

MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MASSACRE.

An Interview with John D. Lee—Evidences of Complicity, but Refuses to Tell what He Knows—An Intimation that Implicates Brigham Young.

We find the following interview with John D. Lee, published in the Philadelphia Times of the 3d. A reporter of that paper did the pumping:

Having obtained a pass from Deputy Marshal William Stokes, I paid a visit to the noted prisoner John D. Lee, now held in the guard house as a criminal charged with murder. Lee seems to enjoy company, and answers nearly all questions propounded to him cheerfully, and, if approached in a spirit of kindness, he becomes quite talkative. During this mood of loquacity, much that is interesting might be elicited from him, and it is my opinion that were it not for his attorney he would convict himself. In answering the following questions he was not reserved until the name of Young was mentioned, who would have been implicated in the massacre:

Correspondent. Do you remember having conversed with a Mr. L. C. Brand (a deputy marshal and representative of the faith and doctrine of Joseph Smith, Jr.)?

Lee. I do, sir; he stayed all night with me; ate, drank and slept with me. We talked all night on various topics touching the massacre.

Correspondent. How old are you?

Lee. Sixty-three years old on the 6th of September next. I have had eighteen wives, sixty-three children. Thirty-five of them are sons. I have fifty six children still living, one hundred grand children, and one great-grand child.

Correspondent. Do you now believe in polygamy as a true doctrine?

Lee. You should not ask me that question, having so many children and wives as I have. But I have not taken any wives since the act of 1862.

The contrary can be proved, it is said. I asked him if he believed the Book of Mormon to be an inspired work of Joseph Smith. He asserted his belief in that work emphatically. Still he knew that that book denounced the practice of polygamy in plain language.

Correspondent. You did not deny to Mr. Brand the charge alleged by the public against you as to participation in the Mountain Meadows Massacre?

Lee seemed to hesitate, but finally denied having anything to do with the murder of the emigrants, as he was three-fourths of a mile away in a hollow at the time.

Correspondent. Did you not say you felt sorry for what was done there—that you would throw the blame where it belonged?

Lee. I am no traitor. I will never betray Brigham Young, as he was not there. Still, I do not intend to say that others were not guilty, but Brigham Young sent messengers with dispatches to that place (the Meadows,) but all was over and it was too late.

This is certainly enough to show that Young had knowledge that the massacre would take place.

Correspondent. Mr. Lee, you know that blood atonement was then and has been taught by Young?

Lee. Yes.

Correspondent. Do you feel justified, Mr. Lee, in covering up this affair at Mountain Meadows, having the knowledge of it that you have, and still hiding it from the world?

To this question Lee seemed to have objections, but in a low tone said, "he would never stretch hemp."

Correspondent. You say, Mr. Lee, that you do believe in the Book of Mormon, which is strong against polygamy and blood atonement?

Lee. I do.

Correspondent. Well, in that book we are informed that the Lord forgave certain of the people of their murders when they repented seriously, and finally, after offering their lives, were forgiven, but died for the testimony of Jesus. Do you not feel that it would be better to do this and make a clean breast of it than to suffer hereafter the stigma attached to your character?

Lee. I dislike a traitor. Joseph Smith, Sr., used to say a traitor is worthy of death.

Correspondent. But those people at Mountain Meadows were innocent, both men, women and children being like you claim to be. No law had condemned them as guilty, and all men, in a certain degree, are innocent in the eyes of the law until proved otherwise.

This is hardly so, I think, in their case at least, as the Territory was under martial law at that time.

The old story of their (the emigrants) poisoning springs, uttering oaths, and so on, was repeated. This is how lies were manufactured in former times and sworn to by Indians. Lee was courteous, and by this time had become quite familiar, and it is my belief that if he were to plead his own case he would convict himself. This he would do and make a clean breast of it if a proper course could be pursued. He has very little money at his own command, and were it not for the means in the hands of others, who employ attorneys at their own expense, or for the sake of notoriety, we would quickly be rid of the most guilty, ungodly, professed prophets, pseudoapostles, false teachers and sacrilegious priestly perjurers that ever escaped the guillotine or the gallows. All the efforts ever made by the firmness, determination, noticing industry and zeal for the preservation of the honor and rights of the law of such Judges as his Honor J. S. Boreman, with his associates in the Second District of the courts of Utah. There is little use in jeopardizing the lives of such worthy men as Marshal Stokes in the dangerous undertaking of capturing such men as Lee whilst the power and money are in the hands of the guilty, the law itself being weakened by a priestly hierarchy, for the defense of which perjury and conspiracy against the General Government are considered no crime. Even the press, in some instances, is not free from bribery, and where one word is misplaced or published to the world by an honest Gentleman, a thousand are used to defame his character by the Urim and Thummim of a sacerdotal priesthood, composed of aliens, bigamists, polygamists and despisers of Government, who would in some countries long ago have been condemned to felons' cells or the traitor's own home.