DESERET NEWS:

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY THE

DESERET NEWS COMPANY.

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WEDNESDAY, - SEPT. 26, 1888

GENERAL SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

THE Fifty-ninth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will commence at 10 o'clock Friday morning, October 5th, 1888, in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City.

The officers and members of the Church are respectfully invited to attend.

A meeting of the Deseret Sunday School Union will be held at the Tabernacle on Friday evening, October 5th, one of the Priesthood on Saturday evening, October 6th, and of the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Associations on Sunday evening, October 7th.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

In behalf of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

BURNING KANSAS.

THE western part of the great State of Kansas is often afflicted by terribly hot winds. They are veritable sirrocos. They wither up and destroy the crops and render work during their prevalence impossible. This year the thermometer ran up to 130 degrees while the south wind blew. The blast is deadly and devastation marks its path.

There is a cause for this, of course. Charles Francis Adams, the railroad magnate, has given his opinion of it to the Kansas City *Times*. He has witnessed its effects both in periods of drouth and when there has been an average rainfall. He does not claim to be the discoverer of the reasons he advances, but has formed his views after conversation with observing men. He thinks the trouble is traceable to the unsettled condition of the country lying south and west of Kansas. This is the theory:

"Originally the whole county west of the Missouri River was one vast rolling plain, which had for centuries been burnt over by fire and trodden by buffalo until the surface of the soil was somewhat of the nature of a tile. From this the water flowed rapidly off into the ravines and then to the Missouri River. There was no more capacity for absorption in the soil than there is in the roof of a church. The radiation of heat from this tile-like surface was also about the same as it is from the roof of a church. Accordingly, as the prevailing winds passed over this vast baking and radiating surface they became heated to a higher and higher degree until they withered up every green thing with which they came in contact. It was like a draught of air across iron radiators.

As agriculture crept west from the Missouri River, this tile-like plain has been broken up and fields of growing crops have taken place of the buffalo grass. The soil now not only holds the rainfall, but the fields of growing crops, especially of corn, protect the earth from the constant burning rays of the sun, and generate coolness as well as moisture.

As yet the area of agriculture has stretched only a limited distance west, and toward the south it is put a stop to by the Indian Territory. That territory remains in its primal condition, and, together with the Panhandle of Texas, constitutes a vast radiating surface over which, in its heated condition, the prevailing winds of summer pass, and then strike the southern border of Kansas. Here they come in contact with growing crops, especially of corn, and they burn and wither these up until the sirocco becomes cooled by passing over the artificially tempered area. Accordingly, this summer the hot winds seem to have traversed only the western and southern portions of Kansas, there destroying the crops, but losing their destructive force before reaching the northern and eastern tiers of counties."

Mr. Adams concludes that if this theory is correct, there will be no change in the condition until the Indian Territory is opened to cultivation and the hard-baked soil is broken up. As it is, Kansas is still the pioneer State, with the old tile-covered plain stretching out beyond it. Farmers of Western and Southern Kansas occupy, therefore, much the position of a permanent front rank in the line of battle, sure always to take the fire. Behind them rest in security the northern tier of counties of the State and the adjoining State of Nebraska.

These ideas are worthy of consideration and suggestive of a remedy for the evil which afflicts at least of what may be called burning if not "bleeding" Kansas.

OMAHA AND SOCIAL VICE.

OMAHA is pointed out by some of our cotemporaries as a progressive and "Christian" city, to be very much admired for its enterprise, and to be regarded in contrast and as a pattern for Salt Lake. There is no doubt that the city on "the river" has grown rapidly and put on at an early date the habiliments of civic maturity. It contains many worthy, intelligent and pushing people, and has availed itself of most of the opportunities which its situation and facilities have afforded.

But there is a dark side to the picture, as there is of all places where human beings congregate in large numbers. Omaha has considerable difficulty in its endeavors to regulate the morals of its citizens, among whom there are many lawless and incorrigible characters. Its criminal calendar runs up to high figures, and compared with Salt Lake it is overwhelming. It is not worse, however, than hundreds of American cities of similar size. We do not wish to run down Omaha, but simply to vindicate Salt Lake in comparison. We have no grudge against the place or its people.

The Omaha Evangelical Alliance has been holding meetings, and a committee appointed to gather information in regard to the social evil have made their report to the body, at an assembly in the First Presbyterian Church of that city. Here is a table taken from the report, which shows the status of that evil in its public aspects, and its growth during the past three months:

	June.	July.	Aug.	Sept.
Assignation houses..	2	2	2	2
Landladies and houses.....	38	42	42	45
Public prostitutes...	232	248	248	292
Total.....	272	292	292	340

Increase of public houses since June..... 7
Increase of public prostitutes since June. 68

These are only the places known to the police as devoted to the "necessary evil," as its apologists call it. The report states that a public officia says:

"Standing at the gateway of the Casino an evening with a police officer, and he will point out 200 women who come there, practice their wiles, secure their partner and go to their private rooms."

None of these were included in the table above, and the report goes on to say, "The number of men who are constantly seeking on the streets, everywhere, young women to make them victims are scores and hundreds." This is a terrible condition of public morals. And there is still another shade to the picture. The police authorities declare that there is an immense number of "respectable men and women" who though not married are living together as man and wife or are connected with this illicit business.

One of the most prolific sources of the evil, it appears, are the wine rooms; and it is stated in a prominent paper of that city, that "all the houses of prostitution in that city are not capable of as much harm, and really do less than the principal wine rooms. They are the schools of vice."

The system adopted for the regulation of this evil is a monthly fine, levied on the known houses and their inmates. A list is kept, and the women are notified to appear and pay the fine, which is much less than the maximum provided by law. If they neither appear nor pay the fine, they are liable to arrest, and, as a rule, those who are arrested are wretched creatures in the lowest stages of vice. The fines aggregate about $25,000 a year, and the proceeds of this virtual licensing of the evil go to the support of the public schools! The report says:

"In effect, the city takes their money and winks at their crime—tells them to go on and they do, increasing their numbers sixty-eight since June."

A lady living near a quarter where these vile houses are tolerated by the city authorities, and who was present at the meeting, said: "She lived within the plague spot and she could recall twenty Sunday school girls who had been enticed into leading lives of shame by the houses situated there." She advocated moving them beyond the city limits.

The Alliance passed resolutions pronouncing the evil "an unspeakable danger and an enormous and increasing crime," and the fine system as a virtual license and approval of it; submitting the propriety of treating those who are convicted of the crime "as the worst of criminals are treated;" recommending the removal of these "public houses" from the vicinity of the public schools and from "every community in the city;" commending the establishment of "homes" for the destitute, intemperate and penitent; and calling upon all the pure-minded to work against the evil and use their influence at primaries and elections for its eradication.

This is a serious subject, not only for Omaha, but for every populous place in the United States. And we suggest for the thousandth time that the preachers, writers, philanthropists and social scientists of the land would do far more for humanity, the preservation of "the purity of the home" and the maintenance of good society, by uniting their efforts for the suppression of this frightful and corrupting vice, than in denouncing, fighting and misrepresenting the "Mormons" and the family relations which a small portion of them have contracted.

There is a wide field, all over the Union, for the labors of the virtuous and moral, who take an interest in the public welfare. They need not go many steps from their homes to do the work. They can gain a correct understanding of its proportions and necessities. They need not depend for information upon rumors from afar and the exaggerations of people interested in raising funds to expend at a distance. Right under their own noses and within the sound of the church bells that call them to Sunday worship, flourish social crimes that are appalling in their depravity and extent. And these are smelling to heaven, daily and nightly, and polluting the very air breathed by those who give money to correct a reported wrong, of which they know nothing and said to exist in a remote part of this great country.

The evil in their midst is an old one, it is true; Christendom is familiar with its fumes and accustomed to its gaudy and flaunting appearance. But it is none the less the social danger of the age and a standing shame and disgrace to every "Christian" city under the sun. Is it blindness, stupidity or arrant hypocrisy, that causes so many men and women in this land to go into convulsions of offended decency over imagined evils in Utah, and bear with unruffled complacency the foulness and corruption that reek all around them and saturate and poison their own vaunted social system?

LET THE RECORD SPEAK.

WE are pleased to note the fact that the majority of the non-"Mormon" portion of the population are disgusted with the unseemly rage and malice exhibited by a small minority of political self-seekers because of a disposition having been lately manifested to administer the law here as elsewhere. Such decisions as would be given in "Chicago or New York" are not wanted by that class when "Mormons" are being dealt with. Yet when it is assigned as a reason why men did not appear some time ago and meet charges preferred against them, that they would be confronted by a vindictive District Attorney and a prejudiced court, the bare intimation is viciously designated as false by certain individuals fired with furious hate. Fortunately the record, like the blood of Banquo, will not out. Unless compelled to, in order to vindicate the truth, we have no present disposition to rake the record up. If, however, it becomes necessary in our judgment, we have a formidable budget salted away. It may not be amiss to present a fragment now.

On May 2nd, 1885, when Parley P. Pratt was before the court for sentence for unlawful cohabitation the judge expressed his regret that the law did not provide a greater penalty than imprisonment for six months and a fine of $300. In unison with this numerous sentiment, in addition to the maximum penalty of the law, hard labor was included in the judgment. That element of the sentence was subsequently eliminated being extra-legal as well as extra-judicial. But the District Attorney, for whom Mr. McKay acted, subsequently came to the relief of the unprejudiced judge, as will be seen by the following record of a proceeding, on the 9th of October, 1885, in the Third District:

"The grand jury came into court at 11:30 today, and presented one indictment under the laws of the United States.

Mr. McKay then arose and stated that there was a matter he wished to bring to the attention of the court, which had been discussed informally and otherwise in the grand jury room. At least one member of the grand jury claimed the right to say whether he should find an indictment or not, when at the same time he admitted the evidence sufficient to warrant it, claiming that it would be a usurpation on the part of the grand jury to find an indictment under certain circumstances, notwithstanding the evidence warranted it. Mr. McKay then stated the objection was in relation to finding more than one indictment for unlawful cohabitation in a certain period. The juror referred to said he would do no such thing, in spite of being reminded that his oath required it, under the instructions of the Court. Under the circumstances Mr. McKay thought the juror incompetent.

The Court asked for his name and Mr. Clayton was named as the juror.

Mr. Clayton said yes, he was the one, and desired to correct Mr. McKay in one particular. That he had not refused to indict where the evidence warranted. That he had voted for indictment in that case.

Mr. McKay stated that the point he made was that the juror refused to find more than one indictment. The juror assumed to say whether the law was correctly laid down by the Court or not. It was not disputed that the grand juror had a right to say whether the evidence was sufficient or not, but the grand juror claimed that even where the evidence was sufficient, the finding of more than one indictment was unconstitutional; that the law of 1862 fixed the maximum punishment for polygamy, and the Edmunds law showed it to be the intention of Congress to fix the utmost punishment for unlawful cohabitation, which he termed the 'junior' offense; at six months' imprisonment and $300 fine; and to find two or more indictments against a man he might be punished to even a greater extent than for polygamy.

Mr. McKay stated further that there was another juror he asked to have taken off for substantially the same reasons, Mr. Jacob Moritz; and he was informed that there were others.

Mr. Davis stated that in certain cases he had the same opinion as Mr. Moritz.

Mr. Clayton was interrogated by the court and said he believed it was unconstitutional to find more than one indictment. The Constitution provides that excessive fines or unusual punishments shall not be imposed. He said he did vote for indictment where "the evidence" warranted it, but to go back and find an indictment for every day, or every minute or week, he would not indict. Notwithstanding the evidence showed the defendant had been living in unlawful cohabitation for three years, he would find but one indictment. He had advised with no one, talked with no one, except perhaps his wife.

Mr. Moritz and Mr. Davis thought that where parties had been indicted, tried and convicted, those parties ought to have a chance after they came out, then if they didn't live within the law they were ready to find it them.

The Court then interrogated each of the other jurors as to whether he took the same position, but they all responded in the negative.

Court—Mr. Moritz, Mr. Davis and Mr. Clayton: I am surprised, gentlemen, that after you took the oath you did, that you would investigate and enquire into all the matters that were brought before you, and whenever the evidence was sufficient you would find the truth, and nothing but the truth; that you would not be influenced by fear, favor or affection, or by any reward, or promise, or hope thereof, but in all your presentments, you would present the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, that you will state you will not do it—

Clayton—I have stated that I would, and did so.

Court—The effect of your statement is to that effect.

Clayton—I don't understand it that way—

Court—Men must be careful when they take oaths—

Moritz—We had no evidence. We didn't take a vote on it.

Court—But you have no right to state you would not do it. You cannot trifle with your consciences like that in this court. It is astonishing that men have not more regard for their oaths than that. Where the evidence is sufficient you have no discretion whatever. If it is sufficient to indict. You must indict; if it is not sufficient, you cannot indict. You have no more discretion than this Court has when a case is submitted to it. If the evidence is one way, the Court, under its oath cannot find another. If a case is submitted to the Court, if the evidence is with the plaintiff, it cannot find the facts the other way. So with a grand jury; you have not the slightest discretion. You must move directly according to your oaths, and find the truth according to the evidence. You have no right to say you will not indict though the evidence may be sufficient. You have no right to say a law is unconstitutional or wrong after the Court charges you that it is the law. It is the duty of the Court to charge you what the law is with respect to your duties as grand jurors, and has so charged you. Gentlemen, you are excused as unworthy to sit on a grand jury. Next time you come before the Court and are questioned as you were in this case, as members of the grand jury, answer frankly and honestly, and if you go on the grand jury you must be governed by your oaths.

Mr. Moritz, Mr. Davis and Mr. Clayton, you may retire, you are discharged from this grand jury.

This afternoon Mr. McKay made an argument in support of the proposition that the court had power to fill the vacant places in the grand jury. He read from the decision of the Supreme Court in the Clawson case, affirming the legality of the open *venire* process in obtaining a petit jury, and contended that it was within the power of the court to adopt the open *venire* course in the present instance.

At the close of his remarks, Mr. McKay moved that an open *venire* issue, and the court ordered that it be for six names, and be returnable forthwith.

This proceeding was followed, as the 200 names on the jury list were exhausted.

Upon the return of the open *venire*, J. S. Scott, J. T. Clasbey and A. Gebhardt were selected to fill up the grand jury.

Thus it was made possible to send a man to prison for the term of his natural life and fine him in a sum that could not be met by a millionaire, for a simple misdemeanor, solely because he happened to be a "Mormon." From that time forward until the Supreme Court of the United States interfered, for a single offense of unlawful cohabitation, by the segregation process, men were sent to the penitentiary to serve terms on all the way from one to seven indictments or counts, and were under fines in keeping with the same process.

The District Attorney stated in the hearing of a number of persons with whom we are acquainted, that he could send Mr. George Q. Cannon up for the balance of his life. Not taking the probable interference of the Supreme Court of the United States into account, this did not appear at the time to be an idle boast.

Now take the proceeding above quoted in another aspect—the expulsion of three grand jurors because they declined to violate the Constitution, and the filling of the vacancies thus created by open venire process, and then hunt for a parallel in the history of civilized jurisprudence. It simply cannot be found.

In what position did the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, declaring unlawful the action of the local courts in segregating the offense of unlawful cohabitation, place the district attorney and judge? It placed them in one of two lights—that of a vindictive District Attorney and a prejudiced court, or officials who were ignorant of the law. The latter theory is not a feasible one. The court said the precedents were, without exception, against the position taken by the local courts.

Like Banquo's ghost, the apparition of a vindictive District Attorney and prejudiced court will not down. It pops up in the courts ever and anon, as some person who did not formerly expect a fair trial comes into court with three or four indictments or counts over his head for the same offense, and the court dismisses all but one, the others not having been the offshoots of a fair prosecution and an impartial court. This has been exemplified at every term of court since the jail delivery created by the decision of the court of last resort in relation to the continuous character of the offense of unlawful cohabitation.

We have an immense budget of judicial proceedings pigeon-holed. They are handy to have in the house, being portions of the record. They are only of use to us in defending the truth when it is unscrupulously assailed.

COUNT THE COST AND THEN DECIDE.

THE City Council advertise in our columns that it is their intention to construct a double line of lateral sewers in District No. 1, the boundaries of which with the course of the laterals are given in the notice of intention. The cost of this work to the property holders in that district will be two per cent on the assessed value of the real estate for 1888. Added to this will be about $100 each for house connection, and the expense of plumbing in the house which can only be learned by an estimate from a plumber.

So much for the direct cost to the taxpayers in District No. 1. The indirect cost of the main sewer, to be built out of city finances, which means at the expense of all the taxpayers, has not yet been definitely determined. But if it will take $80,000 to put in these lateral pipes in one district, the cost of the large sewer to carry the sewage to some unknown but distant point, on the Jordan or by the lake, will surely be something enormous.

Now it is for the property owners in the district named to say whether they want these laterals built at their expense or not. If they say nothing, the work, we suppose, will go on and they will have to pay their $100 each besides a tax of two per cent on their real estate, and then, to make it of any personal use, will have to employ plumbers to fix up the necessary conveniences in their respective houses and stores. If they do not want to go to this expense, they will have to send their objections or protests to the City Council on or before Tuesday, October 16th.

So far the City Council has acted fairly, and with the view of affording the citizens to be affected by this project an opportunity of manifesting whether they want to have and pay for the sewers or not. But the chief difficulty, in our opinion, still remains. The question is, what are you going to do with the sewage from District No. 1 if the pipes are laid and paid for? Where is the waste matter to be deposited? Is the Jordan to be the receptacle for the filth? If so, at what point is the discharge to be made? Is there any assurance that the stream will carry the sewage to the lake when the Jordan is low, and that it will not overcast it upon people's farms when the water is high? When these questions are decided, what is to be the approximate cost of the main sewer from the point of beginning to the place of discharge?

It is easy to ask questions. But they often become necessary. There is need for them now. They are most important in view of the situation and the published intention of the City Council. It is clear that unless there is some understanding of this principal matter, the taxpayers in District No. 1 cannot decide intelligently whether they want the laterals or not except as to their willingness or ability to bear the local and special expense.

To build lateral sewers before a main receptacle is provided, seems like putting the cart before the horse, and to construct either main or laterals before it is decided where to discharge or deposit the sewage, is like buying a wild elephant without any place to put the quadruped.