

## EDITORIALS.

## THE MURDER OF SECRETARY BABBITT.

We have received the following extracts from the Crescent City, Iowa Oracle, and publish them in the NEWS by request of Mr. J. E. Johnson, who clipped them from back numbers of that paper, as they contain authentic information concerning the killing of Alma W. Babbitt, about whose death so many falsehoods have been told by anti-"Mormons." Those stories have been given new prominence by the resurrection of the dead and buried perjuries of Levy Abraham alias Razin. The first clipping is an editorial which appeared in the Oracle of Friday, May 22, 1857:

## MURDER OF HON. A. W. BABBITT.

We notice in the letter of resignation of Hon. W. W. Drummond, to Attorney-General Black, that he there, among other very grave charges, asserts that the Hon. A. W. Babbitt was murdered by white men disguised as Indians, by order of the authorities of Utah. In justice to the parties thus maligned, we will state that we have taken much pains to gather all the information possible calculated to throw light on the death of our relative, Mr. Babbitt, and the particulars connected with the same; and we have not a shadow of doubt but that Indians of the Cheyenne nation murdered him for revenge and plunder; and for the satisfaction of his friends, who have not heard the full particulars, we will recount them briefly:

As Secretary of Utah, the late lamented Col. Babbitt purchased the stationery and other necessities for legislative purposes, etc., and at a proper season started it from Florence across the Plains, with ox teams, under the charge of a Mr. Nickols. Late in August, with only one attendant, and in an open carriage, Mr. Babbitt left Florence, for Utah. Upon arriving at Fort Kearney, he there found some of his stock, his wagons, and a portion of the goods, and one man wounded from his train, being all that remained, four of the number having been killed; three on the spot and one (Mrs. Wilson) the next day after capture.

Mr. Babbitt hastened to purchase more cattle, and, gathering up the remains of his freight, started the train again forward, and wrote us two several letters, stating that he would start forward himself with two attendants, the day following. These are probably the last he ever wrote.

Mr. Babbitt left the fort as had been arranged, and was never again seen by white men. All the emigration was ahead. He intended to reach Fort Leavenworth in three days, and was making good his time. Some weeks later an Indian came into a French trader's station with a gold watch which bore the initials of Mr. Babbitt's name, and soon another came with a massive ring, which was also marked as a seal ring.

The Indians then being charged with the murder, acknowledged that they had done it. News was sent to the fort and Maj. Wharton immediately sent out a detachment in search, which found Mr. Babbitt's carriage, trunk and many valuable papers, but nothing of the unfortunate victim but a few bones.

The Indians then confessed that having been insulted and abused by the parties in charge of the mail, and some of them killed by the soldiers, a company of twelve had fallen upon Mr. Babbitt's ox train as being the first they had met to avenge the wrong. That they had seen Mr. Babbitt arrive at the Fort, and knew him (he having crossed the plains nearly 20 times) and that he was a big man, and by killing him they might get plunder and revenge at the same time. They had gone on ahead and lay in wait; when he passed they followed him at a distance until he had stopped, the second day in the afternoon. Then they rode down upon him, yelling and screaming. Mr. B. shouted at them and motioned them to stop and pointed his pistol at them, but they passed on and he fired at them.

Frank Rowland (a young man accompanying him) stood with his arms by his side until shot down; the other man ran away in some willows. The Colonel fought like a tiger, fired all his arms, then clubbed his rifle and fought the whole twelve savages, disputing every inch as he slowly backed up to his carriage for protection behind

He had seriously wounded several, when one, more cowardly than the others, jumped up into the wagon, and with a tomahawk, killed a brave and noble man.

Major Wharton still has possession of the ring which he obtained of the Indians, and some other valuables and relics, found on the spot of the murder.

Mr. —, a French trader, has a fine gold watch which belonged to Mr. B., which he purchased of the Indians, together with some articles of minor value.

All that is known of the murder of Mr. Babbitt, is obtained through the Indians themselves, who acknowledge they committed the murder.

It seems to be a very malicious charge the ex-Judge is thus making against the people of Utah, without anything to justify him in doing so.

The widow of the late Mr. Babbitt is now on her return from Utah to this place. Upon her arrival, we shall, at the earliest moment, announce the receipt of anything further connected with his murder."

The annexed is an editorial published in the Oracle of August 7, 1857:

## "LETTER FROM MRS. BABBITT."

"The New York Herald of July 25th, publishes the following notice of a letter, from Mrs. Babbitt, relative to the murder of her late husband."

"Mrs. Julia Ann Babbitt sends us a communication full of melancholy interest, containing the results of an inquiry lately made by her, relative to the circumstance attending the murder of her late husband. The letter is dated at Crescent City, Iowa, at which place Mrs. Babbitt had arrived after a fatiguing and perilous journey from Salt Lake City, thence to Fort Laramie, Fort Kearney and Ellisdale, Iowa. At the three first named places Mrs. Babbitt had communications from travelers, French traders, friendly Indians and the U. S. officers commanding the forts. Their joint testimony shows that Mr. Babbitt, in company with Mr. Rowland and Mr. Sutherland [Sunderland], started from Fort Kearney for Fort Laramie about the 6th of September last, and that they were murdered and robbed by a party of Cheyenne Indians. Some of Mr. Babbitt's jewelry and other valuables have been since seen with the Indians. Mrs. Babbitt fully acquits any white man of a participation in her husband's death, and repudiates the idea that he was murdered by the Mormons."

This, we consider, should be evidence enough of the falsity of those charges concerning the killing of Mr. Babbitt which have been preferred by unscrupulous persons. Mrs. Babbitt, whose letter appears above, died at Crescent City, Oct. 23, 1857, aged 47 years. A notice of her decease appears in the Oracle of October 30, in that year.

## LEGALITY OF SCHOOL MEETINGS.

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." This saying is nowhere more applicable than in the domain of the law. A smattering of legal lore frequently inflates the mind of the possessor until he imagines himself an authority, and it renders him not only an unpleasant because dictatorial acquaintance, but also a dangerous guide to the unsophisticated who may look to him for advice. We do not say this to discourage the study of the law, but rather to urge upon those who intend to make it their profession the necessity of thoroughness.

Everybody should endeavor to become acquainted with the laws of his own country, and especially those local statutes, ordinances, and regulations which specially affect the community in which he resides. But no one should attempt to "lay down the law" for the guidance of others, unless he is well acquainted with the enactments bearing upon the subject under consideration.

There have been some disputes recently in relation to the beatings of the school law of this Territory and the effects upon it of the recent Act of Congress known as the Edmunds bill, and some very foolish notions have been advanced concerning it. The following letter asks some questions on this subject which we are requested to answer, and we do so for the reason urged by the writer that, an explanation will be of benefit to many persons in different parts of the Territory. Our correspondent is a School Trustee in Sanpete and has

good reasons for making these inquiries:

1st. Have the school trustees under existing laws right and power to call a school meeting for the purpose of raising funds for school purposes?

2d. If the people meet, at the call of the trustees, for the purpose of levying on themselves a tax for school purposes, is it the registered voters or is it the taxpayers only (whether they be citizens or not), that shall vote on the rate per cent?

3d. If it is the taxpayers only that shall vote on the rate per cent. of a school tax, does the Edmunds bill take away their right to vote?

4th. If a meeting be called and conducted according to the provisions of the school law, and two-thirds or all of the taxpayers present at the meeting and residing in the district vote for a tax, can such tax be legally collected according to existing laws?

The School Trustees of any district in the Territory have the right to call a school meeting for the purpose of raising school funds, under sections four and five of the school law, to be found on page 23, Laws of 1850. If the meeting is called according to law, the property taxpayers resident in the district, may vote upon the question of a special tax upon the taxable property in the district, for any school purposes, to an amount not exceeding two per cent. for the year. It is not necessary that they be "registered voters." The property taxpayers are the interested parties because their property is liable for the tax when assessed. A registered voter living in the district, may be without taxable property in the district, and it would not be just to give him power to vote a tax upon other people's property to which he would not be liable himself.

The Edmunds bill, as we understand it, has no bearing upon the sections of the school law under consideration. The meeting for voting a tax is not an election within the meaning of the election laws. The bill vacates all the registration and election officers in this Territory. But there are no registration or election officers connected with the business of a school meeting to assess a tax. The office of school trustee is not a registration or election office. The right of taxpayers to meet and assess a tax on the property in their district, created by the territorial statute is not destroyed or infringed by the Edmunds bill.

If a school meeting has been duly called as prescribed by law, and two-thirds, or more, of the property taxpayers resident in the district present at the meeting, vote by ballot for a tax not exceeding two per cent. for the year, we think there can be no doubt that it will be legally collectable after sixty days from the date when it becomes due, as per notification by the trustees. Under the law of 1850 the time when such taxes became delinquent was ninety days after the date when due, but at the late session of the Assembly the time was changed to sixty days.

Under the recent amendments to the school law it becomes the duty of the trustees to file with the County Superintendent a copy of the notice calling the meeting for the assessment of the tax, and a copy of the minutes of the meeting, which may be inspected by any member or taxpayer of the District. This should be done within ten days after the meeting is held. There is nothing that we can discover in the amendments to the school law or in the Edmunds bill which affects the calling of a school meeting and assessing a tax for school purposes, and we have no hesitation in saying that trustees may go ahead with their duties in this respect, no matter who may advance obstructive and disturbing notions to the contrary. Every trustee should endeavor to inform his mind in relation to the laws governing his office, so that he may know for himself what are his duties, powers and obligations. And considering the importance of our educational interests, we hope that no one will be so unmindful of the public good as to place needless difficulties in the way of those public servants who have to perform many unthankful services for the benefit of the rising generation.

## A NEW FOOD PRESERVER.

PROFESSOR BARFF, of the London Society of Arts, claims to have made a discovery which will prove of immense benefit to the world. It

is a process by which all kinds of meats and fruits may be preserved for an indefinite time in their normal condition. The preparation is composed of boracic acid and glycerine, and is dubbed by the discoverer boroglyceride. It is of a fatty nature and is tasteless and harmless. It is ordinarily hard and brittle, but softens by heat and is soluble in hot water. It costs, ready for use, when prepared in small quantities, about eighteen cents per gallon, and edibles when immersed in it become unaffected by the action of the atmosphere.

Professor Barff supplied the students of Beaumont College during the heated term of 1851 with milk preserved by his new process, and they had no idea but that it was fresh milk from the cow. He also supplied a relative with fish and flesh of various kinds so preserved, and it was not suspected that they were not fresh and new. In disclosing his discovery he regaled his hearers at the meeting of the Society of Arts with oysters, herring, lobsters, turtle, pheasants, tongues, beef, mutton, foreign and home fruits, etc, which had been kept, in some instances, for several months, and no difference from fresh articles could be perceived in smell or taste.

If these statements are correct the new preparation with the awkward name will be of immense value to the public, and will make the fortune of the discoverer. Several pretended inventions for this purpose have been palmed upon the credulous. Let us hope that this time the genuine food preserver has been compounded.

## HOW THEY LOOK AT IT.

The Hour, a New York Journal devoted to social interests, contains in its issue of April 29 a long article on "The Mormon side of the Question." It gives a good review of the pamphlet "Utah and its People," which by the way was not written by a "Mormon," as the Hour supposes, but by a "Gentile." Then follow some pertinent remarks on the Utah question, breathing a liberal spirit, and here is the closing paragraph:

It is not to be disguised that numbers of clear-headed public men and lawyers look with distrust upon the anti-polygamy bill recently passed by Congress. It is an interference in religious and social matters which is not warranted by the genius of our institutions. It gives an irresponsible board power to throw an industrious and thriving community into confusion. Absurd as the Mormon religion may be, it is doubtful if the interference of a government, especially that of the United States, is permissible; while it is very certain that the putting down of polygamy by law is the extension of Government interference which may bring about greater abuses than those which it now aims to correct. The population of this country is increasing so rapidly that we need not fear the spread of Mormonism. Any two months of this year will bring more people to our shores than inhabit the Salt Lake Valley. Is it worth while to strain our institutions and create pernicious precedents for interference in religious and social matters which may have the gravest consequences in our future history?

## SCENES IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

THE OFFICIAL REPORTERS OF DEBATES—THE DIFFICULTIES UNDER WHICH THE WORK IS PERFORMED—CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—WORK IN CONGRESS—ELAINE BELMONT SCENE—BEN HOLLIDAY—UTAH COMMISSIONERS—OREGON SHORT LINE.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
April 23, 1852.

In my last letter I wrote at some length concerning the noisy character of the members of the House of Representatives—the House in which is daily performed "the uproarious farce called legislation"—and now, perhaps, it would not be out of place to describe to my readers the manner in which the proceedings and debates of this clamorous branch of the national legislature are reported by the official stenographers of the House for publication in the Congressional Record. Even under the most favorable circumstances the task of

reporting the proceedings of the House is one of no ordinary nature, and it is a matter of wonder to many—more especially to those who are experienced in the reporting business—how the official stenographers endure the strain they are called upon to bear during the entire session. Of course, like everything else, this class of work has become, in the hands of competent stenographers, more or less mechanical; yet when it is considered that one day's proceedings in both Houses would cover say, in a guess, sixty columns of the DESERET NEWS, some idea of the immensity of the work to be performed may be gathered from that fact.

The Congressional Record is a government concern, and is published every morning. Each day's issue contains a verbatim report of the previous day's proceedings in the Senate and House of Representatives. The system of reporting in both Houses is, of course, the same. I shall therefore confine myself to a description of the official reporting in the House of Representatives. In this branch of Congress there are five official reporters of debates, namely, Messrs. J. J. McElhorne (chief of corps) William Blair Lord, David Wolf Brown, J. K. Edwards and John H. White. As soon as the House meets, which it now does at 11 o'clock, the above named gentlemen are in their places at the reporters' desk, immediately below that of the clerk of the House, which being centrally situated affords a good view of the whole chamber.

The chaplain opens the proceedings by prayer, which is very formal, and then "the uproarious farce called legislation" commences. The green constituent in the gallery, who has never before had the privilege of witnessing the House of Representatives in session, but who has formed in his own mind something about the dignity of so important a legislative body, is utterly at a loss to understand what is going on. And the more he tries to understand, the more he becomes bewildered. To him everything seems "confusion worse confounded." He can see a dozen of men on their feet flourishing sundry papers in their hands—bills, doubtless, of some kind or other—but all our verdant friend can make out in the midst of the confusion are the words, "Mr. Speaker," "The member for Ohio is recognized," "Referred to the Committee on Pensions," "The House will please come to order," "The Chaplain thinks the point is well taken," etc, etc.

But what are the official reporters doing in the meantime? The House is now in regular session, and a verbatim report of the proceeding must appear in the Congressional Record to-morrow morning. Great Scot! how is such a thing possible? Well, this is the manner in which the work is accomplished: In previous arrangement, each reporter takes what is called a "turn," which "turn" generally extends some ten or fifteen minutes. Mr. McElhorne, "turn." But where is he? He is not in his place at the desk. No, if he had sat there, no verbatim report could possibly appear in the Congressional Record to-morrow. The noise in the House, added perhaps to the fact that some member is speaking from the far corner of the chamber, has compelled him to vacate his seat at the desk and slide into one under the nose of the member who is speaking, otherwise the speech, important or otherwise—most likely otherwise—could not be reported. But now Mr. McElhorne "turn" is up. He has been relieved by Mr. Lord, who has begun what Mr. McElhorne left off. If the latter's "turn" has lasted fifteen minutes, it can readily be supposed that he has taken down considerable matter, and the next point is to get that matter off his note book as quickly as possible.

From experience I know that when he is compelled to transcribe his "turn" into long hand, it would take him at least from an hour to an hour and a half to do so; for a moderately quick speaker can usually speak as much in one hour as will take the reporter—supposing he can read his shorthand notes with ease—six hours to transcribe. [Mr. McElhorne, however, does not transcribe his own notes. It would be impossible for him to do so and be ready to take his turn at the proper time. A second corps of short hand writers therefore are absolutely necessary. To one of this corps—located in the official reporter's room—Mr. McElhorne reads off his "turn," by whom it is transcribed into long hand