

conformity in act with the laws of the land, and that belief was free and beyond the purview of courts and of all human control? "You may believe what you please so long as you do not practice that which is obnoxious to public opinion," was repeated again and again. "Come within the law and your religious views will be regarded as sacred," was proclaimed by the press and by the bar.

But now the fear is expressed that though the "Mormons" have ceased to practice polygamy they still believe it is right, and this is made a ground of offence and an excuse for depriving them of their church property and their political rights and privileges. Is this just? Is it American? Is it in accord with the civil and religious liberty of which all parties boast?

Polygamy and slavery have been allied in party platforms, pulpit orations and stump speeches. We will say nothing about the nonsense of making them appear as "twins." But when slavery was abolished in the South, was it required of the people there that they recant their belief in its rightfulness before they were accorded the common rights of citizens? Are there not strong and able men, some of them prominent as statesmen, who still hold to beliefs on that question that are diverse to the popular doctrine? And have those beliefs ever had the effect of an attempt to revive the practice of slavery? Why, then, should an alleged belief in the rightfulness of polygamy under certain circumstances, be any barrier in the way of the "Mormons" to the exercise of all the rights of freemen, seeing that the practice has been abandoned and that there is no more prospect of its reprobation than of the revival of slavery?

We say the American people at large, their representatives in Congress, and the advocates of republican institutions through the press or on the platform, have no right to penetrate into the domain of conscience or of faith, but may only demand conformity to law and to custom. Nor should they carry their prejudices against the past, so far as to deny justice and liberty to the "Mormons" on the hazard of altogether improbable contingencies in the future.

The concessions that have been made to the requirements of the majority by the "Mormons," are admitted by unimpassioned and sagacious persons informed as to the facts, to be all that could be desired or expected of any people. Is it not now good policy as well as plain justice and pure charity to accept these concessions in the spirit in which they have been made, and

leave mere questions of abstract belief to the sphere of opinion and thought, which in this, above all other civilized lands on earth, should be perfectly and absolutely free?

WAR AGAINST VICE.

THE German Emperor has undertaken a Titanic work. Our dispatches today announce that he has commenced in earnest the Herculean task of cleansing the Augean stable of moral filth with which his kingdom, not less than other countries, is infested. In pursuance of this undertaking, he has given notice that officers in the army who are parading their inamoratas before the world will be cut off from the army and ostracised from society. The police are hounding down the keepers of houses of ill-fame, and immoral dramas and light songs in the numerous cafe chantants will be suppressed as will also the traffic in obscene pictures and photographs. In brief, the whole machinery of the law will be brought to bear upon the social evil of the empire.

Concerning this effort nothing ought to be said but commendation. It shows a proper disposition in the young ruler and proves that he has his eyes open to the fact that a great power cannot be kept in existence merely by "blood and iron," so long as the very foundations are undermined by the tide of immorality.

It will be interesting to watch and observe how the enthusiastic reformer will succeed in his work. The history of the world hardly indicates that evils of the kind in question can be successfully removed by the force of law alone. People who are the slaves of their lusts do not change their minds because a law says they must improve their conduct. Nor does the fear of punishment impart strength to break the chains of sin and shame. To quote one illustration, which shows how determinedly people pursue their inclinations; when the use of tobacco was first introduced in Europe it was thundered against by moralists and vigorously fought by law-makers. But neither King James' "Counterblast to Tobacco," nor the custom in Turkey of sticking the pipe stem through the nose of the smoker; nor the cutting of their noses off, as was customary in Russia; nor the fear of death, which was the penalty imposed by Amurel IV; nor the anathemas by Popes and prelates could stop the spread of the practice. It kept on growing till it outlawed the law. In

view of this and many similar facts that could be quoted, one may well ask, Is the Emperor likely to succeed? If he does, he shall be entitled to the honor that ought to have been won by the established churches of Germany; for to them, as much as to the civil power, one would naturally look for the inauguration of a warfare against moral evils among the people.

THE PLAGUE IN RUSSIA.

FOR some time an epidemic of a most virulent type has been raging in the famine-stricken districts of Russia. It is admitted in official reports that the people are dying by thousands. The disease was supposed to be either typhus fever or Siberian plague. The New York *Tribune* is of the opinion that it is neither, but genuine Asiatic cholera; because this pestilence has invariably followed in the wake of all great famines.

Furthermore, though the ravages of the disease have always been a thousand fold more extensive than those of the famine, yet a regular proportion has existed between both.

The famine threatened districts of Russia, it is estimated by an official announcement, embrace 30,000,000 of people. Should the pestilence turn out to be Asiatic cholera, and should it decimate with the usual proportion, nearly half the population of Russia would be swept away.

Asiatic cholera in Russia means a visitation of the terrible malady into western Europe; and as this epidemic can be traced directly to the treatment of the Russian people by the government, it is claimed that the civilized world will have a terrible account to settle with the Czar.

GREAT CHICAGO.

A LEADING Boston newspaper, after airing its personal pride in the fact that that city has so long been recognized as the "Athens of America," generously concedes that Chicago, "though not heretofore a literary centre, and not distinguished by its publishing houses or its authors or its institutions of learning, has recently laid foundations which will soon make it not only a literary centre but a point of influence upon the scholarship and the literature of the country."

The ground for this acknowledgement is that Chicago has suddenly acquired from Berlin a collection of books embracing 300,000 bound volumes and 120,000 pamphlets. This acquisition makes Chicago possessor of four of the largest libraries in the United States. The