

The Terre Haute, Ind., *Gazette* has the annexed pointed editorial:

"The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States affirming the constitutionality of the act of Congress confiscating the property of the Mormon Church is the most dangerous menace, or rather the deadliest stab to religious freedom that has ever been witnessed in this country. Carried to its legitimate conclusion it clothes Congress with a power which an irresponsible tyrant would hardly dare to use for fear of dynamite. To confiscate the church property of a people who believe the Book of Mormon was divinely inspired, carries with it the right, when Congress pleases, to confiscate the church property, or other property for that matter, of people who believe the Old and New Testament are inspired, or the property of those who do not believe they are inspired.

"This interpretation of the Constitution is itself unconstitutional.

"It is contrary to the fundamental idea of freedom and the rights of man. It is a scandalous outgiving, to our thinking. The court must be reorganized or the Constitution must be changed.

"Mormonism, in our opinion, is a snare and a delusion, a nightmare of a religion, a fraud and a cheat in its inception and foolishness in its practice, but the right of those who hold that faith is as sacred as the right of any man to hold to his faith, and this earth is going to rival hell if we begin quarreling with one another in a deadly way about our respective faiths. Our only safety, and the right and the decent and the just thing to do, is to let every human being hold whatever religious belief he pleases. Whether a person thinks there is a God or isn't a God; whether he thinks He ought to be worshipped in this, that or the other way or in no way at all; whether he thinks there is or isn't a heaven or a hell; whether he thinks he has or hasn't a soul is his own look out and nobody else's. For our part we would rather stand in the shoes of the man who honestly thought that what shall prove to be the wildest guess was the true belief, provided he lets other people alone in their beliefs, than in the shoes of the best guesser at the mysteries of life and death, but who was inoculated with this Devil's doctrine that it was his business, and for the Lord's sake, to steal the property of that other.

"Polygamy is not Mormonism. It is an overt act of Mormons and against the laws. Punish the polygamist. But punish him in his person. To take even his property is to steal, and stealing never was constitutional."

This is from that vigorous champion of equal rights, the Alexandria, Va., *Gazette*:

"The U. S. Supreme Court last week temporarily vacated its mandate to escheat the property of the Mormon Church to the United States government, in order that some means might be found by which that property could be returned to those whose money had bought it, with a provision that it should not be used for propagating the Mormon religion. And yet the first amendment that was made to the Constitution of the United States declares that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' In the first free legislature of Virginia, 1776, religion was made free chiefly by reason of a memorial from the Presbytery of Hanover, which declared: 'There is no argument in favor of establishing the Christian religion, but what may be pleaded for establishing the tenets of Mohammed by those who believe in the Koran.' Now the Mohammedan, like the Mormon, religion sanctions polygamy. The

decision of the court shows how easy it has become to override a plain provision of the organic law of the land, and the general acquiescence in that decision shows the great change that has taken place in public opinion on the particular subject referred to since the establishment of the government."

The New Haven, Conn., *Register* gives details of the case and says:

"The language of the Constitution upon this point is brief and simple. Section 3, Article IV, provides that 'Congress shall have power to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.' The Supreme Court assumes that the Territories are the property of the United States and that Congress has the right to break up any corporation which it has reason to believe is subversive to the laws of the country. The difference of opinion among the justices was as to whether Congress could legally go as far as to confiscate property in order to secure the enforcement of law. This is a very nice point and one that many laymen will disagree upon. The general sentiment of the country is unanimous upon the desirability of crushing out polygamy. No one disputes that it ought never to have been allowed to gain a foothold upon our soil. The espousal by the Mormons of this unlawful practice, has made that Church cordially hated. And yet it may be and is questioned whether it is right to go so far as to confiscate the property of the Church corporation. A rather dangerous precedent is established which might possibly lead to bad results in the future, and to the substantial overthrow of free religion. We have always held that it would be better to attain the desired results in some other way."

The Hutchinson, Kan., *News* reasons in this way:

"While there is nothing about the Mormon Church to commend it to the sympathy of an intelligent public, it is not certain what the effect of a confiscation of its property may be; or to what extent the same decision may apply to the property of other churches held for other purposes than worship and burial. There are some very wealthy churches in the United States—churches holding in fee simple ten times as much property as the Mormon Church held, and the right to hold it has never been questioned by the judicial authorities of the United States. While the same principle of escheat of all excess over and above \$50,000 and property held for worship and burial purposes may not be held to apply to them, it will be a hard matter to explain satisfactorily to the Mormon why it should not, and by what constitutional authority Congress and the courts apply to one denomination a principle it does not apply to all."

Scores of articles are headed "A Death Blow to Mormonism." The nonsense of this is perceived by some sensible writers, among them the editor of the Toledo, Ohio, *Commercial*, who hits this notion the following "death blow":

"Polygamy, we are told, has obtained another death blow. The latest is said to be more deadly in its effects than any previous death blow. The first death blow visited on the Mormon religion fell upon the Prophet Joseph Smith, at Nauvoo, Ill., and from that time to this polygamy has gone on growing and thriving on death blows. It will be no surprise to the *Commercial* to see a boom in the proselyte market as a direct result of the new death warrant lately pronounced upon that thrice unhappy institution. A proclamation of religious liberty possibly would be as severe a blow on the Mormon religion as the State could inflict, and one which in time would doubtless eradicate its loathsome criminal features. Polygamy, as practiced by the Latter-day Saints, is a religious rite, and therefore to a certain extent compulsory with the adherents of St. Joe Smith's theory of saving souls; but with the legal right to accept or reject the degrading forms, it would fall into 'innocuous desuetude' and soon die out. As the blood of the martyr is the seed of the Church, Mormonism has lived and thrived upon its death blows."

We notice that among all the endorsements of the action of the Su-

preme Court on this question that have appeared in the public prints, none of them are made on legal or constitutional grounds. They are all prompted by that prejudice which is born of ignorance and begotten by bigotry, and justified by what is supposed to be public expediency. The editors of the United States ought to pause and reflect before offering a word of encouragement to any judicial body which suffers itself to be turned out of the straight and proper way of strict law and equity, and led into the broad but deadly road of popular sentiment and unreasoning clamor.

CENSUS QUERIES.

MUCH complaint is heard over some of the questions which the census enumerators are required to ask of the people when they make their visits. It is not everybody who feels willing to describe ailments and diseases from which he may be suffering, or to tell whether certain members of the family are idiotic or insane. Some people, however, will take delight in describing their bodily infirmities, and will deluge the enumerators with a flood of descriptive matter as to their aches and pains and disorders.

In order to modify to some extent the opposition which this feature of the census investigation has aroused, Census Superintendent Porter has issued instructions to the enumerators to simply note upon the returns the fact of a refusal to answer. The person refusing will then be served with a circular from Washington, which he can fill out and return. This will save the necessity of exposing matters which people desire to keep private, from a neighbor or prying person who may happen to be an enumerator, and also save the necessity of imposing any fine.

In response to questions from newspaper correspondents, Superintendent Porter has stated that enumerators have been instructed to be polite, and not to press any question which people decline to answer. When the person so refusing receives the circular that will be sent, it will be returned in a sealed envelope, and, he explained, "The papers will be thrown in with thousands, perhaps millions, of others, and put through the machine as if there were no personal significance attached to them."

He said further: "If any one so appealed to still refuses, I have no