

"Dear Sir: On my arrival here I found your favor of 1st inst., but have been prevented from answering it until to-day.

"Having no literary ability whatever I must decline your flattering invitation; nor do I know how to aid the worthy cause you advocate; could I do so be assured it should be freely done.

"My knowledge of the modern drama is so very meager that I never permit my wife or daughter to witness a play without previously ascertaining its character. This is the method I pursue; I can suggest no other, unless it might be by means of a 'dramatic censor,' whose taste or judgment might, however, be frequently at fault.

If the management of theatres could be denied to speculators and placed in the hands of actors who value their reputation and respect their calling, the stage would at least afford healthy recreation, if not, indeed, a wholesome stimulus to the exercise of noble sentiment. But while the theatre is permitted to be a mere shop of gain—open to every huckster and immoral gimcrack—there is no other way to discriminate between the pure and base than through the experience of others.

"Yours truly,  
EDWIN BOOTH."

We think Mr. Booth has exhibited, in this communication, one of the chief marks of literary excellence—brevity consistent with plainness. He strikes the nail directly on the head. A theatre which is "a mere shop for gain" cannot fail to be injurious to public morals. The question of the propriety or impropriety of attending theatrical performances, which was the point submitted to Mr. Booth, is one that has provoked considerable discussion. There are a great many "Christian" teachers and "Christian" people who consider it a sin to go to a theatre. They condemn the stage and all who act upon it without reserve and without distinction. On the other hand, a great many more individuals attend the theatre for amusement only, without any discrimination as to the character of that which is presented.

We regard these opposite ways as extremes which it is wise to avoid. While there are actors whose names are synonyms for dissipation, recklessness and vice, there are others who as richly deserve the title of lady or gentleman as any titled scion of nobility, or any honorable person who breathes the atmosphere of this planet. And while there are plays which are vile in their intent and pernicious in their effects, there are many others which convey lessons of purity and goodness, encourage proper feeling and right action, and inspire disgust and abhorrence of immorality and crime. The drama has been and can be made the most powerful and popular of teachers. The principles which ought to govern mankind and which are enunciated from the pulpit, the platform and the press, are, when embodied in a play that is presented with fidelity, made vital and impressive, and will leave deeper marks upon the mind than when conveyed in any form divested of amusement.

The drama has more force than either poetry, painting, sculpture, music, or oratory alone. It combines the elements of them all, and in properly organized and wisely regulated society will be regarded and utilized as the great recreative educator and reformer.

But it is undeniable that the stage has been prostituted to evil. Many of the silly productions of pretended wits that go by the name of farces are full of double meanings, foul innuendoes and impure suggestions that should never be uttered. And there are dramas and comedies in which vice is dressed up in such an enticing and attractive garb, and virtue is made to appear so feeble and ridiculous, that minds not fortified by sound understanding and good judgment, are captured and carried away to the side of evil and become lost to everything that is Godlike and pure. What is called familiarly "the leg drama," is one of the modern perversions of the stage, the popularity of which indicates the low standard of intellectuality and morality of the age we live in. Nudity is approached as closely as possible without infraction of law, and indecency of act and sentiment are generally so associated

with this kind of performance as to produce the very worst kind of effect upon the audience.

Again, there are dramatic entertainments which, without containing anything positively evil, are such a compound of nonsense and absurdity that people who laugh heartily on seeing and hearing them are unable to explain or give any reason for what they are laughing at. This, although without the pernicious tendencies of performances previously alluded to, are still perversions of the drama, and ought to be discouraged rather than upheld.

And yet theatres would be comparatively empty in these times if, nonsense, ribaldry and that which feeds a prurient appetite were altogether excluded. This is the theatrical manager's excuse. And from his standpoint it is a plausible one. That is if his object is but to make money. He merely strives to supply a public demand. He does not create the desire. But he panders to it, as a profitable pursuit, and thus aids to increase it. And while the theatre remains a mere money-making institution, the evils which surround it will continue.

The censorship to which Mr. Booth refers is not practicable in this land of excessive liberty. In certain parts of England the Lord Chamberlain is endowed with this power. He can forbid the enactment of any play which is shown to be inimical to public morals. But it is seldom that his authority in this respect is exercised, and it is too much to expect that one man can properly control the theatrical representations of a people. And when the public taste is really depraved it will be found very difficult to correct it by law.

In Utah this matter may be regulated in the interest of the great body of the citizens. Our theatres and public entertainments can be controlled to a very great extent by the leading authorities of the Church in the various Stakes and Wards. They can not only instruct the people in relation to this matter, but use an influence to prevent the presentation of any performance calculated to do moral harm. Power must be used wisely and impartially to be effective. The whims and notions and personal tastes of those who exercise it must not be the ruling motive. What may please the majority and yet be harmless might displease a few. But it will be safe for men who hold authority to set their faces like flints against the introduction into public amusements, of anything tending to degrade the minds, manners, or morals of the community, and to encourage such dramatic entertainments as are calculated to promote virtue and a taste for that which will elevate, refine and ennoble. There is much dramatic talent in the Territory, and it ought to be utilized for the common good. And we hope to see the time when our amusements, as well as our apparel and all our staple necessities, will be, like the wine authorized in the sacrament, pure and good and of our own manufacture.

## Local and Other Matters.

FROM SATURDAY'S DAILY, JAN. 4.

**For England.**—We received a call, this morning, from Elder Henry Rampton, of Bountiful, who leaves, to-morrow morning, on a mission to Europe.

**Dismissed.**—The case of Mr. P. H. Lannan, who was summoned before Justice Pyper for obstructing the sidewalk with meat, was dismissed yesterday.

**Lecture.**—Next Wednesday evening, at 7.30 o'clock, Elder Joseph F. Smith will deliver a lecture on "Reminiscences of early history of the Church," in the 20th Ward Assembly Rooms. All are invited. Admission free.

**Picnic.**—The children of the 17th ward Sunday School were assembled in the school house, yesterday, to partake of a picnic, which had been arranged by Brother James Dwyer, the superintendent. The good things were furnished by the parents, and a general time of rejoicing ensued.

**Amateur.**—The Ogden Amateur of January 1st, comes to hand filled as usual with instructive reading matter. We notice, among other articles, an able answer from

Apostle F. D. Richards to the question, "When and by whom was the Sabbath or Sunday changed from the last to the first day of the week?"

**Serious Accident.**—We learn from the Ogden Junction of a serious accident which occurred to Mrs. Knight, wife of Brother John Knight of Plain City. He was returning to his home on Friday evening, from Ogden, when his horses took fright and ran away, throwing out Mrs. Knight, with the baby in her arms. The lady was considerably bruised, besides having her collar bone broken, but the child was uninjured. This morning the lady was quite comfortable and it is hoped she will soon entirely recover.

**Farewell Surprise Party.**—Last night the friends of Elder Joseph R. Mathews, who is about to leave for Europe on a mission, gave him a surprise party, at his residence in the 19th Ward, and passed away the evening in singing, feasting, and other kindred social enjoyments. The party was arranged by the officers of the Sunday School, where Brother Mathews has been a teacher for the last 10 years. During the evening he was presented with a purse of money to assist him on his way. He leaves on Tuesday morning. Good wishes.

**Pleasant Time.**—On New Year's day Brother Benjamin Green, superintendent of the Draper Sunday school, had the children meet at the school house to give an exhibition. Dialogues, declamations, songs, etc., were rendered in the forenoon, after which prizes were distributed.

In the afternoon the children enjoyed themselves in a social dance. The day passed off pleasantly, and the interest taken in the Sunday school as well as the general ability of the children who took part in the exhibition, show that Brother Green's labors are appreciated.

**Mortuary.**—The following is the report of the Logan City sexton for the year 1878:

Adults, 22; children under 12 years 32; males 31; females 23. Causes of death as reported. Scarlet fever, 5; diphtheria, 4; dropsy, 2; inflammation of stomach, 3; decay of nature, 3; heart disease, 2; inflammation of bowels, 2; premature birth, 2; summer complaint, 2; cholera, 1; inflammation of lungs, 1; typhoid fever, 1; black cancer, 1; rupture of a blood vessel, 1; convulsions, 1; accidental, 2; scarlatina, 1; erysipelas, 1; rheumatism, 1; croup, 1; canker, 1; general debility, 1; female weakness, 1; lung fever, 1; bilious fever, 1. Total interments 54. C. LARSEN, Sexton.

**The Tax Case.**—The case of the Bingham and Camp Floyd and Wasatch and Jordan Valley Railroads against Collector Crismon was continued in the Third District Court yesterday. The defense put in evidence affidavits, showing the assessments against the plaintiffs for 1874 and 1875. The witnesses examined for the plaintiffs were Collector Crismon, Judge Sutherland and County Clerk Boekholt. The former testified that additions had been made in the books, and that he had refused Mr. Sutherland's request to see the assessment roll.

Sutherland's testimony was a confirmation of Collector Crismon's statement.

County Clerk Boekholt testified that after diligent search in his office for certain statements and accounts which he had been requested to produce, he was unable to find them. The statements of the Secretary of the Territory, as published in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, were handed to the witness, and he was asked if they were correct. Witness said from memory he was unable to state positively regarding the truth of the statements referred to. Exceptions were taken by the defense to the admission of such evidence. This morning the case was resumed, and the county records were produced.

FROM MONDAY'S DAILY, JAN. 6.

**Home Again.**—Dr. J. M. Benedict has returned home after a pleasant two months' visit to the East.

**Deseret University.**—In another column appears a notice from Dr. J. R. Park, president of the Deseret University, stating that the 2nd

semester of that excellent institution will begin Monday, January 13th, 1879.

**Postmasters Appointed.**—The following persons have been appointed postmasters in this Territory: Of Jacob City, Tooele Co., Hiram Lush; of Logan, Cache Co., R. G. Shirley; and of Grouse Creek, Box Elder Co., Mrs. S. H. Kimball.

**Below Par.**—We are informed that trade dollars are only worth ninety, and the Mexican dollars are only worth eighty-five cents. This information may be useful to those who receive the discounted silver in payment or in exchange.

**Notice.**—The Y. L. M. I. A. of the 13th Ward will resume their meetings on Thursday next, at five o'clock p. m., at the residence of Sister E. F. Thomas. A general and punctual attendance is requested.

**Diphtheria.**—We notice in another column the death of a third child of Brother John M. Cowley from this dreadful disease. We sincerely sympathize with the bereaved family, and hope they may receive divine consolation in their affliction.

**Deceased.**—Judge Robertson, for several years a resident of this city, died Saturday evening, after a short illness of two or three days.

**Tax Case.**—The overhauling of the county records by the plaintiffs' counsel occupied the time of the court on Saturday.

To-day the arguments are being heard, and it is hoped that the case will be so far advanced that a decision can be rendered.

**The Poisoning.**—Mrs. Miller, who has been in a very low condition from the inhalation of the poisonous coal gas, died on Saturday morning. A verdict in accordance with the facts of the case was rendered by a coroner's jury, an inquest having been held Saturday evening.

**Stabbing Affray.**—The following special to the News has been received per Deseret Telegraph line: SILVER REEF, Jan. 5, 1879.

A serious stabbing affray occurred last night in the hurdy gurdy house, in which Wm. Gagan, a young horse jockey was stabbed in the breast by "Spanish Mary," a dance girl. The wound is considered dangerous, though not necessarily fatal. Jealousy and constant abuse from Gagan was the cause. The girl was arrested.

**Fire Alarms.**—On Saturday afternoon the firemen were called out by an alarm sounded at 3.40 p. m. The photographic gallery over Lollin's saloon was the scene of the fire, which was caused by the explosion of some chemicals. The flames were promptly extinguished, having destroyed property to the amount of some \$200.

A second alarm was sounded about 7.30 p. m. Some clothing in the house of Mrs. McDonald, of the 13th Ward, caught fire from a passing lamp. The flames were soon extinguished by the help of some passers-by.

**Manti.**—Sexton's report for the year 1878. Males 15, females 18. Of these, adults 18, children 15. Causes of death as reported—Nervous fever 1; inflammation stomach 3; inflammation bowels 2; cholera 4; inflammation lungs 3; consumption 3; lung fever 3; teething 3; old age 2; killed by lightning 1; diarrhoea 1; convulsions 1; congestion of lungs 2; dropsy 1; still-born 1; croup 2. Total interments, 33. JOHN H. TUTTLE, Sexton, Manti.

**A Nuisance.**—We must again call attention to the miserable condition of the sidewalks in many places, caused by the overflow of the water in the ditches. Especially is this noticed at the Townsend House corner, where for a block, both south and west, the sidewalk is alternately a sheet of ice and a lake of water. In several other parts the same complaint is heard, and walking in such localities is unpleasant if not dangerous. We do not know where the blame belongs, but it seems that an unnecessary amount of water is turned into the sects, which are frozen up to such an extent that an overflow is unavoidable.

**Obsequies.**—The funeral obsequies of Mrs. Electa Barlow, were conducted in the Fifteenth Ward meeting house, on Sunday morn-

ing. The house was crowded with the friends of the bereaved family. The choir sang appropriate music, "Vital Spark" being one of the chief pieces, which was splendidly rendered. Elder James W. Cummings preached an effective discourse, and was followed by Elder C. W. Penrose. The benediction was feelingly pronounced by Elder W. H. Hooper. A large cortege followed the remains to the cemetery. The deceased lady was an estimable wife and mother, and her sudden departure is greatly regretted.

**Another Death.**—Yesterday morning, at 7.30 o'clock, ex-Judge James B. McKean departed this life. The disease which caused his death was typhoid fever, and it is two weeks ago to-day since he was first confined to his bed.

He was the son of Andrew and Catherine B. McKean, his father being a Methodist clergyman. He was born August 5th, in the year 1821, in a house which stood upon the battle field of Bennington, Vermont. The greater part of his life was spent upon a farm in the town of Half Moon, Saratoga County, N. Y. He studied law in the office of Gen. Bullard in Waterford, N. Y., and was the first Republican county judge in Saratoga County. In fact, he was the first Republican office in the State, the great party which has since achieved such power being then in its infancy. He was elected to Congress and served two terms, after which he raised an infantry regiment, the Seventh New York Volunteers, with which regiment, as Colonel, he went in 1862 to the front. During the peninsula campaign his health became impaired, and he was compelled to leave the service. In June, 1870, he was appointed Chief Justice of Utah Territory, and held his first term of court here in September of the same year. Since that time he has resided here and his actions and record are familiar to every one in Utah.

A meeting of the members of the bar of Salt Lake City was held in the District Court Room, at noon to-day, at which a committee of gentlemen was appointed to consult with the family and make such arrangements for the attendance of the members of the bar at the funeral as might be necessary.

**Provo Items.**—From the *Enquirer* of Jan. 4th, we select the following:

Judge P. H. Emerson has settled the long pending water difficulty between Goshen and Mona, by a verdict for the Goshen folks.

A sad accident occurred on Christmas day, which on New Year's terminated fatally. A child of Mr. Samuel Bailey, fell into a tub of hot water, and received injuries which caused its death one week after.

On the 1st inst., a large number of citizens met at the Court House, for the purpose of organizing a board of trade, Hon. Moses Thatcher, who had been appointed by the Twelve Apostles to organize such associations in the southern counties was present; and read the by-laws of the Cache County Board of Trade. The following gentlemen were elected to direct the society: A. O. Smoot, Jas. Dunn, Myron Tanner, Geo. D. Snell, J. S. Tanner, John Brown, T. R. Cutler, Wm. Bringham, and W. W. Jackson.

On the 2nd inst. a shooting scrape occurred at Pleasant Grove. Alpha Ballinger met Daniel Driggs and commenced shooting at him. Driggs was unhurt, however, and ran in search of a pistol; having secured one he, returned and began firing at Ballinger. The latter fell to the ground, it was thought seriously wounded. Driggs was arrested and placed in confinement. It was afterwards discovered that Ballinger was unhurt, when he was also arrested. The cause of the quarrel is said by some to be liquor, and by others it is said that some difficulty about a girl was the cause of it.

A well written correspondence from Jay Dee appears in the *Enquirer* of Jan. 4th. The writer claims, with much justice, that we as a people should patronize home industries, not so much as a matter of economy, for in some instances at the present time it is not economical, but to encourage those who are engaged in home production and to enable them to make their home-made articles what they should be—not only the cheapest but the best to be had.