

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE MAINE DISASTER.

As the circumstances attending the sinking of the U. S. cruiser Maine in the harbor of Havana are more thoroughly considered, the impression gathers strength, both in this country and elsewhere, that there is more probability of the disaster being due to some fiendish plot than to accident. An investigation of the wound in the ship's side may throw some light on the subject; it may disclose whether the destructive force came from within or without. In the latter case there can be no doubt about it being the work of an enemy. The difficulty of ascertaining the real facts will be greatest, if it shall be found that the explosion took place in the interior of the vessel. But before the results of the investigation are known the conjectures freely indulged in are useless.

Spain has always been watching with ill-concealed jealousy the marvelous progress of the United States. From the day the colonies engaged in their noble struggle for independence, this disposition has been apparent. It was Spain that endeavored to check the good offices of France. Later it sought to restrict the boundaries of the new-born nation. In 1812 Spain sided with England and planned an expedition against the Americans. In the Civil war Spain was found on the side of the Confederate states, and would probably have lent it material aid, had it been in a condition to do so. In 1873 Spaniards seized a vessel floating the American flag and killed the captain and some of the crew and passengers, merely on suspicion that the craft carried supplies for the Cuban insurgents. The exploits of General Weyler in Cuba the past few years and the disregard of the rights of American citizens in that island are still fresh in the minds of the public, to say nothing of the fact that two representatives of Spain in succession have expressed views of the United States and the chief executive of the nation, such as rendered them unfit for the diplomatic service in this country. But notwithstanding all this, it would be unjust to charge the Maine calamity to Spain without indisputable proof.

Probably the disaster will serve to focus public attention on the insurrection in Cuba, and result in a more general demand for cessation of the hostilities there. Indirectly at least, the conditions on the island have cost the United States one of her finest cruisers and many valuable lives. What is called the destiny of nations often appears to turn on incidents of much less importance, and it is conceivable that the fate of Cuba and the Cubans by this will be brought nearer a decision one way or another. The loss of the Maine to the United States may cost Spain an island.

THE EUROPEAN MISSION.

Elder J. W. McMurrin, of the First Council of Seventies and one of the counselors to the president of the European mission, in a private letter to President George O. Cannon, gives some statistics regarding the labors of missionaries in that field during the past year. His letter is undoubtedly of interest to the general public.

The reports show that there were 1,412 baptisms during the year 1887, an increase of 244 over 1886. The writer has been looking over the reports for some years back and found that there has not been so many baptisms in one

year, in the European mission, since 1884. The average number of baptisms for each year since 1884 has been 1,150, except in 1887, when it was 1,398.

"It is true," Brother McMurrin writes, "we have more missionaries in the field now than ever before, and we do not have as many baptisms for each Elder as some former years; still, I think it very gratifying to find that with the great increase of Elders we have an almost corresponding increase of baptisms. In spite of the fact that the Gospel has been preached so extensively in these countries for so many years back, I am of the opinion that the Elders of this mission still meet with as much success as their fellow-laborers in other parts of the world."

The Elders laboring in Great Britain during the past year have visited 384,109 houses in tracting from door to door, and have held 55,867 Gospel conversations. They have received 13,458 special invitations to visit the houses of the people where they have been tracting, and distributed 1,271,258 tracts and placed 5,953 Gospel books in the hands of investigators. They have held 8,558 hall or cottage meetings and 4,104 open air meetings. This labor has resulted in the conversion of 503 souls; prejudices have been removed and hundreds of friends have been made, while the warning has been sounded in the ears of tens of thousands. The missionaries themselves have had their testimony strengthened, and they have been established firmly in the truth.

In the Netherlands mission there have been 126 baptisms: 271 in Switzerland and Germany; 502 in the Scandinavian countries and 10 in Turkey. The Elders operating on the continent do not engage so extensively in tracting as those do who labor in Great Britain; neither do they hold open-air meetings, such not being allowed in any of the continental countries where our Elders are laboring. The tracts in use in the missions on the continent are very much larger than those used in Great Britain, and the cost of them would make it impossible for the Elders to use them as freely as they are used in this part of the mission. Good success attends the missionaries on the continent, and in spite of the fact that in some ways they are hampered and do not have as good opportunities for preaching the Gospel as the Elders in Great Britain have, they maintain a higher average of baptisms for each Elder than has been reached for some time by the brethren in the British Isles.

The missionaries in all parts of the mission are seeking to adopt the best methods possible for the spreading of the Gospel, and they are laboring with a zeal and faith that are commendable for the accomplishment of the work whereunto they have been called. Elder McMurrin states in conclusion that the health of the Elders with very few exceptions is good.

Elder A. H. Lund, of the Council of Apostles, and Elder F. F. Hintze arrived in Liverpool January 18th, and spent some days and afterwards attended a special meeting at Birmingham. From this place they went to Cardiff, where the Welsh conference was held, and then spent three days in London.

During the visit of Elder Lund to Liverpool, in accordance with instructions from President Wilford Woodruff, Elder McMurrin was set apart as one of the First Council of Seventies. Concerning this Elder McMurrin writes:

"Before I was set apart, Brother

Lund asked me if I was willing to accept of the position. I answered 'Yes.' He then asked me if I knew of anything that would prevent me from discharging the duties of the office. I answered 'No.' After this he talked to me in an impressive manner in relation to the importance of the calling and office, and then set me apart. I feel that a very serious responsibility has been placed upon me, and it seems marvelous to me that I should be called to such a position. I pray the Lord to bless me with the qualifications necessary to enable me to discharge the duties of the calling, to His divine acceptance."

A HISTORICAL PICNIC.

Among the books and papers of this office was found the other day a copy of an invitation to a picnic at the head waters of Big Cottonwood, issued by President Brigham Young, for Friday, July 24th, 1857. It is interesting as showing very neat typographical work at that early day, and still more because that particular picnic is of historical interest to Utah. It was during the progress of the entertainment that word was brought to the assembled people that Johnston's army was coming. The invitation card is as follows:

PIC-NIC PARTY

at the
HEAD WATERS
of

BIG COTTONWOOD.

President Brigham Young respectfully invites
and family to attend a Pic-Nic party at the lake in Big Cottonwood canyon on Friday, 24th of July.

REGULATIONS.

You will be required to start so as to pass the first mill, about four miles up the canyon, before 12 o'clock, on Thursday, the 23rd, as no person will be allowed to pass that point after 2 o'clock, p. m. of that day.

All persons are forbidden to smoke cigars or pipes, or kindle fires, at any place in the canyon, except on the camp ground.

The Bishops are requested to accompany those invited from their respective wards and see that each person is well fitted for the trip, with good, substantial, steady teams, wagons, harness, hold-backs and locks, capable of completing the journey without repair, and a good driver, so as not to endanger the life of any individual.

Bishops will, before passing the first mill, furnish a full and complete list of all persons accompanying them from their respective wards, and hand the same to the guard at the gate.

Great Salt Lake City, July 18, 1857.

CONFERENCE IN BROOKLYN.

Elder John M. Whittaker, now laboring in New Jersey, forwards to the "News" clippings from several New York papers relating to the Mormon conference held in Brooklyn on the 6th and 7th instants. The Herald has a synopsis of an address delivered by Elder W. H. King, Utah's representative in Congress, which is fair rather than otherwise, and which was in part reproduced in the press dispatches the day after the address was delivered.

The World praised the singing which was led by a sextette, but said the organ was wheezy, which is very likely true. It gave some of the speakers credit for being good preachers, but criticized others on the ground of poor oratory. The World's remarks on this line convey the idea that it had been led to look for a higher order of oratorical talent on the part