

sion to explain away its meaning. To insist that *crave* (which the *Oxford English Dictionary* traces in this sense back to the fifteenth century) must mean something entirely different if two men are involved is to fail to acknowledge the full range of human sexuality in all its complexity.

Through extensive and careful research, Godbeer has assembled a rich and varied collection of previously unknown homoerotic writings. That he denies that that is what they are makes this book an important part of a developing debate, and it should be read by anyone with an interest in sexuality and gender in early American history. Take from it what you will.

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*"Liberty to the Downtrodden": Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer.* By MATTHEW J. GROW. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009. 368 pp. Illustrations, appendix, notes, index. \$40.)

Matthew Grow paints a portrait of a man who was compelled throughout his life to defend the persecuted from the powerful. Thomas Kane (1822–83) was from a wealthy and influential Philadelphia family and joined in numerous reform efforts, including the woman's rights and antislavery movements. But no project occupied Kane's time as much as his defense of the Mormons. His involvement was perhaps atypical of the day, as many nineteenth-century reformers were the ones working hard to end the theocracy and polygamy of the Mormon Church. While many reformers were also evangelicals, Kane, with an ecumenical upbringing and education, was a fundamentally antievangelical reformer who stoutly defended the Mormons from what he saw as evangelical bigotry.

Kane first encountered the Mormons in 1846, when their opponents were driving them out of Nauvoo, Illinois. Many sympathized with the Mormons, but Kane went so far as to visit them in their camps the following year. He was impressed by their sincerity and their kindness in nursing him back to health (Kane suffered from health problems throughout his life), and he formed a lasting bond with them. Determined to defend the Mormons, Kane wrote numerous newspaper editorials and worked closely with government officials to advance Mormon interests. Devastated when he learned they practiced polygamy, Kane did not slacken his efforts, which reached their apex when President Buchanan sent the army to put down a supposed insurrection in Utah in 1857. Kane received permission to act as negotiator between the Mormons and the army. He went to Panama, crossed over the Isthmus to sail to California, and traveled overland to Salt Lake City to intervene. Over the following months, Kane averted the hostilities, convinced the Mormons to accept their new territo-

rial governor, and got Buchanan to pardon the Mormon leaders.

After the Civil War, in which Kane rose to the rank of brigadier general, he worked to stem antipolygamy legislation against the Mormons. Though Kane strongly opposed polygamy, he felt that evangelical anti-Mormons were overstepping the bounds of a free society. After a visit to Utah in 1873, Kane's wife wrote a favorable account of Mormon domesticity in the hopes of forestalling pending legislation that would have revoked the Mormons' judicial power in Utah. The book likely had an effect through positive reviews, but with the direst aspects of the legislation defeated, the Kanes refused to issue a new printing of the book (they only printed 250 copies). They were likely concerned that they made polygamy look too appealing.

Grow notes at the beginning that Kane's ill health led to hypochondria and depression, which seem to have always compelled him to action in the hope of improving his health and mood. Coupled with his concerns over his small stature, Kane always felt the need to prove his manliness. Yet Grow does not overemphasize these points in explaining Kane's actions, and perhaps he should not have. Why Kane supported his causes generally, and Mormonism particularly, is not entirely clear after reading the book. Grow gives full contextualization of Kane's life, as he masterfully handles and synthesizes an abundance of materials. There is a certain lack of speculation on Grow's part, but ultimately the author provides ample information to allow the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.

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*Eastern State Penitentiary: A History.* By PAUL KAHAN. (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008. 128 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$19.99.)

According to its mission statement, The History Press "empower[s] history enthusiasts to write local stories, for local audiences" by offering brief, highly readable community histories. Kahan's notable contribution, *Eastern State Penitentiary: A History*, with its detailed social history and in-depth use of archives, maximizes the possibilities of the local history press, bringing its subject to life without sacrificing objective analysis or expansive research.

Eastern State Penitentiary has never lacked for exposure and chroniclers. Yet, Kahan argues that no concise, detailed history of Eastern State Penitentiary remains in print and readily available. His compact study traces the penitentiary from its opening in 1829 to its closing in 1971 in five chronological chapters. While the generalist format of this edition limits Kahan's ability to clarify how his observations and conclusions differ from those in histories of Eastern State Penitentiary written by Negley Teeters and John Shearer (1957), Laura Magnani