

BRIBERY AND VENALITY.

NOT many days since we gave the opinion of the *Alta California* respecting the recent Legislature of that State, and the joy there would be felt by many upon receiving the news that the session had expired by law. We perceive that the Sacramento *Union* entertains a similar opinion in relation to that body. It says:

"It is almost certain, in the minds of those who have closely watched the events of the session, that the late Legislature was reeking with corruption. This is the common opinion. But it would be next to impossible, by any means, to convict a single individual on specific charges. We have seen how one case failed utterly in the Assembly, where a member got up and handed over to that body a bribe which had been given him to vote for an infamous bill. The Assembly, probably interested in such a course, laughed down investigation and silenced the complaining witness."

The *Union* is greatly exercised about the present condition of affairs, and the manner in which bribery, to carry out desirable schemes, is openly practiced. Men of "wealth, success and respectability" have come to look upon such crimes as merely venial.

The *Union* says this is the age of great corporations. They stand in about the same relation to the people of this day and country as the barons occupied toward the common people of Europe in feudal times. With this difference, they have greater power; for they accomplish their ends in ruling the country and wronging the people by fraud and bribery, while the barons, to reach the same objects, had recourse to brute force.

Its language respecting the condition of public affairs is so graphic that to condense or change it would weaken it.

"Bribery," it says, "runs riot; sharp practice is called 'smart'; fraud, if it covers many thousands of dollars, is patted on the back and complimented with the name of shrewdness; the corporations are encouraged to swindle the public; the Government—county, city, State or National—becomes a convenient goose to be plucked; Legislatures are subsidized, and their members bought up like so many hungry hogs waiting to feed upon the people's corn; Boards of Supervisors follow in the evil way; Courts neglect their duty, juries and witnesses are suborned; Grand Juries intimidated, and law officers deem it a hopeless and a useless task to defend the injured State or county."

This is a severe and not flattering, yet truthful, pen picture of official life as it exists in more places than one in the Republic; in fact, the most gloomy reflection connected with the subject is that the evil is so general and so thoroughly fastened upon the body politic that it is almost hopeless to expect a cure. Yet the *Union* thinks there is one remedy, and only one. That is, to appeal and organize public opinion. That can only be done through the medium of an honest, incorruptible and courageous press. Should the press be subsidized, then the people have the power in their own hands to reject it with scorn and crush it with neglect.

Alas! for the Republic, if this be the only agency that can be brought to bear upon these abuses to eradicate them. While, as the *Union* says, the age is wholly commercial and money is god, why should the controllers of the press be so elevated above other classes that they should not only resist temptations offered to themselves, but remove them beyond the reach of others? Editors and publishers are mortal, and subject to human weaknesses and wants, like politicians. If a member of a State or National Legislature places a certain value upon his vote and his influence, why should not controllers of the press view their influence as valuable and worth a price? Unless it be admitted that editors are a superior class, and elevated above the sordid and the elnal, it is vain to expect an ex-veition of virtue and self-denial on their part that their fellow-citizens do not exhibit. The fact is, a general demoralization has taken place on these points among public men. Its growth is painfully apparent. Venality prevails. Justice is bought and sold like meat at the shambles, and the question is not, Is a measure right? but, Is it popular? or, Is there money in it? Many people look upon position and influence as a means of obtaining the god they worship. If they hold a place of trust in the Legislature or elsewhere, they place a commercial value upon the influence which it enables them to wield. If they control the columns of a newspaper, they view its influence in the same light. While such is the conduct of public men, there is just grounds for anticipating the most dreadful of evils to befall the Republic.

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTER'S
CURE FOR POLYGAMY.

REV. WM. BARTLETT, the pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Chicago, preached a sermon on the 10th instant, on the subject of the family, in which he took occasion, as we learn from the Chicago *Post*, to give his views on the subject of polygamy, connected therewith, and now receiving no little attention from the American public. The *Post*, in alluding to his discourse, says:

"Not so much because this gentleman is the minister of a large congregation of influential, intelligent people; not even so much because he is generally known as a prominent thinker and writer in that denomination which has so many leading minds of the country; not so much for both these reasons as because he belongs, as a citizen of the republic, to that school whose teachings have destroyed slavery, uprooted all political caste, and made the nation free, do we make mention of a discourse the truth and wisdom of which we wish were instilled into the hearts of all the people of the land."

Mr. Bartlett does not approve of polygamy. He thinks the family is a divine institution, and, as divinely instituted, monogamy is a part of it. He says polygamy is nowhere commended, nor are there any moral lessons based upon it. On the contrary, he thinks, the history of Solomon, the chief of polygamous sinners, and particularly the history of his latter days, is an unanswerable argument against polygamy. He branded that King with the red-hot iron of condemnation, and then skinned him to the bones. He made him out to be a great "eca awag."

It is not our purpose to comment on this part of Mr. Bartlett's discourse. We differ with him respecting his conclusions about polygamy, and the testimony of Scripture in reference to it; and certainly think Solomon's wickedness no more an evidence against the institution of patriarchal marriage, than the idolatrous conduct of Jeroboam, king of Israel, and the dissoluteness of George the Fourth, of England, are evidences of the hurtful tendencies of monogamy. But it is his views in relation to the measures under consideration at the present time for the extirpation of the people who believe in patriarchal marriage that we wish to lay before our readers.

Mr. Bartlett cannot, from his record and public avowals and censures, be looked upon as a man having the slightest leaning towards the peculiar institution of Utah. Yet the treatment he would extend to it would not suit those who are in favor of sending fire and sword and army contractors to this Territory to "civilize" its inhabitants. He would wipe out the institution; and because he would wipe it out, he would do it by means not only adopted to the end,—by moral forces,—but which the enlightened civilization of the age would approve. No drop of blood should, according to his view, be shed in the contest, or could be, without the gravest crime. As for the particular politico-religious horror so many people have upon the subject, it must be taken for just what it is worth and no more, due regard being had to the fact, to quote from the *Post*, that

"Only ten years ago nearly all of us were upholding an institution infinitely worse in all respects than polygamy, and in fact, embracing that atrocity in the infinite variety of atrocities of which it was the parent—the institution of African slavery."

But even though the nation were sinless now, and had been as pure as snow for centuries—for the toleration of flagrant wrong in the past is no good reason why it should be shielded now or in the future—we quote again from the *Post*:

"We should never draw the sword against the polygamists of Utah, because, as a remedy for such ills, it has long since become obsolete. There are so many better, surer, and even quicker means—permanent and thorough cure being desired—that we should be in the last degree stupid, not to say criminally blameworthy, to use such means as, used centuries ago, cast a black shadow over the fame of those who had a thousand excuses and palliations where we could not possibly have one. It is Mr. Bartlett's opinion, in a word, that Brigham Young's institution in Utah, as a religious monstrosity, is only paralleled, in view of the enlightened civilization of the age in which we live, by the politico-religious monstrosity of what is known as the Cullom bill."

There can be but little doubt that herein Mr. Bartlett correctly represents the thought of that liberal school of thinkers who have led the public opinion of this nationality, and are rapidly taking position as leaders of the public opinion of Christendom. They will not let the world be turned back three centuries, even in

the cause of the destruction of the Utah harems. They will not let slip the dogs of war in a contest of a religious nature. They will put down the evil, but in such way that the cure shall not be as bad as the disease. Let the Christian church in all of its different denominations pronounce against that monstrous barbarism practiced upon the shores of the Great Salt Lake, let them pronounce with equal earnestness against the equal barbarism of an act of Congress which could only with complete appropriateness be written in blood, and they will find polygamy go down before their peaceful assaults, and the co-operative influences of commerce, travel, journalistic discussion, and the irresistible power of millions of families organized on the one principle which is consistent with the laws of nature and of nature's God. Otherwise we may indeed destroy the monstrous evil of polygamy, but in so doing, would certainly hasten, and might speedily bring on, the ruin of our free republic."

ADULTERY AND ITS PUNISHMENT—
A REMARKABLE SERMON.

A REMARKABLE sermon was delivered by the Rev. Charles B. Smyth, a Presbyterian minister, in New York City, on Sunday, the 10th inst. His text was the tenth verse of the twentieth chapter of Leviticus:

"And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

He opened his remarks by saying that it is the great fault of the modern pulpiticians that they indulge in "vague generalities," but in his view the Christianity, not of modern speculating theologians, not of bigoted sectarians, "but the Christianity of Christ himself—this is what is needed in the pulpit, in the pew, in the courts of the church, in her conventions, conferences, synods and councils, to put life into a dead world, and to make the church, not a by-word and a laughing stock, but an object universally admired and beloved."

"Thou shalt not commit adultery," rings through every avenue of the soul, he said, "with the true ring of a precious coin that is not counterfeit, and elicits at once the unanimous acclaim of all the faculties that such a command is right—right in the very nature of things—absolutely, eternally, unchangeably right."

"Brethren," said he, "it is time for true modesty to take the place of the false modesty which by her prudery, with cruel whip in hand, has driven virtue like an exile weeping from our land and peopled it largely with Fourierites and free lovers. It is time for the pulpit to waken up on this question. It must do so if our country is to be kept from a fate like that of Sodom and Gomorrah. The medical faculty are arousing themselves and crying to the clergy to come and help them. Let the latter not hear their cry in vain, nor refuse to hearken to the call of God: 'cry aloud and spare not; show my people their transgressions.'"

He then took the press to task for the doctrines which it, in many instances, disseminates, and asked who can tell what the influence the reading of the effusions from the pens of men of loose morals has produced upon youthful minds? He evidently does not favor the abolition of capital punishment, for he said that men whose morals are bad are apt to favor such an abolition. Impunity for crime accords well with the freedom to commit crime.

The extensive prevalence of the crime of adultery he thought was plainly traceable to the free-love doctrine of marriage by affinity, and on this account a disregard of the sacred obligations of marriage by law had grown up. The Indiana method of settling questions arising out of the practice of this crime he was opposed to. That method also was opposed to common sense. This was evident from the fact that even the nations of antiquity, which were loose as to many points of morality, were united in inflicting punishment upon all who were guilty of adultery.

To give our readers an idea of his line of reasoning on this point we quote from the report of the sermon as it appears in the New York *Herald*:

"Abimelech threatened death to any of the men of Gerar who would thus insult the wife of Isaac. Judah condemned Tamar to be burnt on the supposed evidence of her having committed this crime. The Egyptian law maimed for life both of the offenders. The Locrians put out both of the man's eyes. The Germans placed the woman denuded among her kindred, shaved her head, and caused her husband to beat her through the city. The Gortynians crowned the man with wool to shame him. The Camani obliged the woman to ride upon an ass, naked and hooted at, and forever after called her in scorn 'a rider upon an ass.' Even the Romans, though very lax and though permitting the husband to divorce his wife at pleasure, yet fortified

by statute his property in her so long as he recognized her as his wife. And the Jews punished with death both offenders. This leads me to remark further that adultery with impunity is opposed to the law of God."

"The doctrine that a man should be allowed to violate the seventh commandment with impunity is absurd. It is opposed to the instincts of human nature. The offence is one that pierces the heart of the injured one with a poisoned arrow that sets his nerves on fire and consumes all his joys and his hopes. It wounds his brain and sends his reason reeling. It meets a spontaneous, ungovernable, instantaneous resistance, which seeks the life of the offender, 'mad or not mad.' Now, from the fact that God himself decreed death as the punishment for adultery, it follows that death is the natural and proper punishment for that crime. And if it is so, how comes it to pass that nations under the sway of modern civilization, professedly Christian, have not affixed that penalty to the offence? The reason which Blackstone assigns for this deficiency in the laws of England may be sufficient to account for the same in all Christian lands. He says that it was 'left to the feeble coercion of the spiritual court, according to the rules of the canon law—a law which has treated even adultery itself with a great degree of tenderness and lenity, owing, perhaps, to the constrained celibacy of its first compilers. The temporal courts, therefore, take no cognizance of the crime of adultery, otherwise than as a private injury.'"

"By a law enacted during the Commonwealth this crime was made capital, but the same authority says that 'at the Restoration it was not thought proper to renew a law of such unfashionable rigor.' The Court of Charles II., it is well known to every reader of history, was most profligate; and such a law, consequently, would be by no means agreeable to law-makers, who were at the same time law-breakers, since no man who is *compos mentis* desires to be his own executioner. Brethren, it is time now that our law-makers should open their eyes to the fact that the judgments of God are true and righteous, and should attach the proper penalty to the violation of the seventh commandment. The remembrance that so many men have in recent years fallen back upon their natural rights, and avenged their injured honor and ruined hopes and blighted bliss with their own hand, and been acquitted by honest juries appointed to try them on the charge of murder, and that their verdicts have been approved by the people, should make them understand that mere pecuniary damages are no compensation to any man for the desolation which an artful seducer has made in his hitherto happy home."

"We have our statute law, and our common law, but there is a higher law that rises above them all; and that higher law is the law of God—a law promulgated amidst the thunders and lightnings and other awe-inspiring indications of the presence with it of our God, who is a consuming fire to all workers of iniquity—a law, the utterance of which meets with a true and an exact echo in every manly heart, and says, 'The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.'"

If such preaching as this were more general, such statements were sustained and enforced, crime would receive a severe check; but who can get law-breakers, as Mr. Smyth says, to be law-makers; that is, make laws binding upon themselves? This is well illustrated by the manner in which the proposition of Mr. Fitch, of Nevada, was received by the House of Representatives, when he proposed to make the provisions of the Cullom Bill applicable to all the States and Territories.

A. OAKLEY HALL, the present Mayor of New York, has reason to congratulate himself on securing the good opinion and praise of the New York *Herald*. That paper has been unsparing in its denunciation of the manner in which affairs have been conducted in a municipal capacity in New York City; but at last it can speak in terms of approbation of the course of the Mayor, who it says "makes a fair beginning." The Mayor has accepted the high trust reposed in him as involving an "honorable obligation to respect the political minority of his constituents, so far, at least as to reappoint a few of his political opponents whose past service to the public additionally deserve the recognition."

Upon the general considerations which have guided the Mayor in these appointments, the *Herald* thinks "they are surely calculated to give general satisfaction."

It is said that the new Senator, Morgan C. Hamilton, from Texas, never smoked a cigar, took a drink, or kissed a woman. We predict he will be like the new hired girl, when asked if she had ever had any experience as a wet nurse. She said she hadn't but that she could soon learn.—*Ex.*

New York has enough outcast children to make a procession, in double file, eleven miles long.