



ALBERT CARRINGTON.....EDITOR

Wednesday.....Mar. 27, 1867.

## THE THEATRE, AND THINGS THEATRICAL.

As a community we are manifestly partial to theatrical representations. Almost every city and settlement in the Territory has its dramatic association, with a place for giving performances in, and stage accessories more or less complete. Many of these associations possess members who manifest a very creditable ability in delineating character. As we aim at improvement in everything, this evident and growing taste requires to be catered for with much wisdom, that the mind may not be influenced to evil by theatrical representations having an injurious tendency. The young are in this way, as in other ways, more liable to be influenced, because of being more susceptible and having less experience than those who are older and more matured. We would like to ask here if it pays to instil into young minds the would-be ideal heroism of thievery that such a performance as "Jack Sheppard" is calculated to give? Or to break up the loathing, which our religion inspires for wickedness, corruption and villainy, through the representation of kindred pieces, by exciting an incorrect and false sympathy for some ruffian, whose wickedness is glossed over with a puling sentimentality that gives it almost the appearance of virtue to the tender and undiscriminating mind? We have heard of "Jack Sheppard"—a piece interdicted in Britain because of the injurious effects following its representations—being performed in one of our settlements by some traveling professionals, and hence our queries.

In this city we have one of the finest theatres on the continent, and one of the best conducted, if not the very best conducted, to be found in the world. We have a right to be gratified at this, and hope that every place for theatrical representations in the Territory will pattern after the manner in which it is controlled and managed.

It is very doubtful if the people here entertain the idea that our Theatre is entitled to that position of excellence and completeness which well informed travelers, from the great metropolitan centres of the world, frankly and cordially assign to it. Many of our citizens had but little acquaintance with theatres before coming here. Most of our young know nothing of theatres outside of these valleys by experience, and can gain but a very limited conception by reading. A great many, therefore, are apt to judge of such places elsewhere by their own ideas of that which they should be, and those ideas are of necessity often very incorrect. There are many theatres larger than ours, yet but few in the world can at all compare with it in the internal arrangements made for the comfort, convenience and purity of those engaged on the stage; while no other equals it for the strictness and care constantly exercised to have a pure, virtuous, moral spirit reign throughout the entire building, controlling those who are the living, breathing expositors

to the people of the characters represented, and exercising a beneficial influence on the audience.

These are facts which are admitted by those well competent to judge, who have no interest in common with us as a community, and but little sympathy for us or our institutions. The *Colorado Times*, of the 7th inst., in a short piece about affairs in this region, says: "The grand Mormon theatre, the best conducted in the country, opened for the season last Saturday night week. Brigham has leased it to the managers, Messrs. H. B. Clawson and John T. Caine, Thomas Williams, Treasurer. Those managers, particularly Mr. Caine, can conduct a theatre and play a part too, about as well as any from San Francisco to the 'Hub.' Their police order and usher arrangements are ahead of most metropolitan theatres in the Union." This, if we do not mistake, is from the pen of one who speaks from personal observation during a sojourn in this city. Mr. Dixon, the editor of the *London Athenaeum*, who visited G. S. L. City last summer, speaks in the highest terms of our Theatre, its order, completeness of internal arrangements, and the care taken to make it a model theatre. There cannot be found here, as in other places, wealthy rousers hanging about the wings, or having the entree to the green room, waiting to pour their poisonous language into the ears of weak unsophisticated girls, who know no better than to believe the falsehoods uttered with evil designs. The happy, quiet, orderly air which pervades the entire establishment is so well known, that a simple reference to it is sufficient.

We could multiply testimony from passing travelers, of high reputation, to the excellent manner in which the Theatre here is conducted and the ability of our performers. But that to which we wish to draw attention now, is, that as people seek and must have recreative enjoyment and amusement, such a place so conducted is a necessity in a community having the aim that we have, to improve in all things good; and should be encouraged by the countenance and support of all who desire to see the people keep improving and progressing.

To have a place of public resort open for amusement, where making money was the great object in view, independent of higher and nobler aims looking to the welfare of the community, would be poor policy. It would be an easy matter for the Managers of the Theatre to put a class of pieces on the boards that would bring money to the treasury, so long as a certain percentage of a particular class of persons were around and had a dollar to spend. The impelling motive might be solely—to make it pay; and then everything that would excite the lowest passions and desires would be put upon the boards. To represent the human form in as near an approach to nudity as possible without dispensing entirely with articles of dress, has lately been found the most effective manner of filling theatrical treasuries in the largest cities in the world. "Mazeppa" played by a woman strapped all but nude to the back of a horse, has been the great excitement of the past summer and winter in London and Paris. A piece called the "Black Crook," performed in some eastern cities, has drawn crowded houses for months, the great feature in it being a troupe of ballet girls whose dresses are remarkable for nothing but scantiness. Other similar pieces have been very successful. Our public have reason to be proud of the Theatre here, and of the manner in which it has been managed. And we hope to see it continue successfully to fulfil the

object for which it was with generous munificence erected.

We designed saying something concerning our performers, who as a stock company are fully equal to many metropolitan companies, and vastly superior to most provincial ones; but this article has extended already beyond the designed limits. The subject may be referred to again.

## SIGNIFICANT AND SUGGESTIVE.

The daily record of events that reaches us from the east and the west—from the "old world" and the older world, so far as population is involved, incorrectly called "new," is of a significant and suggestive character. It tells of the rapidity with which the nations are hastening to a crisis inevitable yet dreaded by all, while they vainly strive to hope against conviction. Science and art have made immense strides within a few short years; yet the idea that mortal existence would thereby be prolonged, and enjoy a comparative immunity from the varied dangers to which it was exposed in days of greater intellectual darkness; that disasters and dangerous accidents would be less frequent; and that the grosser passions which sway men in a ruder state would be made subject to peace and purity, is fast melting away.

To say that there has been a railroad accident, a fire which laid half a city in smoking ruins, a shipwreck where every soul on board the ill-fated vessel perished, an earthquake which spread destruction around, or a war in which thousands on thousands were maimed, mangled and slaughtered, is but to record that which has occurred since railroads were first used, cities built, ships sent forth to navigate the great waters, volcanic action developed itself, or man forsook his God and became subject to the power of evil. But when these things, and others equally painful and terrible, become repeated and repeated a hundred fold, amid the vaunted science of an age that looks upon past times with disdain and contempt, they suggest inquiry as to the causes which produce them, or the crisis, if any, to which they point.

There is something appalling about the magnitude of the disasters which have occurred within a few months in various parts of the world, and their number. Statists have in vain tried to account for the immense increase of shipwrecks which have been chronicled within a few years, because of a much larger number of ships being afloat. But the disproportion between the number of ships in two given periods, and the number of disasters at sea, confounds them. Besides, the rapid advance made in shipbuilding and in the knowledge of preservative principles has been lauded, until one would almost imagine such a thing as a shipwreck would become a wonder.

There is scarcely a dispatch which crosses the wires, but contains a statement of some terrible conflagration, horrid railroad disaster, some fearful colliery explosion, or some appalling accident, which would curdle the blood if their very frequency had not rendered the public feeling comparatively callous to such matters. Men may seek to find the causes why they occur, in incendiaryism, increased travel, and carelessness; but these very causes reveal the fact, which is overlooked, that the spirit which inspires to preserve and maintain, which bestows wisdom and prompts mankind to value life and save from destruction—the Spirit of life—is fast leaving the inhabitants of the earth; and they are becoming subject to a spirit

which destroys, wastes life, and would empty the earth of everything worth preserving.

Some believe that they can see the hand of an overruling Controller of events visibly made manifest in these signs of the times, and we are among the number. Others laugh at such an idea, and call it fanaticism. They say they can only see the action of natural causes, and their results. They do not think that there is a Power by which the natural laws are directed. Two trains of cars freighted with human life and rushing along with tremendous velocity meet on the same track; there is a collision, followed by shrieks and groans as the bruised, bleeding and mangled are thrown into one huge heap of human suffering. A bridge is defective, and as the thundering cars pass over it, the treacherous supports give way, and the whole is hurled downwards in a mingled mass of death and destruction. A rope is stranded, it parts in the moment when strength is most needed, and the ship is dashed to pieces, or founders in a storm. A match or cigar end is dropped carelessly among inflammable matter, and a pile of buildings falls before the devouring fire. These are all simple effects of simple causes; but he must be wilfully blind who cannot see in their culminating increase how fast the human family are losing that spirit which prompts to save and preserve, and how rapidly they are giving way to a recklessness that will lead to the most terrible consequences. *They are being left to themselves*; the Spirit of God is being withdrawn from the nations; and if these evidences are not sufficient to prove that the Almighty is permitting them to rush on in their downward course, the voice of earthquakes, terrible storms and exceptional seasons, that mock human calculations and explanation, declares that the elements and man, though the latter may not believe it, are swayed and controlled by a divine Power, for the consummation of His eternal purposes.

The state of the nations to-day, the signs of the times, and the human and elemental discord so rapidly increasing, point in a most significant manner to a crisis which human wisdom neither knows how to avert nor meet.

## HOME ITEMS.

**SABBATH MEETINGS.**—Elder Charles C. Rich treated on the objects in view in our being gathered from the nations,—to work righteousness and build up the kingdom of God on the earth. To do this we must learn that which is right, and then do it. The responsibility of doing right is not confined to a few individuals, but rests upon us all; and it is the duty of every one to live according to the principles of truth and righteousness. We are not compelled to wait for the salvation offered to us until we have passed behind the veil and go into the eternal world; we enjoy a foretaste of it in this present probation in the development of the principles of life within us. Many persons desire to be tried as Abraham was, yet they are being tried upon a similar principle every day, and numbers of them do not stand the test; they are required by the Lord or His servants to do something which they fail to do, and thus they are tried and found wanting. Some think if they do wrong and there is no one to accuse them, they are not held guilty; but they who do wrong, though none should know it but God and themselves, lose confidence in themselves and lose confidence in their God, and unless they speedily repent their course is downward to destruction. The first thing for the Saints to do is to do right themselves; and to see that corruption does not grow up and spread in our midst.

## AFTERNOON.

Elder Wilford Woodruff in a few spirited remarks showed that individuals or a people who are led to obey the commandments of God by seeing miracles, require to be fed with miracles constantly or they will apostatize and forsake the truth. Such has been our whole experience, and so it was with ancient Israel as a people from the time that Moses led them out of Egypt until Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies and its inhabitants dispersed. Their faith was strong only as the Lord manifested His power visibly in their behalf. They who embrace