

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

PAY NO HEED TO SLANDER.

It is to be regretted that again the columns of local newspapers have been opened to the repetition of unkind, prejudiced and false charges against leading men in the community, and particularly against prominent Church authorities. That some of the journals which reproduce these slanders are not in accord with their sentiments, is evident in one particular case from the explanatory note preceding the quoted extracts, to the effect that "we do not wish to be understood as putting these views forth as our own or of endorsing them so far as they misrepresent the actual state of the situation;" the reason for their repetition is that "our readers may fully understand the impression that recent occurrences have produced throughout the country."

A journalistic anxiety to keep the reader posted upon falsehoods, abuse, and partisan attacks upon reputable men and sacred institutions is something which very few honest-minded people are inclined to give much credit for. If the receiver of stolen goods is as bad as the thief, the copyist and repeater of known slander cannot be much higher than he who originates it. Especially does the former come in for censure and condemnation when he willfully circulates that which he knows to be untrue, without any attempt to correct the impressions sought to be conveyed; while to confess by implication a knowledge of the falsity of the matter and in the same breath disclaim responsibility for and endorsement of it, has very much the appearance of moral cowardice of the most abject sort.

It is a peculiarity of human nature that a well-told and oft-told lie finally comes to have so much the appearance of truth as to deceive not only those who hear it but even those who tell it. The responsibility for putting such stuff in circulation, and repeating it day after day, should therefore properly be placed in the outset where it belongs. And as there can be but one effect of such a course—and that is to destroy the influence of those whom a paper permits to be attacked and itself leads a willing hand to the operation—it should be held up promptly to scorn and contempt.

It is almost inconceivable that any journal pretending to have at heart the welfare of the people of Utah and to be desirous of their friendship, could enter upon a course so malicious and unjust. Yet every day gives proof that there are just such papers, and right here at home, too. Generally speaking, we want to say that the thing is infamous; it is not only a disgrace to local patriotism, but an insult to the worthy and honorable men a sated, and a base appeal to passions which every honest voter ought to wish to see extinguished. And lest any casual reader should be misled into believing that there must be some truth in falsehoods so often reiterated and not contradicted and denied each day by

the men who are attacked, we want to say that most of them have been denied before, and all of them are easy to be disputed and overthrown. But lies travel fast and multiply faster; and no man against whom such an attack is deliberately made, could hope to keep his denials up to the pace set, even if he gave his whole time to it.

The people of Utah need not be disturbed, therefore, because every falsehood uttered and repeated is not exposed and denied; they need not wonder if they see honorable men's names used unwarrantably or improperly, their acts criticized or condemned, their motives questioned or impugned—and all without a word of rebuke, denial or explanation from them. If others drag their names into the slime of politics and through the colosseum sewer of slander, they are under no obligation to descend to the same filthy level themselves; for if their whole lives do not supply them with a justification, no words of theirs can help them out. This is an argument that their enemies do not seem to count on, but it is one that their friends and the community at large ought not to forget.

UTES—AND UTES.

The lady in the play says that while consistency is truly a jewel, jewelry is admitted to be vulgar. We admit this doctrine is peculiarly acceptable to some of our Colorado friends.

For two or three days past the dispatches have blazed with the indignation aroused in the Colorado settlers in the northwest part of the state by the fact that certain Utes from the Uintah Indian reservation had left their proper habitations and were hunting game in the regions to the east. There have been threats that if the courts did not settle the question, the settlers would; and it appears to be agreed that any particular Indian against whom the state desires to prosecute charges will be arrested on his return to his reservation and sent to Colorado for trial.

A good memory may be quite as vulgar as the jewelry of consistency, according to certain Colorado purists. Nevertheless we venture to recall a few facts not more than a year old, which people on both sides of the Utah-Colorado line can scarcely have forgotten. The incidents referred to occurred not in the northwestern part of Colorado, but in the southeastern part of Utah; the Indians who were off their reservation and ravaging other property were not Utah Uintah Utes, but Southern Utes from Colorado. They did not leave their prescribed boundaries merely to hunt game for a week or two as in the present case; but they moved bag and baggage, flocks and herds, parpooes and wicki-ups, over into Utah with the announced intention of remaining, and declared that they came with the approval if not actually by the direction of their agent. We have not heard of any Utah people who justify the present

raid of Utah reservation Indians into the hunting grounds and otherwise comparatively unused lands of northwestern Colorado. A year ago we heard of hardly any Colorado people who condemned the wholesale migration of the Colorado Utes into the winter grazing grounds from which the bona-fide and patient settlers of southeastern Utah drew a large portion of their means of living.

There is no doubt that it makes a great deal of difference as to whose ox is gored, or as to which leg the boot is on; of course Utah settlers sympathize with their Colorado colleagues in the prospect that the dusky aborigines may kill a few deer, mountain grouse and jack-rabbits off their reservation. But this feeling will be accompanied by one of grim congratulation that the Uintah Utes have no such designs or backing as the Southern Colorado Utes had last fall when they came over the border by hundreds prepared to stay and eat the Utah settlers in two large counties absolutely out of house and home.

BE NOT DECEIVED!

The News has already alluded to and condemned the conduct of men who for political effect make unwarranted use of the names and utterances of the leaders of the Church, a practice which has resulted in much bitterness being aroused, many false charges being circulated, and great injustice being done. Upright men's actions have been misjudged, their purposes and motives grossly misstated, and their characters assailed as though they were the basest and most hypocritical of mankind. The circumstances in which they did the acts or used the language charged have been overlooked or falsified; and many otherwise conservative men have blindly accepted allegations put forth by designing persons against honorable citizens without ever attempting to verify or consider the facts in their true light.

One such instance is recalled by a recent declaration issued by a great political party. In that document quotation is made of a letter attributed to President Joseph F. Smith, enclosing a Bishop's letter as to the Church standing of a candidate in a previous campaign. These letters, it is stated, were used as a circular, and intended for general distribution, being reproduced as having been addressed "Bishop ———"

Now the facts are: (1) that the letter as published was never written by President Smith at all, the whole of it being supplied by some one else before it was published; whoever did this, therefore, must be held guilty of a most reprehensible deed; (2) while it is true that President Smith wrote a letter or two on this subject, no one of them was ever written for publication, or for use as a circular at all; each was written in answer to two or three personal inquiries from north and south as to charges being made by opposition speakers concerning the standing of the candidate referred to; (3) these letters were not only not printed by President Smith or by him authorized to be printed