

and minister to the sick and afflicted, pouring the healing balm of consolation into the wounded heart. The society organization is so complete as to extend its ramifications throughout the entire Church, while its services are not necessarily confined to it, but apply to all people within reach of its benign operations.

The mission of the society is God-given and beautiful. It was appropriately conferred as a special domain, upon the sisters of the Church. They are better adapted by nature for it than the sterner sex. They are constitutionally more refined; their tender emotions are more intense, and consequently more readily awakened. This susceptibility is essential to the practical application of charity dispensed in detail, where the minister has to come in immediate contact with the recipient of the exercise of benevolence. The bestowal of charity requires a delicacy which woman possesses in a much higher degree than man. It constitutes one of her most conspicuous charms. It is easy, by a want of this essential accompaniment of philanthropy, to inflict pain upon the feelings of the sensitive poor that almost overbalances the value of a gift.

As already stated the field of usefulness of the Relief Society widens as time passes and the conditions of the community change. There are social features now in existence that are threatening in their character. We refer especially to the development of pride, class distinctions, departures from even the semblance of a serious view of the object of the present life and other indications of the times equally important. They are opposed to the genius of the Gospel, and directly so to the spirit and intent of the Relief Society. This can be observed at a glance. This organization, above all others, can wield a potent corrective influence upon certain unpromising tendencies which are fraught with danger to the Saints.

Recently the venerable and respected head of the Relief Society—Sister Zina D. Young—made an exhortative allusion to an approaching event that illustrated the necessity of a reformatory action against worldliness. Referring to the anticipated dedication, in the near future, of the Temple in this city, she spoke of the necessity of the people purifying themselves as a preparatory process, that God might accept that noble structure. There are certain drifts that are not in unison with the Spirit of Christ, and are certainly not of a nature to elicit the pleasure of the Lord. Hence the need of active influences being exercised against the conditions that threaten to divide in place of cementing the community. This labor comes within the pale of the Relief Society as a help in the government of the ecclesiastical body.

The public celebration of Thursday was an extensive affair. It was probably participated in by the Saints in every part of the world where there exists a branch of the Church of any magnitude, as each of these divisions have, as a rule, a Relief Society connected with it. As "anticipation forward points the view," the mind naturally seeks to reach ahead and endeavor to grasp the conditions that will prevail when the centennial an-

niversary of the Society shall be celebrated! The possibilities are, however, too great for present human comprehension.

### PRESIDENT DIAZ.

THE fact that there is a colony of Latter-day Saints, embracing a number of thriving settlements in Mexico, will lend somewhat of a local interest to the following sketch, taken from an exchange, of the present President of that Republic:

The president of Mexico is quite well known in this country. For many years past Gen. Porfirio Diaz has been the foremost citizen of Mexico. His popularity at home and the fame he enjoys abroad have made his name familiar in the United States as the regenerator ("regenerador") of a country which by its wonderful natural resources is entitled to a high place among the family of nations. Anyone acquainted with the condition of Mexico fifteen years ago and with the present state of affairs cannot but acknowledge the great progress achieved by Mexico during the intervening years and give credit to President Diaz, above all others, for the establishment and maintenance of that peace and order which have enabled the country to reach its present state of prosperity. Gen. Diaz, says the *New York Tribune*, is regarded by his countrymen as the best president that Mexico has ever had. When, in 1887, he assumed the government for the first time, the country was bankrupt; mining and agriculture were almost paralyzed; revolutions and disorders jeopardizing the lives and property of peaceful citizens were of frequent occurrence; in a word, all was chaos and confusion. He started by applying energetic remedies to all these evils, punishing the promoters of revolutions wherever they appeared, and in a few years succeeded in completely crushing the lawless spirit in Mexico. Once this accomplished he turned his attention to the economical and commercial interests of his country.

The career of President Diaz is remarkable. At the age of eighteen, after securing a common school education, he began the study of law, but when almost ready to be admitted to the bar enlisted in the national guard of Oaxaca, and went to the front to oppose the tyrannical government of the dictator, Santa Anna. From the beginning his military record was spotless. To this he added a series of very lucky and successful victories against the enemies of the liberty and integrity of his country. During the war with France, which led to the crowning of Maximilian of Austria as emperor of Mexico, he distinguished himself and became one of the leading generals of the republican army and the most respected by the soldiers of Napoleon III.

When the republic was restored he retired to private life in his country residence of "La Noria," near the city of Oaxaca, refusing all the honors which the government of Juarez was anxious to confer upon him. Nevertheless, during his retirement his name was twice brought before the Mexican people as a Presidential candidate, but was defeated both times by Juarez and by Lerdo de Tejada. In 1887 the people, who longed to reward the man who had done more than anybody else to crush the empire of Maximilian, elected General Diaz president by a big majority; but after some juggling of votes he was deprived of the trust conferred on him by the people, and Lerdo de Tejada was declared re-elected by the partisan Mexican congress then assembled. This led to a popular revolu-

tion, which, proving successful, placed General Diaz in the presidential chair. Up to that time he was known as a successful soldier. Nobody dreamed that he should develop into a statesman of the modern type. Such proved to be the case. The energy and executive ability which he displayed during his first presidential term reflect much credit upon him as a statesman and a patriot.

In 1880 he retired to private life to give way to his successor, Gen. Manuel Gonzales. He did not remain a private citizen very long, as a year after he left the presidency his native State of Oaxaca unanimously elected him governor, which office he held until called again by the people to serve a second presidential term, from '84 to '88. The constitution of Mexico prohibited the immediate re-election to the presidency, but the Mexican congress in 1887, thinking the continuance of President Diaz in power almost a necessity, repealed that clause and permitted him to hold a second consecutive term. This action of the Mexican congress met with the full approval of the people, because the question of retaining Gen. Diaz and the distinguished men whom he had called to serve as his cabinet was of vital importance to the whole country for its continued peace and prosperity.

### PERILS OF THE REPUBLIC.

ELIJAH H. ROBERTS, Assistant Treasurer of the United States, has written an article on that subject. He says that the spectres of disaster which appeared before Washington in his farewell address have entirely faded from view at the present time. Then the dread of a military dictator was natural, but in our day there is no man big enough "to stand astride this continent." Caesar, Cromwell and Napoleon, with our environment, would sink into a mere petty Jack the giant-killer. The protest against a third term for General Grant rested on the popular reluctance to change national traditions, and not on a fear of his sword and military prowess.

Danger from excess of party strife was apprehended even in Washington's time, but Mr. Roberts asserts that "our generation has little to fear from that source." Strife we have, but not the fierce political warfare of the Federalists and their opponents.

Slavery, which at the inception of the Union displayed its malignant front, has been buried in carnage and desolation. Sectionalism, the ally of slavery, though disappearing in name, exists in race prejudice, and "makes fraud its weapon against constitution, laws, ballot, manhood, justice." This too will disappear as did the fear of militaryism in the beginning, as did the fear of results from the bitter recriminations of Adams and Jefferson, as did slavery and the fear of a Grant dictatorship.

Mr. Roberts states that the immediate peril of the republic is "militarism in politics." He cites Richard Croker's article in the *North American Review*, in which it is stated that a party organization should rest on military discipline, with absolute dictator leaders subject to an unquestioned central authority, and with rewards to good and faithful workers. This is simply an argument for arbitrary government in general, and should the system obtain in political parties, where