

place it beyond question so far as the manner of its passage by the Legislature is concerned. There is room for argument for and against such a constitutional rule, but the preponderance seems to be in favor of it. It would tend to establish certainty as to the validity of laws, and to shut out technical objections to them. It would, however, give the Legislature a latitude so wide as to be objectionable, unless safeguards should be established by law, which, however, could be done, though they might also be uncertain.

It is quite possible that these three constitutional amendments will be presented to the people at the earliest opportunity for them to give consideration to such matters.

AGE FOR MARRIAGE.

In the House yesterday, Kenner's bill to increase the minimum age at which legal marriage may be contracted was made the subject of a lively and prolonged debate, which did not result in anything definite. There was such firmness and diversity of opinion as to what the minimum age for lawful marriage should be, that the House did not come to a definite conclusion upon the point until the bill had to go over in favor of a special order.

Under the present law, a male aged 14 years, or a female aged 12 years, may contract a lawful marriage; but the consent of the parents or guardians is necessary when the male is under 21, or the female under 18. Kenner's bill simply proposed to increase the minimum age of the male to 20, and of the female to 16. The judiciary committee recommended that the minimum ages be made 18 and 16, respectively.

The subject of marriage, in any of its phases, is pretty sure to arouse much interest in this State, where it has been studied as no community on earth has ever studied it, and where an experience has been had in connection with it which no other people have had. Among other phases of the general theme, that of youthful unions has been embraced within the study and experience the people of Utah have devoted to the marriage question.

The practical results of early marriages in this community have been of a character to greatly modify objections to them. Numerous cases can be cited in which the groom was under 18, or the bride under 16, which have been productive of the very best results in every respect. The children have been robust and bright, and the parents happy and prosperous; and in our opinion it would be exceedingly difficult to find an instance in this State in which pronounced evil results of any kind, either to parents or children, are positively traceable to early marriage, when the female was as old as 16, or the male more than 16. In other words, the alleged evils of early marriages frequently are greatly exaggerated.

A reasonable amount of practical experience is worth an infinitude of theory not having such a foundation; and the existing and tangible

results of early marriages in Utah, easily accessible to the knowledge of any investigator, go to show that the minimum ages proposed in the bill, and even by the committee, may be too high. It would be safe to make the age of the male as low as sixteen, and of the female as low as fifteen.

There is a somewhat delicate yet none the less forcible argument which strongly urges that the age be kept as low as it can be in reason. It happens, with too much frequency for the good of our race, that the passion of youth is not subordinate to the judgment and conscience, in the hour of temptation. But the latter qualities often assert themselves after that hour has passed, and create a desire to make amends as far as possible. In such cases the law should offer no obstacle to practical repentance and restitution so far as it is possible to consummate them. When a boy or a girl is old enough to feel an earnest desire, or to form a determination to marry, there is often danger that something worse than marriage may occur if the purpose is thwarted; and the least of two evils should always be chosen. In fact, in such cases, all the evils, both moral and physical, which can be urged against early marriages may be produced without any compensating advantage; and such evils are generally enormously augmented by the very fact that they occur outside of the marriage relation.

As a general proposition, laws tending to restrict marriage are very liable to do more harm than good, when all their consequences come to be considered; and a serious error may easily be committed by the Legislature in making too high the minimum age, and in excluding the parents from a voice in the matter of their children's marriage.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

The Baltimore Herald speaking of the famine in India charges the British government with responsibility or the conditions causing the sufferings of the masses of that country. It is pointed out that inquiries into this subject have revealed the fact that before the establishment of English authority in India, the country was self-sustaining, and that the native institutions were such as to provide employment for all without creating overproduction in any one direction.

It is charged that the very first step of Great Britain when assuming control was to destroy the native industries in order to have a market for her own products. The result was that the natives were compelled to abandon many trades and engage in agriculture. An overproduction of cereals was the natural consequence during good years, but this lessened the purchasing power of the products of the earth, and starvation followed, whenever there was a failure of rain, because of the impossibility of saving anything during the good years. Wages have fallen, until the average earning of the Indian is \$10 a year, out of which taxes, food, clothing and

other necessities of life must be paid. The result is that a large percentage of the population pass through life in a condition of starvation. The natives thus deteriorate both morally and physically.

The following famine statistics are given: From 1802 to 1854 there were thirteen famines, with an estimated loss of 5,000,000 lives, while from 1860 to 1879 there were sixteen famines, with a loss of over 12,000,000 lives. From 1876 to 1879 alone 5,000,000 died of starvation. The figures would seem to indicate that the whole population is gradually becoming poorer, a fact all the more striking because Asiatic states governed by their own rulers, despotic though they may be, enjoy a condition of comparative prosperity.

European powers generally seize outlying countries under the pretext of giving the natives the benefit of civilization, and as a rule zealous missionaries act as advance agents of these movements for the alleged betterment of savage conditions. The history of India, and recently of Africa, proves, however, the contrary. When the Goths, the Huns and the Vandals, the Saracens and the Turks emerged from their respective resorts and founded the world, they suppressed the physically inferior races and destroyed their civilization, as far as it was in their power. Destruction followed in their path. It was death on the pale horse and the grave at its heels. The methods may be considerably changed since those dark ages, but in the motives and results no perceptible difference can be pointed out. The fact is noteworthy, because it proves the necessity at this time of some superior influence to save civilized mankind from perishing in the depths of barbarism into which it has sunk. There is today as much need of genuine Christianity as there ever was, and civilized Europe needs missionaries as much as do the savages of the darkest continent of the earth.

THE SPANISH REFORMS.

It is not supposed that the reforms suggested for Cuba will be satisfactory to the insurgents. As far as can be judged from the synopsis of the decrees published, the intention is to grant Cuba control over certain local affairs, but only in so far as this control does not interfere with the power of the executive officer appointed by the Spanish governor general. The council of administration is to be vested with extensive authority over all local affairs, to have control of municipal and provincial administration, education, public works, commerce and that part of taxation which is for local and not imperial purposes; but with the restrictive suffrage prevailing it is supposed that both this body, the provincial councils and the municipal councils provided for in the new decrees, are likely to be composed mainly of members of the Spanish party. But probably the Spaniards do not regard the Cubans as capable of any form of self-government—the very point on which Cubans and Spaniards now entertain different opinions.