

and never speak the truth; Gentile opponents are pukers and Philistines; Church leaders are infallible paragons. This attitude is reflected in the dialogue. All Mormons speak perfect English, regardless of national origin and limited education. (If this is so, it certainly is a testimony to the miracle of baptism.) On the other hand, the typical Missouri puke talks some of the thickest po'-white-trash dialect ever committed to paper. (I was anxiously awaiting the conversion of just one of them, to see what it did to his language, but the author didn't provide an example.)

But all quibbling aside, I will say that while Ruth Louise Partridge worked thirty years on this book, it is worth the effort.

Recently Received

To Utah with the Dragoons, and Glimpses of Life in Arizona and California, 1858-1859. Edited by Harold D. Langley. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1974. xvi + 230 pp. \$8.50.

"That Young's career in Utah should be arrested, no one will deny: none will attempt to apologize for his crimes and those of his fanatical followers. The cause of morality demands the extermination of this nest of adulterers, and no further time should be wasted in attempts at compromise or windy discussion. It were useless to attempt their reformation—the only missionaries that can make headway with them are such as wield the sabre and the musket." So wrote a young private in the U.S. Army Second Dragoons from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, on May 28, 1858, in the first of twenty-five letters (or perhaps twenty-four, since one seems of doubtful authenticity) which he sent back home to the Philadelphia *Daily Evening Bulletin*. The letters, written on the march from Fort Leavenworth to Camp Floyd, Utah Territory, and later from Los Angeles and Arizona, have been edited by Harold D. Langley, Associate Curator of the National Museum of History and Technology at the Smithsonian Institution, and published in the University of Utah series Publications in the American West.

Although "Utah" (the pen-name used by the unidentified dragoon) began by expressing the standard anti-Mormon view in the standard political rhetoric of the time, his tone soon changed. Even at the outset, his anti-Mormon remarks are balanced by his unflattering comments on the Army and the Buchanan administration. Although he thought the Mormons should be dealt with, he did not believe that either the officers or the men of the Army were "fit champions of order and morality." In support of this judgment, he quoted from what he claimed was a morning report of Company A, Second Dragoons: "Privates in confinement 49; charges—stealing 11; drunkenness and disorderly conduct 23; gambling 7; attempt to rob 4; attempt to desert 3; attempt to murder 1 . . . Total strength of this company 53." It is hardly necessary for the editor to state, as he does, that "The original of this report has not been located . . ." Clearly, we are in the realm of American humor. "Utah" was a printer before he joined the Army, and at times he makes us think of another young printer who came to prominence a few years later under the pen-name "Mark Twain." He has the irreverence, the sharp eye for incongruity, and the flair for outrageous exaggeration of the frontier humorist. He even anticipates Twain's assessment of Mormon women. Out of nearly a hundred and fifty whom he met in an immigrant train, "there was not one among them who would

not come under the head of—well, ugly is an unpleasant term to apply to the fair sex, but I must tell the truth. At home I know at least a dozen fair damsels whom I would have no objection to bring under the Mormon doctrine; but if these I met are a specimen of Mormon beauty, one is more than I want.”

“Utah’s” opinion of the Army did not improve as he marched westward, but his opinion of the Mormons did. He found the women of Utah “much superior” to those he met on the plains, and the men were “as well dressed and tidy as any well-to-do farmer in our own State.” He had a high regard for the Mormon bishop/brickmason with whom he worked as a hod carrier in building Camp Floyd. He also showed some admiration for Brigham Young, especially President Young’s habit of giving more attention to the soldiers than to their officers. “Utah’s” report of the prospects for the territory is glowing with praise for the beauty of the landscape and the productiveness of the soil: a corrective (if we still need correction) to the popular notion that the pioneers came into a barren wilderness.

“Utah” did not remain in Utah for long, however. He claimed to have been wounded in a fight with Indians and discharged from the Army in December, 1858, or January, 1859. It appears more likely to me that he joined the great tide of deserters and made his way to California in search of new opportunities. It is interesting to see how his attitude toward the Mormons changed once again in his later letters, after he was robbed of most of his belongings in Fillmore. The letters written from California and Arizona are generally less interesting than the ones written on the way to Utah, but the description of Los Angeles is amusing: “The town is quiet and orderly, but the inhabitants possess very little energy or enterprise.”