

## DESERET EVENING NEWS

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SALT LAKE CITY, SEPT. 1, 1902.

## "SUPERSTITIONS PRACTICES."

It is remarkable, in these times of scientific inquiry and intellectual progress, that there should be so much superstition, and that even "educated" people should attach importance to so-called "occult" influences and imaginary agencies, that are really non-existent except in their own minds and over-sensitive nerves. Mental conditions often develop into bodily disturbances, and the saying is verified that, "As a man thinketh, so he is."

The old, exploded belief in witchcraft is revived to some extent, even in the twentieth century, and that is not very wonderful in view of the facts that sway the minds of millions, under the guise of high-sounding titles and misleading pretensions. There is a pertinent article on this subject in the Improvement Era for September, by President Joseph F. Smith, and we reproduce it in the "News," that it may obtain a still wider publication than that afforded by the Era, which, however, has a big and well-deserved circulation throughout the Church. It is as follows:

"It was no uncommon thing for people of eastern nations, almost from time immemorial, to profess to hold communication with the spirit world through the medium of superstitious practices. There were magical formulas, lucky and unlucky days, incantations, horoscopes, and various other devices, and superstitious rites and practices through which magicians, astrologers, soothsayers, divines, wizards, witches, sorcerers, necromancers, conjurers, and enchanters, played upon the ignorance of their victims. It is, of course, impossible to tell what the secrets of their practices were, but it is safe to say that the power of a strong and cunning will over a weak one, was uppermost in their deceptions. The children of Israel were forbidden to believe in these various classes of superstition, heathenism and idolatry, for they tended to draw men's minds from God, the true source of knowledge and power. Says Isaiah: 'And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? To the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' They were forbidden to seek wizards that 'peep and mutter,' but were commanded to obey the law and the testimony of the prophets."

"One would think that in the day in which we live the belief in witches and witchcraft no more exists, and that the counsel given to ancient Israel in this respect would be unnecessary to the Latter-day Saints, but apparently this is not the case. Word comes from a northern State of Zion which indicates that in a certain settlement the belief in these things is fairly rampant, and a great deal of trouble and unnecessary annoyance have been given to the authorities of the stake and ward because of this absurd belief entertained by certain foolish old men and women of the ward."

It is needless to assert that to those who are intelligent, and not bound by old notions and superstitions, there is no truth in what people call witchcraft. Men and women who come under the influence of a belief therein are bewitched by their own foolishness, and are led astray by pretenders and mischief-makers who 'peep and mutter.' It is really astonishing that there should be any to believe in these absurdities. No man or woman who enjoys the Spirit of God and the influence and power of the holy Priesthood can believe in these superstitious notions; and those who do, will lose, indeed have lost, the influence of the Spirit of God and of the Priesthood, and are become subject to the witchery of Satan, who is constantly striving to draw away the Saints from the true way, if not by the dissemination of such nonsense, then by other insidious methods."

"One individual can not place an affliction upon another in the way that these soothsayers would have the people believe. It is a trick of Satan to deceive men and women, and to draw them away from the Church and from the influence of the Spirit of God, and the power of His holy Priesthood, that they may be destroyed. These peep-stone men and women are inspired by the devil, and are the real witches, if any such there be. Witchcraft and all kindred evils, are solely the creations of the superstitious imaginations of men and women who are steeped in ignorance, and derive their power over people from the devil, and those who submit to this influence are deceived by him. Unless they repent, they will be destroyed. There is absolutely no possibility for persons who believe that such influences can have any effect upon him. The enjoyment of the Holy Spirit is absolute proof against all influences of evil; you never can obtain that Spirit by seeking diviners, and men and women who 'peep and mutter.' That is obtained by imposition of hands by the servants of God, and

retained by right living. If you have set it, repent and return to God, and for your salvation's sake and for the sake of your children, avoid the emissaries of Satan who 'peep and mutter,' and who would lead you down to darkness and death."

It is impossible for anyone possessing the spirit of the gospel and having the power of the holy Priesthood to believe in or be influenced by any power of necromancy. My advice to the Saints is to so live that they may have the Spirit and influence of the Lord with them; for, having that influence, it is a wall of protection against all powers of evil that may seek an inroad into their hearts and thoughts. The possession of the Holy Spirit is a sure defense against evil thoughts, superstitions, ignorance, and the follies and machinations of evil-disposed men and women. Every Latter-day Saint should so conduct himself that he may enjoy this Spirit, and there will be no danger of his being led away by the foolish nonsense that ignorance and superstition seek to implant in the minds of people concerning the existence of witches and witchcraft."

There is no danger to anyone in so-called witchcraft itself; the evil effect lies in the belief therein. The person who believes injures himself through fear and belief; no other person has power to injure him; it is himself who injures himself through the superstition of his own mind. In the Sandwich Islands this superstitious belief was very prevalent, years ago. They call it *pule*, or the prayer of sorcery. It was an uncommon thing for a person who became beset with the thought that he was being 'prayed to death' actually to wither away, and die. I knew a good woman, wife of a leading native Latter-day Saint whom I often visited, who one day became very ill. I asked what was the matter. She said she was being 'prayed to death,' and she was actually seriously ill, and getting ready to die; so great was her fear and faith in what some evil-designing, but in himself impotent, person, had whispered about her. I told her it was all wrong, that she must not believe it; it was impossible; she must believe, on the contrary, that she would live, and be well. I labored with her in this way for some time, and she finally believed and was restored, and such nonsense never had power over her again. It was not so with a young native cook whom the missionaries employed. Some of the jealous natives, one day when we were off on a visit, brought him word that he was being 'prayed to death,' and it so frightened him, and so great was his belief in this superstition, that he died within a week, and we were without a cook when we returned."

As Israel of old were enjoined to obey the law and the testimony given to them by Moses, so the Latter-day Saints are commanded to turn to the Gospel law restored anew to them, and to live so that they may enjoy the Holy Spirit of promise. A sentiment against belief in the power of witchcraft, and all other evil things should be cherished among the Latter-day Saints, for persons who believe or express faith therein are in danger of losing the Spirit of God, and of placing themselves under the influence of the adversary whose footsteps lead to death."

JOSEPH F. SMITH.

## LABOR DAY.

Labor Day has been pretty generally observed in this city and throughout the country. Of course the newspapers cannot very well suspend, because the dear public expects to get the news, and advertisers want their claims to public attention placed continuously before the people who read, for they are the kind of folks whom it is desirable to reach.

It is a good custom to set apart certain days as legal holidays, when the toiler can rest from his work and take a little recreation, and pay some attention to family or relatives. There are none too many such opportunities for relaxation, and they should be encouraged and promoted.

This holiday, however, has come to be viewed with dread in European countries and in some parts of the United States. It has been made the occasion of riots and tumults, and even of strife and bloodshed. But this condition is being gradually toned down and the day is more generally celebrated in a peaceful and appropriate manner; that is, as a time of enjoyment instead of a season of agitation and contention.

We do not wish to be understood as desirous of muzzling free speech, or of suppressing lawful movements for the amelioration of labor conditions. We recognize the right of working people to unite in legitimate endeavors to advance their cause, and to resist the encroachments of organized capital for their oppression. At the same time, we deprecate all attempts at violence, whether against labor that will not be controlled by orders or individuals that assume to dictate to them, or against employers who will not come to terms imposed by leaders of the employed.

The tyranny of organized labor is at least as obnoxious to liberty, as the opposition of capital is to the freedom and proper remuneration of honest industry. No man or association has the right to say to another, 'You shall not work for a livelihood except on terms that I or we dictate.' Such domination is to be resisted by every citizen who rightly appreciates true freedom.

The working people who enjoyed this day's holiday observed good order, and the parade of the trades was very creditable to all who took part in it. There was no disturbance, but everything was well conducted and commendable. It is right to exalt labor and to encourage the elevation of the toiler. The condition of the common worker today is far better than that of the noble of past ages. Let the improvement go on, until every laborer shall be a capitalist in some degree, and there shall be a union of all classes for mutual benefit and the general welfare.

September took a 'fall' out of August in fine style.

The cry along the New England coast is: My voice is for milder war!

England's birth-rate is declining. Anglophobes will see in this the beginning of England's decline.

Most men in public life would rather be right than President—after they find out that they cannot be President.

It is easier for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a poor man to become an English cavalry officer.

One great advantage of a mimic war is that it is known when it will be over, and the cost can be calculated beforehand.

It is a pity that the West Indian earthquakes cannot be utilized to overthrow the Central and South American revolutions.

People who are subject to burglarious visits should lay up treasures in heaven, where thieves do not break through nor steal.

"On what does J. P. Morgan feed that he has become greater than Uncle Sam?" asks the Boston Post. Largely upon Uncle Sam and the rest of mankind.

The Chicago police are able to trace William Bartholin's ancestry back over two hundred years to a noble German house, but up to date they have not been able to trace him just a little bit.

Not until the conventions are held and the nominations made do the politicians realize that there are more 'patriots' than places. And how much reflection and rumination does this realization bring!

The Central Labor union of Philadelphia has adopted resolutions denouncing General Gahin in strong terms. He must have been performing his duty strictly and promptly to merit such distinction.

What a perfect day ushered in the autumn! In many respects it is the richest, loveliest season of the year. But those whose hearts are right and whose lives are happy and healthful every season is good and beautiful.

If General MacArthur does not bottle up Admiral Higginson's fleet, and cork the bottle tight, then he will fail to meet the great expectations of his countrymen. Was it in expectation of some such event that the price of bottles was recently raised?

The Salt Lake Stake Sunday school conference was a splendid success. The scene in the Tabernacle on Sunday morning was a spectacle to men, and angels, and the evidences of good training, order, discipline and comprehension of Sunday school work were most commendable and creditable to all engaged in it. 'Continue in well doing.'

Every little while there comes across the sea a muttering that England may enter upon a tariff war with the United States. Such a war is quite as improbable as a physical war. England has her industrial policy and the United States has its, and each has prospered. It is possible that either might prosper under the other's were an exchange made, but it is quite safe to say that the present generation will not live to see the change. The chief trouble in England is that she is, in a measure at least, undergoing an industrial revolution, and such times are always accompanied by more or less discontent, and when people are discontented they talk in a wild manner.

## SPEAKING OF THE PRESIDENT.

San Francisco Call.

In his numerous addresses the country is impressed, by the president's tolerant tone in discussing issues that divide his party and his country. Without attacking the acts or the motives of others he gives reasons for his own position and thereby invites the extending of reasons for a contrary position, giving the country a chance to finally decide upon the merits of the reasons given, and not compelling it to choose between reason and prejudice.

Milwaukee-Wisconsin.

The president's reception at all points on his New England tour has been enthusiastic and hearty. He is evidently a favorite of the people. The speeches which he makes are not mere holiday formalities, but utterances bearing directly upon living problems of governmental policy, and what he says is commanding attention not only within the range of his voice, but wherever the English language is understood. The London newspapers of yesterday commented approvingly upon his declarations in his address to the government of the subject of governmental regulations of trusts. Everywhere there is admiration for a man in a position of commanding responsibility who gives to the people the art of his speech, and who habitually disregards the traditional dictum that language is useful to public men to conceal their thoughts.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

President Roosevelt is making some very readable speeches during his New England tour. That was to have been expected of him, for he is skilled with tongue and pen and no one is better able to hold the attention of a reader or an audience. But it is evident he has acquired caution with the responsibilities of office. There is more conservatism in his utterances than formerly characterized them, and while the readiness of previous less guarded remarks has not been altogether lost, his New England speeches have gained in dignity. At the same time they are more persuasive and less assertive than formerly. President Roosevelt is not the bull in the china shop that 'Teddy' Roosevelt was expected to be. He has been learning some things during his first year as president, which is nearing its completion, and one of them is the art of diplomatic speech making, in which his predecessor was a past master.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The Improvement Era for September is a very interesting number. The frontispiece is a finely executed cut of the Bureau of Information building, in Tabernacle square. The History of the Prophet Joseph is continued; so is 'The Castle Builder.' The second part of the 'Reply to Roberts on Delty,' is another feature. The fourth chapter is given in the life of the late Bishop Edward Hunter. An article by Elder C. W. Penrose on the much discussed subject of 'Our Father Adam' will be found of general interest. Elder Alma Taylor contributes a paper on 'How It Is Done in Japan.' A further installment of Elder B. H. Roberts' fine dissertation on 'Jesus Christ: The Revolution of His Life' follows. Dr. J. L. Tanner treats on 'Leading Events in Current History.' The Editor's Table has pertinent and timely comments by President Joseph F. Smith on 'Superstitions Practices,' and there are other attractions in poetry and prose that help to make up a most valuable number of this excellent magazine. Published by the Salt Lake City.

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## FIRST IN THE FIELD

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