

MARIA SMART PARKINSON

Maria Smart Parkinson, was born in St. Louis, Missouri, April 29, 1851, the daughter of Thomas Sharratt and Ann Hayter Smart. Her parents were honest, honorable people and were natives of England coming to America in 1845 to improve their financial conditions and settled in St. Louis where they first met L. D. S. missionaries. They were impressed with the new religion and joined the church. Thomas Smart decided to go into Cache Valley and was placed in charge of about fifty families to settle what became Franklin, Idaho, the oldest permanent town in that State. This became their permanent abode and with his wife they continued as pillars in both temporal and spiritual lives until their deaths.

A pioneer home with a large family meant a variety of tasks and responsibilities for young and old. Besides the work of the household Maria with the other children went into the fields and gleaned wheat, thus saving bushels of the precious grain, after the reapers had done their work. Maria, with her sister, took the wool from the sheep's body, washed, picked, spun, wove it into cloth and helped make the clothing for the family. Maria often told of their good times and celebrations for it was not all work and no play.

At the age of 17 Maria entered plural marriage as the third wife of Samuel Rose Parkinson. They were married February 15, 1868, by Daniel H. Wells in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Maria and her sister Charlotte, being married to the same man, lived in the same house, with separate living quarters, until they had 17 children, living almost as one family. As the family outgrew this house Charlotte's family moved, the children often mention how lonely they were after this separation of the two families.

Maria loved traveling and went with her husband to her birthplace in St. Louis, visiting his brother William and sister Sarah, then on to Silver Lake, Kansas, visiting his cousins Elizabeth Howell and Susanna Parkinson. The relatives welcomed them heartily but were not interested in hearing of their religion. They were devout Baptists, entirely satisfied with their own church. Maria went with her daughter and grandchildren Luella and Laura to meet her son Clarence returning from a mission to New Zealand. She never forgot the excitement and thrill as they stood with the crowd watching the boat come in, after hours of waiting. For identification in meeting loved ones they had never seen, some had photographs or different colored ribbons tied around their arms or colored handkerchiefs to wave. Maria spied Clarence waving a white handkerchief to attract their attention as he saw them in the crowd. It was a glorious meeting after three years separation.

In January, 1913, Maria, her husband Samuel, and Luella took a trip to Southern, California. They spent a month enjoying San Diego. In attending the L.D.S. church there they met several from Utah spending the winter in that delightful climate. Among these acquaintances was a dear life-long friend, William Burton of Ogden. From San Diego, on their 45th Wedding Anniversary, Maria and Samuel took the boat trip to Los Angeles. Most of the day was spent on the deck, reminiscing of his youthful water adventures around the world, and Maria recalling interesting experiences of their long married life. Polygamy had its hardships through persecution by State and Federal Authorities, but whatever trials that were connected with this unpopular yet Divine Principle she bore it patiently. In 1888 Maria had to leave home and go to Logan. She was away about a year, here her twelfth baby, Lenora was born, and she suffered the grief of its passing away at 5 months old after three days illness from pneumonia. The body was taken to Franklin in the night and buried in the same grave as her sister, Chloe, so there would be no extra grave to prove her birth.

In all these trials Maria was patient and uncomplaining, acknowledging the hand of the Lord and maintaining at all times her loyalty to her husband and to the principle of plural marriage, which she believed and cherished. Polygamy had its compensations with men, women and especially children in sharing, all developed a high degree of unselfishness. Samuel was a devoted, wise and just husband and father, truly capable of being head of his large family, and loved and respected by them all. Maria was a good manager in the affairs of her home. She made the clothes for the family and was an allround homemaker. Her time was so full in the routine tasks of the day that she often put the boiler on and did the family wash at night or put in a quilt after the children were in bed and there were fewer interruptions. She took great interest in the home surroundings. She loved flowers inside the house and out and with shrubs and various plants and vines her place always looked inviting and homelike. In those days, when all the work was done in the home it was important that each shared in the household activities. It was easy for Maria to sacrifice for any development and advancement for her children. Her interest and anxiety for their welfare did not lag when they married and left the parental roof. She went to her children's homes to help when their babies were born or sometimes they came home to be confined. Also if their husbands went on missions they were invited to come home and bring their children to give them encouragement and help with their expenses.

In these and other ways Maria was known and appreciated by the husbands and wives of her children as a wonderful mother-in-law. A fact which could be voiced by each of them is given in a written passage by Ezra Monson, Olive's husband, "We feel that we owe her much. There never was an emergency in our home that she was not there to cheer us along and help us through."

Maria liked socials and readily entered into the spirit of the occasion. Only a few months before she passed away she took part in the costume party given by the Relief Society in the Logan Fifth Ward. She dressed as a young girl with her lovely gray hair hanging in curls. They danced as the judges awarded the prize and Maria was the winner.

She was the mother of 13 children, ten of whom grew to maturity, 5 boys and 5 girls, all married members of the church and were married in the Temple.

Fortunate circumstances occurred which permitted her to visit several of her family and old friends shortly before her passing. In June, 1915, Maria and Samuel had an enjoyable trip with their son Glenn, who took them to Grace, Idaho, to visit Susie, the youngest daughter, and her family. Also on July 3, Ezra Monson, Olive's husband, called to see if Maria would like to go home with him for a few days. She expressed her desires of going to Preston for the 4th of July Celebration and said they would be delighted to return with him to Franklin and perhaps they could all go to Preston together. They were soon on their way. They had a good visit and went to Preston the next morning, surprised Bell and family and then went to a celebration meeting. Maria saw many of her old friends and had a thoroughly good time.

July 10 she had an attack of gallstones, after suffering considerably from this at intervals for many years. Carmen, her grand-daughter was with her attending summer school at the college. Others of her family were there, the doctors did all possible but she passed away July 18, 1915. After the suffering subsided her peaceful happy countenance indicated that something beautiful took place as her precious spirit left its earthly home and she joined her children, parents, and other loved ones gone on before her.

She was buried in the family cemetery in Franklin, Idaho, where she had spent most of her days. Her life was one of sacrifice, service, love and labor. She was a wise counselor and dear companion. For five years she was a member of the missionary committee, and for twenty years a visiting teacher for Relief Society. She was full of appreciation and charity for others, and many came to her in times of trouble and received comfort from her understanding nature and broad experience. They moved to Logan, Utah, for Glenn to attend college and this enabled her and her husband to work in the temple. Maria enjoyed this and they spent much of their time in this sacred work. She was at the bedside of the sick and dying, feeding a vagrant at her door, opening her home in hospitality, taking food and necessities to the needy, searching a remedy for the sick, gladdening the heart of the weary, being a Savior on Mt. Zion through temple work. If all this brings satisfaction and joy, Maria's cup must be overflowing and she has earned a place in future usefulness and progression with her family in the Mansions of our Heavenly Father.

May her example and teachings continue to live in the hearts of her children and all who knew her and the remarkable events of her life and character here recorded be forever honored and cherished by all her posterity.