



GEORGE Q. CANNON.....EDITOR

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THE STAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE.

A WELL-CONDUCTED, properly managed Theatre is an agency that can be used very effectively for the education and improvement of the people. On the stage the manners, styles, modes of living, etc., of those of past generations and of other nations, can be portrayed so historically true that all classes, but especially the young, may derive much information therefrom. It is an excellent and interesting method of teaching history, of inculcating fine moral sentiments, and imparting lessons that must have a permanent effect upon those who hear them. The representation of a drama that gives truthful delineations of historical incidents and scenes cannot fail to afford instruction, even to the most careful student of history, and to give a better understanding of the times and people among whom the events are supposed to have happened. This is especially the case if the surroundings—the costumes, scenery, etc., are in historical keeping with the incidents.

In London, a few years ago, Charles Kean got up a series of Shakspearian representations—we believe he called them Revivals—in all of which the appointments, costumes, scenery, &c., were copied, with strict fidelity, after the fashions which prevailed in the times and places represented. The thousands who thronged his theatre received impressions concerning those people and periods which they never could have obtained by any amount of reading. In fact, the more familiar a person was with the history of the events represented, the greater was his delight at witnessing the plays. We had the pleasure of visiting London at the time and saw the performance of Henry the Eighth, he playing Cardinal Wolsey and Mrs Kean taking the part of Queen Katherine. We shall probably never forget the effect the performance had upon us. It conveyed to our mind a more vivid impression of the scenes depicted than all our reading had done. The gentleman who personated the King was so true to life that any person familiar with his likeness, would, without the aid of handbill or programme, have instantly recognized Henry the VIIIth. The other characters were equally distinctive.

The representations of historical plays upon our stage in this city have been attended with one excellent effect which we have had occasion to notice. Young people, not familiar with the history of the period in which the drama has been laid, have been stimulated to ask questions and to read history to obtain a more thorough knowledge of the personages and scenes in which they had become interested at the Theatre. In this respect they have done much good; and though in such dramas anachronisms may occasionally occur, a further familiarity with the histories soon correct these. But while we are convinced that information has been diffused and general intelligence promoted among us, through the agency of the Theatre, yet it is in the enlarged knowledge of language, in the correct and various methods of giving expression to thought which it has given, that we perceive the greatest improvement. Slang phrases are still too common, but there has been a great change in this respect among the rising generation. The stage has had a refining influence, and in the conversation of the young people we are of the opinion that the language used is more comprehensive and select than it would have been, had the Theatre not been made an institution among us.

When we concede this influence to the Stage it follows as a matter of course that it should be jealously watched, and no play be put upon the boards respecting the tendency of which there can be any doubt. If there is room for doubt about the plot, the moral, the language, or the effect its representation will have upon the audience, it should be unhesitatingly

rejected. The Elders who are in the habit of speaking to the public are held to strict accountability for the character of their teachings. No man who uses an improper influence, and whose teachings are not healthy and sound, is permitted to labor in a public capacity among the people after his character is known. And if the Elders are thus made responsible for the influence they wield, the managers of our Stage, with so potent an agency under their control, should at least feel an equal responsibility. Neither the Theatre nor any other institution among us can ever accomplish much good if it have to depend upon the charity or philanthropy of the people or of an individual for its support. The Theatre should, therefore, be self-sustaining; but while this is admitted, the question whether the putting of a drama upon the boards will pay or not, should always be held subordinate to the question of primary importance—is its influence pure, healthy and elevating?

The stage being a school where lessons on deportment, manners, language, gestures, &c., are given, it is of the first importance that performers should never sink beneath the dignity of their profession. The use of the name of the Deity should always be avoided. It shocks the mature, and breeds a familiarity in the minds of the young which is not desirable. The same also with oaths, vulgarity, and *double entendre*. The mouthing, the contortions of countenance and the rolling and blinking of the eyes, which some performers fall into, are bad habits which make a disagreeable impression upon the audience, and detract from the interest felt in the artist and the performance. A performer who places a proper estimate upon the power of the eye, in attracting and enchaining an audience, will correct these faults. Such will also be attentive to gestures that they be modest and expressive.

The obsolete and antiquated pronunciation of words, such as *per-sev-er*, instead of *persevere*, though probably defensible on critical grounds in blank verse, has a tendency to mislead. But we sometimes hear pronunciation that is indefensible on such grounds; for instance, for-mid-able, instead of for-mid-a-ble; incipient for incipient; diathesis for diathesis. Grammatical blunders are not unfrequently made when the performer, neglecting the text, takes the author's idea, and attempts to clothe it in his own language—a species of gagging that requires both education and skill to make successful. This causes such expressions as “between you and I,” “let you and I,” “I done,” and others equally incorrect to be heard.

It is not in a spirit of captious criticism that we allude to these things. We fully recognize the difficulties which managers and performers have had and still have to contend with. They deserve credit for what they have accomplished. We desire to see them perfect in their professions, and the Theatre a school which old and young may attend with profit and delight.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH AND STATES RIGHTS.

In December, 1843, Joseph Smith wrote letters to several prominent statesmen, whose names were before the nation as probable candidates for the Presidency during the ensuing campaign, asking each of them, categorically, what his rule of action would be relative to the Latter-day Saints as a people, should fortune favor his ascension to the Chief Magistracy. The Latter-day Saints had but recently been expelled from Missouri, and his inquiry was an important one, as it involved the entire question of States Rights. The reply of John C. Calhoun was brief. He said that if he should be elected, he would strive to administer the Government according to the Constitution and the laws of the Union; and that as they make no distinction between citizens of different religious creeds he should make none. “But,” he continued,

“As you refer to the case of Missouri, candor compels me to repeat what I said to you at Washington, that, according to my views, the case does not come within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, which is one of limited and specific powers.”

According to his view the Federal Government had not the power to redress the wrongs inflicted upon the Latter-day Saints in Missouri. The latter State, according to his doctrine, was independent, and must be left to its own sense of justice and right, to correct any abuses to which the residents within its

borders might be subjected. If the governor and the officials of the State chose to trample upon law and lead mobs, to murder, plunder and exterminate a large body of its citizens, as they did in the case of the Latter-day Saints, the Federal Government could not interfere. The State had to redress these evils, or they must go unredressed.

With such views it was an easy step to acknowledge and defend the right of a State to secede from the Union. And though Calhoun died before secession was attempted, he bequeathed, in the doctrines which he propagated, a legacy of blood and a heritage of woe to his unhappy State and section.

It is interesting, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, to review in the light of subsequent events, the predictions and views which Joseph expressed in his famous reply to Calhoun. He so thoroughly exposed Calhoun's sophistry in this letter, that wherever it was read—and it was very widely circulated—men were struck by the contrast between the narrow, sectional doctrines which Calhoun advanced respecting the powers of the Federal Government and the broad, patriotic and truly national views which Joseph advocated. Joseph was aroused, and the noble scorn which he felt for the politician's tricks is breathed in every line of his reply. Space will not permit us to give this reply in full; but he took a high, statesmanlike position. He repudiated the States Rights doctrine as taught by Calhoun and his school, and claimed for the General Government paramount jurisdiction. If citizens of the United States were deprived of their rights by mob violence, in the State where they resided, and their cause was just, and the State would not protect them, the Parent Government had the necessary authority to reinstate them in their rights, even if it required the whole power of the Union to do so. To use his own expressive language: “If the General Government has no power to reinstate expelled citizens to their rights, there is a monstrous hypocrite fed and fostered from the hard earnings of the people! A real ‘bull beggar’ upheld by sycophants.” He predicted clearly that trouble would come if such views as Calhoun enunciated were to prevail; for their spread would destroy the Government.

Looking back to-day at the sentiments expressed by politicians twenty-five years ago, it does not seem strange that the power of the General Government should have fallen into disrepute, or that war should have broken out at its attempt to maintain its supremacy. When Calhoun, as a candidate for the Presidency, could make public such sentiments, and Martin Van Buren, the President of the United States, could say in relation to the same subject, when appealed to by Joseph and his friends: “Gentlemen, your cause is just; but I can do nothing for you, it is evident that demoralization was wide-spread, and politicians and not statesmen occupied the chief places in the land. If Joseph Smith's views could have prevailed—and, being constitutional, they ought to have met with instant recognition—mobs would have been broken up, mobbers have been punished, and the citizens of each of the States would have been protected in all their rights as citizens of the United States throughout the broad domain of the Union. If they had prevailed, the late terrible civil war might have been averted; for the supremacy of the law and of the General Government would have been vindicated, and Missouri been taught a lesson that would have had a salutary effect on every States Rights man in the Union. But the weakness, vacillation and dishonesty of men in high places prevented this, and what have been the consequences?”

It was not imagined when Joseph Smith thus expressed his views that they would be vindicated in so terrible and costly a manner within so brief a period. And yet it is true that the whole power of this nation and its rich heart blood have been expended to maintain the principle which he urged upon the Chief Executive and Congress upwards of twenty-five years ago. “The mill of the gods may grind slowly, but it grinds mighty fine.”

Correspondence.

ST. JO., on the MUDDY,

March, 16, 1869.

Editor *Deseret News*—Dear sir, Corresponding not being my forte I trust you will pardon all blunders, and if after having run the gauntlet of the editorial quill any

of this remains, I hope you will insert it in your paper for the perusal of your readers. I got home from the “metropolis of Dixie” a few days ago somewhat demoralized from the effects of fishing too long and often. All things are moving on serenely in that locality. The wheat is up and looks well (without irrigation). The brethren, having received reinforcements from Pine Valley and St. George, are busy putting up buildings; they have hoisted a liberty pole on the Public Square and the “stars and stripes” wave proudly in the breeze.

The Saints on the Muddy are wide-awake and are progressing finely. The wheat looks extremely well; the trees are leafing out and the peach trees are in full bloom. Potatoes, corn, peas, &c., are up and look well, though some fears are entertained of grasshoppers, as they are hatching out in vast numbers in places, though, as a general thing, nothing to compare with Salt Lake County last year. There are a few flying around of the regular “iron clad” species which have lived here all winter. The natives are very quiet and peaceable, and do a great deal of work for the Saints. They seem perfectly harmless and docile, their greatest vice being gambling for their clothing. One day you will see an Indian dressed from top to toe, stepping around seeming to think himself the “height of fashion and the mould of form,” the next day perhaps you will see him skulking in the brush, as innocent of clothing as was our first parents.

There have been reports current concerning the raids by Navajos in consequence of which the brethren have organized the military for mutual protection and drill; the cavalry under Col. John Gillespie, the infantry under Maj. R. J. Outler. I feel thankful that I have been accounted worthy to assist in lengthening and strengthening the borders of Zion and for the privilege of rearing my children in a land free, to a very great extent, from the influence of modern so-called civilization.

D. G. BRIAN

OGDEN, April 1, 1869.

Editor *Deseret News*—I have just this moment been an eye-witness of one of the most heart-rending sights that a journalist can be called upon to record. A woman and two of her children butchered in cold blood, within the precincts of a populous city. Verily, civilization hath come at last!

This afternoon, about three o'clock, a fiend incarnate, name not certainly ascertained, entered the house of the wife of Wm. Butler, of Mariett Settlement, near the track of the U. P. R. R., and finding her alone, excepting the presence of two little girls and a sucking babe, announced at once the base object of his intrusion. Finding his entreaties, his importunings and his maledictions all alike unavailing, he suddenly turned, grasped a hatchet lying in a corner, and sprang upon the woman, and, by three furious blows, burying the weapon in the side, top and back of her head, stretched her upon the floor. Having thus rendered her powerless to resist, the monster turned upon the two little girls, one aged seven, the other five years, who were shrieking with fright at the horrid murder of their mother, and inflicted upon each of them the same number of blows on the head, each entering the brain. The fiend then defiled the dying woman.

The cries of the children had been heard by the neighbors, and two or three females ran to the house to learn the cause, but to behold the atrocious scene of butchery and outrage, and the monster engaged in his horrid work. As soon as discovered, he threatened he would kill them too if they did not leave. Two youths, sons of brother Horace Tracy, were the first on the ground to render any effectual aid. These he fiercely attacked with a club, but fortunately his blows were parried, and the boys and women so dexterously handled clubs and stones that he fled, taking down the railroad track and finally crossing into the willow patches in the suburbs of Ogden. Being barefooted and very fleet, he outdistanced his pursuers, and but for the opportune assistance of a young man on horseback, might have escaped. By a random shot the fugitive was somewhat disabled, when Butler, the father of the murdered children, having by this time heard of the deed, overtook him, and with deadly aim, sent a bullet through his brain.

The body was conveyed to the Ogden jail, to be consigned to a murderer's grave to-morrow.

The excitement here, upon the arrival of the body was intense. The whole tragedy, probably, occurred within less time than that taken to relate it, and the people knew nothing of it until the remains were brought in. A gentleman, late from Montana, remarked that he ought not to have been shot. “He should have been burnt,” said he “to cinders over a slow fire.” The dreadful act, with its unparalleled connections, is appalling to every one.

But yesterday it seems, when a female was outraged at Morgan, Weber valley; and another at North Ogden—the beastly perpetrators of both finding a speedy, summary and a self-admitted, justly-merited retribution. To-day brings its sad refrain of crime quadruply intensified—a female outraged and three innocent helpless human beings most horribly butchered!

Regret it as we may, the recurrence of such atrocities can but result in sealing up the hearts and hospitalities of our population from the stranger in our midst. It can but generate suspicion and dread, per-