

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

LEIF AND COLUMBUS.

In another part of the News will be found an interesting article by Dr. John Thorkelson concerning the early discoveries on the American coast by Northmen. It was written at the request of the Icelandic "Society of National Friends" and published at Reykjavik, Iceland. The translation is by Mr. John Thorgeirson, a native, we believe, of that historic island but now a resident of Bannack city, Montana. The author is *rector magnificus* of the University of Iceland and recognized as one of the best informed antiquarians of the northern countries. The article contains about all that is positively known concerning the famous Leif Erikson and others who made voyages to this continent, and it is based on the records still found in Iceland, and more especially on the codex named after the island of Flato, which was brought from Copenhagen to the World's Fair at an enormous expense.

The doubts entertained regarding the perilous voyages of Leif Erikson and others of his countrymen in the beginning of the eleventh century and subsequently are by this time pretty generally dispelled, and it is accepted as a historical fact, that they actually landed in America and recorded the event. But it is equally certain that their discoveries did not extend far enough to excite the general attention of the world. They had no idea of the vast continent, of which they had seen but a very small part. The time was not then come for the opening up of this country for the universal benefit of mankind. That was reserved for Columbus, four centuries later. In other words, the discoveries by which this continent was made part of the civilized world, the home of human liberty, the throne of the queen of nations and the cradle of the Church of God in this dispensation, will always justly be traced to the Genoese and not to the celebrated Icelandier. Whether Columbus had heard about Leif's discoveries and thereby was prompted to undertake his expedition to the western hemisphere is a question not yet settled. By some it is supposed that he visited Iceland in 1477 and there became acquainted with the records concerning Vinland. Others discard this assertion as only assumption, and contend that the discoverer might have his information of the far away country from traveling Icelanders. It cannot be denied that among the sages of the island at that time were some famous scholars, educated in Germany or France and well known in other European countries, and it is not impossible that Columbus might have met some of them. But it would seem that if he had been able to point to historical records containing accounts of voyages to the land in the west, he would have had a most powerful argument in the struggle to convince his contemporaries of the feasibility of reaching that country. The absence of any reference to such information

may be taken as pretty sure evidence that he did not possess it.

Then, again, if Leif's discoveries had been the guiding star in the mind of Columbus, he would naturally have taken nearly the same course as Leif took. He would have gone by way of Greenland and reached America somewhere near Leif's booths, as others are said to have done before him. This, as is well known, he did not do, but took an entirely independent course, taking all the chances of a first discoverer. These considerations cannot be disregarded in a discussion about the possible connection between the different expeditions to the great west. The probability is that, at the time of the fifteenth century, Leif's Vinland was practically forgotten and that this country by the providence of the Almighty was again discovered by Columbus.

A "HEDRICKITE" DEFECTION.

According to a notice in *Zion's Ensign*, Elder C. A. Hall, president of the Hedrickite church, has severed his connection with that organization, by publicly declaring it to be without Priesthood authority and without legitimate succession to the Church founded in 1830. Mr. Hall, we understand, has been the leading spirit of that movement during the last five or six years, and his step is likely to be followed by others, who no doubt have come to the same conclusion.

Anyone who has the courage of his convictions has one great requisite for usefulness in the cause of truth, and the enlistment of such under her glorious banners deserves always to be hailed with joy. It would seem to be high time both for the Hedrickite and the Josephite organization carefully to reconsider their present status in the light of the revelations of the Almighty and the facts of Church history. By doing so sincerely and in humility, they cannot evade the recognition of that authority which alone has divine sanction; and in submitting to it, they would receive the blessings which are to be found nowhere but within the Church.

THE UNEMPLOYED.

A casual reader, perusing the special message and accompanying documents just transmitted by Governor West to the Legislature, might derive exaggerated ideas of the number of unemployed men and the amount of distress in this city. The communication of Hon. Wendell Benson, chairman of the Territorial Relief commission, gives the number of unemployed men on the list of that commission as 1,706. Hon. Arthur L. Thomas, chairman of the General Relief society, gives the number of names of unemployed men on its books as about 1,500, while Selectman Bamberger, chairman of the Salt Lake county and city relief work gives 1,141 as the number of laborers on his list who are waiting for work. The apparent aggregate is 4,347 men who are out of employment, and

have listed their names in the hope of obtaining a few days' work at the small wages that are being paid by the organizations named. In other words, the showing is that there are in this city 4,347 men who are out of employment, and whose necessities are so urgent that they have sought a few days' work through one of the channels that have been established for relieving the needy and suffering.

On their face these figures convey a conviction that they exaggerate the facts. Allowing to the city a population of 55,000 and a laboring man to every six inhabitants, we have 9,166 laboring men. The latter figure is not intended to include merchants nor business nor professional men, and will probably cover all who would be commonly classed as laboring men, or even exceed the number that could properly be so classified. There are just about 8,000 registered voters in the city, and these include classes who are here excluded from the estimated number of working men. If we say that we have 9,000 of the latter we shall probably approximate the truth.

Now 4,347 is nearly half of 9,000, but it is not possible that nearly one half of the working men of this city have listed their names for a share of the employment which is specially designed for the relief of the destitute. There must have been an extensive duplication of names of applicants for work on the three lists above referred to. A gentleman who is in a position to know, informs the News that if the names on Mr. Benson's list, 1,706 in number, be thrown aside, and only those given by Messrs. Thomas and Bamberger be retained, the truth would be approximated. The gentleman explained that the organization of which Mr. Thomas as chairman had been co-operating all winter with Mr. Bamberger, and that one object of such co-operation had been to avoid duplicating relief while needy persons had received none; whereas Mr. Benson's organization, being a new one, had naturally attracted to its list a great portion and perhaps nearly all, of the waiting working men who were on the other two lists. It is known that there are many instances in which the name of the same man appears on both the latter lists, a fact which reduces, by so much, the apparent number of unemployed on them.

The number of men without work, and the amount of destitution, are great enough, without being exaggerated. We do not charge that this has been done intentionally, by any person. The documents referred to are no doubt truthful in the figures which they give, and were submitted by the Governor to the Legislature for what they are worth. They were not prepared by their authors nor submitted by the Governor, with any intention to mislead. The point we wish to make in reference to them is that the circumstances attending them require to be understood, in order that the whole truth of the subject may be.

While the situation is to be deplored, it ought not to be portrayed in colors darker than are necessary to represent the facts. The severity of winter is over, the spring is here, and there is one source of employment to which thou-