

Written for this Paper

## A TICKLISH SUBJECT.

The world is filled with injustice. Might, far too often, makes right. Things innumerable are done by law which violate the very first principles of equity. Men appropriate and steal without any qualms of conscience because they can do it, and Shylocks line the highway of man's necessity, taking their victim by the throat with the nonchalance of a Robin Hood, only that the first acts under the cover of a statute, and grabs because he is a legal thief.

On a gigantic scale, the Latter-day Saints were thus dispossessed of their accumulations by the vagabondism of politics. It was assumed all too readily that this injury could be inflicted on an unpopular people without comment, save that which gloated over the infamous spoliation. Today perchance the most prominent actors, as well as the rank and file who cried huzzah for the leaders, would be truly glad if the condemnatory record could be expunged from the pages of history as unworthy of a civilized people. The injustice, however, of that whole movement, whether it affected an organization or individual members thereof, has never yet been settled. That part of the Church property which was returned as well as the part which is still retained had to be defended at an immense cost, and it would only seem fair that any indebtedness so incurred should be refunded, if right is to be supreme.

It may be thought that the responsibility for wrong is difficult to fix, so divided and subdivided it is to human ken; but there is an "eye that neither slumbers nor sleeps," and it in this life wrong triumphs and oppression rules, the swift judgment of the Eternal will reward every man according to his works.

That there is a great deal of incredulity to regard to this is readily admitted. That selfishness often leads persons into acts of oppression is equally true; and it is just as true that that which is acquired by violation of right carries with it a curse instead of a blessing. Fate, as some would call it, seems to hover around that which has been unjustly acquired. Easy come is often easy go. Though the grip that is over it may be like the grip of a vise, it is seen to slacken, and its tenacity by unseen forces is often relaxed in the very moment of apparent success.

It is quite possible to go through the streets of this city and with prescient eye to note how, where property has been unjustly even if legally acquired, that the finger of retribution seems to be laid upon it. No shrewdness, no human wisdom, no change, great or small, seems able to obliterate or nullify the originally wrongful acquisition. We know of places melting away before the elements, and stricken apparently with rust and blight, because from thence by legal pressure was driven the widowed wife and orphaned children into the public street. We know of places where the iron hand of the mortgagee has eagerly grabbed the coveted property at a moiety of its real value. Injustice has laughingly and boastfully told of the grand acquisition and speculation it had made. But the tears and prayers

of even an unwise owner have entered into the ears of "the Lord of Sabaoth," until the legal usurper has had no rest or until he had got rid of this "wedge of Achan" which carried with it the unseen but not unfelt curse of a retributive Providence.

It may be said that the loser is never blameless in those cases; but if conceded, it is also noted that this form of modern injustice was guarded against in the Divine economy as given to Moses, and men's momentarily alienated inheritances reverted again even to the foolish as to the wise. There was provision against undue exaction; usury was absolutely forbidden, and so the inheritance came again to its owner every few years. Was it intended in this to excuse any debtor? He is under moral and religious obligation in this community to honor all his promises and covenants. But some are the victims of circumstances; they want to be and do right, yet they cannot be called successful in the strange and trying battle of life. Some there are perchance in all classes of society, who approximate to right for fear of penalty; on the other hand the one who takes his brother by the throat, and says "Pay me that thou owest," and then casts him into prison (or poverty) until he has paid the uttermost farthing, is quite likely to have presented to him the same inflexible procedure, from which he may be only too glad to escape.

That was good authority which said that "the same measure meted (by men) to others should be meted to them again." It is no doubt part of the Divine program and philosophy, and that beautiful precept, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," has been so written in the very fabric of moral and religious duty and salvation, that no man, high or low, rich or poor, influential or unknown, with claim or without, can afford to invalidate his personal trust in the attributes and action of Deity by ignoring a certain rule.

It is because of this faith and assurance that we look with some complacency on the historic past. We have no idea that "the wrongs of Missouri" or the pressure which compelled the evacuation of Nauvoo is simply a matter of history. We have no idea that government proscription and confiscation is only to be found in the records of Congress and the courts. We have no idea that because men and women were plundered and imprisoned, and that many were thus hurried into an untimely grave, that the account is outlawed and uncollectible. We have no idea that personal violation of right or mercy is condoned because the victim, bound hand and foot, submits to the exactions of the tyrannical oppressor. No, no, none of this. Technicality is not the method of the other side. Human precedent, rules, decisions, have no value in the Higher court, only as based upon principles which have behind them the eternal recognition of right and truth.

Here authorities may differ; one court may reverse the decisions of another; justice and judgment may be so costly that the poor cannot reach the one or secure the other; technicality may supersede equity; but the unsleeping avenger will bar the way of

progress until rectification is thorough and complete.

If this assurance could be more intimately interwoven into the fabric of life, into politics, finance and morals, surely there would be less of fraud, less of oppression, less advantage taken of necessity or opportunity. Many things would be compromised that are now pushed to extremes; many an obligation would be settled without acerbity and bitterness of feeling; sympathy would take the place of harshness; brotherly consideration would supersede the spirit of the world, and in any event mutual conciliation would take the place of arbitrary procedure, and the spirit of the Gospel that of the letter of the law.

Few men even in this life can afford the exercise of arbitrary power. Few can afford to have either the maledictions or the quiet silence and reserve of those whom they have wronged. It is better to have a reputation for princely magnanimity than to be known in Zion as one who under all circumstances insists on his "pound of flesh," and will have no less because able to get and willing to keep it.

## THE CONSTITUTION—PROHIBITION.

I perceive from what appears occasionally in the columns of your paper that the question of prohibition is somewhat in evidence in Utah, and that a desire is expressed by some of our people that the constitution soon to be adopted by the coming convention shall contain an article prohibiting the manufacture and sale of spirituous liquors in the coming State of Utah.

In discussing the question, one of your correspondents made use of the observation "There has been but little popular agitation on the subject."

Now, without wishing to enter the field of discussion pro and con on this question, I beg to remind that correspondent, as well as all persons interested in the subject, that he has, perhaps unintentionally, furnished a very good and sufficient reason why the convention should not insert any provision concerning prohibition in the document which that august body may submit to the people for ratification or rejection.

As your correspondent truthfully says; there has been but little agitation of the question by the people, and that little has only taken place since the election of the delegates to the convention, and consequently the delegates are under no obligation, or at least may not feel under any obligation—to be influenced by what may have been said or written since the election.

In the absence of the expression of public opinion on public questions prior to the election of delegates to conventions, the delegates go uninstructed and are the sole judges of what their duties to their constituents require them to do.

I presume that most of the people of Utah desire statehood, and with a constitution with as few objectionable features as possible, it may be expected the people will adopt it. But as there cannot be a doubt that much opposition will develop against a prohibitive article, should one be inserted, it seems to me that it will be wise to leave that question in the hands of the voters of