

## DESERET NEWS

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - AUGUST 7, 1878.

## PLURAL WIVES AND THE FRANCHISE.

THE general election, which will take place next Monday, will probably give a smaller total of votes than has been usual for several years. Many persons who have the general qualifications of voters have failed to register. This has been through their own carelessness, wilfulness or lack of understanding. The Assessors, we believe, have endeavored to perform their duty, in regard to the registry, faithfully and to the best of their ability. Those whose names do not appear on the lists had ample opportunity of proving their eligibility.

There are always some who neglect to exercise the rights conferred upon them. Therefore it is too much to expect that the votes polled next Monday will show as big a total as the whole number of names registered.

Then there are a class who will not go to the polls because they were doubtful about their right to have their names inscribed on the registry list, and preferred to forego the privilege of voting at this election rather than violate the law either in its letter or spirit.

Quite a number of ladies who are plural wives and were not born in the United States, have taken no steps towards securing the right to vote at the coming election. It is argued that though they are the wives of their husbands, with all that the title implies in the sight of God and their co-religionists, yet the law of the land only contemplates one legal wife of any man. Therefore, that the statute conferring upon the wife of a citizen the elective franchise, does not meet the case of plural wives not native citizens of the United States.

We think it better to lose a few votes than to break the law, or even to be in a dubious position in relation to it. The best way for all our alien ladies is to be once naturalized and thus obtain the status of citizens, independently. The daughter or widow, as well as the wife of any native-born or naturalized citizen, whether she be a plural wife or not, is a citizen and has the right to be registered and to vote in this Territory, if she is over twenty-one years of age and has resided in the Territory six months and in the precinct one month previous to registration. But if a woman is neither the wife (beyond the disputes of lawyers or the rulings of courts,) daughter or widow of a citizen, the safest and best course for her, in our opinion, is, to take out naturalization papers, and thus put it beyond the power of any person to dispute her right to the franchise.

We advise the alien ladies of Utah who are in the position we have described, to attend to this without delay. All the particulars of the necessary steps to be taken can be learned of competent persons in their respective precincts. Every woman in Utah may count for something if she so pleases. If she stands as a cypher in the community, religiously, socially or politically, it is not the fault of the system which we are endeavoring to build up. The vote and influence of every person, male and female, is needed and expected on the side of right and truth, in the Church and at the polls. There should be no drones in the hive of Deseret. All powers granted to us should be used and used righteously, and those placed within our reach should be grasped with gratitude. No one has the right to neglect or despise the opportunities afforded by Providence to do good. Every man and every woman belonging to the Church are under obligations to God and their brethren and sisters to perform their part of the work required.

Up, then, and be doing! Let no man or woman having the right to vote refrain from going to the polls next Monday because there is no danger of

opposition. The power to vote implies the duty to vote. Neglect is inexcusable. Regular and punctual performance of duty is a good habit to contract. Omission is often a sin as well as commission. Let those who are not lawfully entitled to vote on Monday take the necessary steps as soon as practicable and legal, to secure the right, so that they may stand on an equality with their friends—and enemies—and be able to count for something politically in the future. And let the ladies, particularly, give heed to the suggestions we have made for their especial benefit, and remember that woman is expected to play her part in the great drama of the last dispensation, and if she performs it by the side of man in this world, she will without fail share with him in the glory and dominion and eternal increase of that which is to come.

## "WHAT'S THE THREE MILLS FOR?"

WE understand that the tax collectors are meeting with some little difficulty in consequence of a misunderstanding, or lack of information on the part of many property holders. The amount of taxes now due to the county collectors is a little higher in most cases than was demanded last year. This is in consequence of the new revenue law, by the provisions of which the school tax formerly levied by the trustees of the respective districts is made collectable by the County Collector. The law says:

"There is hereby levied and directed to be assessed and collected annually, beginning with the year 1878, an *ad valorem* tax on all the taxable property in Utah as follows: Three mills on the dollar for Territorial purposes; three mills on the dollar for the benefit of district schools; and such sum as the County Courts of the several Counties may designate for County purposes, not to exceed six mills on the dollar."

Under the "Act providing for the establishment and support of district schools," etc., the trustees were empowered to "assess and collect annually a tax of one-fourth of one per cent. on all taxable property within their districts for school purposes." That part of the law is now repealed. The revenue law authorized the assessment and collection annually of "a Territorial tax of one-fourth of one per cent.," \* \* \* and a county tax at a rate prescribed by the County Court, not to exceed three-fourths of one per cent.," etc. These provisions are also repealed.

By comparing the total rate per cent. under the present law, and that under the old, it will be seen that though the amount now required by the County Assessors and Collectors is a little larger than last year's tax, yet the taxpayers have a little less to pay in the aggregate, because the one-fourth of one per cent. for school purposes can no longer be collected by the trustees, being superseded by the three mills on the dollar now included with the county and territorial assessment.

Some may inquire, "Are we then to have free schools supported by taxation?" That depends upon circumstances. If the proportion of the small amount of three mills on the dollar, belonging to any given district, will pay the expenses of teachers therein, the school can be made free. Or if the legal voters in a school district, by a two-thirds majority vote, decide to levy therein a tax not to exceed three per cent. per annum, for school purposes, and the amount collected, with the sum appropriated for teachers out of the three mill general tax, will pay all expenses, that district can have free schools by taxation.

The present revenue law makes the distribution and application of the obligatory school tax much more equitable than was possible under the old school law. Formerly each district collected its one-fourth of one per cent. and expended it. Some districts being much wealthier than others, were able to build and nicely furnish good school houses, while the poorer districts were left to

struggle along with poor accommodations. The school tax collected from railroads was frequently obtained by the very districts which were best able to pay for their own educational expenses, while the poorer districts, perhaps with a larger school population, were entirely without extraneous help. Now the tax collected for school purposes in a county will be distributed among the several school districts according to their school population, and be used for the payment of teachers according to the average daily attendance of pupils. This is fair and equitable, and will be approved by all sensible persons who give the matter attention.

Every property-holder who desires the progress of education in Utah will cheerfully pay the tax imposed. There has been a great deal of clamor for free schools supported by taxation. The present law is a step towards making that system possible. Local option determines the matter in each district. But it is often the case that those who support a measure most with their mouths are least willing to do anything when the movement reaches their pockets; and we have no doubt this will prove to be the case with some who have found the most fault with the methods now in use for the support of our schools in this Territory.

Violent changes are seldom expedient. Nature is progressive rather than revolutionary. The cause of education in Utah is moving forward with commendable speed, and ere long this Territory, or the State of Deseret, will shine among the most illustrious disseminators of general intelligence upon the face of the globe. Now is the day of small things. Let every good citizen perform the duties of the present, financially as well as in every other way. Settle your tax bills.

## A BIG CHARGE FROM A SMALL POP-GUN.

The New York Evening Post says:

"It would not be a bad thing in the way of business for the government to investigate the charge brought by Mr. Daniel Alexander, an official representative of the government in Utah, against the Mormon priesthood. Mr. Alexander charges, upon the authority of a deputy United States marshal and other persons, that the Indians, even when they are engaged in war with the government, procure arms and ammunition through the Mormon priesthood; that the Indians are initiated into the mysteries of Mormonism and are incited to hostility by the priests, whose purpose is to prevent the settlement of the country within 500 miles of Salt Lake, in order that the Mormons may themselves fill and control that Territory as their number increases. This is a serious charge, and whether true or not it offers the government an excellent opportunity to discover what the truth is in a very important matter. Somebody furnishes the Indians with abundant materials of war, and it would be money in the nation's pocket to find out who it is."

The person referred to in the above extract as "an official representative of the government in Utah" is a very insignificant individual, and his position is simply that of "commissioner," under the Poland Bill, which is a sort of a local Justice of the smallest jurisdiction, having no authority to try a case, inflict a penalty or pronounce a decision, but simply to commit, if sufficient cause is proven, to a court having some actual power.

The only act in which this small dignitary was ever known to distinguish himself, was in relation to two petitions signed by a number of ladies in Utah. One was a memorial to Congress in behalf of woman suffrage, sent from the East to Utah for signatures. The other was a petition from the ladies of Utah, asking Congress not to legislate against polygamy. Both were circulated in this Territory, and were numerous signed. But the first-named was signed and dispatched to the East before the second was drawn up. And the former was signed by both "Mormon" and "Gentile" ladies, while

the latter was only presented to "Mormon" ladies for signature.

The person referred to above, anxious to make a point against the people among whom he had recently settled, conceived the idea of injuring the pro-polygamy petition by getting up a statement that signatures had been obtained to it by misrepresentation. He explained to certain "Gentile" ladies of Ogden City who had signed the petition for the suffrage, that the "Mormon" women had deceived them, and obtained their names to the petition in favor of polygamy. By this means he induced them to sign an affidavit in his presence as a notary public, setting forth that they had been fraudulently induced to sign the petition then before Congress. The sworn statement was sent, and the chief conspirator and cunning inventor was particularly tickled with his own cunning. But lo! and behold! when the names of the ladies who were foolishly deceived into signing his affidavit were sought for on the pro-polygamy petition, they were not to be found! These ladies were thus placed in the position of perjurers through the machinations of this very smart Aleck.

The fraud, if any, was his. The memorial that was signed by the "Gentile" ladies went to Congress before the other was arranged, and the Gentile ladies were not even asked to sign a petition which it was known would be contrary to their views. Instead of clothing himself with glory he was covered with contempt, and all classes of the community joined in reprobation of the small malice and despicable falsehood which prompted the plot to injure the "Mormon" ladies, with its recoil on the heads of others who, excepting himself, were innocent of evil design.

And this is the "official representative of the Government in Utah" who, according to the *Post*, has been making charges against the "Mormons" equally false with his affidavit scheme, about their stirring up Indians to hostility. The influence of the Latter-day Saints upon the government is and has been always in favor of peace. Our local laws as well as the spirit of our religion are opposed to any such conduct as the *Post* assumes us to be guilty of, on the statement of such an infinitesimal dignitary with such immense mendacity. Wherever the "Mormon" priesthood have obtained any ascendancy over the minds of the red men, the effect has been to quell the blood-thirsty instincts which impel them upon the war path, and to lead them to industry and submission to law. If any man claiming to be a "Mormon" has done aught to aid an Indian in hostility to the whites, he has done it in violation of the policy and precepts of the "Mormon" leaders and the "Mormon" people.

Investigation we court. It is misrepresentation that we deprecate. And the New York *Evening Post* and every other newspaper in the land should, in justice to a people who are continually maligned by unscrupulous enemies, avoid endorsing or giving weight to the unsupported statements of adventurers without reputation, and mushroom officials who, while wielding less power than a common constable, attempt to magnify their importance and spread themselves on strength derived from corruption. The charges are entirely untrue, and the author of them utterly unreliable.

## THE COLLAPSE OF "MORMONISM."

THE Springfield *Republican* of the 19th ult. tries its hand at a fling against the "Mormons;" probably for the purpose of keeping up the policy of the late editor, the departed Samuel Bowles. The article is a strange mixture of contradictory statements, and shows how greatly befuddled the brains of otherwise intelligent editors become when they attempt to touch upon the "Mormon" question.

The writer begins by saying that there are fewer signs of the collapse of "Mormonism" a year after the death of "its despotic prophet" than were generally anticipated; and closes by intimating that the decay of "Mormonism" is sure, and will be "more accelerated each suc-

ceeding year in the future." That is, it is decaying more rapidly every year, but there are less signs of its collapse now than there were last year. The signs indicate the facts, the prophecy is only the product of the writer's personal desires. He wants it to collapse, but it doesn't show any signs of dissolution. Perhaps if he keeps on wishing and predicting he may ultimately see a sign or two. But as the wise of this generation have continuously prognosticated the speedy downfall of "Mormonism" for the last forty years, we must confess the signs cannot be very encouraging to them.

The *Republican* says: "More polygamous marriages have been celebrated by them than in any previous year." But in the next paragraph he laments thusly: "The trouble has been to prove these superabundant marriages." And again: "As this rite is performed in secret by the Mormon priests, of course the needful legal evidence has always been lacking." Well, Mr. *Republican* how did you find out about it? How do you know how many polygamous marriages have been solemnized, if the matter is kept secret and persons right on the spot here cannot obtain legal evidence of the fact? Does it not look as if you were guessing or romancing about "Mormon" marriages, or writing on something that you know nothing about?

But this editor at sea grasps at three straws for support, or three supposed crumbs of comfort. The first is: "The United States Attorney has just struck a 'new lead,' he calls the wives themselves, and has just succeeded in getting a prominent Saint sentenced to two years in the penitentiary." The second: "The quarterly conference just held was very slimly attended." The third he puts in this way: "Another hopeful sign of Mormon disintegration is afforded by municipal politics. The independent voter is abroad in Salt Lake City as well as the East."

As to the first point, there has been no trial of a polygamy case for over three years, and since its occurrence we have had a change of judges and two new United States attorneys. Cannot the *Republican* indulge its readers with Utah news less than three or four years old. Oh what enterprise! And what intimate acquaintance with the subject written upon! Now for the second. The "Mormon" church does not hold quarterly conferences. What the *Republican* alludes to is the conference of one Stake of the Church in Utah, which is not the great semi-annual gathering of the Saints, but only of those in the locality. It was slimly attended on the Saturday because of the busy season, but on the Sunday there was as large a congregation as upon any previous occasion of the kind. And for the third. There is no disintegration of politics here, and the independent voter has always been seen in Utah. The People's Ticket has always polled a large majority, and it will do so again on Monday next. We are afraid the poor scribe of the *Republican* hasn't a straw left nor a crumb to comfort him.

The fact is, the Springfield paper, like many others, seizes upon "Mormonism" as a never-failing topic of public interest when political or other subjects do not crop up in sufficient numbers. And editors scribble away at it as ignorant of the question as of the condition of the North Pole, but sheltered from exposure by the corresponding ignorance of most of their readers. But the public are becoming better acquainted with Utah and its people, and their principles and progress, every year, and editors will find it necessary when touching on these matters to find out facts and cease re-hashing the silly statements and groundless speculations, about the dissolution of a system which is rooted and grounded in everlasting truth and cannot be overthrown nor destroyed. If the *Republican* wants reliable information about the "Mormons" its editors should keep on hand a file of the DESERET NEWS.

General Crook, in answer to questions from the Omaha *Herald*, representatives, as to the cause of the Bannack war, replied very earnestly, *Hunger; nothing but hunger.* He further said, "the proof is incontestable that there are cases where Indians have actually starved to death on the reservations," and added, "he must be a very contemptible being who would not fight for his life."