

**THE MARTYRDOM OF  
JOSEPH STANDING OR THE  
MURDER OF A "MORMON"  
MISSIONARY: A TRUE STORY**

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The martyrdom of Joseph Standing or The murder of a "Mormon" missionary: a true story by  
John Nicholson

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**JOHN NICHOLSON**

**THE MARTYRDOM OF  
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MISSIONARY: A TRUE STORY**



THE MARTYRDOM  
OF  
JOSEPH STANDING;

OR, THE  
Murder of a "Mormon" Missionary.

A TRUE STORY.

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ALSO

AN APPENDIX,

GIVING A

SUGGEST DESCRIPTION OF THE UTAH PENITENTIARY

*And some data regarding those who had, up to date  
of this publication, suffered incarceration  
through the operations of the  
anti-"Mormon" Crusade  
begun in 1881.*

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WRITTEN IN PRISON

BY JOHN NICHOLSON, 1839-1909

"A Convict for Conscience Sake."

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## PREFACE.

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THE narrative which forms the principal feature of this little volume was penned under peculiar circumstances. Such a condition as privacy has practically no existence in the Utah Penitentiary. The writing was therefore done by snatches, in the midst of varied and almost incessant noises, in the eating room, bunk-house or yard, as occasion presented or necessity demanded. This fact should perhaps be a sufficient apology for any defects it may contain. The story has one good quality, however—it is strictly true. On that ground it is with pleasure presented to the public by

THE AUTHOR.

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THE  
Martyrdom of Joseph Standing;  
OR, THE  
MURDER OF A "MORMON" MISSIONARY.

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CHAPTER I.

How the Story was obtained.—Rudger Clawson.—His Nativity, Appearance and Characteristics.—Conviction and sentence.—First Definition of "Unlawful Cohabitation."—Speech in Court.—Punished for Belief.—Prison Experience.

THE author was among the more early victims of the legal raid instituted against the Latter-day Saints under the "Edmunds Act," which prescribes penalties for polygamy and "unlawful cohabitation."

The rule in the courts has been, when a man has been placed in jeopardy for the latter offense, to inflict the full penalty, without reference to the character of the plea or other mitigating circumstances, unless he made a pledge to the judge in relation to his future conduct.

This promise, reduced to a plain statement of the situation, requires the person making it to repudiate a principle of his religion and cast a portion of his family adrift.

Such an agreement being at direct variance with our conceptions of duty, honor and integrity, we declined to be a party to it.

Having been previously convicted of "unlawful cohabitation" (living with and supporting our wives), we were, on the thirteenth day of October, 1885, sentenced by his honor, Chief Justice Zane, to imprisonment in the Utah Penitentiary for six months and to pay a fine of \$300 and costs of the prosecution. We entered the penitentiary the same day.

It is not the intention to present a relation of personal experience while in prison, but the foregoing brief preliminary statement is given simply by way of explanation as to how we obtained the particulars of the tragic story which constitutes the chief feature of this volume.

While a prisoner we had an excellent opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with Rudger Clawson, whom we have learned to esteem and respect, on account of some sterling qualities he possesses. Added to a sound understanding of the principles of the Gospel, he has an un-

usual degree of personal courage, both moral and physical, and integrity from which, up to this time, he has never swerved.

He was born in Salt Lake City, on the twelfth of March, 1857, an issue of plural marriage, being the son of Hiram B. Clawson and Margaret Gay Judd Clawson.

Rudger is slightly under medium height, and of stout build. His face is oval shaped and inclined to be plump. He has clear grey eyes; the nose is somewhat large, and has a tendency toward the Roman type; sufficiently so to give the impression of resoluteness. This feature gives a stronger intimation of firmness than the mouth, which is small, the lips being full and not usually closely compressed. Although he is in his thirtieth year, his appearance is more youthful than that age would generally denote.

He has been a subject of considerable interest in the community of Latter-day Saints and elsewhere, on account of being conspicuously connected with some circumstances of public prominence.

The case which culminated in his being sent to prison for a term of four years was the initiatory one under the Edmunds Act, consequently he was the first victim of the present anti-"Mormon" raid.