosity in 1889 drove him to extremes: "It is just as if a lot of Chinamen or other foreign people should come here and take possession of that Territory, with ideas entirely distinct and diametrically opposed to ours."³²

The governor retracted the implication as accidental, but such hyperbole was all too common. In vain did an impartial observer like the Rev. John C. Kimball ask: "Who has implicit confidence in a Californian's denunciation of the Chinese, or in a western squatter's diatribe against the Indians or in a Protestant theologian's strictures on Roman Catholicism? So with the criticisms of Utah gentiles on their Mormon neighbors."³³ And in vain did Apostle George Q. Cannon contend that "a large part of our people are native-born," and that "our proselytes are more largely Americans than any other nationality."³⁴ It was an ingrained national habit to speak ill of the Mormons. Praise, if any, was always left-handed—amazement at the good results from disreputable beginnings. Rarely did anyone like Hugh Mc-

²⁹"The Scandinavian Element," *Deseret News*, June 25, 1886.

³⁰John M. Coyner, ed., *Handbook on Mormonism* (Salt Lake City, 1882), 40; C. C. Goodwin, "The Mormon Situation," *Harper's*, LXIII (October, 1881), 756.

³¹John W. Hill, *Mormonism vs. Americanism* (Salt Lake City, 1889), 22.

³²*Hearings before the Committee on Territories in Regard to the Admission of Utah as a State, 1889* (Washington, D. C., 1889), 128.

³³John C. Kimball, *Mormonism Exposed, the Other Side* (Hartford, Conn., 1884), 3.

³⁴Interview, March 27, 1881, *New York Times*, April 11, 1881.

Cullough, ex-Secretary of the Treasury, applauded the Mormon immigration: "The people of the United States," he said in the *New York Tribune* in 1877, "are under obligation to the Mormons. . . . They have brought to the country many thousands of industrious, peaceable and skillful people, and added largely to its wealth. . . ." The irrationalism of the anti-polygamy prosecution in the late 1880's betrayed even the Commissioner of Immigration into an irresponsible description of one company:

In many instances there were women with children born out of wedlock, wives who had deserted their husbands and brought their children with them, husbands who had left behind their wives, children who had run away from home, and parents who had abandoned their children.³⁵

It was a perfectly stereotyped picture of Mormon immigrants, as common in Europe as in the United States.

While the United States blamed Europe for supplying proselytes "ignorant enough and sufficiently docile to carry out the schemes of the apostles,"³⁶ and on occasion even sought the help of foreign governments to check them, Europe blamed America for exporting an undesirable *ism* which "victimized and depleted" the population by "immoral and criminal means."³⁷ Scandinavia deplored Mormon success. National pride dismissed the converts as not representative—it was consoling to think they were the sick, the poor, the outcast, and that the well-heeled and intelligent among them were the exception, though Denmark expressed surprise, if not concern, that its peasants, traditionally so stable and sober, should be persuaded in such numbers.³⁸ Worst of all, the Mormon proselytes alienated themselves from both church and country: the Danish Establishment already had its hands full with dissenting Grundtvigians and the pietists

³⁵Edward Stephenson to the Secretary of the Treasury, July 15, 1886, in "Paupers and Mormons," *ibid.*, August 2, 1886, describing the arrival of 497 Mormon immigrants on the *S. S. Nevada*, July 7, 1886, "bound for Utah with passage prepaid." Stephenson urged that future shiploads not be allowed to land.

³⁶"Our Western Patriarchs," *ibid.*, July 9, 1877.

³⁷John L. Stevens to William M. Evarts, September 23, 1879, in *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States 1879*, p. 964.

³⁸Gunnar Hansen, "Dansk Udvandring til U.S.A. tog Fart for 100 Aar siden," *Danmarksposten* (Aalborg, Denmark), June, 1948.

of the Inner Mission, but these were at least native movements and patriotic. Sweden, also on national grounds, was frankly envious: while its missionaries were evangelizing the heathen in Africa, China, and India, the Mormons were making proselytes in Sweden itself, with the added difference that the Mormon proselytes, at an economic loss to the country of 5,000 *kronor* capital worth, emigrated to strengthen the community in Utah, where they paid tithing, supported missions, and maintained churches, whereas the Swedish missions had only a handful of black and yellow natives to show for their trouble.³⁹

The bad opinion of the Mormons in Scandinavia was universal: "I knew nothing of the Mormons except very bad reports." "I had always understood them to be a wicked, mean people that ought to be shunned." "Father did not care so much about the Baptists, if my brother would only keep away from the Mormons." Anna Karine Widtsoe, widow of a Trondhjem schoolmaster, felt contaminated when her shoemaker stuffed some Mormon tracts into shoes she had left for repair. It was always a surprise to find any good apples in the barrel. Tailor Olof Hanson remembered his pastor's astonishment: "He asked me how I, who could read so well, could have become a Mormon."⁴⁰ Overnight, established reputations could be blighted. Convert Hannah Sorensen, though twenty-five years a respected midwife in Snedsted, lost her practice and was threatened with the workhouse; Oslo impresarios, eager to engage Agnes Olsen's golden voice to sing Solveig's song from *Peer Gynt*, told her no audience would tolerate her as a Mormon. It was not often that teachers or employers took the part of the proselyte as did Annie Christensen's teacher, who told the children not to make fun of her. On the contrary, Johan Nielsen's schoolmates dubbed him "John the Baptist" and made him fill his wooden shoes with water to baptize them. Christina Oleson's Swedish pastor, encountering her on the village street one day, struck her with his cane for joining the despised Mormons. She felt she was getting off easy.⁴¹

³⁹A. O. Assar, *Mormonernas Zion* (Stockholm, 1911), 57.

⁴⁰Jens Nielsen, *op. cit.*; Hannah Sorensen, "Life Sketch," *The Young Woman's Journal*, I (August, 1890), 392; Hans Christensen, *op. cit.*; John A. Widtsoe, *In the Gospel Net* (Salt Lake City, 1941), 64; Olof Hanson, *Autobiography*, MS., typescript in my possession.

⁴¹Hannah Sorensen, *op. cit.*, 393; "Zion's Daughters Sing," *Heart Throbs*

An immorality of the clergy's own making gave many early proselytes an unsavory reputation. They came from a class already in bad repute because, cut off from benefits of clergy through fees they couldn't meet or having an antipathy to the authority and ritual of the Establishment, they had entered into common law marriages. Franklin D. Richards observed in Stockholm in 1867 that the clergy had "bastardized" 42% of the population.⁴²

Stories about the Mormons emphasized their credulity and low caste. Not a few tales had to do with runaways, desertions, child-stealing and broken homes. In their zeal, some converts committed follies that rumor easily magnified. They took Christ at his word and left family and friends to form new ties stronger than the old. More than one frantic parent tried to win back a son or daughter lost to the Mormons—run away, he might say, but very likely turned out of doors. Despite her mother's "heart-rending pleadings" Olina Torasen would not return home from Christiania, where she had gone in 1864 to learn dressmaking and had met the Mormons; her father, "crazed with grief," came for her, sitting up all night at her boarding house because he did not dare to leave her alone; but she outwitted him in an unguarded moment and with the help of a missionary, and disguised as a boy, made her way to Copenhagen until the spring emigration of the Saints, working meanwhile at a cape factory and writing home, her mother finally relenting to the extent of sending Olina her "grandmother's feather bed and a few clothes."⁴³ What were testimonies of God's providences to the faithful seemed cloak and dagger treachery to the bereft.

of the West, IX, 13-18; Annie Catrine Christensen Olsen, Autobiography, MS., Utah State Historical Society, WPA Writers' Project Biographies; Johan Nielsen, Autobiography, MS., microfilm in Utah State Historical Society; Christina Oleson Warnick, Autobiography, MS., Utah State Historical Society, WPA Writers' Project Biographies.

⁴²Letter, February 6, 1867, in *Mission History*. Farmer Hans Jensen Hals noted the inability of the poor to afford a dowry or the "church marriage tax." Diary, August 12, 1867, microfilm copy in Utah State Historical Society.

⁴³Olina Torasen Kempe, Autobiography, MS., typescript in my possession. One Norwegian girl ordered out of the house by parents who could not be reconciled to her joining the Mormons was Kristine Mauritzdatter, who as the plural wife of Abraham O. Smoot became the mother of Reed Smoot, U.S. Senator from Utah for five unbroken terms and at the same time an Apostle, member of the leading council of the Mormon Church.

Hardly a company of Mormon emigrants ever left Copenhagen without a warrant being served on someone for child-stealing: fearful relatives or suspicious neighbors often tried to interfere when a Mormon family sent some of their young ahead. Anna Lucia Krause, wife of a prospering wheelwright and nail-maker who was in no mood to give up his thriving shop to go to America, kept her Mormon membership a secret for two years, until her unhappiness prevailed on him and he agreed to go as far as St. Louis. When they sailed, Anna left eight-year-old Maria behind to come with a later Mormon company. It was part of Anna's design to get her unbelieving husband to Utah, where he would have to journey to fetch the girl, and in the process perhaps be converted and remain. When the emigrant company passed through St. Louis the father asked for Maria, but her zealous guardians were determined not to leave the child among gentiles. Krause, already griefstricken at the loss of his wife and three children, all victims within a week of the cholera, made a heartbreaking search for his daughter. Going from wagon to wagon, throwing covers off even sick people in his desperate quest, he spied her playthings, but he never found her; the Mormons, confident they were doing a good deed, took her off to Utah, leaving the father, already at odds with them, more embittered than ever and source of more damaging evidence against them.⁴⁴

III

The popular image of the Mormon proselytes—their poverty, their ignorance, their fanaticism—made them Europe's ugly ducklings, objects of scorn and ridicule, though the novelist Ole Rolvaag called emigrants from the same class "giants in the earth." It was precisely the poor and humble the Mormons were after. Poverty and ignorance were ills for which America itself was the remedy, an assurance that was one of Mormonism's enthusiasms. "The people have much to learn," observed Apostle George Q. Cannon. "Transplanting them to Zion will benefit

⁴⁴Biography of Maria W. C. Krause Madsen, MS., Utah State Historical Society, WPA Writers' Project Biographies.

them in every way, if they will do right The gospel will not only bestow spiritual benefit . . . it will benefit them temporarily."⁴⁵ Their "habits of industry and the various ways in which they are taught to apply it," felt Apostle George A. Smith, "render them well qualified to develop the resources of new and untried countries, and their former experience greatly enhances their appreciation of the emancipation the gospel brings to them and contentment follows."⁴⁶ The poverty of the Old World was really a blessing; nothing so endangered salvation as a prosperity which killed the urge to gather. Besides, already inured to want, they were better prepared for hardships.⁴⁷ The Mormons had no illusions about their converts, but they saw beyond their limitations: the poor were after all the Lord's poor; the ignorant had simply been denied schooling; and the credulous had faith, frequently displaying the "fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom unsung" which Milton found the essence of Christian humility.

The hidden resources of the humble could be magnificent and would prove Zion's greatest assets. How could the pastor who caned Christina Oleson for joining the Mormons ever imagine her a pillar of the community, a progenitor of leading citizens? Yet who else in Deseret's wastes would get a precious daily pound of butter into town to sell before the sun could melt it, or be forever knitting as she plowed or read or herded?⁴⁸ How could fellow Lollanders ever see in Elsie Rasmussen and Jens Nielsen more than simple, hard-working hands hiring out from one farm to another, now and then walking arm in arm into town to dance away the night and return in time to do the chores? How could anyone predict their heroic history? Underway to Zion when Jens' courage failed him crossing Wyoming's snow-bound plateau, Elsie would load him, his feet frozen, into her handcart and pull him till his courage returned, saving him, though permanently crippled, to pioneer five settlements and build as many homes to make good his dedication to the Lord for the

⁴⁵George Q. Cannon, visiting Scandinavia in September, 1862. Quoted in Andrew Jensen, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City, 1927), 170.

⁴⁶"Foreign Missions," *Deseret News*, November 16, 1860.

⁴⁷*Stjerne*, XII (November 1, 1862), 40-43.

⁴⁸Christina Oleson Warnick, *op. cit.*

deliverance. As colonizer, Indian peacemaker, merchant, stockman, bishop and patriarch, he would make his broken-tongued maxim "Sticket to trude"—"Stick to the truth"—a badge of honor, while Elsie in sandswept Bluff would plant mulberry trees to raise silkworms, tend beehives to provide the settlement its only sweets, spend long hours at the loom, giving her days to manual labor, her evenings to the Bible and other good books, and devote herself as foster mother to the children of her husband's plural wives.⁴⁹

It was just such recruits Zion needed. Conversion called thousands like Jens and Elsie Nielsen out of obscurity, confirming Mormonism's conviction that "The Lord is gathering out the best and the most pure material for his own use With them will he build himself a people and a name in the earth."⁵⁰ No ugly ducklings ever had a greater sense of destiny. Scandinavia might disown them and America not want them, but they felt a singular identity as the Lord's own. In fact, they felt sorry for the unsaved, for the king himself. Apostle Franklin D. Richards, attending the Royal Theatre in Stockholm in 1867, and finding himself "in the midst of nobility and gentry, the beauty, elite, and authority of Sweden," thought how much he would like "to impart to His Majesty the testimonies of the gospel restored, and the work of God as it is now progressing on the earth, and inform him how he could assure the stability of his throne"⁵¹

But only royalty's humble subjects, their eyes on another kingdom, came to know the high drama of conversion. For them the encounter with Mormonism was the great turning point in their lives, a new beginning to which all previous events, now they looked back, had unerringly led.

Conversion was far from simple-minded, though there were immoderate seekers of signs, a frenetic fringe whose extravagant expectations spelled trouble both in the mission and later in Zion. Often attended by doubt and indecision, conversion answered a variety of needs rational and emotional felt by the dispossessed looking for a place to belong, the worldly ready for moral reformation, the dissenter unsatisfied by the established creed or piqued

⁴⁹Jens Nielsen, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰George Q. Cannon, in Jenson, *op. cit.*, 170.

⁵¹Letter, February 6, 1867, Mission History.

with the clergy, the scriptural literalist looking for fulfillment of prophecy. Many were ripe for a spiritual experience, so many Bunyans earnestly seeking their grace abounding: "I felt that I had allowed myself to be careless, and to trifle with the most important of all subjects, my souls salvation." "A stranger introduced himself as an elder from America In an hour we saw and understood more of our Bible than ever before Our hearts rejoiced and a new life had opened before us."⁵²

They went to their first Mormon meeting on a dare or out of curiosity and universally with the worst expectations. "I went to the meeting that night with the pronounced conviction that they were not even Christians . . . with the thought of spending the evening in mischief." But time and again they were confounded: "It seemed as though every word the Elder spoke went right through me The sermon had an entirely different effect upon my brother and the other young man. They were greatly amused. I sat there like a statue and could not join them in the merriment."⁵³

Their fears routed at the first encounter, they were ready for more: "We bought some few of their tracts and studied them for a few weeks and were perfectly satisfied the work was of God."⁵⁴

And then invariably they felt the stigma that their affiliation with the new movement gave them in the eyes of friends and neighbors still prejudiced. "From that time on all my former friends turned against me and spoke all kinds of evil against me, and that falsely." The agonizing struggle to remain steadfast crushed some but strengthened others: "All my possessions had no power over me then, my only desire was to sell out and come to Zion." "I had no idea before I was baptized that I should have to go through so much if I joined the Mormons; if I had known it, I don't think I could have done so."⁵⁵

Conversion cost dear. No allegory of Christian warfare, the soul against the world, was ever more terribly real. Nearly a

⁵²Hans Christensen, *op. cit.*; Sarah Josephine Jensen, *op. cit.*

⁵³Carl Madsen, *My Conversion to Mormonism*, MS., typescript in possession of Dr. Brigham Madsen.

⁵⁴Jens Nielsen, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵*Loc. cit.*; Hannah Sorensen, *op. cit.*, 393.

third of the proselytes could not pay the price but disavowed the faith in Scandinavia, with others following suit after emigration, some en route to Zion, others after residence in Zion itself. Such wholesale disaffection refutes the easy explanation that Mormonism was such an effective Pied Piper because its tune was America. It was America, but on very special terms, forbidding to any but the most ardent believers. Belated discovery of unacceptable doctrine, inability to endure ostracism and persecution, capitulation to doubt and disbelief created by adverse propaganda, disappointment in the expectation that passage to America was a handout, all weighed in the scale of apostasy. Moreover, some of the converts themselves, in church eyes, were weighed and found wanting. *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, mission periodical, bluntly published names of those cast out for "whoredoms and abominations," while congregations were quick to censure backsliders for intemperance or for returning to an occasional service in the state church or for failing to pay tithes and offerings. Sometimes personal pique and backbiting, jealousies over positions in the lay priesthood, or misunderstanding about the order of the church led to breaches impossible to mend. It was a winnowing both natural and deliberate, intended to separate the wheat from the chaff so that early and late it could be noted that "many of our brethren have so improved their manner of living, the civil authorities have been obliged to acknowledge the fruits of a good doctrine."⁵⁶

The winnowing was a part of a general reformation in which conversion, itself such a profound education, was only the beginning. Mormonism might have blamed Scandinavia for having done so little for its lowest estate, but Mormonism took its converts where it found them and prepared them for the American experience in an indoctrination unique among European emigrants. To this end the mission considered itself "Eden's nursery," where the gospel was sown and the seedlings readied for transplanting to Zion, the Garden itself.⁵⁷ The husbandry was both spiritual and mundane, at once bent on a purification of motives and on a program for improved living intended to win greater respect for

⁵⁶C. C. A. Christensen, "Beretning," *Morgenstjernen*, III (1884), 203.

⁵⁷"The Outgathering of the Saints," *Millennial Star*, XXIV (March 29, 1862), 200-202.

Mormonism in Scandinavia and to make its converts better inhabitants of Zion.

Though emigration was the great common impulse among the converts, they were told not to make gathering the sole aim, confusing means and ends. It was an urgent duty to gather, but those not feeling it should not be induced until moved by their own zeal. Simply getting to Utah did not insure salvation. Motives were all-important. Converts should come to build up Zion, willing to be identified with it in adversity as well as in prosperity, the object not wealth but only serving God. Whatever temporal benefits attended removal from Babylon came through the gospel and through their "own energies under wise direction and the opportunities which the country affords," blessings which were the natural fruits of righteousness.⁵⁸

The Saints were urged to make the most of opportunities while still in the homeland, to add "to the treasury of the Church all useful knowledge and all the benefits of their experience" gained there.⁵⁹ The church itself supplied valuable training: converts enjoyed a voice and by the uplifted hand a vote they had never known in the professionalized service of the Lutheran Establishment; the men served as missionaries, teachers, book agents, congregational leaders, filling a variety of positions in the lay priesthood—all an excellent apprenticeship for responsibilities in Zion. In the choirs (in Oslo as early as 1856), the Sunday schools, and the young people's and women's societies (dating from the 1870's) congregations as a whole found important outlets for recreation, an exhilarating experience, the dances and outings and the visiting among the members satisfying and joyous.

As notable as any activity, and most directly related to preparation for America, was the sustained effort to learn English, in which classes for children and for adults abetted the private sessions of painful learning. Held often on Sunday morning, pre-

⁵⁸"Why Are So Many of the Saints Not Gathered?" *ibid.*, XXIV (October 11, 1862), 649-52, and *Skandinaviens Stjerne*, XII (November 1, 1862), 40-43; "Vink til de Hellige, som skulle emigrere," *Stjerne*, XII (April 15, 1863), 216; *Stjerne*, XII (July 1, 1863), 296-98; "Emigration and the Motives Which Prompt It," *Millennial Star*, XXVI (January 23, 1864), 57-60; "Mormon Proselytism and Immigration," *Deseret News*, June 25, 1886.

⁵⁹"The Outgathering of the Saints," *op. cit.*, 201. Adding "to the treasury of the Church" meant money as well as experience; Europe sustained Zion through tithing and temple contributions from the proselytes.

lude to church service, they were in a real sense religious exercises; a phrase in Peter Nielsen's journal unconsciously reflects the familiar and natural affinity of the worldly and spiritual in their lives: H. T. W. Eriksen, he says, who held an evening school in Nyby for the children, "taught them English, religion, and writing." And he was pleased to note "They made good progress according to the circumstances."⁶⁰ The private journals themselves moved from Scandinavian to English, the language mixed at first, then more confidently in the new tongue, though the spelling remained woefully uncertain. One legacy the Establishment had bequeathed even the humble: in preparing them for confirmation it had made them literate, and not a few proudly recollected they stood first in Bible reading or response in catechism. Converts who could not read or write were admonished to learn. English above all was "the language in which it had pleased the Almighty to manifest His will in this last dispensation";⁶¹ it was the language of the *Book of Mormon* and of latter-day prophets. It was an inherent part of the new gospel, and the desire to learn it was another evidence of how completely Mormonism produced a break with the convert's past, separating him from mother church and fatherland and his native tongue, the transition begun even before he left.

Not only English was important to salvation; so was soap. "It is not enough for a person to believe, be converted, and be baptized for forgiveness of sins. The gospel promotes a reformation in every respect where many customs and habits inherited from the fathers are not in harmony with the gospel." Cleanliness was paramount. The Holy Spirit did not dwell in unclean tabernacles. "The first step in this so important reformation is to wash the whole body at least once a week and change linen as often. Thus may health be preserved, peace and good cheer, and sickness and death kept at bay." Such directives were as frequent as they were frank: "The Saints will forgive our speaking so freely,

⁶⁰Diary, April 23, 1859. The mission periodicals frequently admonished converts to study English: "Det Engelske Sprog," *Stjerne*, V (January 15, 1856), 244-47; IX (October 15, 1859), 25; *Nordstjarnan*, VI (January 15, 1883), 24.

⁶¹Peter Thomassen, "Hilsen til vore Laesere," *Utah Posten*, December 24, 1873.

but it is necessary to speak clearly for your benefits."⁶² It would have been good doctrine for rural America at the time, and it anticipated the catechism in Zion's frontier settlements when church teachers would visit the homes monthly and ask, "Sister Anderson, do you scrub your floors and wash your windows every Saturday that your home may be in order for the Sabbath? . . . Do you pay back the things you borrow and hunt for the owner of things you find?" And "Brother Anderson, have you cut hay where you had no right to? . . . Have you taken water to irrigate when it belonged to another person at the time you used it? Do you preside over your household as a servant of God and is your family subject to you? . . . Have you labored diligently and earned faithfully the wages paid you by your employer?"⁶³

Among the Mormons in Scandinavia the same inclusive morality prevailed, the training as intense and diligent. The doctrine on soap formed but part of the "general reformation" which would have the converts, human beings by birth, become Saints by adoption, legalizing their common law marriages, ceasing card playing, abstaining from tobacco and strong drink, and paying their debts. The number who fell by the wayside, often over trivial matters, only indicates how serious a commitment membership was and how far the converts had to go. In all respects they were expected to be an example to an already critical world.

Returning good for evil had its effects—at times it won over estranged members of the family, suspicious neighbors, and angry employers; it gained the respect of wary officials; it changed the face of a divided village and even erased national prejudices, for among the members themselves identity as Danes or Swedes or Norwegians was lost in their association as Latter-day Saints. James Jensen remembered that half a dozen men owned the farms in Haugerup village, with the social distance between proprietors and tenants as wide as the middle ages; but more than half of Haugerup joined the Mormons, among them some of the landlords. "From that time on a new relationship sprang up The spirit of equality and brotherly love which the new message had brought to them led to more intimate rela-

⁶²"Et Vink til Emigranterne," *Stjerne*, XI (April 1, 1862), 200-201.

⁶³William R. Palmer, "Questions to be Asked the Latter-day Saints," *The Improvement Era*, XLII (April, 1939), 210-11.

tions among all of the members of the Church in that little village."⁶⁴ In Copenhagen master tailor Ola N. Liljenquist, the only burgher of the city among the converts, stood passport security for so many of his fellow religionists in 1852 that the officials summoned him to the city hall to belabor him for his audacity. He could be imprisoned for signing beyond his capacity. "I know these people and I am willing to take all risks on their behalf," he told them. For four more years, until his own emigration, he staked his reputation on hundreds of emigrants. The magistrate issued the same warnings, but the officers at the emigration office became more friendly. On the eve of his own departure for America in 1857, they told him they would rather accept his endorsement than that of many wealthier men because the Mormons took care of their poor and the city had never had the slightest difficulty with anyone he had underwritten. On one occasion, after completing some 900 Mormon passes, Counsel Gendrup, who had often come to Liljenquist's aid when he was in difficulty, said to him: "Mr. Liljenquist, should you arrive in a better heaven than I, will you not think of me?"⁶⁵

The master tailor was but one of an unexpected number of enterprising converts of refinement and substance who served as a leaven in every congregation powerfully working for self-improvement. The country crudities of some converts would furnish Zion itself with the comic figure of the "Sanpete farmer" and his household, earthy and unsanitary as a scene from Breughel, and they offended fastidious converts whose idealism had not anticipated such a lowly brotherhood and who did not stay long in such company. But those with tougher sensibilities remained to lift up their fellows and provide an effective native leadership. The convert-emigrants who returned from Zion on missions also served as living models of what the gospel and the new life could do. They attracted their kind and strengthened the work of reformation.

The fruit of all this husbandry in Eden's nursery was the formation of a people more than ever set apart from their unbelieving countrymen, suffering at once the consequences of that estrangement and enjoying the compensations of their new-found

⁶⁴Tanner, *op. cit.*, 8.

⁶⁵O. N. Liljenquist, "Autobiografi," *Morgenstjernen*, II (1883), 25-32.

fellowship and place in the sun. Indoctrination for Zion was essentially indoctrination for America, but with a significant difference amounting to a paradox. Whatever the attraction of America and whatever the desire of the convert to be identified with it, he was brought to the painful realization that in joining the Mormons he joined a sect which America itself repudiated. Taught by doctrine and by circumstance to regard himself in the world but not of it, he learned early that he must shun gentile America as much as Babylon Europe. The centripital forces of persecution and ostracism in both America and Scandinavia intensified the feeling. The faithful accepted the world's stigma as a seal of their apartness and relished union with a peculiar people in whose destiny they believed. In Scandinavia the apartness meant self-preservation as a valiant minority. In America it could easily become oppression as an illiberal majority, a barrier against inroads by outsiders. The doctrine of apartness was both a strength and a weakness. What was a shield was inevitably also the target against which Zion's attackers from without and the disgruntled from within broke their lances. At length even many of the veteran converts felt its weight and worked themselves free of it.

Akin to this apartness, so vital in forming the convert mind, was their total acceptance of the authority of the new church, the habit of putting church before country, priesthood before government. To believers, the word of church leaders was the Word of the Lord. Obedience to priesthood authority was the touchstone of good standing, whether it concerned spiritual or temporal affairs, whether—as it did often in Zion—it meant a call to go on a mission, advice to take another wife, or an order to stop trading with the gentiles. It brought converts the security of implicit trust in a higher management of their affairs, but more than anything else, such unquestioning obeisance gave the impression of slavishness and ignorance. It was an aspect of their indoctrination which bred serious difficulties, a source, like their apartness, of both inspiration and irritation and of a good deal of misunderstanding by outsiders, who generally believed the converts to be subjugated by "the ambitious aims of the . . . leading Priesthood." It was rather voluntary submission, a fact a few anti-Mormon liberals did acknowledge:

If slaves at all, they are . . . slaves to their idealisms. . . . the docility and obedience of the people is the result of an attempt to be consistent with the religious assumptions upon which their faith is founded; and from which course, from their standpoint, they cannot depart without throwing off their faith altogether.⁶⁶

And it had to be remembered that "Nearly every one of these supposed slavish Mormon people has . . . broken away from some popular and established church and joined his present one in the face of ministerial authority . . . rendered sacred by tradition and habit. Men in this temper . . . would not be likely to feel very slavish."⁶⁷

IV

Products of a conversion that shook most of them to the root, objects of a thoroughgoing reformation in their manner of living, welded together by doctrine and tried by experience, the proselytes found themselves impatient to "go up to Zion." "Intentions are secret; who can discover them?" they might have asked with John White in his *Planter's Plea*; and they found their motivation as mixed as the reasons for the migration of America's realistic first settlers, who believed "Nothing sorts better with piety than competency."⁶⁸ The temporal and the spiritual were inextricably mingled for a people who believed that a God who noted every sparrow's fall and numbered the hairs of a man's head would also concern himself with farms and merchandise and the daily transactions of the Saints. Was not the "all-seeing eye of the Lord" painted over the doorway of every shop in Zion? Christian Nielsen, Danish miller three years in Utah, voiced the multiple attractions and compulsions:

⁶⁶E. L. T. Harrison, "The Question of the Hour: or, Radical or Conservative Measures for Utah?" *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, I (1881), 131.

⁶⁷*Loc. cit.*

⁶⁸John White, *Planter's Plea*, quoted in Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill: 1630-1783* (New York, 1952), 16-17.

We own our own home and land, animals and equipment to ride and till the soil . . . about twenty acres of plowland . . . two town lots About 300 Danish families live in this town and seven English miles north of us there are about as many In everything there is freedom; here is freedom of trade; here anyone may organize in whatever manner he wishes and follow as many trades as he desires. . . .

Grieving that a son, Niels Emmanuel, had chosen to remain in Denmark, the father urged:

He could have the fat of everything here He could work for himself and not have to slave for another his whole life without ever having the pleasure of gaining something he could call his own Neils is now at an age when he will become a soldier. He stands alone . . . and Europe is involved in a great conflict I strongly beseech you to advise and help him to travel from Denmark with the next departure of emigrants. . . . If the Constitution is still in effect they cannot forbid him to leave

And finally Nielsen struck the chord of religion so common in the letters of the converts:

The gospel moves steadily forward I pray you to greet my wife's brother, Peter Hansen, for us; we wish we could have him here, however much he was against us; that we forgive There are missionaries; listen to them!⁶⁹

Even had the material and spiritual magnet of Zion been less powerful, the expulsive forces of their precarious situation in Scandinavia made the converts long for their deliverance. The eagerness to leave Europe's poverty, the incessant wars of kings,

⁶⁹Letter, April 27, 1856, in *Bikuben* (Salt Lake City), December 19, 1912. Original in Royal Library, Copenhagen.

and futures barren for growing children easily outran the readiness. "Prepare not in haste, but in wisdom and order Let all that can, gather up their effects and set their faces as a flint to go Zionward."⁷⁰ They came, usually on a shoestring but rich in human resources and in sufficient numbers to make history, their posterity a constant reminder that Utah has roots deep in Scandinavia. The ugly ducklings needed only a congenial environment to feather out.

⁷⁰*Stjerne*, I (June 1, 1852), 141.