

EDITORIALS.

NOT KEPT IN THE DARK.

THE Philadelphia Press, not to be out of the fashion of speaking rashly about the "Mormons," says:

Mormon missionaries do not preach polygamy, and as the mass of their converts belong to the classes who don't read there is little reason for the surprise expressed in many quarters that the Edmunds bill had no apparent effect in reducing Mormon immigration.

This is intended to convey the impression that the people who join the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints abroad, and who compose the "Mormon immigration," are kept in the dark on the subject of "Mormon" plural marriage until they reach Utah. This has been frequently charged in plainer language than that used by the Press. But a great many journals offer an opposite objection. They declare that the "Mormon" immigrants, who are arriving in large numbers, come to the United States for the special purpose of breaking the laws of the land, that is, of practicing polygamy.

Which is the correct position; that "Mormon" missionaries conceal "Mormon" polygamy and their converts know nothing about it, or that "they scour the European continent for recruits for Mormon harems?" The statements cannot both be true. And yet each is insisted upon with as much vigor as the other.

We will answer the question. Neither assertion is correct. "Mormon" missionaries do not generally preach on the subject of plural marriage. At the same time they do not conceal it. They are not sent abroad to promulgate the doctrine; that is not their business. It is to preach the Gospel of faith, repentance and baptism for the remission of sins, with the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, and the exhortation for the Saints to gather out from the wicked to the land of Zion. But they are always ready, when requested, to explain and defend the doctrine of plural marriage as held and practiced in Utah. So the people who receive the Gospel are not kept in the dark concerning polygamy. Neither do they emigrate for the purpose of supporting that system. If they think of it at all, it is more in the way of assent to its principles in theory, than of any expectation in regard to its practice.

But the Press is greatly mistaken as to the class of converts to the "Mormon Church." It rarely includes a person who cannot read. The most potent "Mormon" missionary and one that is kept in the field more than any other, is called THE HOLY BIBLE, and it is chiefly the people who believe in and read that book—King James' translation—who receive the testimony of the "Mormon" Elders and come to Utah in the "Mormon" immigration companies. Conversation with the people who arrive at New York in charge of our Elders will prove the truth of these assertions.

We also have works which are widely read, and our Church organ, *The Millennial Star*, which is taken and read generally by the Latter-day Saints in Europe, has been published continuously for nearly forty-five years, and keeps our scattered people posted in regard to our Church doctrines, the doings in Utah, the laws of Congress that relate to the "Mormon" question, and all things about which the Saints abroad are supposed by some people to be kept in ignorance.

The Edmunds bill does not affect the "Mormon immigration" one way or another. There is no reason why it should. The "surprise expressed in many quarters" is the result of ignorance of the whole "Mormon" question, which the Press, we are sorry to see, shares in common with other papers and the general public. We respectfully recommend inquiry, and sincerely advise silence on the part of respectable journals until they can speak with some understanding of the subject.

ERRONEOUS DISPATCHES AND PRESS COMMENTS.

It is the fashion of many prominent newspapers in this country to comment on press dispatches concerning Utah and the "Mormons," as though the tidings borne by the

telegraph were undisputed and undisputable facts, requiring no examination as to correctness. And yet there is no more unreliable news circulated through the land than these same press dispatches about Utah. Often they are whole-cloth falsehoods, frequently they contain just enough truth to save them from that imputation, and now and again by telling part only of the truth they succeed in misleading the public mind without getting fairly within the line of lying.

A case in point is the dispatch concerning the circular letter of the First Presidency of the Church here, on the political situation. By making a partial quotation here and there from the document, sandwiched in between the telegrapher's own remarks, a text has been furnished for long discourses from the press. We clip the annexed from a Boston paper as a specimen paragraph:

The manifesto which the Mormon leaders have issued to their followers breathes a spirit of defiance and resistance to the execution of the Edmunds law. It describes the law as aimed at the repression and destruction of a portion of the Mormon religion; declares that the principle of celestial marriage is "interwoven with our dearest and holiest hopes connected with eternity;" affirms that the Mormons have "no compromise to make or principles to barter away;" and appeals to the Mormon people to guard well their franchise, and in one unbroken phalanx maintain and sustain their political status. Mormon resistance to, or evasion of, the Edmunds law, will only result in other legislation which cannot be resisted or evaded; and it is perhaps just as well that the Mormon spirit should manifest itself now as later.

Now the "manifesto" contains not a syllable of "defiance" nor a breath of "resistance" to the Edmunds law or any other enactment. It is an outspoken declaration of the sentiments of the "Mormon" leaders on subjects upon which every American citizen has the right to speak, and so far from advising "resistance" or "defiance," it counsels the Latter-day Saints to submit not only to that law in relation to the approaching election, but also to the rules made by the Commissioners, although, in some respects, they are in excess of the law and the power it confers. It is a document that has been largely commended for its moderation and liberality by persons not in accord with the "Mormon" Church in any way, and can only be objected to in a spirit of unfairness and bigoted animosity.

But the comments that have been made upon it, like the above, have been provoked by the garbled report of it in the press dispatch; and the papers which have let themselves loose on the subject are to be blamed more for taking a one-sided and unreliable report as the ground for their attacks, than for the rabid nature of their remarks. We think that if the "Mormon" question is of sufficient importance to provoke frequent and serious attention, it is grave enough to demand inquiry into the facts before wholesale and bitter denunciation is indulged in. And we suggest that the "manifesto" which has called forth so many editorials should at least have been read, before leading journals proceeded to load it down with so many epithets.

However, one good thing will come out of this injustice. If the editors will not investigate before condemning, other people will, and the very fierceness of the attacks made upon everything that is connected with "Mormonism" will direct the attention of inquiring people, who will read, think, see and act upon their own agency and responsibility. And their conclusions will be of value not only to themselves, but to the system and people who are so unfairly assailed.

THE "MORMON" POLITICAL STATUS.

"The Utah Commission has encountered the opposition of the Mormons at the very start of its operations. The high officials of the church have issued a manifesto to their followers, bidding them prepare to 'guard well our franchise, and in one unbroken phalanx maintain and sustain our political status, and as patriots and freemen operate together in defense of what few liberties are left us.' If this is not an appeal for resistance to the authority of the United States, then it has

no meaning. The Edmunds bill was framed for the express purpose of destroying the political status of the Mormon church, as the first step toward securing an enforcement of the law against polygamy. If the Mormons attempt to 'maintain and sustain' this political status an issue will be joined which may force a speedier solution of the Mormon problem than the advocates of this measure calculated upon."

We clip the foregoing from the Boston Herald. It is one more illustration of the slipshod way in which eastern papers handle the "Mormon" question. They feel called upon to say something on this subject because the public feel some interest in it; but they will not take the trouble to inform themselves enough to speak intelligently and correctly.

The Utah Commissioners have made a report to the Secretary of the Interior, which has been published all over the country, being circulated as a press dispatch. It contained one error, made by the operator, but was in the main correct. The mistake was in crediting the "Mormons" instead of the non-"Mormons" with that application to the Commissioners to exclude women voters from the registry lists. This attempt was made by the clique called the "Liberals," but it did not succeed. The "Mormons" are in favor of woman suffrage, as they are of every movement calculated to secure political, social and religious liberty to women equally with men.

In their report the Commissioners make no charge of obstruction on the part of the "Mormons." Neither in the start nor at any other point of their proceedings have they experienced opposition from the "Mormons." If the Boston Herald had paid proper attention to this matter before comment, it would have seen that the "opposition in the start" came from the non-"Mormons," who objected strenuously to the election in November which the Commissioners came here to supervise. The "Mormons" were in favor of the election, and their opponents were so mad over the decision of the Commissioners that it should be held, that some of the baser sort commenced to abuse the Commissioners, and accused them of pandering to the "Mormons."

Neither have the "high officials of the Church," by "manifesto" or otherwise, appealed for resistance to the authority of the United States. And the quotation made by the Boston Herald does not convey any such impression. If to guard well our franchise, sustain our political status and defend our liberties, is resistance to the authority of the United States, then it follows that the United States are engaged in an attempt to destroy the franchise, political status and civil liberties of a portion of the people, which the Government was organized to protect. But we do not charge this and the Boston Herald should have sense enough to perceive the folly of such an accusation. And if the words quoted convey such a meaning as that imputed, then every political manifesto, Democratic, Republican or "Independent," can be construed in the same manner. The Herald needs a pinch of the snuff of common sense to clear its editorial head.

The Herald is rash and foolish again in stating that "the Edmunds bill was framed for the express purpose of destroying the 'political status' of the Mormon Church." We are afraid that the Herald has not read the Edmunds bill. It says nothing about the "Mormon" Church nor its "political status." If it did that would have stamped it with an additional mark of unconstitutionality. Congress has no right to pass laws to destroy the political or other status of any church in the land. The "Mormon" Church has just as much right to a "political status" as the Methodist Church, or the Catholic Church, or any other church. The only allusion to the "Mormons" as a religious body, in the Edmunds Act, is in the Seventh Section which is favorable rather than antagonistic. It legitimates all the issue of bigamous or polygamous marriages "solemnized according to the ceremonies of the Mormon sect," born before the first day of January 1883. This does not aim at the destruction of any political status; does it, Mr. Herald?

But the term political status attached to the "Mormon" Church is sheer nonsense. It has no such status to destroy. As an ecclesiastical organization it does not figure in such a position. It is a Church, not a State nor a political party. Mem-

bers of the "Mormon Church" have a political status just as members of any other church who are citizens of the United States. And they have the right to organize for the purpose of preserving it, and to defend their political liberties. The authorities of that Church have not lost their political status by accession to ecclesiastical dignity, but have the right to speak to their friends and associates on all matters that pertain to their welfare socially, morally and politically, as well as religiously, using the latter word in its common, restricted sense.

We can assure the Boston Herald and all the anti-"Mormon" fanatics in the land, that the "Mormons" as citizens of the United States will certainly "attempt to maintain and sustain their political status," that is, to exercise the elective franchise so far as it is left to them, in sustaining, for what few offices are yet in their gift, such men as appear to them the best qualified to serve them in a public capacity. Those who are disfranchised by the Edmunds law will not attempt to vote or stand for office. But those who are not affected thereby, we believe, will exercise their undoubted legal and constitutional rights according to their own judgment, and if this is to force an issue such as the Herald hints at, then it follows that men and women are to be hindered by force from exercising the common rights of citizens, simply because they hold religious opinions different from a set of howling bigots and unprincipled sectarians.

But the Herald is "off" about the whole matter, as it is likely to be because of its indisposition to investigate a subject on which editors have less understanding than any of the public questions of the times.

The Herald need not imagine that the "Mormons" are going to offer resistance either to the law or to the Commissioner, unless to test the constitutionality of the provisions of the former and the legislation of the latter, by the means provided in the laws of the land, can be construed into offering resistance. We are submitting, as gracefully as possible for any one, to the exigencies of the situation and everything is moving along as calmly as a summer's morning when all the elements are harmonious and at peace. We are not at all disturbed, and we do not think such threats as the Herald hurls at us will raise a ripple upon the stream of our steady course, or make the slightest difference to our "political status."

A VILLAINOUS PROPOSITION.

"A wealthy oil merchant in China has given practical proof of his conversion by putting away his concubines and offering one of his houses for a free chapel, besides paying all the expenses of the services he desires the Mission to conduct in it."

A good example for the Latter-day Saints of Utah to follow. A similar course, on their part, would remove the Commissioners, and restore to them the rights of American citizenship."

The above is from the editorial columns of the Christian Advocate published in this city. What is the course here pointed out for men to pursue who have married plural wives under the ordinance and doctrine of the Church to which they belong? It is to forsake their wives; turn them away, in violation of all obligations moral and religious and of the claims upon them as husbands and fathers. This is truly a "Christian" piece of advice, using that term in its modern perverted sense. And what is the reward to be obtained as the price of such "Christian" villainy? The removal of the Commissioners and restoration to "the rights of American citizenship."

Indeed. Well, we do not know of any one who is anxious for the removal of the Commissioners. They are very pleasant gentlemen, and are perfectly welcome to stay in Utah altogether, so far as we are concerned. The "Mormons" have no quarrel with them. It is true we think they have gone further than the law required or authorized, but no one that we are aware of holds anything against them for the discharge of what they have deemed to be their duty. So their removal is no consideration at all.

The other promise is the "restoration of rights." Oh! you admit that "rights" have been taken away, do you? That is

just what we have contended. Now if there are any "rights" of which "Mormons" have been deprived, there is a legal way to proceed for their recovery. As to that we have no need of any advice from the truly Christian (?) Advocate of "putting away," a thing which the Bible says "God hateth."

We are not surprised at the sentiment advanced and the step counseled by the editor of that paper. It is just such a course as we would expect him to take if he were similarly situated to some of the Latter-day Saints. One who has spent most of his time in cringing and caddging, list or plate in hand, squeezing out contributions from "Mormon" and "Gentile," and who has travelled through the land lying against the Latter-day Saints for money, would be just the kind of thing to repudiate wives, children and any sacred relation or tie for worldly gain or position.

But let us see whether the second delirium he proposes would be of any benefit in the direction indicated. By the arrangement made for the approaching election, not only actual polygamists, but those who have long ago ceased to practice plural marriage, are excluded from registration and the poll. The term "polygamist" is construed to mean a person who has practiced polygamy at any time, whether before there was a law against it, since, whether he is still maintaining the relation or was freed from it before it was made an offence by law. Thus those who by the death of their plural wives, or by voluntary separation, have become monogamists or widowers or widows are deprived of those "rights of American citizens" offered as a bait for repudiation, just as much as the present practical polygamists.

There are some individuals, passing under the name of "Liberals," who, on seceding from the "Mormon" Church were unscrupulous and cowardly enough to put away their plural wives without the latter's consent, in the expectation of gaining the applause of the multitude and other earthly rewards. And they are to-day, as close-shorn of the franchise as if they had been true to their vows, their manhood and their social obligations. And if ever they get back that franchise it will be as pardoned criminals who have sued and bent and pleaded for mercy.

Perhaps the peripatetic dinn gatherer who recommends family repudiation for earthly gain would like the "Mormons" to dispose of their plural wives in the same way, adopted by the heathen chief. Making "converted" to the perverted Christianity promulgated by the Methodists, in hopes of the material benefits which those who "compromise sea and land" know so well how to hold out to the "benighted," he presented himself with his seven wives to join the church. But he was informed that he could not be a Christian until he had disposed of all his wives but one. He turned away sorrowful. But after a considerable time he returned with his one wife, the youngest of the seven. "Why have you done with the others?" was asked. "Oh," replied the newly converted "Christian," "me 'em."

If the "Christians" of this country by their misrepresentation and hatred of our cause have stirred up so much trouble in the land, imagine that those "Mormons" who have taken more wives than one and raised up families by them, the sacred relations of divinely dained marriage, are going to discard and repudiate them and turn their vacated and desolated homes into Methodist conventicles, all the fashion advised by the Christian (?) Advocate, they must have been indulging in spiritual hashish. When we get down to the level of such villainy and folly as that, we shall be deserving not only of being deprived of "the rights of American citizens" but of the loss of divine favor, social recognition and self respect.

THE FIGHT FOR THE OFFICE.

WHERE THE MONEY'S TO COME FROM.

Liberal Assessment Number One

WE are able to present to the public copies of two very interesting documents. We commend them to the consideration of the people of Utah. They are being sent to all the bog officials. It appears that a gub-