

## THE LATE GRAND JURY ADDRESS THE PEOPLE.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah,  
April 9th, 1879.

To the Third District Court of Utah Territory, and the People of said District:

A grand jury for the February term of said court was impaneled on the 17th day of February last, and at once began to perform its duties. At the same time the court took up the criminal calendar, and the United States district attorney, as well as his assistant, became so occupied as to be unable to render the grand jury the assistance that body required. The grand jury continued in session transacting business as well as possible, with such aid as the attorney and his assistant were able to furnish until March 1st ult., when, at the suggestion of the district attorney, after the latter had advised with the judge of the court, a recess of thirty days was taken, with the understanding that when the grand jury should reconvene, March 31st ult., criminal business would be so far completed in the several district courts as to enable the district attorney to render the grand jury such assistance and legal advice as would enable the body to discharge its duties with dispatch and thus save much time and expense.

Pursuant to the adjournment of thirty days, the grand jury reconvened on the 31st ult., and remained in session until the morning of the 3d instant, when the press dispatches, having announced the nomination of a successor to the judge of the Third District Court, the latter discharged the grand jury, leaving much unfinished business, such as inquiring into violations of law, the management of public offices and prisons, the method of assessing, collecting and disbursing taxes, sanitary measures, etc.

Committees for various purposes had been appointed, many of which acted before and during the recess of thirty days, and had reported to the grand jury. Their reports had been received and were to have been considered, and a general report, with recommendations, made by the grand jury, to the end that the attention of the court and people might be directed to abuses or oversights and steps taken looking to their correction.

The sudden and unexpected adjournment of the court prevented the grand jury making such a report before discharge, but as we feel and felt that the public money and the labor of the committees should not go for nothing, the members of the grand jury, after discharge, and before separating, unanimously decided to submit to the court and people their views on certain subjects of public interest inquired into.

We recognize that the step is unusual and perhaps without a precedent in the Territory, but as grand juries are called together for the public good and paid by the public, and as unfinished work of grand juries is seldom completed by succeeding ones, the members of this jury feel in duty bound to report as citizens upon certain public matters inquired into as grand jurors. In so reporting we shall make many recommendations suggested by facts observed while acting officially.

The subjects that have been investigated by committees with some thoroughness, and upon which reports were made, are the Territorial penitentiary, the insane asylum in this county, some county and city affairs and prisons, and the records of a few counties. The reports of committees are attached.

Other subjects of grave public interest, as the records of populous counties and cities, and the courts therein, and the financial affairs of these counties and cities, together with the causes leading to the high death rate of our most populous towns, might, with propriety, have been inquired into and reported upon had the facilities for doing so not been lacking. We learned of one county, Tooele, where the records have not been examined by any grand jury since the county was organized, and that the records of several of the largest counties and cities in the district and the courts therein have received no attention for several years. To pass upon these and similar cases, as we desired and was our duty, involved the expenditure of a large amount of time and money, neither of which was at our command.

We have no disposition to give as our opinion, without investigation, that examination would disclose irregularity in any office, officer of court, yet complaint is widespread, and it is but the right of taxpayers that they should be advised of irregularities if they exist, and nothing more than simple justice to officers, if upright, to be vindicated. These rights are so manifest that we have no hesitation in recommending to the legislature of the Territory and the courts to make adequate provision of means, so that, in future, investigations will be possible and so that grand juries may not be compelled to neglect duties perhaps more important to the people than the mere finding of indictments to which, as matters now stand, we find ourselves almost confined. To make the provision of law requiring grand juries to inspect public records anything more than a farce, it is necessary that sufficient means be provided to conduct investigations in a systematic and thorough manner. These means have never been provided and hence the records are seldom inspected and the people remain in ignorance of how taxes are assessed, collected and disposed of and of many other things of vital interest to them.

The committees appointed by this grand jury performed their duties as far as possible, but many of them could not and did not, for the reasons set forth, make such examination as they and we desired and as the public had a right to expect.

The members appointed to act in Cache County, report that the county records were examined by a committee of a previous grand jury, two years ago, and that the present committee took up the work where the previous one left off, and examined the records up to date, finding them well kept. They consider the Cache county jail insecure and not in a condition to confine prisoners.

The members appointed to act in Weber County report that they could not make sufficient examination of the county and city records for want of an appropriation for clerical help. They found the Weber County prison condemned as unfit for use owing to dampness, and the Ogden City prison unsuited to the purpose for which it was designed, being too small and insecure.

The member appointed to act in Davis County reports the records and accounts well kept and the prison in good condition, but not in use, the authorities finding it more economical to board county prisoners in the Salt Lake City jail.

The member appointed to act in Tooele County reports no investigation of records for want of clerical help, and that the records of Tooele County have never been examined by a grand jury in its history. He reports the county prison in need of repairs, and also that the Territorial school appropriation for 1877 has never been received, in consequence of neglect on the part of the county superintendent of schools.

The member appointed to visit the Box Elder County jail, to ascertain its condition and what, if any, prisoners were there confined, reports the prison in such an insecure condition that two prisoners awaiting the action of the grand jury recently escaped.

The members appointed to examine the Salt Lake County prison report it reasonably well managed, but are of opinion that it is unhealthy at certain seasons, from being in the base of the building, and consequently damp.

The report of the committee appointed to examine the accounts and records of Salt Lake County is necessarily incomplete, as the members lacked the aid necessary to a satisfactory report upon the records of so large a county.

The report of the committee appointed to report on the penitentiary in this county is ample, and hence is not commented upon.

### SALT LAKE CITY PRISON.

A committee of the grand jury visited the Salt Lake City prison February 28, and found 15 inmates—13 males and 2 females. Nine of this number had committed offenses, five were voluntary prisoners, working for subsistence, and one was counted insane. The prison is reasonably strong, and probably as well cared for and the prisoners as well subsisted as could be expected for the compensation the contractor receives. The jailor, the committee is satisfied, endeavors to keep

the cells, halls, dining room and kitchen clean, and succeeds in all but the sleeping department of the common run of prisoners, which the committees found somewhat filthy, and the occupants complaining of vermin. The latter are due to the habits of some of the prisoners, and the fact that many of them are filthy when sentenced and do not remain in prison long enough to be disciplined. Separation of new prisoners from those who have been inmates for a time, and the establishment and rigid enforcement of rules looking to cleanliness would, we think, remove the above ground for complaint, and no doubt promote the health of the unfortunate persons who become inmates of the prison.

There is less to criticize in the management of this prison than in the principle governing the sending of people to it. We find there a number of distinct classes of inmates—hardened criminals, those debased by dissipation and excess, those there for the first offense, youths, paupers, tramps, the insane—and one, at least who, while he should not be permitted to run at large, is much more in need of a reform institution and moral lessons than of imprisonment as a punishment.

Little discretion, we suppose, is left by the law to the justice who commits inmates to prison, but the law makers must be held responsible for not providing institutions suited to the various classes that must for the public good be deprived of their liberty. The city prison under consideration, is well suited for the confinement of criminals who are worthy of but little punishment, but is in no sense what should be provided for a considerable percentage of those who find their way within its walls.

There is not, in Salt Lake County, nor in the Territory, we believe, an institution where any attempt is made to arrest the steps of wayward youths, who, through faulty education, bad associations and want of restraining influences, commit petty offenses. Instead, these young offenders are either let go with a reprimand, or sentenced to imprisonment and labor with those who are known in police circles as old offenders, from whom they learn lessons far from reformatory. For such, and these like one of the females in the prison, who seems unable to control herself, the legislature should provide reform institutions where, instead of being debased into real criminals, as is the tendency under the present system, they might in most cases be educated and developed into useful members of society.

It is true that just at the date of our committee's visit to the prison there were few, if any, lads of the class we are describing confined, but it is not necessary to see them in prison to learn the need of reform institutions. Every town and city in the Territory has representatives of the class referred to, and many of the violations of law brought to the notice of grand juries show what their habits, if unchecked, lead to.

It is the duty of the state to protect its citizens, and in our opinion there are few agencies better calculated to meet that end in this Territory than a house of correction for what is known on the Pacific as the "hoodlum element."

In the prison at the date of our committee's visit there were five voluntary prisoners, who, if we judge them right, were tramps. They were generally healthy young men and were willing to serve the city and sleep in jail through the winter for their subsistence.

The policy of the city government in providing for them on request was doubtless dictated by humanity, but the propriety of doing so is questionable. This class of men swarm all over the country, and in many localities have become a pest—so much so that legislatures are at a loss for remedies. Utah is and has been having her share of experience with tramps. The course of the city government in providing them with food and lodging in winter, even though they work a little, when it is difficult for them to sustain themselves on the road, seems to us calculated to foster rather than check the evil. It would seem far more reasonable to punish than to reward them for the life they led, if we wish, as we must, to correct an evil that is growing constantly. Legislation providing for the punishment and reformation of this dangerous class would we think be wise.

In closing the general subject of prisons, we may say that the reports of many of the committees of the grand jury lead us to think that the authorities of nearly all the counties in this district are derelict in respect to the care and safety of prisoners. It is true that the number to be cared for in the less populous counties is small, but however small the number, they are entitled to humane treatment, and whether confined as a punishment or to await the action of the courts, the public good demands that prisoners be safely kept. The two who escaped from the Box Elder County prison were, we understand, tramps. They probably remained in prison at will during the winter at public expense, and when spring opened and dry roads invited, quietly stole away.

If so, this is commentary enough, and should remind county authorities that it is a waste of funds to commit prisoners to await the action of grand juries unless their prisons are secure.

### THE INSANE ASYLUM.

Various circumstances led us to seek information respecting the character and management of the Salt Lake City Insane Asylum.

Among other means of acquiring information adopted, two of our number visited the institution late in February last, and made a report upon the inmates, which is attached. They found twenty-three inmates.

The patients are mainly insane, though some are hospital patients sent to the asylum by the authorities for the want of a more suitable place for care and treatment, there being, we regret to say, no such thing as a public hospital, in a comprehensive sense in Salt Lake County.

The asylum is owned by Salt Lake City, and is leased to a physician who contracts to subsist, clothe and treat the patients at prices ranging from \$25 per month for those sent by the city and county, to \$35 per month for patients from outside Salt Lake County.

The average number of patients, we are informed, is about twenty-four, and the building, by crowding, it is said, would accommodate thirty.

Our information is that the patients are fed, clothed and housed, and that they are visited occasionally by the physician, but we are not impressed that the institution is such as the enlightenment of the age prescribes for the insane, who, above all others, are the wards of the public, and are entitled to every help that science, care and experience can bestow.

The establishment is imperfect in plan of buildings and grounds, and plan of details of management; and the contract system upon which it is conducted is open to objection as exposing helpless creatures to the cupidity of private interest.

The asylum is patronized mainly from necessity, for we regret to say, as imperfect as it is, there is no other in the territory.

It was established to meet a want of the community at a time perhaps when the Territory could ill afford to provide a more elaborate institution, but is now unequal to the demands of the times, and is a reproach to Utah.

The territory has now a large population, and a proportionate number of insane persons, many of whom are sent east or west or kept at home for treatment at great inconvenience and expense, because of the dread friends have of the treatment their insane would receive in our only asylum.

This suggests the necessity of an asylum in keeping with the population, managed in an enlightened manner and supported and controlled by the Territory. It should be centrally located and have large buildings and grounds, embodying all the improved appliances modern experience has suggested, and in its management all approved agencies for treatment, discipline and cure of patients, conspicuously lacking in the present asylum, should be made use of.

The direction of the suggested Territorial asylum should, we think, be confided to a managing board of distinguished philanthropic citizens unlikely to have any but humanitarian motives, which board should elect and hold responsible physicians and superintendents.

An institution so supported, planned and controlled would relieve friends of the insane of that feeling of dread which now strikes them at the thought of sending patients

to the Salt Lake City asylum; would be of immeasurable benefit to the people and a credit to the Territory.

In concluding this report, with the inconvenience and annoyance of inadequate support of grand juries, fresh in our minds, we urge upon the members of the legislature the importance of their making more liberal appropriation for the courts, to the end that grand juries may have facilities whereby infractions of the law and alleged dereliction of duty of every kind may be investigated. Courts now have the power to order, but grand juries have not the means to investigate public matters in a manner satisfactory to themselves or as thoroughly as the interest of the people demand.

Respectfully submitted, by order of the discharged members of the grand jury, February term, 1879, as their views.

M. T. BURGESS,  
Former Foreman.

### THE GRAND JURY.

#### REPORT ON THE PENITENTIARY.

Mr. Foreman: Your committee of the grand jury visited the penitentiary February 28th, 1878. With this report is handed you a list of the names of all the prisoners, on what account held, their crimes, term of sentence, date of confinement, and including those awaiting trial, etc., on the above date.

But few words are required from us to express our views of this institution, if indeed it is worthy the name of an institution; but one opinion may be reasonably formed respecting it, and that unavoidably an unfavorable one, for the purpose of a penitentiary, for the uses and ends for which it was erected, can ill be served in this poorly constructed and badly designated place. We should have to look far and wide to find its equal; it is remarkable for nothing but the absence of all arrangements that are to be found in a well-appointed prison.

The penitentiary consists of mud or adobe walls, which offer no resistance to escape, as has been frequently proved. The buildings are two wood structures or rooms, for astonishing as it may appear, there are only two rooms for all the prisoners, numbering forty-eight persons. The two rooms, besides a blacksmith shop, a bake house, stables, two guard houses on the walls, warden's house—in which the cooking is done for the prisoners—and a "sweat house," as it is called, constitute all there is of a penitentiary for Utah. This sweat house is a place of punishment for the refractory. During the tenant's occupancy of this house, he is deprived of food, water and light, and it is said this mode of treating the insubordinate is very effective in its persuasion to submission.

In one room about 20 x 30 feet sleep thirty-two prisoners in bunks and it is very imperfectly ventilated. In this room were three prisoners sick, who receive attendance once a week from Dr. Douglas. They had no accommodations, nor quarters nor privileges beyond other prisoners, there being no hospital in which such patients can be properly treated. This room impressed us that it was more like a pest producing than a morally curative establishment, nor should we have been surprised if all were sick who sleep there, as a very offensive effluvia was unpleasantly dominant. The condition of this room is decidedly unclean, nor were the prisoners' persons, clothing and bedding any better than the premises, and the only blame we could attach to the officers, is for not insisting on cleanliness; nay, for not absolutely enforcing it. We drew the warden's and guards' attention to this obvious necessity. The warden informed us that the place would be whitewashed the next day. We told the prisoners that if they were punished to enforce them to keep their quarters and persons clean, it would only be what was essential for their own good and comfort. The balance of the prisoners sleep in iron cages (these cages are a loan, as seen by the receipt hereto attached, from William Nelson, United States marshal), which are enclosed by a slim board house, which is merely designed to protect the prisoners from the weather. The prisoners who sleep in this room are those who work about the premises, inside and outside the walls, of whom the warden has some assurance that they will not try to escape. No