

## FRIENDLY WORDS FROM KENTUCKY.

DANTON, Ky., Nov. 28, 1896,

As I sometime read your most estimable paper and being acquainted with about five of the Mormon Elders, who are at work in this state, I thought I would write you a letter.

I see you are all for Bryan and 16 to 1, hence we do not feel your people are very much strangers to us. We still love and honor Mr. Bryan and though he was defeated this time we will brace up and make the stronger fight next time, for we believe that "truth crushed to earth will rise again."

This is Thanksgiving day—all well and good; but I am so sick and tired looking at the pictures of turkeys and reading the headlines of "shockegiving stories"—I do not read the stories themselves.

It has been sometime since I saw a copy of the News, and I miss it very much. I always look for the letters of travel and read them with interest as I do also the lecturer, discourses, etc., by your home people. I presume it is needless for me to tell you of what an educated prejudice there exists among us against the Mormons. I assure you it is something tiresome and terrible. No doubt if we were as well educated in other branches some of us would ere long be able to realize the long cherished desire to vanquish them—soul and body—and polygamy! The last named is of course the great bugbear, and although you will meet with many who know not a single principle of Mormon religion, there's no one but has heard of polygamy. I declare it is absolutely laughable to see the blanched countenances and behold the nervousness of some when the subject is mentioned.

I never saw a Mormon until a short time ago, about a year I believe, and I had always lived in mortal fear of meeting one. Since I met them they have visited us quite often. My husband is a Christian but he hates the Mormons with sincere cordiality. I have an uncle, Dr. J. D. McAtee in Malad city, Idaho, who visited us several years ago. I ventured to ask him how he liked the Mormons and he said: "Why my dear, they are the best folk you ever saw," which so terrified me that I did not again refer to them. My cousin Frank Frayne McAtee attended school at the University in your city. I have also a cousin there by the name of Brauchear. If they see this it will remind them of their "Old Kentucky Home."

With much regard I am, very truly,  
MRS. NORA BELLE MAJOR.

## LAW AND CRIMES.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10.—Attorney General Harmon in his annual report to Congress expresses his satisfaction at the results so far obtained of the new salary system which displaced the old fee system on July 18th of the present year. The returns he says afford striking evidence of the wisdom of the course so long advocated, which removes the public service from some of the common temptations to extravagance and abuse. A very large reduction is shown in every one of the items which would naturally be affected by the fee system. The fees for U. S.

marshals will show a reduction for the year of about \$400,000 from those of the previous year. Other reductions will be made approximately as follows:

Fees of jurors, \$25,806; fees of witnesses, \$807,073; pay of bailiffs, \$84,920; salaries and expenses of district attorneys, \$192,042. The report shows that although there was an increase during the year of fifty in the number of cases docketed by the United States Supreme court, there was an increase of eighty-four in the number disposed of.

The dockets at the close of the last term showed a decrease of 107 cases since the close of the preceding term. At the end of the October term 1894, there remained undisposed of on the appellate docket 640 cases, and upon the original docket seven cases making a total of 647. The number of cases docketed at the October term 1895 was 386, of which 382 were on the appellate and four on the original, making the total number of the cases pending at that term 1,033, of which 1,022 were on the appellate and eleven on the original docket. Of this number 494 was disposed of during the October term 1895, of which 489 were on the appellate and five on the original docket.

The attorney general points out two defects in the criminal laws to which the attention of Congress is invited.

The first he says is the unnecessary and unfortunate confusion of our criminal legislation. Provisions are constantly enacted to meet special cases. The sequence is that it is often difficult to ascertain which of two or more laws is applicable to the case in hand. Cases arise which ought to be covered by the law but are not, and the same offense is visited at various degrees of punishment not determined by any difference in criminality, but merely by the fact that the various statutes relating to special instances of the offense were drafted by different men and presented at different times. There is a general statute punishing embezzlement, but there are also many special statutes punishing embezzlement in particular cases and I am not aware that it has yet been settled whether the general statute applied to such cases or not. There are statutes punishing frauds in the United States in many specific cases and there is a general statute punishing conspiracy to defraud the United States on all cases, but there is no general statute punishing frauds against the United States when committed by one man alone.

I think a new crime act should be passed as speedily as possible which should contain provisions simple, easily understood and general in their scope, covering such crimes as those above stated; that a uniform system of punishments should thus be provided and that as to cases arising in the future the present laws relating to these crimes should be repealed. This work could be easily and quickly performed by a commission.

The increasing repugnance on the part of the juries to inflict death penalties, in connection with the fact that the law makes no degree in murder, constantly leads to the entire acquittal of persons charged with capital crimes in cases where the facts proven not only warrant conviction for murder, but oblige the court to

charge that they do not permit a conviction for mere manslaughter. This danger to society can be at least mitigated by the establishment by statute of different degrees of murder with corresponding appropriate grades of punishment.

The second defect, is the unfortunate results of the present law governing writs of error to the supreme court in criminal cases. Defendants in criminal cases are generally poor. It is hard for them to obtain counsel to defend them at home, but it is generally beyond their power to obtain counsel to argue their cases before the supreme court.

I think that a transfer of the criminal appeals to the circuit court of appeals with the present system of permitting important questions to be presented to the supreme court by certification, is highly desirable.

The cases of the United States against Rider and the United States against Howacker, the attorney general says, disclose another grave defect in our criminal procedure. The decisions are that the statute permitting the supreme court to review questions of criminal law upon certificate or division between the circuit and district judges, has been implicitly repeated. The court had previously held that there can be no writ of error on behalf of the United States in a criminal case. The consequences are that when a doubtful point arises in a criminal case, there is no way in which it can be taken to the supreme court except by removing the doubt in the first instance against the prisoner, permitting a conviction and casting upon him the burden and expense of prosecuting a writ of error.

I recommend that the right to certify division in opinion in such cases be restored or that a writ of error be allowed to the United States upon questions arising on demurrer or motion on arrest of judgment.

The attorney general says that last September complaint was made to him that a certain telegraph company which had in other countries reached by them a monopoly which would exclude all American companies were about to land a cable on the shores of Long Island. It was reported to me that such foreign company having failed on account of the exclusion of American companies above mentioned to secure authority to land their cables, had resorted to the device of an American company with a small capital organized to be controlled by them which was merely to lay its cable from our shore beyond the line of jurisdiction and thereby furnish a means of entrance to the foreign company.

Knowing that Congress at its last session had under consideration a bill to regulate the landing of foreign cables and believing that the general sentiment favors the exclusion of companies organized in countries who refuse like privileges to American companies, I deemed it my duty to direct that a suit be brought in the southern district of New York to enjoin the consummating of the plan above mentioned. My chief design was to afford Congress an opportunity to act upon the matter before this cable is laid.