

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

A NATIONAL ORDEAL.

The Latter-day Saints have always cherished an anticipation of a time when they would take the leading part in rescuing our nation from a situation of deadly peril. This looking forward is based upon a prophetic declaration made by the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is to the effect that, in the course of its history, the country would be torn into fragments by internal dissensions, which would result in scenes of riot and bloodshed. The Constitution would be, at that time, trampled under foot and the situation become so menacing, under the tyranny and depredations of ruthless mobs, that, from every natural standpoint, it would appear impossible to snatch the nation from irretrievable ruin. When this point should be reached it should become the high duty of the Saints to raise the standard of liberty and call upon all patriotic lovers of peace to rally around it and assist them in the work of re-establishing peace and reorganizing the Republic upon the basis of constitutional principles. This exalted labor was to be accomplished and be the means of causing a new and brighter era to shine upon the people.

The attention of every thinker is now directed to the signs of the present time. This mental exercise is enforced by the peculiar character of existing conditions. Here is a pertinent question: Do they indicate an approaching dilemma which will demand just such a patriotic intervention as that defined by the Prophet? One of the features of the time is a growing disregard for the requirements and inhibitions of the Constitution. Indeed this evil genius is so widespread that it requires but little growth to make it weigh overwhelmingly. This is susceptible of incontrovertible proof.

One of the strong indications of the drift in the direction of unconstitutionality is the existence and objects of the commonweal army. It is a menace to the government, at the hands of which it demands the enactment and enforcement of measures that are clearly violative of the Constitution. If these demands were complied with, the government could no longer exist, as its power would thus be transferred to an organized mob. But this disposition spreads out over the country like a great gathering cloud, which betokens an impending storm. This is indicated by the fact that the commonwealers have the sympathy and co-operation of great masses of the general populace, and next, of immense bodies of organized workmen, whose societies are spread over the land, extending to every inhabited region of the Republic. How widespread then is the anti-constitutional sentiment. Combine this situation with labor commotions, which are already precipitating scenes of riot and bloodshed, and the country is certainly confronted by the most serious situation with which its legal officers have ever yet grappled. It is only necessary to add the evidences of the decay of popular

character to render the mental picture of the future results of such an accumulation of distracting elements appalling. Then let it be considered that the prospect of an early return to industrial prosperity is exceedingly dim, and the avoidance of a coming revolution will seem still more remote. If a time of national trouble is not near it would look as if causes had ceased to produce their usual results, or that there was a direct intervention of divine providence to stay the day of calamity.

As heretofore explained in these columns, the same modern Prophet referred to at the opening of this article predicted, twenty-nine years before it burst upon the country, the war of the Rebellion. He designated the precise locality where the struggle would open—South Carolina. That was the first state to secede from the Union, its separate resolution having been passed on Dec. 25th, 1860, and the first gun was fired at Charleston the following April. Joseph Smith likewise pointed to another national ordeal, further out in the future, and indicated the section where its most destructive elements would widely prevail. This prediction evidently had reference to the natural outcome of the symptoms which are now so prevalent in the East, where secret oath-bound organizations threaten the peace of that part of the country. It will now be proper to quote the words of the Lord as they came through the human founder of the Church on Feb. 9th, 1831:

"And behold it shall come to pass that my servants shall be sent forth to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south; and even now, let him that goeth to the east teach them that shall be converted to flee to the west and this in consequence of that which is coming on the earth, and of secret combinations."

At the time this revelation was given the preaching of the Gospel was confined to this country, and it indicates that the East would be the chief seat of the great troubles that would arise in the nation through oath-bound associations. They form a mighty host and their aspect is becoming more and more threatening. It is a significant feature of the quoted passage that at the early day when the revelation was given it was not deemed necessary to take time by the forelock and avoid a defined species of trouble by teaching the converted to flee from any other direction to the west, except from the east. It is also a matter of remark that perhaps thousands of men are taking the opposite course, and are moving from the west to the east, in the vain hope of finding relief from their troubles.

Seeing that the times seem traveling toward a great national ordeal, what should be the position of the Saints in relation to every question and situation—both local and general? They should stand by the law and the Constitution, sustain them by word and, if necessary, by deed. They should display unqualified patriotism in its widest and deepest

sense and never be carried away by any popular current or movement that has not truth and right for its basis. Those who participate or even applaud tendencies that are opposed to the spirit of the Constitution are not inspired by the genius of the Gospel of peace, and will have no lot nor part with the patriots who will grapple successfully with dissension and strife and cause order to evolve out of national anarchy.

LYNCHING FIGURES.

According to statistics published by the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* there occurred in the United States up to May 5th, this year, no less than fifty cases of lynching. Of these, four were perpetrated in Kansas, two in Ohio, two in Indiana, and one in Pennsylvania, while forty-one belong to Southern states. Of these Alabama heads the list with eleven; next come Louisiana with nine and Arkansas with seven.

Apologists for the savagery in the South generally offer the excuse that lynchings occur as a natural result of the uncontrollable feeling of indignation on the part of the white population, when the daughters and wives are assaulted by black brutes—a sense of honor requiring that the dearest heritage of man must be defended and avenged. Thus a prominent bishop of the Methodist church, last October, when a negro had been burned at the stake after first having been subjected to tortures after the manner of the most cruel savages, wrote in the *Forum*:

Unless assaults by negroes on white women and little white girls come to an end, there will most probably be still further displays of vengeance that will shock the world. Sane men who are just will consider the provocation. Sane men who are righteous will remember not only the brutish man who dies by the slow torture of fire; they will think also of the ruined woman, worse tortured than he.

This has been the essence of the apology offered for the Southern lynchings, but from the statistics gathered it is evident that the plea is not well sustained, for of the forty-one cases of murder by mobs in the South, only eight victims were killed for such offenses, while all the balance were accused of less grave crimes and some were only suspected.

The fact of the matter is that the frequent recurrence of killing by mobs, whether the victims be colored or white, is the outgrowth of a lawless spirit and the desire to gratify the brutal craving for personal revenge common to man in a certain stage of moral development. It is on a level with duelling, street-fighting, family feuds, vendettas and similar embodiments of the jurisprudence of a barbarous age. The people resorting to such means may be advanced in every other respect and stand in the front ranks of the nineteenth century civilization, but the very fact that they prevent the law from taking its regular course proves that they morally stand on the level of Corsicans, Afghans and Montenegrins whose first thought is of the stilleto or other weapons of the assassin. To offer any apology for such deeds is to