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SALT LAKE CITY, - DEC. 27, 1902.

ACT WITH WISDOM.

Some very good people in this city have become greatly excited over evils that exist here, but which have been greatly exaggerated through sensational newspaper reports. They propose public agitation to arouse popular indignation, with a view to the extirpation of those evils and the consequent purification of the city. Their purpose is praiseworthy, their intentions are excellent, but we think they are acting largely upon rumors, and that the publicity given to the vices justly complained of, and to a certain locality where they are alleged to flourish, will probably aggravate instead of suppressing the evil and direct attention to a spot which was comparatively unknown, until described and pointed out to thousands who were ignorant of its existence.

At the risk of being misunderstood by some very zealous ladies and gentlemen, who may not know that the Deseret News for many years has vigorously fought the vices that have been permitted to gain a firm foothold in this city, we suggest that before parading these matters in the view of the general public, it would be well to ascertain the actual facts. The stories that have been told about juvenile depravity associated with the exposures that have been made, will be found on close investigation to have been magnified out of all right proportion, for the sake of making what some newspapers regard as "a good story."

This is illustrated in the case of the physician who is under arrest, charged with a most serious offense and believed to have caused the death of a young woman from malpractice. It was published that in his office were found "letters from women and girls all over the State," soliciting his services for similar purposes. This caused a great sensation as did the story of juvenile visitors to the dens of vice, in one of which the murdered miner was drugged to death. And it was equally unfounded. The "News" instituted inquiries, and learned that, as a positive fact, only two such letters were found in the doctor's office, instead of the "bushels" that were reported.

Now we do not wish to hinder the good people of this city, in any work of reform or purification that they may undertake for the public benefit. There are real evils to be fought, and these are worthy the efforts made for their correction. But we do not believe good will come from advertising them, either to the world outside or the public at home, nor from taking for granted the terrible tales told as news but which are largely fictitious, thus giving wrong impressions concerning our social conditions and placing upon them the stamp of religious endorsement.

During the time of the rigid enforcement of the acts of Congress specially framed for Utah, the vices now complained of were rampant in this city. But they could not be seen by the religious gentlemen who were actively engaged in urging the enforcement of those laws and are now concerned about conditions that are certainly not worse today than then, but which have been made prominent through crimes that have been recently disclosed. That, of course, should make no difference as to the execution of the city ordinances and the suppression of present evils. But this sudden agitation over exaggerated conditions naturally recalls the former indifference as to their notorious prevalence.

If anything can be done outside of official circles to purify the city, by all means let the good work go on. At the same time, a little common sense and indeed some wisdom ought to be exercised, in dealing with wrongs that trouble every city in Christendom, and which are not lessened by making them the talk in every home, as well as in all the public places where people congregate. And it should be understood that lawful measures only can be taken to effect the end designed. The wild notion that the unfortunate women can be "driven out of the city," or that the houses in the alley pointed out can be destroyed, is too stupid to be seriously entertained for a moment.

The enforcement of the laws must be attended to lawfully. Urge upon the officers the necessity of doing their duty, confine the evils that really exist to the narrowest limits and most repulsive quarters, punish the frequenters, as the ordinances provide, but do not parade these things so that they are familiar to every boy and girl in the community, nor proclaim to the world, monstrously exaggerated stories concerning a city that is undeserving of the reputation that is being given to it. Proceed on rational grounds, but do not plunge into wild and baseless and useless agitation.

GOES TO THE HAGUE.

President Roosevelt has, finally, declined to act as arbitrator in the Venezuelan difficulty, and the powers have agreed to submit the disputed questions to The Hague tribunal. That is the most desirable exit from an awkward

situation. The strange part of the proceedings is this, that the powers interested did not ask for arbitration, before they made the naval demonstration and destroyed, without apparent justification, the ships belonging to Venezuela, and one of her forts. One would naturally think that war measures ought to be the last resort, and not the first. The change of policy on the part of the allies is gratifying, however, from every point of view. It is really another victory for American diplomacy.

The Hague tribunal is competent to handle the Venezuelan question. According to the rules by which it is established, there is a permanent board of arbitration that may take up the pending questions without delay. This permanent board consists of representatives of all the signatory powers, from which the requisite number may be selected. They are all statesmen of international law, enjoying the highest moral consideration. From these statesmen Venezuela, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Holland and such other powers as may yet join with them, are at liberty to select by mutual consent a single arbitrator or a body of several arbitrators. Having done that they have only to agree upon a date for the trial of the case, and the peace-preserving machinery is in motion.

The Hague convention, Sec. III, also provides for an international commission of inquiry, to which the disputed points can be submitted. This commission can clear up the circumstances that have given rise to the dispute, by an impartial and thorough investigation of all the facts. The machinery established by the Hague congress in the summer of 1899 is complete. In every particular, it was formed with the object of preventing armed conflicts between nations; and promoting an understanding with respect to the mode of applying good offices, and establishing a uniform practice in using them. There is no necessity any longer for letting the warring loose, as soon as a slight difficulty arises.

The Venezuelan question is the first of general importance that comes before The Hague court. It is a case in which practically Europe and America are equally interested. If it is settled speedily and with apparent solicitude for the prevalence of justice alone, it will go far towards making the court popular. It will gain a great victory for the cause of permanent peace. The precedent will be of the greatest value for the future.

A RELIGIOUS TEST.

The Chattanooga Times copies the annexed editorial note from the Washington Post, and proceeds to comment upon it in the paragraph following:

The leaders of the Mormon Church declare that Apostle Smoot is in politics on his own hook. Then the Church should not worry over the anti-Smootism.

"True, but for the fact that the anti-Smoot is not so much after Smoot as they are after his religion. The Post will doubtless agree that up to this time this 'land of sweet liberty' of ours has refused to tolerate a religious test as a prerequisite, even to holding a seat in the United States senate. As an evidence that this is so, regard for a moment the number of old heathen in that body."

Without endorsing the complimentary allusion to a number of our national lawmakers, who openly confess to having no religion, we think the Times has hit the nail of the Utah senatorial agitation squarely on the head. If a "religious test" is to be interposed in political affairs in this country, it will be a radical departure from the spirit of our national institutions, and a direct violation of a provision of the national Constitution. We are pleased to see any recognition of the principle of civil and religious liberty by a prominent public journal whether in the north or in the south.

THE ENDOWED THEATER.

The question of the endowment of a national theater is again discussed in the press. Not long ago a joint resolution was introduced in the house by an Indiana member providing that "a site upon which to erect a national theater be provided in the District of Columbia." It is reported that Mr. Andrew Carnegie has promised to be the providence in this project. If Uncle Sam will co-operate to the extent of giving a site on which to build the theater, the multi-millionaire, so the story goes, will endow it.

The endowed theater is, of course, a scheme for "elevating the stage," by making it independent of popular support. The theory is that when it has such independence, it is at liberty to present only meritorious plays—plays that are a moral force for good, instead of plays of a questionable character. Some ridicule the idea, but without sufficient reason. The stage certainly needs a thorough cleaning. Such "actors" as John Sullivan, James Corbett and Fitzsimmons may not be considered in this connection, but theater managers have gone so far as to offer to public view women who have figured promiscuously in murder trials, and as long as such outrage upon public decency can take place, some remedy is called for.

But will the proposed plan work? Will an endowed theater have the desired effect? It all depends on whether the good citizens patronize it, or not. It should be possible for such a theater to raise a standard, around which the lovers of true histrionic art might gather, and thus draw a line between the legitimate and the illegitimate in that art. It might in time make it as disreputable to go to a low play, as it is now to frequent a saloon. In this way it might have an effect on public sentiment. A little stone dropped in the middle of a lake is a small object, compared to the sheet of water, but it creates a center of disturbance, from which the waves spread out in rapidly widening rings, and it thus has an effect far away from the center. Why should not a good theater at the capital have some similar effect throughout the country? It might not accomplish all that its advocates hope for it, but it would not be without good results. And

just what would be done through it, can best be appreciated when it has been in operation for a number of years.

A BABYLONIAN LAW.

Among the important discoveries of recent times is that of a document containing a code of laws in force in Babylonia long before the time of Moses. It is said to have been unearthed somewhere in Persia by a French expedition of scientists. It is supposed to have been brought to Persia with other trophies.

The document has a picture of King Hammurabi, who is supposed to be the Amraphel, king of Shinar, of Genesis, the leader of the allies that captured the cities of the plains in the days of Abraham. He made Babylonia a great empire, extending from the Mediterranean to Persia. The text of that law is now published.

According to an article in the Independent, it was quite elaborate, and severe. Legal cases were tried before a court of judges, at the head of whom was a president. The facts in the case were learned through witnesses and written documents. The care taken in this regard is evident from the following example: "If anybody has bought or received as a deposit silver, or gold, or a male slave or a female slave, or a steer, or a sheep, or an ass, or anything else from a free man or a slave without witnesses or written documents, he is to be treated as a thief and shall be killed."

The death penalty was the punishment for a number of offenses, and among others for witchcraft and for robbing a temple or royal possessions. Any person who permitted a slave to escape, or harbored an escaped slave, was punished by death, as was an official who failed to attend to his duties himself but intrusted these to a substitute. The death penalty was inflicted either by fire, or drowning, or impaling.

The old maxim, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," was carried out literally. In this way an adopted daughter or adopted son who sold to his foster-father and mother that they were not his parents should lose his or her tongue. The code provides that "if a man knock out an eye of a free-man, his own eye shall be forfeited. If he break one of the members of a man, his own member shall be removed." If the suffering party were a slave, a payment of money could make good the wrong; the same was true of a freed-man. On the other hand, if an inferior struck a superior, he was punished with fifty lashes, and if he was a slave his ear was cut off. If a surgeon was unsuccessful in performing an operation, he was not entitled to any pay. If the patient died under the hand of the surgeon, the latter lost his hands, in case the patient was a free man. If a slave died under his hand, he must buy another. In case a builder made a failure of a structure he was also punished with death. He who falsely claimed that another was indebted to him must pay one-third of a mina. Freeman fighting were fined one mina. Theft of an animal was punishable by a fine of thirty times its value.

A closer study of this remarkable law code would probably disclose how much superior was the Mosaic law—how much more advanced, notwithstanding its severity as compared to the laws of later ages. For mankind is steadily progressing in civilization, notwithstanding the temporary backsets that history seems to record.

The frozen stone gathers no moss.
It's an ill wind that blows no snow.
In life's race the man with the longest wind wins.
Hayti has a new dictator. What make of typewriter is it?
Secretary Hay has scored another diplomatic triumph.
Professor Alexander Graham Bell's kite may yet become as famous as Giltroy's.
For ways that are dark Salt Lake City, when there is no moon, is a splendid place.
New Year would receive more consideration did it not come so soon after Christmas.
Very naturally Mr. Hay likes to have international disputes sent to La Haye for settlement.
It begins to look as though it was going to be a mighty Happy New Year for the whole world.
Perhaps one reason there are so many train wrecks these days is that the trains are overtrained.
That there was something rotten in Denmark may have been the reason why the storm swept it.
John Mitchell of the United Mine Workers is to have his salary raised. But his hours will not be reduced.
Indiana's greatest industry is writing historical novels. The writers were taught by "The Hoosier Schoolmaster."
The Venezuelan triumph beats his charge up San Juan hill all to pieces. Peace hath rarely had a greater victory and war few more renowned.
In the matter of bringing the Venezuelan embargo before The Hague tribunal President Roosevelt can say with Coriolanus: "Alone I did it."

It is said that Dr. Lorenz has not made a fortune in the United States. He has done much better than that. He has made many cripples whole and gladdened their hearts for life.
It seems that that Kansas mob hung the wrong negro. It can scarcely do less now than pass resolutions of regret and present a nicely engrossed copy thereof to the deceased's family.
The crepeos at the crossing at the intersection of South and East Temple streets have been removed and gravel put in their place. It is an improvement, and to cross now requires less skill on the part of pedestrians.
The little Princess Yolande of Italy is said to have the largest and darkest

eyes of any European princess. And she is entitled to them for a Princess Helena of Montenegro her mother was reputed the most beautiful woman in Europe.

Mr. Carnegie says that he thinks too much of his little daughter to burden her with great wealth. A very sensible view to take for the moment, wealth becomes a burden it ceases to be a blessing. Yes, there is such a thing as having too much of a good thing.

Uncle Sam is arbitration's best friend. He submitted the Alabama claim to the Geneva tribunal; he submitted the San Juan Island dispute to King William; he was the first to invoke the good offices of The Hague tribunal; and now he has induced Great Britain, Germany, Italy and Venezuela to submit their differences to the arbitration of The Hague tribunal. Three cheers for arbitration and Roosevelt!

ON RELIGIOUS TOPICS.

New York Churchman.

Under the influence of what Christians stand for, the true believer can recognize no impassable chasm between Christians of whatever name. In the light and life of the incarnation our vision and our hope must include all who believe in Christ, and through them, all for whom He died. And our work and our life will be measured by our striving to fulfill both vision and hope. To those who regard the divisions of Christianity as a city from the standpoint of economic waste, all that we have said may seem wasted theorizing. To those who believe that God has bound Himself and the salvation of the world irrevocably to an ecclesiastical system, we shall seem to be dealing in vague generalities, if not something worse. But we deny the reality or finality of such points of view or of the standards that result from them.

Christian Work and the Evangelist.

It is very certain that the union of Protestantism, when it comes, will not come by the way that Bishop Carpenter calls surrender, by the annihilation of the theology on which any denomination bases its separation from the others. The archbishop of Albi was profoundly right when he replied, a few months ago, to the Pope's inquiry whether there was danger of a schism in France, "No, your Holiness, for people must be in earnest to cause a schism, and the Catholics of France are not in earnest." Conversely, people must be in earnest before they can find a basis of union, and the way to church union can never be along the path of indifference to doctrine.

New York Independent.

Every one who was on the firing-line from 1870 to 1871, and who has since will recognize that theistic thought holds a far more commanding position today than it did then. At that time popular thought was busy with Professor Huxley's "Lay Sermons." Professor Tyndall was "prolonging his vision backwards and discerning in matter the promise and potency" of all things. Strauss was proclaiming in "The Old Faith and the New" the final triumph of atheism; and Romanes in his "Candid Examination of Theism" was showing, not only that theism has no logical standing, but that so surely as science is true so surely is theism false and impossible. How completely this has passed away in the higher speculative circles is plain upon inspection. Professor Tyndall's famous address has become the subject of a smile. The "Lay Sermons" are laid away with other antiquated matter. Romanes lived to return to the Christian faith. Conflicts of science and religion are out of date; and the chair for their reconciliation has become a matter for humorous reference.

Chicago Interior.

Pope Leo's encyclical appointing a commission "to devote their entire energy to insure that the divine words may receive the explanation demanded of them by the times," does the utmost possible to make the labors of the commission sterile by adding this qualifying instruction: "That must be held to be the true sense of Holy Scripture which has been and is being held by the holy mother church." There is not a whisper anywhere in Protestantism who would not agree that that sentence contains the gist of the reason why the Catholic church is so nearly a failure as a witness to living, saving Christian truth. And yet we have known even Presbyterian ministers who, whenever theological problems were appointed to do for our church what this commission is to do for Catholicism, have insisted that they must put on just such clumpcocks as the pope has commanded these scholars of his to wear.

The Outlook.

In this age every effort ought to be made to cultivate the imagination. Dealing with great energy with things almost entirely material with material of all sorts, this generation needs, as every other generation has needed, the outlook through the windows of the imagination on the larger landscape of life. If it is to bear its burdens and not grow weary of its prosperity, so that the things which it makes turn to dust in its hands, it must have the higher vision of life; it must understand how to set tools, instruments, and materials of all sorts to spiritual uses.

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