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SALT LAKE CITY, MAY 11, 1904

A COLPORTEUR'S REPORT.

A report from one George D. Pen-

cock, Jr., to the American Tract so-

ciety detailing his travels and labors,

especially the former, while canvass-

ing the counties of Sevier, Sanpete,

Carbon, Utah, Wasatch, Summit and

Cedar in Utah, and of Mesa and Del-

ta in Colorado has been sent to us by

letter from Rev. Jas. H. Ross of

North Cambridge, Mass. Our morn-

ing contemporary, the Tribune, gives

it front page first column place as

"Special to The Tribune," but we give

it for what it is worth, and that is

very little and is certainly not of value

as a "special," but our neighbor still

seems to think his little trick gives it

a specious importance, and so keeps

up the petty attempt at deception.

This is the first news we have re-

ceived of the travels of the junior Pen-

cock and his alleged "severe opposi-

tion" by the "Mormons." Colporteurs

are not new arrivals in the rural dis-

tricts of Utah, and the sheep-wagon

fare has been played to a very limited

extent and without apparent results

in some of the small villages in the

State. But of this particular bird of

passage no tidings has come to us as

far as we remember. He may have

made a tour of all the places he claims

to have visited, but it is a little singu-

lar that our correspondents in those

localities have not made mention of

his advent. His principal aim in the

report appears to be to impress upon

his employers the extent of his pere-

grinations rather than the results

achieved thereby.

Without casting serious doubts upon

his alleged covering of great distances,

we must confess to strong doubts as

to the "arrests" which he claims to

have suffered. It is observable that

he does not clearly assert that he was

taken up for selling Bibles, but that

"in four towns during the year" he was

"arrested and fined for selling Christian

literature and the Bible without a li-

cense." What he includes in the term

"Christian literature" is not explained.

Neither does he give the names of the

"four towns" where he was fined, nor

tell us whether they were in Utah or

elsewhere. He leaves the inference that

they were "Mormon" towns, though he

does not say so directly. We fear the

colporteur is either remaining or bear-

ing false witness against his neighbors,

so as to give his job undue importance

with those who hire his services.

Peddlers are required in some cities

in this and many other States to take

out a license. Even peddlers of "Chris-

tian literature" ought to comply with

the law, and when they violate it they

should not designate as "severe opposi-

tion," the enforcement of the statute or

ordinance in such case made and pro-

vided. It is true that the stuff that

has been circulated in Utah under that

name is not acceptable to the majority

of the "Mormon" people. It is either

childish twaddle or base and infamous

falsification of their faith, and their

character, and they have no use for

it except to light the fire or some

such purpose. So it is quite probable

that even if offered to them "almost

without cost," they are not very anxi-

ous to "receive it into their homes."

The universal circulation among

them of the Semi-Weekly Deseret News

is a sure sign that they are not in igno-

rance as to the "Christian" religion

whether that is viewed from a "Mor-

mon" or a sectarian standpoint. The

Church works that he refers to are all

explanatory of the Christianity taught

by Christ. And he omits to mention

the Bible among the works received as

standards by the Latter-day Saints,

when it stands foremost on the list and

is studied by them and by their children

in the Sunday schools and auxiliary so-

cieties, more closely than any other

book that is published. We believe

there are more Bibles in the homes of

the Latter-day Saints, in proportion to

the population, than in any community

of similar numbers upon the face of

the earth, Boston and North Cambridge

not for a moment excepted.

There is a great deal of standard

literature in the homes of the "Mor-

mons" besides the works issued by this

Church. Every week the Deseret News

gives reviews of books and essays and

scientific and philosophical dissertations

from noted authors and notices of the

contents of the best magazines. The

Deseret News Book Store keeps in

stock works of all kinds from the fore-

most publishing houses in the trade,

Bibles included. These peripatetic ex-

horters and peddlers who make reports

like that of the mysterious Peacock,

are simply fooling the public and try-

ing to make a show to justify the pay-

ment of their hire. Their services are needed,

if anywhere, vastly more in the purlieus

of such cities as Boston than among

the "Mormons" of Utah, who know

more in a minute about real Christian

doctrine and practice than all the strutting

sectarian Peacocks can tell them or

sell them in a generation.

RUSSIAN RETREAT.

Ever since the crossing of the Yalu

by the Japanese army, the Russians

have been busy explaining that their

retreat was part of a skillfully laid

plan. The only mistake made was that

committed by General Zassalitch, who

did not run away fast enough, prob-

ably thinking that his duty was to fight

the Japanese. It is now explained that

General Kuropatkin has not much over

200,000 men south of Harbin, and that

his idea is to let the Japanese follow

him into the interior, until he is strong

enough to take a stand, or perhaps

the offensive. The Japanese ought to

appreciate this information from St.

Petersburg, in which the Russian plan

is fully revealed. But is it a plan, or

only an attempt to cover up the tracks

of an inglorious retreat? If the Rus-

sian plan is to hold their lines of de-

fense in the interior, why did they in-

trench considerable forces on the Yalu,

merely to lose thousands of men and

many valuable arms? Why did they

not stay at the real line of defense,

and await the attack there? The fact

is that plans of campaign are not often

followed out. The best commanders

must rely on the moment for inspira-

tion as to the proper course of proceed-

ing, and be prepared to act without

long preliminaries. Napoleon used to

say that his plans were always formed

on the battlefield. For battles are often

won, or lost, on turns in events that

seem accidental, and certainly are be-

yond human wisdom to calculate be-

forehand.

The retreat from the Yalu may be un-

important from a Russian point of view,

but the continued defeat of the czar's

forces cannot but have the effect of

arousing the Chinese to action. It is

now feared that this will happen. The

Chinese ambassador in Berlin is even

quoted to the effect that a popular

movement in favor of an alliance with

Japan is a near contingency. He says:

"It is evident that if the Japanese

should win many more victories over

Russia the government at Peking would

find it exceedingly difficult to stem the

tide of popular feeling and prevent an

actual alliance with Japan. My gov-

ernment is, however, decided to do its

utmost to preserve the neutrality of

China, well knowing that if we should

take part in this war our action would

be used as a most welcome pretext by

European powers who are always wait-

ing for an opportunity to step in and

divide our country between themselves.

I trust today to find out at the foreign

department whether an actual treaty

had been made between Germany and

Russia covering the possibility of China

taking part in the war, but none of

the high officials would either confirm

or deny the rumor."

Previously the Chinese minister

knew whereof he speaks. He knows

that as Japan's victories are heralded

throughout Asia, the heroes of the

Oriental view crowned with radiant

glory, and the Asiatics will flock to

their standards. They will hail them

as liberators, and fall in line with their

policy, whatever that may prove to be.

PROJECT FOR DISARMAMENT.

An Armenian has issued a pamphlet

in which he sets forth his ideas of

general disarmament. He calls his

scheme a "fool's project," but he un-

doubtedly considers it practical. He

thinks that the United States, Great

Britain and Germany should compel

Russia to disarm, and then establish

an international parliament to sit in

Paris. This body would settle differ-

ences arising between any two or more

powers. To enforce its decrees it would

command "an international army of

100,000 men," consisting mostly of

"travel forces." This police would, we

are told, convert all autocracies into

constitutional states, declare a univer-

sal language, and lay "the first stone

of the great edifice of socialism."

The plan is, of course, ridiculed by

critics, and if the details are consid-

ered, it certainly looks Utopian, but the

general principle is sure to be recog-

nized to some time, as true. It merely

proposes to do for the civilized part

of the world, in the direction of uni-

fication, what has been done within recent

years, comparatively speaking, for sev-

eral nations, such as France, Italy and

Germany. France is an illustration.

That country was unified on the basis

of a common system of law and ad-

ministration of justice, by the adoption

of the code of Napoleon. Before that

time there was chaos. What was right

in one province was wrong in another,

and legal procedure uncertain and ex-

pensive. This was changed, and to the

change the French state is very largely

indebted for its existence.

Something similar to this will some

time be done for the world at large.

There will be an international court

with an international code, and an in-

ternational army. But the time has

clearly not yet come. Jerusalem, as the

capital of a Jewish state, would be a

better gathering place for an interna-

tional congress, than Paris.

SEA SERPENTS.

The season of the sea serpent com-

mences somewhat early this year, and

significantly enough, it is off the coast

of China that the great marine monster

has appeared this time. One would,

however, expect queer sights in those

waters, after the recent happenings off

Port Arthur.

It is a naval French officer, the com-

mander of the Decade, who this time

tells the story of the sea serpent. He

saw it in the bay of Along. Another

French commander saw the monster at

the same place, some time ago. The de-

scriptions agree with respect to the

small head, the blowing of spray into

the air, and the manner of swimming

by vertical undulations. They disagree

as to color, the serpent of one being

greenish-gray, while that of the other

was black, with yellow spots. As to the

presence of flippers and a dorsal ridge

the two accounts also differ.

From time immemorial the general

public, and the scientists have been

skeptical with regard to the stories of

sea serpents and fishermen of sea serpents.

Even old Bishop Pontoppidan