

EDITORIALS.

REDISTRIBUTION OF THE SEXES.

SOME of the so-called social reformers of the times are demanding a redistribution of property. Their theories are self-refuting, because they recognize the right to hold property while they deny its existence. They claim that it is wrong for the wealthy to keep what belongs to them, but want to obtain and keep a share of it themselves.

It is suggested by some eastern contemporaries that while this talk of redistribution is indulged in, it would be a good thing to agitate for the redistribution of the sexes. That is, to take some of the surplus women of the East and draft them into the regions of male surplus in the West, for while bachelorhood is said to be enforced to a large degree in some western Territories, spinstership is an incurable evil in many of the Atlantic States.

It appears that in twenty-two of the latter there are 308,000 more women than men. This means a much larger population of unmarried women than appears by the figures. For, it is an undisputed fact that there are large numbers of men who do not marry. Many of them think they cannot, because of circumstances, and many more will not because they do not wish to incur the expenses and bear the responsibilities which are attached to wedlock. This throws an immense body of unmarried women upon the community, and tends to increase the volume of those social evils that are the curse of modern Christendom.

In those portions of the country where the males are in numerical excess, on investigation, that there are large numbers of unmarried ladies. And this is usually not their fault. Matrimony is natural to women, although it brings to them so much more care and suffering than to men. They have a tendency in that direction. It is born in them and belongs to their organism. Women who have no inclination to marry are rare exceptions, and there are only enough of them to prove the rule of disposition. The blame of their spinstership rests upon the stingy or timid bachelors who will not propose.

One eastern journal suggests that the Territories in which so much bachelorhood preponderates might establish a local equilibrium by "making a raid on the neighboring Mormons." This idea springs from the common ignorance about our affairs. That editor will be surprised to learn that according to the latest authorized census, Utah has over six thousand more males than females. So, according to this, there are no "surplus women," in Utah to spare to the surrounding Territories.

And even here, where marrying is supposed to be the principal business or common diversion, there are large numbers of young women who have no husbands and who seem doomed to single blessedness(?). Marriage does not seem to depend so much upon the equality or inequality of the sexes as upon the disposition of the "lords of creation" to couple up with the ladies. Go where you will, unless it is in some mining camp, or other region where the circumstances and surroundings are such as to exclude women to a great extent, and you will find plenty of opportunities for men to marry, if they are so inclined.

The rightfulness and practicability of plural marriage do not rest upon the question of the relative numbers of males and females in a State or Territory, a city or a town. Inclination and affinity must be considered in the matter. The way ought to be open for every woman to marry who chooses to unite herself to one of the opposite sex. Wifehood and maternity are her natural aims. No woman is truly happy or fully satisfied until she has achieved both in honor. Laws that prevent this are barbarous and inhuman. And if so many men refuse to embark upon the sea of matrimony that thousands of women remain disconsolately upon the barren and sandy shore of spinstership, the way should be made clear for the ladies to double up, if they can't find "a man all to themselves," and if they are suited it ought to be nobody else's business.

If we had our way in this world—which we do not at present expect to get—we would throw the gates of matrimony wide open, and put huge barriers in the way of illicit commerce between the sexes. Marriage should be promoted and encouraged, while sexual vice should be repressed and punished. And there should be no such thing as "surplus women" in any part of the country.

The world is out of joint on the marriage question, and society needs a thorough renovation from top to bottom. Redistribution, either of property or of the sexes is impracticable. But the means of obtaining all that is sufficient for a comfortable livelihood should be open to all honest men, and of reaching the full object of her being to every virtuous and marriage-fitted woman.

BOGUS PATENT MEDICINES.

"There's cheating in all trades but ours," is an old saying. That this is a

swindling generation everybody must agree who knows anything of the world. Adulterations of food; and bogus imitations of almost everything that is discovered or invented, throw doubt upon the commonest articles for use or consumption, and folks scarcely know for certain what they eat, drink or wear.

One of the latest dodges to turn a dishonest penny has been resorted to in Pennsylvania. The City of Brotherly Love has discovered that even its patent medicines, which it turns out in tremendous quantities, have been treated in such a way that the brand of the concoctors is no protection to the physic-swallowing public. Empty bottles are bought from the junk-dealers and filled up with some cheap and nasty liquid, and in order to palm off the stuff upon the sick and the sorry, the very makers of the genuine article are made to assist in the fraud. Application is made to them for new labels for a large lot of their goods, said to have become damaged on the outside by being placed in a flooded cellar, or something of that kind, and the new labels thus procured are placed on the old bottles, and the deception is complete.

The safest way not to get cheated in this manner is to eschew all patent medicines. But the advice would not be followed if one were to give it for nothing. There are too many drug-drinkers in the world who think they cannot live without making medicine-chests of themselves. And then there some specifics which are really valuable in certain cases, and having a known virtue will be sought after by invalids and be recommended, by the faculty.

But those who practice such deceptions ought to be severely punished if discovered, and we should think that now the abuse has become known, the proprietors of patent medicines would not be very ready to issue labels to irresponsible parties. This new fraud shows the swindling spirit of the times, and how the public are imposed upon by cunning rogues who might turn their talents in an honorable direction.

NEW METHOD OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

SOME eastern papers are advocating electricity as a humane method of capital punishment. "Hanging is played out," was the boast of ruffians in some eastern cities, not long ago. But this was not because some better mode of inflicting the death penalty had been adopted, but because the execution of the laws was so miserably enforced. A bill has been introduced in the New York State Legislature, for the appointment of a commission to investigate and report on the best method of putting condemned persons to death.

Electricity seems to be the favorite mode—in theory; how it would answer in practice has not yet been demonstrated. The supposed superiority of this over the hanging process is in the absence of the unsightly paraphernalia of the scaffold and the rope, the certainty of its action and the absence of physical suffering. It is possible that the first recommendation may have something in it. But it is not sure that no mistake would be made, that a culprit might not be half or three-quarters killed by the shock, and that his sufferings might not be greater and more prolonged than by the old method. It is alleged by electricians of experience that it would be both an uncertain and a cruel means of death, and that it is very doubtful if an instrument could be constructed under ordinary circumstances that would give a current strong enough to kill a man without fail.

There ought to be a better mode adopted than the barbarous plan now in vogue, of choking a criminal to death like a dog. The right way would be to follow the fiat of Deity: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. This is not complied with by hanging, neither would it be by an electric shock. The murderer's blood should be poured out as the only atonement he can make for his crime. Shooting or decapitation would accomplish this, and be preferable to either the common or proposed method, as certain, swift and instantaneous. It need not be so public as to shock the senses of the multitude, and could be divested of the horrors that attend a common execution by hanging.

That is "blood atonement," about which so many people talk in their ignorance, and is the penalty pronounced upon the man-slayer by the great Creator whose word should be the supreme law.

FIFTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

The Fifty-sixth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints convened in the Provo Tabernacle Sunday morning, April 4, 1886, shortly before 11 o'clock.

On the stand were: Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles—Franklin D. Richards, John Henry Smith, Heber J. Grant and John W. Taylor.

Patriarch of the Church—John Smith.

Of the Presiding Council of the Seventies—Jacob Gates and C. D. Fieldsted.

There were also a number of Presidents of Stakes and many leading brethren from various portions of this and other Territories.

The Conference was called to order by Apostle Franklin D. Richards, who conducted the proceedings.

The choir sang:

"Arise! Arise with joy survey
The glory of the latter day."

The opening prayer was offered by President John D. T. McAllister, of St. George Stake, after which the choir sang:

"Father, how wide Thy glories shine
How high Thy wonders rise."

APOSTLE F. D. RICHARDS

addressed the Conference. It was very delightful that we found ourselves so comfortably situated. The good people of Provo had exerted themselves to fit up a place for us to meet in. As usual, however, the place was too small. We have great reason to rejoice, although we have not so much liberty as formerly. We cannot now have the First Presidency with us, and others who have heretofore exercised their calling in our midst. But it is decreed that those who will live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution. It is just as necessary for us to test such sayings as that and others, as to verify those of a more gladdening description. The work of God is subject to various changes, as in nature the seasons alternate, and this is necessary in order to produce the most happy results. The adverse circumstances through which we are passing are useful for our proper development. Our spiritual natures are improved by them. We should view our present ordeals from that standpoint and acknowledge the hand of God in all things. Those things that seem the most trying may be sanctified to us as the most prolific source of blessing. This life at most is but a speck in our existence.

The speaker felt to regret that the brethren of the Presidency could not be present, but they were with us in spirit if they could not be here in person. The last word received from our worthy, venerable and respected President of the Church was to the effect that he was in good health and devoting himself constantly to the interests of the work of God. Our brethren who hold leading positions are sometimes taunted with being in hiding. This is no new situation for men of God. History affords numerous examples of a similar kind. Let not the people be seized with the spirit of fear. Rather let them rejoice, for a brighter day is near. If we are united, those who assemble to hear the instructions given will be fed with spiritual food. The dawning of a glorious day has come. The light of the millennium is tinging the horizon of our sky. It is necessary that we purge ourselves from every evil, that we may be prepared for what is, in the providence of God, approaching.

APOSTLE JOHN W. TAYLOR

complimented the people of Provo on the excellent character of the building in which the Conference was held. He was glad to see that, notwithstanding this was the first meeting of the general gathering, there was such a full attendance. The meeting of the Saints were larger and more interesting since the present legal persecutions began. This was a gratifying result. It was a matter of regret to see men renounce their religious principles and their families. It was, however, a matter of rejoicing that so many were so willing to stand by their covenants like men. The oppressions that were directed against the Church were necessary to cleanse it from those who were hypocritical and otherwise unworthy. Some process had been permitted by divine providence for the same purpose in every dispensation. This latter-day one had its peculiar means for that purpose. In reference to our leading men coming forward and accepting of the penalties and humiliation which their enemies were anxious to heap upon them, they had to be subject in these matters to the will of God. Their natural inclinations might lead them to thus present themselves to be taken within the power of their enemies, but they must be guided by what the Almighty manifests as his mind upon the subject. The First Presidency are Prophets, Seers and Revelators to the Church. Were it not so we, as a people would be the subjects of a delusion and a snare. But we know that this work is founded upon the principle of continuous revelation. The Holy Ghost is the medium of communication between divinity and humanity. The scriptures written by the power of that spirit, say that a wise man foreseeth an evil and escapes from it. The same authority says the fool takes a precisely opposite course. Noah, being possessed of the Holy Ghost foresaw the flood and prepared against the evil day. So with other prophets. It is by the power of the Spirit that a man knows that Jesus is the Christ. It cannot be known by any other power. Hence Paul says: "No man can say that Jesus is the Christ except by the Holy Ghost." That is, he cannot say so truthfully. Yet the people of the world who are religious will claim to be possessed of the Holy Ghost, yet deny the necessity or existence of prophets, notwithstanding that those who possess that power are prophets. While denying the spirit of prophecy they claim to

have the Holy Ghost, which is the same. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. The speaker here testified to his knowledge of the fact that the First Presidency were guided by the power of the Holy Ghost, being directed by revelation from Jesus Christ. He related a number of instances, furnished by the scriptures, showing that holy men of various ages and dispensations had taken a similar course. Let it be known that God had revealed to the First Presidency that it was well for them to keep out of the way for a season. Those who have the testimony of Jesus will know that this is the case, for this is their privilege.

Elder H. H. Cluff, of the Presidency of the Utah Stake, announced that arrangements had been made for the people of Provo to entertain hospitably the visitors who had come from a distance.

Adjourned till half-past one o'clock. The choir sang the anthem:

Be glad in the Lord.

Closing prayer by Apostle Heber J. Grant.

AFTERNOON SESSION.

The choir sang:

"Happy the man who finds the grace,
The blessings of God's chosen race."

Prayer by Bishop O. F. Whitney.

"He died! the Great Redeemer died
And Israel's daughters wept around,"

was sung by the choir.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper was administered to the congregation.

ELDER B. H. ROBERTS

addressed the assemblage. There are many things under existing circumstances to cause us to rejoice in the loving kindness of our Heavenly Father. We can gather strength from our present situation. There are other things connected with our surroundings, however, that cause us much anxiety. So far as the final triumph of the Kingdom of God is concerned there can be no question in the minds of the Latter-day Saints. The purposes of God will be accomplished. The puny strength of man will be incompetent to cope with the strength of Jehovah, whose purposes shall be brought to a successful issue. It is not that that is a cause of anxiety with the Saints. There are things, however, that should arouse them to more watchfulness to stay the progress of evils existing in the community. A recent tour of the Territory under the auspices of the improvement societies has exhibited the condition of the young people especially. Those acquainted with the young of this community cannot help but admire characteristics manifested by them. The speaker had seen many of them under trying circumstances in the Southern Mission. It had led him to appreciate their manhood, their lack of hypocrisy and guile. Thousands of them have set their faces as a flint for the maintenance of truth as incorporated in the work of God. While their educational attainments may not generally be great, yet they possess the characteristics that constitute the foundation of true greatness. This is the case with them as a rule. But while the majority of them are of the class described, there are still many of them who are not converted to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Perhaps the number of this latter class is greater than many would be willing to admit. Perhaps the cause of this condition is because sufficient attention has not been given by parents and others to the subject of clearly explaining to them what are called the first principles of the Gospel—faith, repentance, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, the reception of the Holy Ghost, temperance, virtue, charity and godliness. Those who received the Gospel in various parts of the earth were plainly and diligently taught upon all those subjects, and why should not the youth within the Church to a larger extent than now. Those who were indoctrinated in those principles gathered to these valleys, that, in addition to the spiritual advantages accruing from obedience to the Gospel they might lay a foundation for temporal benefits. It is a question whether, in building up in temporalities some of the weightier matters of the law were not almost lost sight of. The promise given through the voice of prophecy was that the Saints were to gather for the purpose of being taught in the ways of the Lord that they might walk in His paths. This regenerative work was to be done by pastors who should feed the people with understanding. Perhaps the teachings given by the servants of the Most High had not been acted upon with sufficient strictness. Much is said about the sacredness of the family relationship. This is a favorite theme with the people of the world, yet their family obligations are only formed for time. How much more sanctity should be attached to home and the domestic circle by the Saints, than can possibly be connected with it in the minds of others. Their associations are founded upon an eternal basis. The Saints are organized from youth to age, in various forms, for the general weal. Yet all organizations pale in point of importance before that of home. It is there where the young could be the most carefully and effectually instructed in the principles of eternal life. A grave responsibility rests somewhere upon the subject. During the winter months there is a great part of the time when there is no physical employment for the young men. They are consequently induced to leave the restraints of home and seek work

elsewhere. Others go into the mines and other places in summer, make a little money and return to the settlements in winter, where they spend the time in idleness, and thus lead aimless lives, without any proper object ahead of them. Parents and others should, when there is no physical work for them to perform, seek by every available means to induce them to explore the fields of knowledge that by wide information the range of their usefulness may be expanded. The speaker dwelt for some time upon the responsibilities resting upon those of all ages who held the Priesthood, and the results of not discharging the important duties connected with their positions. He read from a revelation in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants showing the displeasure of the Lord against idleness, the disobedience of children, and the existence of the spirit of greediness. These evils in the past had caused judgment to fall upon the people. The position of the Almighty upon that subject was unchanged. The sooner we sanctify our hearts, as Latter-day Saints, the earlier will the dark clouds now hovering over the Church be cleared away, and the sunshine of peace and prosperity beam upon it. The Saints will be scourged and punished, by a loving Father in Heaven, until they are purified.

APOSTLE HEBER J. GRANT

was the next speaker. He hoped there would be a copious outpouring of the Holy Spirit during Conference. When we assemble and receive inspiration from God we are better prepared for the battle of life and the performance of all our duties. It is necessary to have an appetite for and to partake of spiritual food in order to grow in a knowledge of the truth. He could testify, with Brother Taylor, that the persecutions through which the Church is passing is having a good effect in stirring the Saints up to greater faithfulness. It has ever caused an awakening among those who were formerly lukewarm in the work. True, some who were supposed to be true have stepped aside from the path of integrity. But where one has done this many have stepped forward to fill up the ranks of the faithful, that the front presented might be unbroken. Nothing gives a man so much satisfaction as a knowledge that he is walking in accordance with the promptings of duty. Nothing creates greater misery than a departure from that line of action. This was exemplified in the cases of those who had shrunk from meeting an issue between religion and the world in the courts. He did not hesitate to say that those who suffered imprisonment and other similar conditions felt much better than those who failed at the trying moment. There is nothing dearer to the human heart than liberty. Most properly constituted men would rather sacrifice life than part with it. But a love of liberty should not be permitted to extort a determination to obey the commandments of God.

The speaker endorsed the remark of Brother Roberts regarding the duties of parents to children. Perhaps the revelation from which he quoted was not given the importance that necessarily attached to it. Brother Grant then read further from the same part of the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. The quotation has special reference to the command of the Lord to parents to teach their children the principles of the Gospel, indicating that in cases where this duty is not performed the sins of the children rest largely upon the parents. Some people think that children should not be taught upon religious subjects until they grow to maturity and can choose for themselves. Such surely have not a firm testimony of the truth of the Gospel as revealed through Joseph Smith. Why should there be any hesitancy about teaching children that which is true? Young people cannot be expected to grow up and bear the fruits of the Gospel when the seeds of truth have not been sown in their minds. The revelation referred to in regard to children was given as a law to Zion and her stakes, and cannot be lightly treated with impunity. The speaker related an incident wherein a man attended to family prayers when he had visitors. His child asked him how it was that he only had prayers when he had company. That was the poorest kind of teaching to that man's children, as it taught them that their father was a hypocrite. He prayed merely to be heard and thought well of by man, and not of God. There should be harmony between our professions and practices.

PRES. JOHN D. T. McALLISTER.

of St. George Stake, was the next speaker. He expressed pleasure at what he had heard, and said I hail from the south, where there are many living who practice what they preach—which is in accordance with the commandments of God. There are some erring ones in that region, but efforts are being made to win them back to the fold of Christ. In representing that Stake I have to say there is a good people there, and that the season is propitious. The floods of last year set a great many back in their temporal affairs, but they have not lost hope. Fifty miles below St. George the growing wheat is in the boot and the people are cutting their first crop of lucern. At St. George the people are placed at a disadvantage through not having their dam in the river rebuilt, but it is hoped that it will be in time to irrigate their crops.

We are not a perfect people, but we are striving to improve, and trust that