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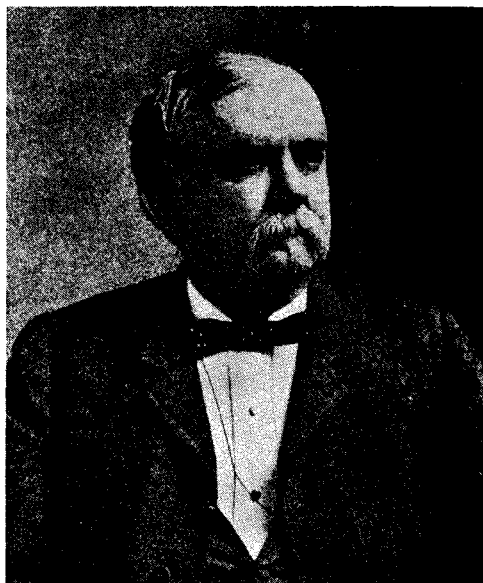
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Senator George Graham Vest
and
The “Menace” of Mormonism,
1882-1887

BY M. PAUL HOLSINGER*

Few men have represented Missouri in the United States Senate so long or perhaps so well as George Graham Vest. From 1879 to 1903, “Missouri’s Little Giant,” as he was aptly known, championed the Democratic party and the South with a fervor that most of his contemporaries never exhibited. Surprisingly, despite the obvious importance of his career, historians have paid

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little attention to his overall record.¹ Those who have, far too often present a one-dimensional man, a conservative bordering on the reactionary, whose only lasting contribution to the pages of history was his famous "Eulogy to a Dog."² Forgotten or ignored by almost everyone is the fact that George Vest was one of the leading constitutionalists of his day, a dedicated spokesman for personal liberties for all segments of society and an eloquent opponent of all who would repudiate any of the principles of American government no matter how acceptable their reasons might be. In no other instance is this more true than in the losing battle the senator waged to protect the rights of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—the Mormons—during the bitter years of the 1880s.

Mormonism had never been tolerated for long in any of the areas where its adherents had travelled in the quest for their Zion on earth. From the day of its founding in 1830 by the self-styled modern-day "Prophet" Joseph Smith, the church had been driven successively from New York, Ohio, Missouri and Illinois. After the assassination of Smith and his brother Hyrum at Carthage, Illinois, in 1844, the main body of the Mormons had followed Brigham Young to the Great Salt Lake Valley in Utah in hopes of avoiding further contact with the "Gentiles" in the eastern states. The discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the massive influx of Forty-Niners on their way westward, however, only reawakened the hostility and bitter antagonisms between the Saints and the far more numerous non-church members throughout the United States. In 1857-1858 a senseless so-called "Mormon War" was fought to determine which side would predominate in the govern-

¹ Among the best of the meager historical literature on Vest are Virginia M. Botts, "George Graham Vest, United States Senator From Missouri, 1879-1903" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, 1931); Marian Elaine Dawes, "The Senatorial Career of George Graham Vest" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1933); "Missouri Miniatures: George Graham Vest." *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XXXVII (October, 1942), 75-80; Edwin M. C. French, *Senator Vest, Champion of the Dog* (Boston, 1930); and Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri (The Center State) One Hundred Years in the Union 1820-1921* (St. Louis, 1921), II, 841-844.

² H. Edward Nettles, author of the brief Vest biography in the Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1936), XIX, 260, for instance, notes: "His senatorial career, in the main, was characterized by a disinclination to recognize new developments and new issues in American life; he adhered largely to bygone principles and precedents." The story of Vest's tribute to "man's best friend" has been told so often as to become almost a part of American folklore. The best account of the episode which provoked the so-called eulogy is Walter L. Chaney, "The True Story of 'Old Drum'." *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XIX (January, 1925), 313-324.

Brigham Young

ing of the territory. The all-too-certain victory of United States troops and the subsequent appointments of non-Mormons to the governor's chair, the Supreme Court and other local offices only widened the gulf between the two groups.³

Any religious denomination such as the Latter-day Saints which professed a belief in direct revelations from God, Jesus Christ and various other angels was bound to be distrusted and condemned by pragmatic nineteenth-century Americans.⁴ No tenet of the church, however, so angered the mainstream of Protestantism as the doctrine of plural marriage. Polygamy had been practiced by the leaders in the church from the days in Illinois, but it was not until 1852 that the professed revelation was announced and actively encouraged by Brigham Young and others in the major Council of Twelve. The revulsion of the majority of non-Mormons knew no bounds; protests poured into Congress, innumerable books, pamphlets and articles, often little more than poorly disguised fiction, appeared to condemn the evil,⁵ and, throughout

³ Of the multitude of scholarly studies on Mormon history now available, the best objective history is Nels Anderson, *Desert Saints* (Chicago, 1942). A good introduction to the persecution encountered by the Latter-Day Saints during the church's early years is the popular, though at times inaccurate, Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History. A Biography of Joseph Smith* (New York, 1945). The "official" church history by Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City, numerous dates), seven volumes, recounts in much more detail the events from Mormon perspective.

⁴ An excellent introduction to the philosophic, theological and sociological beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints is in Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago, 1957).

⁵ A recent introduction to early anti-Mormon writings is Leonard J. Arrington and John Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review*, XXII (Summer, 1968), 243-260.

the country, church leaders filled pulpits with invectives against the practice. In 1862, Congress, though engaged in what seemed at times a losing battle to preserve the Union, took time to pass a law against plural marriage in the western territories.⁶ Yet, buoyed by flourishing immigration in the years immediately following the Civil War, especially from Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries, Mormonism grew even more rapidly than before. The "menace" of Mormonism, as more than one best-selling book called it,⁷ seemed a threat to an otherwise well-satisfied social code. That it needed to be curbed was, to the overwhelming majority of Americans, unassailable. That Congress was the logical agent to carry out any reduction of Mormon power was only natural.

Every president from Rutherford B. Hayes through Grover Cleveland spoke out bitterly against the Latter-Day Saints in the years after Reconstruction and most called upon Congress to enact, as Cleveland said, "further discreet legislation as will rid the country of this blot upon its fair fame."⁸ Realizing the obvious political advantage of satisfying its constituents, Congress was quick to act. In 1882 and again in 1886-1887, two repressive and at times almost vindictive acts were rushed through both the House of Representatives and the Senate to punish not only the practice of polygamy but also the practitioners of the doctrine. Few men dared to jeopardize their careers by speaking out openly against such clearly popular legislation. A small minority of congressional leaders, nearly all ex-Confederate military or political leaders, tried hopelessly to stem the tide. One of the few, and certainly the most effective, was George Vest of Missouri.

By 1882 it was evident that enforcement of the early anti-bigamy statute was at best haphazard. Mormonism was growing both numerically and geographically as adherents of the faith established settlements in Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, California and eastern Oregon. Polygamy seemed unabated. It was at this stage

⁶ The act is incorporated as Section 5352 of the *U. S. Revised Statutes* (1890).

⁷ John Doyle Lee, *Mormon Menace, Being the Confession of John Doyle Lee, Danite, An Official Assassin of the Mormon Church under the Late Brigham Young* (New York, 1878 and republished many times); or H. M. Fallows, *Mormon Menace* (Chicago, 1905). Also useful for understanding the flavor of the times are such works as Jennie A. Bartlett, *Elder Northfield's Home; or Sacrificed on the Mormon Altar: A Story of the Blighting Curse of Polygamy* (New York, 1882).

⁸ *Congressional Record*, XVII, Pt. I, U. S. 49th Congress, 1st Session (1885), 119.

This sketch of a Mormon and his wives appeared in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 11, 1882.



that Senator George Edmunds of Vermont introduced in the Congress the bill which was subsequently to bear his name.⁹ Edmunds in 1880 had been one of the Republican party's top contenders for the presidential nomination that had eventually gone to James Garfield. As head of the powerful Senate Judiciary Committee, his influence was extremely great. What the senator proposed was essentially an administrative change in the 1862 law. In place of the normal territorial courts and judges handling the question of polygamy, Edmunds called for the creation of a five-man Utah Commission with unusual powers to investigate any supposed incidence of plural marriage and to bar from voting rights all those persons found guilty of the crime. Any Latter-Day Saint who refused to submit to the commission's findings or its authority to order the dissolution of his multiple marriages was subject to federal prosecution and long-term confinement in the territorial prison. Any attempt made to deny the power of the commissioners was to be met by force.

⁹ *Ibid.*, XIII, Pt. II, U. S. 47th Congress, 1st Session (1882), 1041.

When Edmunds tried to pressure the Senate into quick acquiescence of his bill, Vest and some, though certainly not all, of his Southern colleagues objected.¹⁰ Though it seemed obvious that the Vermonter had the bipartisan support of the majority of his fellow senators, Vest was not above trying to bring some sense into the rush against the Utah-based Saints. In an officially sanctioned biographical article which appeared in 1894, the Missourian was called "one of the national orators" who "can make addresses on vast themes and large occasions, but is a ready and powerful hand-to-hand debater, quick, intense and resourceful . . . an aggressive antagonist . . . [capable of] holding his own with the other giants of the senate."¹¹ On February 15, 1882, he sought to make this statement a reality.

After having voted a number of times against specific points in the bill, Vest rose to argue for what to him were basic constitutional rights of all Americans. To believe, as some of the bill's supporters seemed to think, that Congress had the power to enact any legislation it saw fit for federally controlled territories was "arbitrary and despotic and unconstitutional."¹² The idea, the senator added, "that the Territories are absolute creatures to be governed by Congress as they please, without reference to the Constitution or law or right is, in my judgment, abhorrent to every principle of American freedom."¹³ A states-right Democrat of the antebellum stripe, Vest called up as authority for his belief the condemned but still in part precedential opinion of Roger B. Taney in the famous *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case. Taney's decision limiting the power of the federal government contained "letters of gold; letters which declare the essence of the Constitution and the rights of every American citizen." The arbitrary punishment of hundreds of Mormons for devoutly carrying out their religious beliefs was an unprecedented wrong.

¹⁰ One of the most outspoken proponents of the Edmunds Act was Augustus H. Garland of Arkansas, a fellow member of the Judiciary Committee. Though some years earlier Garland had had to fight for his constitutional rights in the face of congressional test loyalty oaths against ex-Confederates, he now championed the bill to destroy polygamy and Mormonism as "well-sanctioned by the organic law . . . as any bill that has ever received the sanction of Congress." *Congressional Record*, XIII, Pt. III, U. S. 47th Congress, 1st Session (1882), 1158.

¹¹ "G. G. Vest," *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (New York, 1894), II, 298.

¹² *Congressional Record*, XIII, Pt. II, U. S. 47th Congress, 1st Session (1882), 1157.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1158.

Much as I detest polygamy, much as I believe it to be utterly subversive of all pure society and good morals, I shall never vote for a provision which, in my judgment, subverts the highest and dearest rights of every American citizen.¹⁴

In the remaining hours of the day and into the morning of the sixteenth, Vest's arguments were attacked not only by Edmunds and other enthusiastic senators in favor of the bill but by several fellow Southerners as well.¹⁵ When Vest got a chance at rebuttal, he re-emphasized, with real emotional fervor, his belief that Congress, by substituting a commission for the regular court system, was doing little more than passing a bill of attainder contrary to this nation's usually accepted norms. "If this be not a bill of attainder under the theory of the Constitution of the United States," he charged,

there never has been a bill of attainder proposed in all history. Never in the darkest days of the Stuarts or the Tudors, never in any of the darkest days of despotism, I undertake to say here, weighing my words deliberately, was there ever enacted a statute more exactly within the meaning of a bill of attainder than the seventh and eighth sections of this bill.¹⁶

Anyone who dared to attack the proposed act, or even the language of the act, was bound to be accused of favoring Mormonism and plural marriage, Vest continued, but for him neither of these things were so.

I am not here to defend polygamy; I would resent the imputation as a personal insult from any man at any time or in any place; but where I abhor polygamy . . . , I revere the Constitution of my country and the rights of personal liberty guaranteed to every American citizen. I tell you now, Senators of the United States, pass this bill and you establish a precedent that will come home to plague you for all time to come. The feeling that to-day exists against polygamy may exist to-morrow against any Church, against any class in this broad land. . . .¹⁷

Though he himself could be, and often was, highly emotional in his speeches,¹⁸ Vest was a coldly logical man. "The waves of

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See, for example, the arguments of Charles W. Jones of Florida or Augustus H. Garland of Arkansas. *Ibid.*, 1158-1159, 1161-1162.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1200.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Maurice Irwin Kuhr, "The Speaking Career of George Graham Vest" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1963).

passion mounting high"¹⁹ frightened him and he made it clear repeatedly that he would never vote for a measure that would surrender judicial reason to the prejudice of a five-man commission with unusual extraordinary powers. "Mr. President," he concluded a last effort, "I am prepared for the abuse and calumny that will follow any man who dares to oppose any bill here against polygamy; and yet, so help me God, if my official life should terminate tomorrow, I would not give my vote for the principles contained in this measure."²⁰

That the bill would eventually pass, however, was clear from the beginning. Now, though others rose to agree with Vest, Edmunds steered the bill to its ultimate passage. A number of amendments designed to protect the Mormons from losing various specific constitutional rights were summarily defeated.²¹ Senator Vest nonetheless tried one more tactic in hopes of committing the Senate to his view of the need for judicial action. Just before final action on the proposal, the senator introduced an amendment which would have prevented punishment unless a conviction had occurred before a proper court of law. That this amendment, like all other substantive ones before it had no chance of passage, must have been obvious; the vote against it, when taken, was 33 to 11.²² A few minutes later, with no roll call, the Senate passed the Edmunds Act and sent it to the House for its approval. The galleries broke into sustained applause for several minutes.²³

House approval and the signature of President Chester A. Arthur were quick in coming.²⁴ But the fears of Senator Vest and some of his Southern colleagues were shortly brought out. The commissioners moved with abandon to break up families of polygamous Mormons while ordering the arrest of many and uniformly denying the right to vote to innumerable men and women.²⁵ John

¹⁹ *Congressional Record*, XIII, Pt. II, U. S. 47th Congress, 1st Session (1882), 1200.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1202.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217. The only amendment to the bill to pass was a purely political one insisting that no more than three of the five commissioners be from one political party. Even this vote, hardly controversial, passed by the barest of margins, 26-23, with 27 abstentions. *Ibid.*, 1214.

²² *Ibid.*, 1217. There were 32 senators who failed to vote on this bill.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ The House approved the Edmunds Act on March 13, 1882, by the vote of 199-42 with 51 congressmen not voting. *Ibid.*, 1877. The president signed the bill into law on March 22, 1882. *Ibid.*, XIII, Pt. III, U. S. 47th Congress, 1st Session (1882), 2197.

²⁵ The territory of Utah had sanctioned woman's suffrage in 1870, one year after Wyoming Territory, the first to do so.

Taylor, the President of the Latter-Day Saints,²⁶ was forced into hiding to escape imprisonment as were many of the church's top leaders. Few members of the Mormon persuasion, however, renounced their faith or their belief in polygamy as a divinely inspired act. Many, in fact, who might conceivably have surrendered their adherence to the doctrine naturally, now, because of the martyrdom of their leaders, became even more convinced of its correctness.²⁷ By late 1885, Cleveland's call for "discreet legislation" seemed to most Protestant leaders, both in and out of Congress, once again an absolute necessity.²⁸

On December 8, 1885, Edmunds, with renewed bipartisan support introduced Senate Bill Number 10 in order to add more pressure to the already beleaguered adherents of Mormonism.²⁹ The second Edmunds Act—or more properly, the Edmunds-Tucker Act—was one of the most vindictive pieces of legislation ever passed by Congress. To force a confession of guilt from men suspected of polygamy, fifteen new commissioners were given the power to require, without subpoena, any one to appear in court. Though no Mormon could be forced to testify against himself, a man's wife could be made to incriminate her husband. Homes could be searched for any incriminating evidence at the discretion of the commissioners. Anything found, such as marriage records, could be used as *prima facie* evidence of guilt. The criminal statutes were expanded to take into consideration a number of new crimes. Woman's suffrage, long approved in the territory, was

²⁶ Brigham Young had died in 1877. Taylor, a long-time leader in the church, had been with Joseph Smith when he was assassinated in 1844. He served in the presidency from Young's death until his own death while in exile in 1887.

²⁷ An extremely popular song of the day in Utah, entitled "Ever Constant" contained this refrain:

"They need not think that true affection
Can be crushed by cruel deeds
Or that a long or constant separation
Can turn false the heart that bleeds.
A woman's love will never perish
While the heart she loves is true;
An eternal stream, her love it floweth
Ever constant, ever true.

Thomas E. Cheney, ed., *Mormon Songs From the Rocky Mountains* (Austin, Texas, 1968), 83.

²⁸ There were, of course, some leaders of Roman Catholicism who openly attacked Mormonism and polygamy. Most, however, remained silent on the questions involved, apparently convinced of the truth of Vest's statement that prejudice turned on one church today could easily be applied to another tomorrow.

²⁹ *Congressional Record*, XVII, Pt. I, U. S. 49th Congress, 1st Session (1885), 122.



Senator George Edmunds

Dictionary of American Portraits

now abolished in order to spare the women, so it was argued with obvious tongue in cheek, from the shameful fate of voting as their husbands wished. In many ways most oppressive of all the facets of the new proposal was the plan to destroy the corporate structure of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. All property of the church was to be held for redistribution to its original owners if possible; any monies not returnable were to become the federal government's to be used for the schools of Utah Territory.³⁰

Once again the proposed act was pressured through the limited opposition by its chief author, George Edmunds. Only a small handful of Southern Democrats, buoyed now by the staunch support of Senator Henry M. Teller of Colorado, stood in the way.³¹ Missouri's Vest, if not as repeatedly vocal as four years before, was nonetheless outspoken in his constitutionalism. Nothing troubled him more than the provision dissolving the Mormon corporation. After several attempts to amend the section had failed,³² the senator proposed a revision of his own, suggesting that Congress

³⁰ *Ibid.* (1886), 566-567.

³¹ Chief spokesmen for recognition of Mormon rights besides Teller and Vest were Wilkinson Call of Florida and John Tyler Morgan of Alabama.

³² *Ibid.*, 516.

not be allowed to appropriate Mormon church monies for any purpose no matter how laudatory. "I can not," Vest told the Senate, "as a lawyer, give my assent to this extraordinary legislation. . . . If there is any parallel to this legislation on the statute-books of the United States I am utterly ignorant of it."³³

Edmunds immediately attempted to counter Vest's objection and the two senators were soon engaged in a short and sharp debate. Despite the Vermonter's attacks on the "one-man despot" who ruled the Latter-Day Saint establishment from headquarters in Salt Lake City,³⁴ Vest remained unconvinced. "How a lawyer can look upon [this bill] with anything else than distrust is beyond my comprehension," he commented in the midst of the debate.³⁵ When Senator George Hoar of Massachusetts entered on behalf of the supporters of the bill,³⁶ Vest grew even more firm. He said to seize the church properties,

is nothing else but . . . arbitrary. If it can be done in this case it can be done as to any Baptist, Methodist, or Presbyterian church in any of the Territories if a majority of Congress thinks it ought to be done. . . . [This] is remarkable legislation—I confess I know of no parallel to it. . . . When Congress steps in and declares in advance that property shall [no longer be used for its original purposes], it is not due process of law, it is not the law of the land as I understand it.³⁷

The Vest proposal never reached the voting stage. With some careful rewording of the original section by Senator William Evarts of New York, a rewording that only partially met the Missourian's objections, the Senate rushed toward a final vote on the measure. On January 8, after less than three days of debate, the members of the upper house by a crushingly decisive 38 to 7 approved the legislation.³⁸ George Vest was, after his repeated attacks, not among the official minority. Absent all day from the Senate floor, on every roll-call vote dealing with the Mormon question, including the final tally, the senator's colleague from Missouri, Francis Cockrell, announced his repeated opposition to the persecution.³⁹

³³ *Ibid.*, 517.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Hoar later voted against the entire act because of his belief that woman's suffrage should not have been abrogated from territorial law. In principle he approved all of the other sections. *Ibid.*, 565.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 518.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 565.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 563, 565.

That the House of Representatives would easily pass the bill as it had the original Edmunds Act four years earlier was assured. Though a number of delays, unrelated to the question of polygamy and Mormonism, prevented a vote for over a year, passage with but slight modification from the Senate version was overwhelming.⁴⁰ After a conference committee between the two houses had ironed out the minor disagreements, final approval was put on the new bill on February 17 and 18, 1887.⁴¹ Once again, Vest paired his vote, this time with Senator Preston Plumb of Kansas, but he left no doubt how he would have responded had he participated in the final roll-call. After noting that the Kansan supported the legislation, the senator added emphatically that he would certainly have voted against it had he the chance.⁴² To the credit of President Cleveland, the bill never received presidential approval; not vetoed, however, it passed automatically into law on March 2.⁴³

The effect of the Edmunds-Tucker Act was almost instantaneous. Mormon leaders immediately challenged the constitutionality of the bill in the federal courts but, much to their dismay, found a solid wall of opposition there as well. The federal government, acting through Congress, could pass any form of legislation it wished including revoking formerly held vested rights when dealing with the territories, Mormons were told.⁴⁴ The courts and the new commissioners now moved rapidly with such *carte blanche* power to crush out any vestige of polygamy while punishing adherents of the faith for having ever sanctioned the doctrine. Finally in resignation to the inevitable and hoping to avoid any further trouble, church President Wilford Woodruff⁴⁵ announced in the summer of 1890 his intention to obey the law. In its October general conference, the church adopted President Woodruff's "Manifesto," though reluctantly, and agreed to try to accept federal power. Six years later, after a quarter-century of trying, Utah, now "purified" of evil, was admitted to the Union as the forty-fifth state.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, XVIII, Pt. I, U. S. 49th Congress, 2nd Session (1887), 596.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, XVIII, Pt. II, U. S. 49th Congress, 2nd Session (1887), 1882, 1904.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1904.

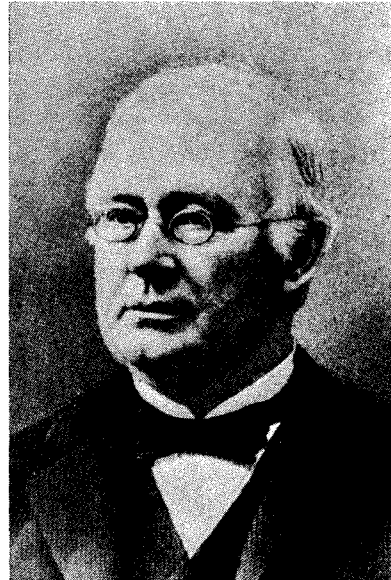
⁴³ *Ibid.*, XVIII, Pt. III, U. S. 49th Congress, 2nd Session (1887), 2667.

⁴⁴ *United States v. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and others* (1887), 15 Pac. 473; *United States v. Late Corporation of Church of Latter-Day Saints et al.* (1888), 16 Pac. 723; *The Late Corporation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints et al. v. United States* (1890), 136 U. S. 478, and (1891), 140 U. S. 592.

⁴⁵ Woodruff succeeded John Taylor in 1887, serving the church presidency until his death in 1898.

⁴⁶ A good popular history of Mormonism which contains a careful account of the persecution of this period is Ray B. West, *Kingdom of the Saints* (New

Senator George Hoar from an Engraving by Alexander H. Ritchie



Dictionary of American Portraits

It has long been questioned whether the Machiavellian politics employed in the two anti-polygamy statutes were justified. The majority of contemporaries had no doubt that they were. Polygamy represented an evil that must be eradicated no matter how severe the punishment. Clearly the end seemed to justify the means. But it was here that George Graham Vest disagreed. He was, as a tribute from the Republicans of Missouri said at the time of his death in 1904, a man of "unquestioned integrity and unsullied honor."⁴⁷ "Brave, sincere, spirited and straightforward," his long-time opponent in the Senate, George Hoar, called him.⁴⁸ Vest could not accept the denial of what he considered guaranteed constitutional principles and, though the result of his opposition was the expected accusation that he was pro-Mormon, he unflinchingly spoke out against both Edmunds Acts. But George Vest was no stranger to controversy in his senatorial career; twelve years later

York, 1957). A scholarly economic history which focuses on the effects of the church's loss of corporate standing is Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (Cambridge, 1958).

⁴⁷ Quoted in *The American Review of Reviews*, XXX (September, 1904), 258.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Walter B. Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri*, II, 844.

he stood in the vanguard of the few men who spoke out against the spread of American imperialism in the world.

George Vest was a man whose dedication to the Constitution made him shun all popular causes that so frequently ignored or twisted that document's provisions. In 1959, Floyd C. Shoemaker, the long-time editor of the *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, in a short article on some of the leading nineteenth-century leaders of the state bar concluded a discussion of Vest's career with the thought that "His accomplishments for the public were lasting and bear time's careful scanning."⁴⁹ Few historians have concurred in this assessment. If only because of the senator's fight for religious freedom for all men, including the hated and despised Mormons, it is time that a reappraisal began.

⁴⁹ Floyd C. Shoemaker, "Some Colorful Lawyers in the History of Missouri, 1804-1904," *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, LIII (April, 1959), 236.

Market Analysis

Platte City Landmark, August 4, 1911.

The editor was busy when he was asked: "How are the markets?" The man was referred to the office devil, who looked wise and said: "Young men steady; girls lively and in demand; papas firm, but declining; mamas unsettled, waiting for higher bids; coffee, considerably mixed; fresh fish active and slippery; eggs, quiet but expected to open soon; whiskey still going down; onions strong; yeast, rising; breadstuffs, heavy; boots and shoes, those on the market are sold constantly going up and down; hats and caps, not so high as last year, excepting foolscap, which is stationery; tobacco, very low and has a downward tendency; silver close, but not close enough to get hold of."

It Wasn't Encouraging

Green Castle Journal, January 3, 1908.

One afternoon a couple from an adjoining town presented themselves to a Boston divine and asked to be married just as he was about to enter the pulpit to conduct an afternoon service. The minister replied that he regretted that he could not at that moment comply with their wish, but that immediately upon the conclusion of the service he would take pleasure in performing the ceremony. The lovers after demurring seated themselves in the rear of the church. When the minister had finished the service he made the following announcement: "The parties who are to be joined in matrimony will present themselves at the chancel immediately after the singing of hymn 415, 'Mistaken Souls that Dream of Heaven.'"