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VIGILANCE COMMITTEES IN THE EAST.

SOME two or three weeks ago the telegraphic dispatches contained the announcement that preliminary measures were being taken, for the formation of Vigilance Committees in the different wards of the city of New York. The announcement seemed so improbable, coming, as it did, from the national metropolis, whose government is confessedly the most expensive of any city in the world, that it sounded too much like a sensation story to be believed. Our telegrams of to-day reiterate this startling intelligence, and a similar statement having appeared in the New York correspondence of some of the western papers, it seems as if there is some truth in it. The paragraph in this morning's dispatches reads "Vigilance Committees are secretly organizing for the suppression of crime by co-operation with honest officials and concerted action against corruption."

This is one of the very strongest commentaries upon the degeneracy of the times. The formation of Vigilance Committees in the unsettled portions of the country has been, perhaps, in some instances, to some extent justifiable, but the necessity for the existence of such an institution is always to be regretted. When, however, circumstances are of a nature that such organizations are considered necessary in the great centres of trade and population of the country it is an indication of an alarming state of affairs. The aristocratic and conservative systems of Europe have long since been weighed in the balances, and, by the republicans of America at least, have been pronounced "wanting;" but they are far from being reduced to a necessity like this. Under them law is respected, and the integrity of its administrators has hitherto been so far above suspicion, that in the great majority of cases, where violations of any branch of State or Municipal law have been perpetrated, the offenders have been promptly brought to justice, and thus the peace and good order of society at large have been preserved.

In our own land, once the boast and pride of all good men and the hope of the oppressed in every nation, the case seems to be different. Venality and corruption of the most irreclaimable type seem to have spread to almost every corner of the land. Politicians, parsons and members of the press seem alike tainted, and the saying of Isaiah seems to be specially applicable to our own times, "as with the people so with the priest; as with the servant so with his master; as with the maid so with her mistress; as with the buyer so with the seller; as with the lender so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury so with the giver of usury to him."

The love of the "almighty dollar," as Washington Irving termed it, seems to be so strong among the Americans as a people, that honor and integrity are freely sacrificed to obtain money, and the woe pronounced in Holy Writ upon him that maketh haste to get rich seems to be overtaking the nation. This greed for gold is not confined to any particular class, but ecclesiastics and law-makers and administrators seem to be troubled with the same infirmity. But the other week the news came by telegraph that prominent reverends in the East were known to gamble extensively in stocks, that church funds had been used for this purpose, and that at least one church had been mortgaged to gratify the itching palm of some of these priestly jobbers.

Among the reasons assigned for the formation of Vigilance Committees in New York is the fact that criminals, no matter how guilty nor of what crimes accused or convicted, can escape the punishment awarded by the law, if the "ring" to which they belong, whether it be the burglars', whisky, internal revenue, Erie or any other is only rich enough

to pay the necessary bribe. What hope is there for real reform when the power which wealth confers is used for such disgraceful purposes? The formation of Vigilance Committees, and the summary execution of a few criminals may temporarily check the commission of crime; but when the laws of a State can not be enforced legitimately, the formation of Vigilance Committees will be of little avail in regenerating society.

If such organizations were composed wholly of individuals who would be influenced in their judgements by justice alone, the evils which they design to remedy might be abated; but there is little ground to hope this. In all such committees there is a fear that some of the members will be actuated more or less by personal feelings and private piques in carrying out their dread decrees. It is not in the nature of things to be otherwise. Where irresponsible power is held by a private organization an abuse of that power is all but inevitable. If once such a movement is inaugurated in New York we may expect similar measures in other large cities of the Union, and the abuse of power, sure to follow, will increase partisan strife and bitter feelings and lead to evils of a more serious nature than those they are designed to suppress.

The formation of the first Vigilance Committee, whatever might have been the design of its originator, sapped the foundation of law, order and the peace of society; and the movement now contemplated in the East, if carried out, will most probably result in consequences of the most serious and fatal character. With Vigilance Committees in the leading cities of the North, Ku-klux and other organizations of a similar character spread over the South, we may confidently look for outrages and violence to be committed which for number and atrocity may far surpass the doings of the once-terrible Council of Ten in Venice; and help to bring about that time spoken of by the Prophet Joseph Smith, when city shall be against city, and when safety can not be anywhere found, except in Zion.

If the law-makers of the nation and the religious teachers of the people at large will use the power they possess, like wise stewards, they may yet cultivate public opinion to such a point of excellence that the law-breaker must suffer the penalty irrespective of wealth or social position. This is the only effective course to pursue; all others, including even the formation of a Vigilant Committee in every ward of every city of the Union, will assuredly fail.

CO-OPERATION AT PROVO.

In our recent visit to Provo we had the good fortune to be present at a meeting of the stockholders of the Co-operative Institution of that place, which was held for the purpose of completing the organization of the society by electing a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Abraham O. Smoot was elected President, Myron Tanner, Vice-President; Elijah F. Sheets, Alex. F. Macdonald, Andrew H. Scott, Samuel S. Jones and Geo. G. Bywater were elected Directors; L. John Nuttall, Secretary; and Isaac Bullock, Treasurer. The society has started under very favorable auspices. At a meeting of the President and Board of Directors, held directly after the former meeting had been dismissed, a liberal proposal was made by Henry W. Lawrence, Esq., of the firm of Kimball & Lawrence, to sell out to them the new store recently built at Provo by that firm, with their entire stock of goods which they had there. The business done by this store since it was opened has been excellent, and it was extending; but this proposal was made with a view to aid the co-operative movement, as Bro. L. thought, and truly, too, that two stores under the circumstances would be one too many. The offer was unanimously accepted, and as soon as an invoice of stock can be taken, which will be done immediately, the goods and premises will be transferred to the Co-operative Institution.

A large amount of stock has been subscribed by the people towards this Institution, and so sanguine are they of success that in several instances, we understand, the amounts originally subscribed have been doubled. This feeling of confidence was not lessened by the proposal of President Young, if the stockholders had no objections, to take \$5,000 worth of stock in the Institution, and the taking of \$3,000 worth by Br. Lawrence. We have heard of no society starting into existence in the Territory under such favorable circumstances as this of Provo, and we shall be much disappointed if it does not prove a success.

Provo has set an example that Salt Lake City need not be ashamed to imitate, and when an establishment is started here on as good a basis, and under as favorable circumstances, as the one in that city, we shall think we have reasons to congratulate our citizens.

The principle of co-operation is a correct one, and it cannot fail to be successful in every instance if the enterprise be conducted by business men on business principles. It is being adopted in many of our settlements, and organizations are being formed, adopting as their constitutions and by-laws those framed by the Parent Society in this city. This intelligence is gratifying. But too great care cannot be taken in starting and conducting the operations of these societies. To be successful the business must be done in a systematic, reliable manner, and men of good capacity and experience must have the management of them. If these precautions be not taken, money will be lost, the attempts will prove failures, and discouragement and, probably, ill feelings will follow, and the principle of co-operation will fall into disrepute. Reckless, careless, inexperienced men should not be entrusted with the management of the funds of such institutions. A man may be a good, reliable man in counseling and preaching; he may be an excellent mechanic, a careful and judicious man in taking care of stock or in cultivating the ground, or be successful in other pursuits, and yet be unsuited to conduct and manage a large establishment and to buy and sell goods. Experience is required to do this. But a careful, judicious man can learn, if he has an opportunity; and if there are settlements where they do not have the men possessing the necessary experience to begin with, if they commence carefully, and do a small, safe business that they can manage without difficulty, their experience will enlarge, and they can extend their business proportionately.

LEVEEING THE JORDAN.

UPWARDS of three weeks ago a petition was presented to the Legislative Assembly, signed by a number of influential citizens, asking that body to take the necessary measures to have a levee built on the East bank of the river Jordan, beginning at North Temple street and extending as far South as may be needed to prevent the overflow of its waters. In response to this petition the House instructed its committee on Claims and Appropriations to incorporate in the Territorial appropriation bill, the sum of three thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary to construct said levee. We do not know what its position is in the Council; but the hope is very widely indulged in that, that Honorable body, in the pressure of business consequent upon the near approach of the day of adjournment, will not be prevented from giving it the needed attention.

This is a subject that deserves attention. Not only is it necessary that the land should be preserved from inundation; but as a sanitary measure it is deserving of attention. The accumulation of large bodies of water in such close proximity to our city is, in the opinion of many, a cause of disease. On this point there is a difference of opinion; but be that as it may, all will admit that these lands should be drained. If the Legislature will respond to this petition, and appropriate the necessary amount to keep the Jordan within its banks, a large tract of very valuable land will be reclaimed. We are well aware of the difficulties which have attended the management of the waters within the corporate limits of this City. Whenever the City Council has attempted to regulate or control them, complications have arisen, and it has only been by the exercise of great caution and wisdom that good feelings have been preserved.

Had the waters of Jordan been left to flow as they would, the signers of this petition might never have presented it to the Legislative Assembly; but a levee was built on the West bank of the river, under the direction of the Territorial Road Commissioner, which in the opinion of the owners of property on the east side of the river, has caused the water to accumulate on their lands and rendered them valueless, and this petition asks that equal favor be shown to the east side by constructing a levee there.

This land, being so close to the city, and so well adapted for pastures and meadows, should be reclaimed; it would be a valuable addition to our grass lands, of which we stand greatly in need at present.

PEACE IN EUROPE.

It seems, at last, to be about certain that for the present the peace of Europe will not be disturbed. The telegraphic dispatches of yesterday brought the news that King George and his cabinet had finally agreed to the terms of the protocol of the Paris Conference. The debates on the acceptance of these terms by Greece, have been long and stormy, having led to the dissolution of one ministry and the formation of a second; even then feeling seemed so nearly divided, as to their acceptance, that King George made it an alternative for them to either accept his resignation as King, or the terms of the protocol. The Greeks have evidently had the war fever pretty badly, and had it not been for the determined stand taken by the King, war between them and Turkey would most likely have been inaugurated. This change in the sentiments and policy of the King is rather remarkable. Some time ago he seemed determined to fight, notwithstanding the expostulations of his father, the King of Denmark, and of his brother-in-law the Prince of Wales. It is likely, however, that their urgent representations have had some weight with him, and he finally decided to oblige these relations rather than the Czar.

This will preserve the peace of Europe for the present, and postpone the realization of the designs of Russia in relation to Turkey; but this is all, it is a postponement only. If complications can not be manufactured out of the Cretan question, and Greece be made the cat's paw in the hands of Russia in furthering her designs in the East, she will easily find some other pretext for an outbreak when the time and the circumstances are opportune. The question is delayed at present, but its full consummation is but a matter of time.

NARROW AND ILLIBERAL POLICY.

A BILL for the protection of labor has been recently introduced into the Nevada Legislature. The bill is designed to protect the Chinese from mob violence when engaged in any peaceful labor or occupation throughout the State of Nevada, whether working for themselves or in the employ of others. The Territorial Enterprise says that the measure is just and humane in character. It aims at nothing beyond the protection of the weak against the strong, and a rational argument cannot be urged against its passage. Yet the prospects are that it will be defeated. There is a Miners' Union Society at Virginia City, and another at Gold Hill. These societies are said to be very powerful organizations as regards numbers and voters, and they are working very vigorously to defeat this bill. They have submitted a protest to the Legislature against the passage of the bill from which the following is an extract:

Witness the deplorable condition of our sister State of California. Her rivers and hills once teemed with glittering wealth, and gave profitable employment to thousands of industrious men; but a mistaken policy permitted the Chinese to enter and usurp the place of nobler men. Peonage was their controlling agent. The placers and hills and rivers swarmed with the multitude of persons sent by the great companies located in various cities of China.

The white men were forced to flee from the contact with such a degraded race, and the mines were, in a great measure, abandoned to the Pagan; and, to-day, in the shadow of the Cross, the idol of Paganism is nestled in fancied security. Seriously, gentlemen, you cannot be so dead to the best interests of the State as to attempt to fasten by law such a scourge upon our people. We have fled from the leprosy; do not, we pray you, again bring it to our presence.

It is very often asserted in these days that the white race, and especially the Anglo-Saxon,—the leading element in the population of America—is vastly superior to any race not blessed by nature with a skin of just the same tint; but the whining spirit manifested by the above extract from this bill gives no evidence of this much vaunted superiority, but rather the reverse. Why, according to this, the "deplorable condition" of California, invented expressly for the occasion we should imagine, by those interested in the passage of the bill,—is the result of admitting the hardworking, economical sons of the "Flowery kingdom" to compete in labor with hard handed, hard fisted, white skinned sons of toil of the Anglo-Saxon and other races! And they, poor souls, have been "forced to flee from the contact with such a degraded race," and in consequence of this "the mines have