

RESEARCH FOR MORMON HISTORY.

The following communication, from the Secretary of the Chicago Historical Society, to Judge Waite, acknowledging the receipt of the collection of books referred to in the note from the Judge to President Young, of Sept. 1st, 1862, published in the 10th number of the current volume of the News, has been placed at our disposal by his Honor. It was not written for that purpose, but in consequence of its interesting nature, it is deemed not improper to give it publicity.

Inasmuch as the letter makes no allusion to the fact, that the books, or most of them, were donated by President Young, Judge Waite wishes us to state that the letter giving due credit to the President for the munificent donation so highly prized, was directed to Judge Skinner, of Chicago, an officer of the Society, as understood, which it seems Mr. Barry, the Secretary, to whom the books were forwarded direct, had not seen at the date of his communication.

CHICAGO, Dec. 29, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have the honor to return you this Society's very grateful acknowledgments, for the extensive and valuable collection of "Mormon" publications, consisting of twenty-three bound books, eighteen pamphlets, and newspapers, obligingly forwarded by you, by mail, for this Society, and received in the latter part of September.

May I beg your kind indulgence, in the delay of the acknowledgment. The books came direct to the Society, and with no accompanying letter; nor had I been advised here, that they were expected. It was not, in fact, until quite recently that I learned from Judge Skinner, that it was to your attentive and esteemed kindness and liberality, we were indebted, for a favor so important and so gratefully appreciated.

You will better understand, my dear sir, how warmly your intelligent and most successful aid is esteemed, when I say, that, in no department of this Society's labors and collections, have I more early, vigilantly, and persistently, pursued my researches than here—in "Mormon" history. I have the only set I know, here, of the original "Times and Seasons" (1839—1845), as published by Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet. Mr. late honored and learned friend (Dr. E. James, of Iowa)—a man, by the way, having not his peer in the West for original genius, broad philanthropy (as an abolitionist he was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews"), and exact learning, was induced by me to prepare a history of the County of Hancock—the Mormons especially, and the "Iberians," who followed them at Nauvoo. How he would have greeted these precious volumes—Swedish, Welsh, and all—for he had the "gift of tongues!" He was intimate with "Christian Christiansen," the Danish poet, still with the Mormons. (Pray find him out, if you know him not: Dr. James had a high esteem of him.) Dr. James pursued his subject *an amore*, till sudden death (falling beneath a team he was driving on his large and beautiful farm) arrested his work. I have since been there, and secured what little he had done on this theme, but he had only begun. And now I am hoping (as soon as my materials are full) to secure the aid, in its continuation, of another (*primum inter pares*)—Mr. John Russell, of Bluffdale, Ill., a man of like elements, though more refined and, may I add, more christianized—this, however, not derogating from the high and exalted moral worth of the other.

I make these explanations solely to show with what faith and earnestness I seek the end to which your most esteemed aid helps me.

And now, my dear sir, allow me to say, how gratefully I shall appreciate your help—so in the midst of that marvellous people. I am no despiser of the Mormons. More than that, I regard them with interest, as a people seeking to carry out, as I believe, in good faith, a genuine conviction. Could you read one of Mr. Russell's letters to me, describing a "Mormon Stake" near him, or read my good friend Dr. James' letters, you would see how they esteemed the persecutions of the Mormons in Illinois. The sentiments of abhorrence both expressed, I concur in. My sole wish is to do exact justice to a people, erring, as they may be thought, yet sincere. Will you not help me, from this stand-point, to collect all the information possible, to vindicate the impartial truth of history.

I want much to secure a complete file of the "Deseret News," and any other journals or magazines printed there. I would like all the Territorial documents. Is there nothing printed on education? I should like the whole. Then I should like any municipal documents, reports of societies, in series; addresses, orations, programmes of meetings; *a'manacs*, if any; school-books, above all, if there are any distinctively "Mormon." Are there no other publications of Mormon "biography," didactics, or polemics. In a word, there is nothing, however trivial, even to ordinary "tickets" or "announcements," or "circulares," I would not greet with pleasure. Not to burden you, I enclose a "greenback" of ten dollars, and should you incur more charge, pray inform me, and I will, with pleasure, indemnify you.

I trust you will appreciate my motive, in saying that our collections are now near sixty thousand, chiefly American. Such a fact may

be my apology for desiring to add to the collection of a people, with whose history our own is interwoven. In a few weeks, I hope to have the pleasure of forwarding to you a printed copy of a "Report" of this Society, recently made to the Governor, in pursuance of a law of 1861, giving a sketch of Illinois history and the Society's transactions.

Begging you will pardon this extended letter,

I am, my dear sir,
Most respectfully and gratefully,
Your obedient servant,
WILLIAM BARRY,
Sec., &c.

Hon. C. B. WAITE.

P.S.—Should you meet Mr. Christiansen, pray give him my profound and warm respects (though a stranger), for the sake of my dear and honored friend, Dr. James. He may help you for Dr. James' sake. Say to him that I have been in Denmark, and am not a stranger to the languages and the noble people of Scandinavia.

Please oblige every pamphlet you can.

Judge Waite is anxious to comply with the wishes of the Historical Society expressed through its Secretary, Mr. Barry, in the procurement of the desired books and documents; and requests those having any of the books, pamphlets, etc., indicated which they are willing to donate or sell for that purpose, to leave them with Mr. Campbell or Mr. Bullock, at the Historian's Office.

FAMOUS RIVER CROSSINGS IN MILITARY HISTORY.

At the Granicus, three hundred and thirty-four years before Christ, Alexander the Great opposed the Persian force of one hundred thousand foot and ten thousand horse, with a small but select army, only thirty-five thousand strong. Unburdened by artillery, the Macedonians and Greeks plunged into the stream at several points, and routed the enervate Persians. This battle was but the type of those which followed at the Issus and Hydaspes. It may be remarked, in passing, however, that there were no well-posted batteries to sweep his crossings.

Cæsar's passage of the Rhine was far more artistic, and more strategic; his famous bridge being designed not only for that crossing, but to keep up his communication, and to present the barbarians a permanent manifestation of his skill and power.

The crossing of the bridge over the marshes at Arcola was but a tactical movement in the midst of a battle. But Napoleon's passage of the Danube, at the Island of Lobau, in 1809, was a daring action in which the French were defeated at Aspern, and compelled, after great losses, to recross, but, thanks to the Island of Lobau, when Napoleon concentrated his troops and supplies he was soon ready for another crossing and another trial, and at the next attempt he was successful in winning the battle of Wagram. He had, however, increased the number and strength of his bridges before he tried it again. At the Beresina, in 1812, a river crossing the retreat, with inadquate bridges, the result was fearfully fatal; and did more to reduce and demoralize the French army than anything had yet done; or rather it was the finishing stroke to a hailstorm of disasters.

In the first movement from Eupatoria upon Sebastopol, the Alma, although an unimportant stream, gave the Russians a choice position and played an important part in the battle of the 20th of September, 1854. So did the Tchernaya and Trokhir bridge in the days afterwards.

Small streams are not without great claims in grand tactics; the tributaries of the Danube, the Iller, the Isar, the Inn, and the Leach, have been of great value in every campaign on that great river. The Tanaro and Bormida, and even the brook Fontanone, were features of the field of Marengo; the little mazy streams in Belgium dictated the movements upon Waterloo.

GIVING THE DEVIL HIS DUE.—There is point in the following anecdote: A pastor was making a call upon an old lady, who made it an habitual rule never to speak ill of another, and had observed it so closely, that she always justified those whom she had heard evil spoken of. Before the old lady made her appearance in the parlor, her several children were speaking of this peculiarity of their mother, and one of them playfully added: "Mother has such a habit of speaking well of everybody, that I believe if Satan himself were the subject of conversation, mother would find out some virtue or good quality even in him." Of course this remark elicited some smiling and merriment at the originality of the idea, in the midst of which the old lady entered the room, and on being told what had just been said, she immediately and involuntarily replied: "Well, my children, I wish we all had Satan's industry and perseverance!"

—An old lady walked into the office of a Judge of Probate in Massachusetts and asked, "Are you the Judge of Probates?" "I am the Judge of Probate." "Well, that's it, I expect," quoth the old lady; "you see my father died detested, and he left several little infidels, and I want to be their executioner."

Too TRUE.—Pope once said, it is with narrow-souled people as it is with narrow-necked bottles—the less they have in them the more noise they make in pouring it out.

DEATH OF SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

The celebrated dramatist, James Sheridan Knowles, died at Torquay, France, on the 29th of November, in his 79th year.

We have a brief account of his history, from the columns of the New York Sun, from which we extract a few items of general interest, but which we more especially devote to the friends and patrons of the drama.

The announcement that the fine play of "Virginius," personated by Mr. Bernard Snow and so enthusiastically received at the Theatre in this city last week, was written by Mr. Knowles, will not in the least detract from its popularity and captivating effects; if, indeed, the fact of its having emanated from the pen of an author so distinguished, coupled with its soul-stirring plot, its excellent moral and its admirable presentation upon the boards, does not only warrant but almost imperatively call for a repetition to the fullest satisfaction of the theatre-going classes:

"Mr. Knowles was born in Cork, Ireland, and manifested at an early age an extraordinary taste for literature, which was encouraged by his father, who was a man of talent and learning. In his twelfth year he composed the libretto of an opera, which was submitted to Richardson, the literary veteran of the day. Like all aspiring youths he soon found his way to London, and through Charles Lamb and Haylett became acquainted with the literary celebrities of England.

"He had some military taste, and a commission was procured for him; but he soon relinquished a profession so uncongenial to his tastes. He soon after appeared as an actor in the Dublin theatres. He played in the same company with Edmund Kean, and remained on the stage for some years. He then became a teacher in Belfast, where he produced his first dramas, which were received with extraordinary favor.

"His third play of 'Virginius' was written for Edmund Kean, and at his request; but he never appeared in it, and when first acted Mr. Macready took the principal part. It met with a warm reception, but he subsequently re-cast and revised it in its present form.

"Other plays followed in quick succession, of which 'William Tell,' 'The Wife,' 'Love,' 'The Hunchback,' 'The Secretary,' and 'Woman's Wit,' were the most celebrated, and still maintain a place on the stage. In some of these plays Mr. Knowles himself took a character, and excelled in 'Master Walter,' in the 'Hunchback.'

"About ten years ago the weight of age and infirmities began to weigh upon him, and a pension of £200 a year from the English Government was conferred on him by the late Sir Robert Peel. Since then he wrote several novels, which, though successful, were not equal to his dramatic works.

"Of late years Mr. Knowles became a teacher, and wrote several controversial works which are scarcely worthy of his fame. It is as a dramatic writer alone that he is most favorably known. He was twice married and had a numerous family, of whom three sons and three daughters reached maturity."

FUNERALS IN SCOTLAND.

A funeral in Scotland 150 years ago was a feast, and sometimes a fortune was well high consumed in celebrating the great event. In the account of the funeral expenses of Sir Hugh Campbell, of Calder or Cawdor, there were charges for an enormous quantity of food and drink consumed. At the funeral of Mrs. Forbes of Culoden the mourners all got drunk. The festivities were conducted by her son Duncan, well known as the Lord President Forbes. The company sat so long and drank so freely that when the word was given for the procession to form, and for the mourners to march to the burial ground, the coffin was forgotten. The whole troop of jolly mourners found themselves at the grave with nothing to put in it. Special messengers were sent back for the poor dead lady, whose remains were then deposited in the grave with all the decorum which could be mustered, under such anti-funeral circumstances."

Nor were such death scenes peculiar to the Highlands. There is a singular story told of Lord Forglan on the authority of Auchinleck, James Boswell's father. On the day of Lord Forglan's death his physician called on him as usual. "How does my lord do?" inquired the doctor as he entered the house.

"I hope he's well," answered the manservant with a solemnity which told what he meant.

The doctor was then shown into a room where two dozen of wine were laid out under a table. Other persons presently came in, and the manservant making them all sit down, began to describe to them his master's last moments, and at the same time to push the bottle about briskly. After a glass or two the company rose to depart, but they were detained by the man.

"No, no, gentlemen; not so," he said. "It was the express will of the dead that I should fill ye a' fou, and I maun fulfill the will of the dead."

"And, indeed," said the doctor, who afterwards told the story, "he did fulfill the will of the dead, for before the end of there was na ane of us able to bite his ain thumb."

CASH NO LONGER "TRASH."

Shakespeare's oft-quoted sentiment, "He that steals my purse," etc., has lost its force in these days of rags, greenbacks, and billious currency. So scarce is even silver coin in the Eastern cities that it is stated as a fact, that a gentleman carrying a Mexican dollar realized handsomely by exhibiting it at a three cent postage stamp per sight. In referring to the matter, the New York Argus indulges in the following amusing strain:

"The sight of silver coin is as rare in this country now-a-days as that of a grizzly bear or a What Is It? Perhaps Barnum may have a five, ten, or possibly a twenty-five cent piece; but such coins are known no more in the places which once knew them, and we mourn their departure in sorrow which is not incapable of expression. Perhaps they are—

"Not lost, but gone before,
To that unseen and silent shore—
Shall we not meet as here before
Some Summer morning?"

Yes—on the shores of Canada we may see their bright and pleasant faces, if Mr. Stanton will only let us cross the lines. Silver, they say, is so plenty over there that it is at a discount—the banks refuse to receive it—it is actually said to be a drug in the market! Precious drug! More precious than opium in China, hashish in India, or quinine in Richmond!"

"THE CRISIS OF THE AMERICAN WAR."

This is the title of a paper in the November number of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, just issued from the New York press. We extract a single paragraph to show in what light the war is regarded by the literati of the old world:

"With their armies baffled and beaten, and with the standards of the rebel army again within sight of Washington, the President has at length owned the impossibility of success in fair warfare, and seeks to paralyze the victorious armies of the South by letting loose upon their hearts and homes the lust and savagery of four million negroes. The die is cast. Henceforth it is a war of extermination. The North seeks to make of the South a desert—a wilderness of bloodshed and misery; for thus only, now, does it, or can it hope to overcome the seceding Confederacy. Mon true, reckless, devilish as the project is, we believe it will not succeed. But it at least marks the crisis and the wing-point of the war. It shows that the North has shot its last bolt—the effects of which we do not yet see, but beyond which there is no other. It proves what every one in this country was loth to believe—that rather than let the Southern States be independent, rather than loose their trade and custom, the North would league itself with Beelzebub, and seek to make a hell of half a continent. In return, this atrocious act justifies the South in hoisting the black flag and in proclaiming a war against the Yankee hosts. And thus within the bosom of civilization we are called upon to contemplate a war more full of horrors and wickedness than any which stands recorded on the world's history."

In reference to the emancipation proclamation the same paper again says:

"In a moral point of view there cannot be two opinions in this country as to the President's proclamation. To employ such a means of hostility as a negro insurrection is simply infamous."

WHERE MONEY IS PLENTY.—From an expression in the commercial reports of the Toronto Leader, we infer that all the American silver coin has escaped to the shores of Canada—doubtless with the shoals of fugitives, also to escape the draft. It says:

"No one refuses to receive a moderate quantity of American silver in payment."

In view of this superabundance in Canada, one of the New York papers calls for a hundred thousand Canadian subscribers, saying:

"We will take our pay in silver, at par. This will relieve our neighbors across the St. Lawrence of a depreciated currency, and will enable us to go into the show business with Artemus Ward."

THE MAYOR'S NEST.—An anecdote is told of one Robbie Johnson, who, in the year 1769, was Provost [Anglice Mayor] of Dundee, in Scotland. His service being required on a certain occasion, a messenger was despatched to his house, who, upon asking for the Provost, was told by the guidwife that he was "awa" to the whin hill for a pocketful of whins." Off scampered the gallant to the "whin hill," and soon the Provost appeared, and, throwing down his faggot, pulled off his bonnet, and wiping the sweat from his bald pate, said, "Janet, where's my wig? I'm to sit in judgment the day."

"Your wig!" quoth Janet: "did I ever hear sic a man! How can you get your wig? D'ye no ken the hen's laying in it?"

—Confidence is the first principle of all business.