

Cunning frequently overtops itself. If the Governor had not uttered a voluntary unsolicited disclaimer against any knowledge on his part regarding the bill which aims at making him king of a Territory within the Republic, popular attention would not have been so keenly directed toward the absurdity of such a condition of ignorance on a matter directly connected with himself, especially in view of his being at the capital on a special lobbying expedition in connection with special legislation in relation to Utah. Indeed, considering his official position and the fact that he was taking a lively interest in pending measures against the interests of the people of this Territory, it would have had the appearance of a discourtesy not to have acquainted him with the merits of the one under consideration and which is known to be so near to his heart.

There were points which escaped the subtle shadowy mind of Mr. Thomas that heightens the improbability of his ignorance—his asserted familiarity with the fate of the bill. Said he—"It's fate will be decided by Mr. Edmunds." That is an assertion, and consequently could not have been born of conjecture. This being the case, it would be unreasonable to attribute this knowledge of the power of disposal of the autoeracy bill to the effect of ruminations in a Pullman sleeper while on the way from Washington. Was not the understanding reached before the departure from the capital that the astute statesman from Vermont would see to the disposition of the measure, and, in the event of the failure of disfranchisement, push it forward for all it is worth, and, on its face it appears to be worth a good deal to the governor. Hence, says Mr. Thomas, "I do not think it will be passed during the consideration of the test oath bill," which probably means that disfranchisement failing, efforts will be made to push the next in order, which largely partakes of the genius of the abolition of the suffrage, because it leaves but little scope for the use of the popular ballot.

COMMENTS ON THE DECISION.

THE *Denver News* of May 21, commenting on the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the "Mormon" Church case, says:

"The Mormon church, so-called, is meeting its fate in the Supreme Court

of the United States. That eminent body of jurists have never missed an opportunity to administer it a blow whenever the chance was fairly presented. Twice within a few months the court has rendered opinions which demonstrated very clearly the views of the judges in regard to the alleged religion and its rights, or want of rights, under the law.

"This decision must be regarded as the most serious blow that Mormonism has ever received. From the day that it was rendered must henceforth be dated the real decline and fall of the Mormon Church. The disfranchisement bill, even were it practicable or wise, need no longer be considered necessary, even by the most persistent opponents of Mormonism. That bill, if passed, would leave the Mormons in the position of martyrs, and excite a measure of sympathy. This opinion by the Supreme Court is a thousand times more effective as a weapon for the destruction of the autoeracy which has been allowed to grow up in Utah, for it takes away the very foundation on which the whole structure rested. With the property of the Church Corporation escheated to the school fund, the resisting and aggressive power of the alleged religion is gone, and the Church must rapidly sink into a decline."

It appears to be the purpose to fasten upon the jurisprudence of America the proposition that, when it becomes necessary to the success of political conspiracies to do so, the adherents of an unpopular religion may be declared destitute of all rights which the law is bound to protect or respect. To engraft such a rule upon the body of our national law will prove "a most serious blow" to other churches than the "Mormon."

When a paper having so little sympathy for the pioneer class of Utah's population as the *Denver News* has generally shown makes the admission it does respecting the disfranchisement bill, it is sufficient proof of the wrongful and unjust character of that measure. That the robbery of a church should be treated as our Denver contemporary treats the present case, is a matter of astonishment. It seems to be dead to all realization of the principles involved in it, and to the danger such a precedent means to the peace of the Republic.

The "Mormons" will shed few tears over the money and property wrested from them in defiance of justice and constitutional law, notwithstanding that one of the objects for which the same was contributed by them was the relief of the poor. They will still endeavor to prevent the poor among their number from suffering for the necessities of life. But with a view broad enough to include not themselves alone, but the various religious bodies in the nation, they feel profound regret that a precedent

has been set which justifies the destruction of a church as a legal entity and the confiscation of its property. That American editors should not share in such a sentiment is a matter of wonderment to them, and indicates a deplorable degeneracy of patriotism and lack of devotion to constitutional principles.

AGAINST BELIEF ONLY.

A FEW days since we published an article in relation to an expressed intention of officials having charge of immigration matters to prevent the landing at American ports of "Mormons" coming to this country from Europe. The ground upon which the proposition to exclude was based was that the Latter-day Saints could be brought under the operation of the anti-contract labor law. Of course it was easy to show that such a pretense was absurd, having no foundation in fact. The *New York Star* takes the same position on the subject as was assumed by us. This will be seen by the following, clipped from the columns of that paper:

"The position ascribed to the Federal authorities, that Mormon immigrants must be prevented from landing on the ground that they are 'foreign contract laborers,' raises an extremely serious question. The Mormons come as converts to a creed which they seek opportunity to practice in this country under the guarantees our Constitution holds out for civil and religious liberty. Can their intention to violate Federal or Territorial law be assumed merely because of the tenets they have embraced, before they have had even an opportunity to break our statutes? There is not, nor can there be, any law in the United States against belief in Mormonism, or in any form of doctrine, true or false. Our laws deal with the acts of men, not with their thoughts or aspirations. The Mormon immigrants are neither criminals nor paupers. By what reasoning can they be construed to be 'contract laborers?' That is a very interesting subject upon which a good deal of light must be shed if it be indeed true that the authorities intend to interfere with Mormon immigrants."

The position of the *Star* is sound on the main question, but it indicates that it is slightly behind the times in asserting that "There is not, nor can there be, any law in the United States against belief in 'Mormonism,' or any form of doctrine." That is becoming an old-fashioned proposition gradually becoming obsolete. A "Mormon" can now, under color of law, because of his religious belief, be robbed of his property and deprived of his civil rights and privileges. The ship of State has broken away from her moorings in the harbor of the Constitution and is drifting out