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PRESIDENT TAYLOR'S BIRTH-DAY.

To-day President John Taylor is seventy-eight years of age. Vigorous, robust, in the full enjoyment of his faculties, he bears his years with dignity, and his white hairs but add beauty to his brow and make his appearance venerable. He occupies a grand and unique position. As Prophet, Seer and Revelator and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he stands before heaven and earth more honored than a king. He holds the keys of the everlasting Priesthood, and through him when the Eternal Father has any communication for His organized Church below—that revelation will come. It matters not how many may reject his authority or how few recognize his mission, he is the servant of the Almighty and the chief living Apostle of the Lord.

He has been firm and faithful from the beginning. He has journeyed in many lands and sailed over many seas for the Gospel's sake. He has braved the violence of mobs and met the champions of modern orthodoxy, unfearful and unsubdued. By tongue and pen he has advocated the truths of heaven and vindicated human rights. He has been a foe to oppression and a friend to the distressed. His blood has mingled with the flowing life-tide of the martyrs, and he bears in his body the leaden tokens of their murderers' hate.

The head of a large and noble household, he is absent from the hearth around which to-day are gathered a host who recognize him as their patriarch and chief. In exile for his religion, he may not mingle with the loved ones whose hearts beat for him with fond affection. Since the passage of the infamous Edmunds Act he has not dwelt in the same house with his wives and children, because he desired not to jeopardize the interests of the Church, and yet to-day he lingers afar off while his posterity meet to do him honor. His enemies thirst for his capture and would rend the air with yells of delight to see him behind prison bars. Yet he has done nothing to injure one of them and has broken no law, and the only thing that can be laid to his charge is faithful devotion to that which he believes with all his soul to be right.

He has been mercifully preserved by Providence for the work to which he is called, and the prayers of many thousands daily arise that he may still be protected from all who would do him harm. May their faith prevail; and may his days be yet many and be spent in liberty and in peace!

We congratulate President Taylor on reaching so good an age with so much vigor of mind and body. May his form be still erect and his brow remain serene. Unruffled as of yore, may he view with complacency the storms that are brewing around him, and, secure in the hands of Omnipotence, may he yet direct for many years the Church and Kingdom of our God on earth.

We join in the prayers and good wishes that go up from every town and village in Utah and from many places throughout the world in his behalf, and say, God bless him and give him many happy returns of his birthday on earth, and a crown of celestial glory among the holy ones in the heaven of heavens!

THE LEAVEN STARTED.

The true standing of the Latter-day Saints who are sent to prison is being gradually recognized. The letter from Charles I. Kempe in our issue of to-day and another from the same gentleman that appeared recently, are indications of this. These men are not criminals in the general acceptance of the term. They are not looked upon as such by intelligent people who come in contact with them and become acquainted with the character of their religious convictions.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor vice versa. The influence of these men is pacific and otherwise beneficial in prisons as elsewhere, so far as there are opportunities for it to extend. It is left to institutions where they are incarcerated, and as a rule they infuse confidence in all with whom they are brought in contact. The moral effect of their presence has been so marked as to enforce its recognition in the Utah penitentiary.

It has been acknowledged by those who have had the supervision of that institution, and is understood by the other convicts. Their moral status has also been recognized in every other prison into which they have been thrust by a mistaken and cruel policy on the part of the Government—and more especially of its local representatives—from which a class of men so intrinsically worthy merit treatment the exact antipodes of what they receive.

The leaven of justice has already begun to work. Men of honor who are opposed to the religious faith and practices of the Saints are not willing that this difference of view should cause them to coincide with the outrages perpetrated upon them in the name of law. The local method of segregating the offense of unlawful cohabitation, enabling the persecutors to send a person accused of that offense to prison for as long a period as may suit their whim and gratify their malignity, and rob him as extensively as they please in the name of the government, is beginning to be unspurringly denounced by the better class of people who become acquainted with anti-Mormon jurisprudence. Those who perpetrate those wrongs are looked upon as perverts of the law and bigoted religious crusaders, while their victims are beginning to be regarded with respect and sympathy. The inflictors of the cruelties have begun to go up while the victims go down when both are placed in the balances of intelligent and fair-minded scrutiny. The recognition of the true position may be small to begin with, but as sure as justice is the right of all men, so sure will the lamp be lightened until the persecutors are held in universal execration—as the very vultures of society—and those whom they have injured are esteemed for their intrinsic moral worth, which will ultimately force itself into general recognition. It is only a question of time.

In the meantime there is but little apparent hope that the crusaders will relent. The extent of their unjust operations is measured by their power to inflict, their disposition admitting of no other limit to the outrages they commit in the name of law, which is turned, twisted, expanded or contracted according as the character of their purpose appears to demand.

IMPORTANCE OF FAST MEETINGS.

The first Thursday of each month has, from the early days of the Church, been set apart as a season for fasting and prayer, blessing of little children, confirming baptized members, and tendering offerings for the support of the poor. Although fast meetings are an ordinance of the Church, they are in some respects almost a dead letter.

The attendance at these meetings is generally very small. This is partially accounted for by the fact that they are held at a time when the adult male portion of the community is actively engaged in the usual vocations of life. Most of the workmen are under the control of employers and their time during hours of duty is not at their own disposal. Probably there are many who would not attend even if the situation were otherwise. Where employees are members of the Church it may in some instances be advisable to close up for a few hours, or perhaps give a portion of the hands liberty to leave alternately for the purpose of going to fast meeting. But this plan would not always operate satisfactorily, for as already intimated, not a few would be disposed to use the time for other purposes than that intended. We observe that this rule—that of giving employees the opportunity of attending fast meetings—has been adopted by The Woolley, Young and Hardy Company and by Burton and Gardner. Work is also suspended on the Temple Block for the same object. In these matters circumstances have to be duly considered. The lack of opportunity to attend these gatherings is far from accounting for the paucity of the number of brethren generally seen in attendance. Sometimes it is so small that some difficulty is experienced in attending to the administration of the ordinances named in the first paragraph of this article.

The congregations are, to a large degree necessarily composed of women and children, but they do not turn out to that extent that they should. It is highly important that at least the children should be educated to an understanding of the importance of this ordinance, and especially to the necessity of contributing to the wants of the poor. While there are many of the people who can furnish reasonable excuses for personal attendance, there are comparatively few but can send members of their families, especially the younger ones, and regularly tender their offerings for the support of the needy. There are many who doubtless neglect this duty, not from an ungenerous disposition, but from having sunk into a condition of thoughtlessness bordering upon indifference. Some again have adopted the custom of donating to the poor once a year, and in this way "lumping it," thus relieving themselves of the necessity of giving the subject more frequent attention. It is a question as to whether conformity with an established ordinance, thus recognizing a salutary custom and as-

sisting to alleviate the condition of the poor as their needs arise, is not much the better way.

The duties of the Saints in all things are clear before them. They should be reminded of them in the spirit of kindness and persuasion. There will be a final summing up time, when judgment based on the deeds done in the body, will be declared.

THE ELECTIONS.

The smoke of the battle has sufficiently cleared up from the field to give us a reasonably comprehensive idea of how the positions of the respective hosts lie. Considerable disaster has occurred here and there, and none of the forces have emerged from the conflict with serious column, while among the captains many have fallen. The defeat of Speaker Carlisle of Kentucky and Morrison of Illinois, which seem probable at this writing, and of Frank Hurd of Ohio, which is certain, are perhaps the hardest blows the Democracy has to bear; they could better have spared other men.

The next House of Representatives will be Democratic by a very small majority, not exceeding twenty-five and it may fall as low as ten. In the present House that party predominates by forty-three votes. But any majority in consonance with the Administration is better than none, as with both branches of Congress against it the situation of the President and his Cabinet would be very embarrassing.

The net result is a decided Republican gain, although they have suffered serious reverses in places. In Minnesota, where they have all the Congressmen at present, the Democrats have apparently captured all—the first time the latter party has had a representation from that State; in Iowa they have gathered in two or three representatives, and this State has so uniformly sent an unbroken Republican delegation to Congress that anything else coming from that source will savor somewhat of a political curiosity; the same, except as to numbers, can be said of Nebraska, where the Democrats get a representative for the first time since the present State was first organized as a Territory. In New Hampshire, where three Republicans have been chosen as Congressmen right along for years, the delegation to the Fiftieth Congress will stand two Democrats and one Republican. In New Jersey, it looks as if the Legislature was Democratic, and if this should prove to be the case, there will be one more Democrat and one less Republican in the United States Senate, as the former body elects a Senator to succeed Mr. Sewell, whose term expires on the fourth of March next. The Legislatures of California and Indiana, each of which States have an outgoing Senator, are still in doubt; and if these should be Democratic, with the gain of one already secured in Virginia, the Senate would change hands and both branches of Congress thus be in harmony with the administration.

The most serious losses to both parties have occurred mainly in their respective strongholds, which illustrates the truth of the old adage that "Politics makes strange bedfellows."

PLANS OF THE KNIGHTS.

The holding of the recent convention of Knights of Labor in Richmond, Va., was one of the most portentous events that have occurred upon the American continent since the close of the war that followed the agitation of the great slavery question. It was a gigantic stride in the direction of consolidating the vast mass of working bone and muscle in the nation preparatory to a war with capital, a war which may be only defensive at first, but which is almost certain to become, within a short time, aggressive also. That convention was a means of greatly aiding the work of effecting a thorough national organization, which, when perfected, will render the Knights of Labor a mighty force in the nation, and it is not easy to see from whence will come the power that will be able to cope with it, should it adopt a determined and beligerent policy.

Capitalists and the better class of politicians have hitherto hoped that the Knights of Labor, whose ranks embrace men of every shade of political belief, would not, as a body, take a preconcerted course in political matters; and the official disclaimers that have come from the organization from time to time, have afforded grounds for the belief that the Knights would refrain from voting as a party or body, at elections. But if the Philadelphia *Inquirer* is correct in its interpretation of the purposes of the order, the capitalists and statesmen of the nation are destined to be disappointed. That paper says:

"The Knights of Labor propose to set up at the National Capital a congress similar to that of the United States, composed, however, of only thirty-eight members. This congress is intended to instruct the Federal

Congress what bills it shall pass and what it shall refuse to pass. The proposed plan of its operation is that as soon as a bill has been presented to either House of the Federal Congress it shall be taken up and considered by the Knights of Labor congress. If that body approve it, the bill will be passed; if not, rejected, and thereupon the decision of the Knights' legislature will be messaged to the Federal Legislature. By this means the Congress of the United States will be prevented approving any bill disapproved by the Knights of Labor or of disapproving any bill approved of by them. In short, the Federal Congress is to be subjected to the rigorous supervision of the congress of a trades union, and held continually under the espionage and threats of a secret social organization.

At first view it seems wonderful that the American people should witness with such apathy as they manifest, the development of movements so menacing to the perpetuity of their favorite institutions as are some now afoot in the nation, including the plans of the Knights of Labor. But on further consideration it will plainly appear that the people of the nation can do little or nothing to stay the progress of such movements. The Knights of Labor have the right to establish a congress of their representatives in Washington if they wish to, so far as the law is concerned. That congress, if established, will have a perfect legal right to express to members of the national legislature its approval or disapproval of bills pending in that body, and it will have the right to urge and influence members of the order which it represents to vote for or against the men whom it may designate as friendly or hostile to its interests. Under the Constitution no law can be framed to prevent the Knights from carrying out the plan for a national congress, to be located at the nation's capital, and to exercise the influence upon legislation indicated by the *Inquirer*.

With the Knights of Labor so organized that the stevedores of New York will contribute money to feed the families of striking pork-packers in Chicago, while the typographical unions of the Pacific slope are extending pecuniary aid to the striking street-car drivers of St. Louis; and with a workingmen's parliament sitting in the shadow of the Capitol at the seat of government, dictating by the power of the ballot what bills the President of the United States shall or shall not sign, scenes of interest and moment are likely to ensue. That such a condition of organization and power is aimed at and will be attained by the Knights of Labor seems probable at the present time.

THE VALUE OF GOOD AND CAPABLE MEN.

ACCORDING to a dispatch in this issue General John A. Logan has been uttering words which embody considerable wisdom. He holds that the condition of affairs is such in the large cities that the mayoralties have become as important in a sense as the governorships of States. This is only the recognition of the fact that in order to insure good government it must be conducted on sound principles from the very foundation to the top of the structure, but it is also an acknowledgment of the existence of a potential danger. If the fundamental portion of the building is rotten, it is not reasonable to expect that the fabric will stand. Hence the necessity, in a Republic, for even the source—the people—to be upright, and the lower functions of the system to be purely performed.

No people can be prosperous or happy when they are the victims of maladministration, by the existence of bad men in office. The Latter-day Saints were, from the earliest days, admonished on this point by the voice of revelation, through the Prophet. They were directed to seek out and sustain good men for official positions. Whenever this idea has been departed from trouble has been the result. It has been so everywhere. It will continue to be so. It is an inevitable effect springing from a given cause. Place authority upon an unscrupulous man, and trouble ensues. It is not confined to the putting of such men in positions of an official character—clothe them with responsibility in the manipulation of any matters of public moment and the consequence will be, as a rule, similar. And when disaster is the result of their crooked course, they will either exonerate themselves from blame, by placing it upon others' shoulders or at least drag innocent persons into the merry puddles of obliquity which they have created.

The value of the advice to demolish party lines in the selection of the best men, the qualifications being honesty, integrity and general adaptability, cannot be overestimated. Examine the past course of a man of that character, and impartial investigation will find it straight; in the case of his antipodes, numerous windings, contortions and twistings will be discovered. Good, honest, upright men are a thousandfold more precious than all the gold of Ophir. Their value is generally discovered after they are dead, for those who scorn to lie, deceive and cheat, are not likely to be largely appreciated in a world where such evils are so common. It is not popular as a rule to

speak the straight truth, for sound doctrine—which is the truth—is not generally acceptable. To act upon it is not much more so.

If the nation would—locally and generally speaking—select officials from among the best element the country affords, in place of awarding place to men who seek it for the opportunities and spoils it affords they would infuse a preservative agent throughout the body-politic. But the tendency is the other way. This corrupting inclination is increased by the very danger which Gen. Logan says threatens the large cities of the Union. The masses—easily made a prey to demagogues—are beginning to feel their ability to wield an overwhelming power in politics. They possess votes, and votes are what count in political contests. Men of brains, but who are utterly unprincipled will not be slow to count the favor of those who have it in their hands to turn the political scales whichever way they wish to. They will throw dust in the eyes of the people and captivate them by guile, deceit and special pleading. Through this crooked and sly path they will gain access to positions that should be filled by better men. Disappointment, disaster and confusion worse confounded, will be the result, and misery the crop that such a soil will yield.

Some journals trippingly dismiss all apprehensions in relation to the danger to which General Logan had reference when he urged the necessity for the Mayoralties of large cities being filled by good and capable men, ready to act on emergencies. They extinguish it with a puff of loyal sentiment, much as some writers fight and win battles on paper which have been fought and lost in the field. But, like the blood-spots upon the hands of Lady Macbeth, the ulcerous parts upon the body-politic will not out. The poison is in the system and largely diffused through the blood, the complaint being by no means local.

Many things have been pointed out regarding the future of the nation by Joseph Smith. The very idea of accepting as correct any forecast from such a source is popularly scouted. This contemptuous treatment of what he enunciated will not, however, diminish the correctness of his statements. He spoke of a time when the masses of the people would become a prey to demagogues, who would, by catering to their passions and prejudices, gain positions of prominence and administer public affairs so unscrupulously and outrageously as to produce ruin and anarchy.

What does the present situation premise?

DEFENDANTS' RIGHTS PER- SISTENTLY IGNORED.

It is not long since the NEWS directed attention to doings we esteem most unwarrantable and insulting on the part of U. S. Commissioner McKay. He does not appear to be guided by any principle in manipulating his court. As we understand it, he cannot well be guided by knowledge for if there be one particular more than another in which he shines with special lustre it is in the absence of information. To call him a modern Dogberry would be a reflection, in our opinion, upon the memory of that notorious character, for he at least is credited with the possession of some knowledge of law, while it may be asked whether or not all the acquisition in that line attained by the official now under consideration was or was not derived from the sweepings of Judge Sutherland's office, when he acted as charwoman for that gentleman in all but the matter of sex.

Commissioner McKay doggedly persists—in cases of unlawful cohabitation—in compelling legal wives to testify against their husbands without the latter's consent and against the will of the witness, in matters of confidential communication. The protests of counsel for the defense are treated with contempt, and have been met by insult from him. Not only is this the case, but he asserts that Judge Zane has not held that legal wives cannot be compelled to testify in relation to any confidential communication between herself and her husband. He thus shows either a willing ignorance of what has been held in the District Court, or he insists in contemptuously disregarding the rules adopted in the court of which he is but an arm, so to speak, or an auxiliary.

This point was brought squarely before Judge Zane in the case against James Eargley, in which objection was raised to testimony being given by Mrs. Zuviah Eargley, the legal wife of the defendant. We here make an extract from the account of that particular proceeding in the case referred to:

The defense offered the objection that the witness herself declined to testify against her husband. Mr. Rawlins stated that he desired to argue the case.

The court said the question had been discussed on a former occasion and would allow the witness to answer any question except as to confidential communications made by the defendant.

In the face of this, Commissioner McKay iterates and re-iterates that Judge Zane holds that a wife is a competent witness in all matters in this