

# DESERET NEWS.

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

WEDNESDAY, - JUNE 18, 1879.

## THE CHURCH AND THE STAGE.

A VERY praiseworthy movement has been inaugurated in the British metropolis. Its object is to promote union between the Church and the Stage. Recognizing the absurdity of the prejudice which exists among the vast majority of "religious" people against "those play actors," and the conflict that has long prevailed between ecclesiasticism and theatricals, a number of clergymen, thoroughly acquainted with popular life in London and the power which music and the drama exercises over the minds of the masses, have started an organization to harmonize two civilizing influences which have generally worked apart and in opposition. Meetings have been held in Drury Lane Theatre, at which actors and parsons, actresses and lady church members, united cordially in a consideration of the object in view. The result is that a society has been formed, with a constitution, which explains its purposes and plans as follows:

"I. *Objects.*—(1.) To unite its members together for the glory of God and for the promotion of right relations between church and stage.

(2.) To assert the right of churchmen to take part in theatrical amusements, whether as actors, actresses, singers, dancers, etc., or as spectators.

(3.) To encourage the members and associates in a godly life and to promote social sympathy between them.

II. *Membership.*—All members of the Church of England who feel that it is the duty of churchmen to respect the stage, and that the theatrical profession has done much and might do more to further the church work of elevating and purifying human life, are eligible for membership of the guild; and all who, from whatever cause, are unable to take part in the common worship of the Church of England, are eligible as associates.

III. The guild shall meet once a year on a day to be named by a committee representing both professions on which the holy communion shall be celebrated and a sermon may be preached, and on the afternoon or evening of the same day, or another more convenient, a social meeting shall be held of the members and their friends. There shall be other meetings, at least monthly, for worship or lectures or the discussion of subjects connected with the work of the guild.

IV. *Subscription.*—The subscription shall be 2s. 6d. entrance fee and 1s. per annum."

It is not intended to introduce theatricals into the pulpit nor religious services on the stage, but to break down the middle wall of partition which has kept apart the votaries of the drama and of the cross, and to mutually recognize the good which may be found in the play as well as in the sermon.

There has been considerable discussion in this country over the subject of the influence of the theatre, and it is to be hoped that some benefit to society may grow out of it. The Latter-day Saints have long recognized the power of the drama as a public instructor, and its usefulness under proper restrictions as a legitimate source of entertainment. Instead of casting out actors from the pale of church membership and their calling from church recognition, they have encouraged the development of dramatic talent within the purview of church influence and authority, and considered it no descent in the social or ecclesiastical scale for a member or officer of the Church to appear in a play containing nothing positively injurious to morality. The theatre in this city was built under Church influence and with the design of using the drama in the interest of truth, virtue, and righteous enjoyment.

We do not claim that the original intent has been fully carried into practice, nor that the representations on the Salt Lake stage have always been such as could be ap-

proved by the best minds among us. Circumstances have arisen from time to time which made possible the introduction of many exhibitions obnoxious to refined taste and calculated to do harm rather than good. This is much to be regretted. But the theatre is now under such control as will at least prevent any performance of a vicious character, and endeavor to provide amusement that will have no demoralizing effect.

Our temple of the drama should be consecrated to the elevation as well as recreation of the people. Valuable lessons may be taught upon the stage with greater force than they can be enunciated from the pulpit. Many who rarely enter the tabernacle often go to the theatre. The value of object lessons is recognized in the advanced school system of the times. Pictures in books convey ideas that illustrate the text and make many things clear which words can but dimly portray. The drama unites the benefits of all, it combines the forces and attractions of painting, sculpture, oratory and romance, and in its best forms is the most powerful teacher of the learned as well as the ignorant of which we have any knowledge. How important, therefore, it is that the influence of the true Church should be felt upon the people's stage, that such plays should be presented as will convey no immoral sentiment or incorrect principle; that those who impersonate the characters represented should be persons whose lives are above just reproach; that while fun and mirth and real enjoyment are subjected to no undue restraint, decorum and good order should be maintained, and the pleasure of all present in the theatre be considered rather than the convenience or inclinations of a few.

This is a subject worthy of serious consideration. We anticipate the time when the Stage will be a mighty ally of the Church in the dissemination of grand truths, the purification of public morals, the correction of improper sentiments, the cultivation of unformed or depraved tastes, and the encouragement of all that is elevating and progressive and calculated to promote the lasting happiness of the whole human race. There are no people on the earth who have a better opportunity to bring this about than the Latter-day Saints. It cannot be done in a day. The changes necessary may take considerable time to effect. But the beginning can be made, the wise in Israel can help in the good work, and by union and determination any reform we earnestly undertake can eventually be accomplished.

We endorse the movement commenced in the world's great commercial capital; we believe in the co-operation of the Church and the Stage; and recognizing the necessity of providing amusement for the people, to whose happiness, health and advancement is essential, we view as a matter of vast importance the purification of the drama, its encouragement as a praiseworthy profession, and its supervision by competent authority, that it may be made an unmingled blessing instead of an actual curse to mankind.

## WHY NOT STRIVE FOR THE TRUTH?

DURING the progress of the Dudley trial one of the counsel for the defense moved that the prosecution be compelled to place on the stand a witness who could give material evidence in the case. The demand was based on the rule that the prosecution should call all witnesses who were present at the commission of the offence, whether their testimony would be for the benefit or detriment of the defendant. The Court admitted the force of the rule, but did not consider that it was applicable in this case, and therefore overruled the motion. We do not mention this for the purpose of finding fault with the ruling, nor of making any comments on the case at bar, but to draw attention to the rule, and the general manner of conducting trials under the laws of civilized Christendom.

It appears to us that it is perfectly right and proper to require the prosecuting officer to place on the witness stand, every person known

or supposed to have any knowledge of facts bearing upon the case to be tried. And this whether the testimony would tend to show the guilt or innocence of the person accused of crime. A public prosecutor is, or should be an officer of justice, and his aim should be to present and make plain the truth in relation to any cause at issue, no matter what consequences might ensue. He is not supposed to be the mere representative of vengeance or an agent to procure convictions regardless of innocence or guilt. His business is or should be to help the jury to arrive at a correct understanding of all points in the case, that they may be able to return a just verdict.

But how are trials usually conducted in this nation and many others, popularly supposed to be the most advanced of any since the world began? The aim and object of attorneys for the prosecution are to convict the accused. To effect this, every incident giving the slightest color of guilt is cunningly woven together, and the whole mental force of these attorneys is bent towards the defendant's condemnation. Anything favorable to his innocence is kept, if possible, out of sight, or, if that is impossible, is ridiculed or explained away. When logic fails, sophistry, invective dramatic art and all the powers of oratory are brought to bear to make the accused appear a fit subject for the law's vengeance.

On the other hand, the counsel for the defense employ every art to refute the evidences of guilt and exalt the character of the defendant, often departing widely from the truth and wresting statements from their obvious meaning, tinting up some, toning down others, and blinding the eyes of the jury to all that is damaging to their client.

In too many instances a trial resolves itself into a question of legal skill and ability. It is a tilt between knights of the bar. The real case at issue, the actual guilt or innocence of the accused, fades almost out of sight and the special pleading of the opposing lawyers takes the place of definite testimony. Prisoners are convicted and sent to jail or the scaffold through the brilliant talents of the prosecution, or set at liberty through the powerful arguments of the defence. Thus, innocent persons are often condemned, and the greatest rascals adjudged innocent.

It is a terrible thing to a conscientious mind to see a man of intellect and culture, representing the majesty of impartial law, exercising every power of his being to hurry a fellow creature to a dreadful death, without regard to the fact of his actual guilt or innocence, but simply from a desire to gain a victory over his legal opponents. Yet how often is such a spectacle to be seen in the criminal courts of Christian countries.

We regard the system as wrong and barbarous and unworthy the light and progress of the nineteenth century. In contrast to the trickery, pettifoggery, chicanery and truth-shading of the established rules of legal procedure, the simple methods of our High Council trials, in which only the real merits of a case are sought to be aimed at, commend themselves to the admiration and approbation of the thoughtful and the just.

## A SPLENDID ENTERPRISE.

ON Thursday the 12th inst., a very important movement was decided upon at a meeting on the sand ridge, between Kaysville and Ogden.

It is well known that a large, fertile region of country slopes from the mountains in that vicinity down to the shore of the briny lake, only a small portion of which has, until recently, been brought into cultivation. There have been for several years, some farms watered from springs and little streamlets close under the mountains. And by constructing canals from the Weber in the neighborhood of Ogden City, water has been conducted to the strip of country now known as Hooper City, where the growth of trees and vegetation is wonderful, and where a thrifty settlement prospers near to the lake's edge. But many thousands of acres were left unreclaimed because of the

lack of water for irrigation, and although during the past three or four years dry farming has succeeded very well, and considerable land has been pre-empted or purchased from the U.P. Railroad, still a large area has been left untilled.

But the feasibility of taking out the waters of the Weber from some point up the cañon from which it could be brought around the base of the mountains and turned upon this naturally fertile land, has been discussed for over twenty years past. The great expense attending such a project has hitherto deterred any attempt to bring it into practical effect. However, a number of live men in Weber County determined to make an effort towards its accomplishment, and, taking the steps required by law, obtained from the County Court of Weber County the right of way for a canal. But there are landowners in Davis County who have for years been agitating this same question, and who would be as much benefitted as the Weberites by such an enterprise.

A meeting of landowners in both counties interested in the undertaking was held on Thursday, when an amalgamation of forces was effected and plans were adopted for the construction of a canal to meet the requirement of all parties. The Davis County people were admitted by the Weberites to a full participation in the benefits of the right of way, each party to do an equal share of the work on the main canal and its own work on the branch canals.

The great ditch is to be commenced about a mile and a half up Weber Cañon, from which point to the forks, where it will part into the Weber County ditch and the Davis County ditch, it will be nine miles in length and carry a stream 12 feet wide and 3 feet deep; the fall is 3 feet to the mile. The cost is estimated at \$100,000 or at the rate of \$3 per acre for the land to be watered thereby. It is to be commenced at once and put through to its completion. There are business men connected with the enterprise, and several capitalists as well as small farmers. They are all in earnest. The work will be done. It is no dream of theorists, and the scheme will not remain on paper.

The changes that will be brought about in a few years, through the building of this long talked of canal, upon the country between Kaysville and Ogden, on each side of the railroad, will be a most pleasing and profitable transformation. It will give another demonstration of the potency of water, as described by the extinguished statesman Smiler Colfax; but people with both eyes looking for causes when they see the effects, will credit something to labor, energy, skill, pluck, determination, and wise direction. Not only will fields and farms take the place of sage and sand, but the country will be dotted with pleasant homes surrounded by the foliage of orchards and shade trees, and made beautiful with flowers and shrubbery. The solitude will be broken by the voice of merriment and the sound of cheerful industry, while the lowing kine and domestic birds and quadrupeds will add their various notes to prove that active life has come in the place of the silent wilderness. Rich crops of grain and fruit and the product of the vine will contribute to the general wealth, and the whole region will become a "Mormon" village with its peace, plenty and general good order.

We commend the course taken by the parties to this union of interests, and with their grand enterprise all the success desired and expected by its worthy projectors.

## BLACKMAILING.

ON Saturday afternoon a complaint was filed in the Third District Court against George Q. Cannon, Albert Carrington and Brigham Young, as executors of the last will and testament of the late President Brigham Young, and John Taylor, John Sharp, Edward Hunter, Horace S. Eldredge, George Goddard, Leonard W. Hardy, Theodore McKean, Joseph C. Kingsbury and Angus M. Cannon, as parties to whom certain portions of the property of the late President Young, are alleged to have been conveyed in trust for the Church. The complaint sets forth that the said executors have "grossly neglected and violated their duties in

this behalf, and have wilfully wasted and converted a large portion of said estate to the value of about \$1,200,000. Of this amount it is complained that they have appropriated to their own use about \$200,000, under pretence of compensation for services, expenses of administration and payment of legacies, and that they have pretended to allow the sum of \$632.90 on a false and fraudulent claim against the estate by Trustee of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Application was also made for injunction against the said executors, restraining them from the further performance of their duties and against John Taylor, enjoining him either as Trustee-in-Trust or otherwise from disposing of any of the property so consigned to him for the appointment of a receiver to whom they must deliver up all moneys, property and assets under their control until the final hearing of the case; and "for a reasonable allowance out of the funds of the estate coming into the hands of the receiver, to pay the expenses of this action during its pendency and for reasonable attorney's fees for prosecuting the same."

The request was further made that, as a final judgment, all these transfers and conveyances be declared illegal and void, and the property be returned to the estate and that the executors be required to render an account of their administration, to make good all that they have wasted or illegally disposed of, and that a trustee or trustees be appointed in the place of the executors to manage and distribute said estate to the beneficiaries entitled thereto.

The complaint is entered by Emeline A. Young, called in the will Emeline A. Young Mackintosh, in her own behalf and on behalf of all the heirs of the estate, excepting Brigham Young, their names being severally given in the document as plaintiffs in the suit. The application was granted and W. S. McCormick and Michael Shaughnessey were appointed receivers.

It was well known on Saturday that such a suit was about to be entered, but the matter was kept as close as possible from the representatives of the NEWS and Herald, even attorneys as well as court officials pretending not to know anything of the affair.

The real point on which this suit hinges is contained in the following clause of the complaint:

"And that this plaintiff has not received more than one-half part in value of the estate which has been distributed, to which on a fair distribution she would be entitled, thus showing the unfitness of said executors for their trust and duty."

It is pretty well known that the executor of this estate have endeavored to make a full, complete and equitable distribution of property left for the heirs, after paying to the Trustee in Trust for the Church such property as was conclusively proven did of right belong to it. President Brigham Young as the former Trustee in Trust held considerable Church property of various kinds in his own name, and it was his evident intention, as may be seen in section 38 of the will proper, that the executor should convey all such property to his successor in office. After making a satisfactory settlement with the executors proceeded to settle with the heirs, with the view of winding up the estate's affairs. This they were able to do with nearly all who had arrived at their majority, and the rents and returns of property still left in the care have been distributed among the widows and minors for their current support. And it should be understood that this is the only property that at present can be made available, out of which to pay the expenses arising from this most wicked and unjustifiable action at law, which thus assumes the color of a robbery of the widows and orphans.

It will be observed that the suit is nominally conducted on behalf of all the heirs but one to the estate. The present writer, in the absence of the recognized editors of the NEWS, takes it upon himself to say that nearly all of them may be expected to repudiate this unauthorized and impudent use of their names. They cannot justly, consistently and truthfully permit this suit to be prosecuted under pretence of their consent. We