

Correspondence.

New Definitions—The New Era.

CHICAGO, April 3, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

Matters are becoming so involved among us here that in a short time our conceptions of honor, virtue, integrity and honesty must of necessity undergo a great change. The definitions of these qualities given by our fathers will have to be totally rewritten by modern lexicographers. One of our prominent newspapers, in reviewing the present outcome of fraud, says, "Virtues take rank according to the pursuits and customs of the day and people; that which is most extolled in a condition of immature society becomes intolerable at a high stage of civilization." Judging from this philosophical conclusion, we are to infer that the honesty and integrity of one hundred years ago are not adapted to our high state of civilization. If honesty is to be defined by a centennial Webster, according to this he must say, "Get into office, cheat your neighbor, rob the public treasury, and make yourself generally talked about." This is the condition of our society at present, though every Monday morning some dozens of columns of printed sermons appear; every day a million editorial articles are scattered broadcast among the people; church bells with undefinable clamor are proclaiming Christian services every Sunday evening; evangelical revivalists are tramping through the land and braying their doctrines into every ear; and what does all this amount to? That the definitions of a few words are to be changed? This in truth is what is the matter at present. To be an honest man or a virtuous woman after the old regime is to be an outcast from modern society. Perhaps the world will get on as well with the new order of things, but it is rather doubtful.

In this city we are treated to an exhibition of corruption and rascality that in moral communities would cause a political and social revolution. Men stand up and detail calmly and explicitly how they practiced fraud and perjury year after year for the last decade. One would think it was a war-worn veteran displaying his scars, and exhibiting his medals for distinguished services to his country, before an admiring and appreciative audience. We have lecturers from England and divines from France and Italy, telling us the way to get but as they don't seem to trave that road themselves we are rather disinclined to go in the direction of their finger-points. When one reads back a century or so, and refers the life of George Washington, one can't help arriving at conclusions anything but orthodox. Fourth of July orators, and gushing historians, and daughter-marrying biographers assure us, with all the composure and consciousness of superior intellect, that George Washington was the instrument of heaven, and that it was by the divine protection that he was carried safe through the Braddock massacre, through the many other almost miraculous escapes, and specially delegated by God for the benefit of mankind. When we look around to-day and survey the religion, the politics, and the society of our country, I am afraid we can't help saying heaven works in a mysterious way its wonders to perform. Yet I am not inclined to disagree wholly with the accepted dogmas relative to the father of his country or our country, but I look at the case from a wholly different point of view, and I do think that Providence has a hand in matters at the present time, that he is only preparing for another great revolution similar to those which purged and purified society in former times. Where or through what source Almighty God is going to regenerate man it is not for me to conjecture.

As a matter of course Mrs. Belknap has furnished material for many a sermon, discourse and social conversation among us here. It is rather hard to speak of the unfortunate woman, but it can't be helped. She is but the fruit of a diseased tree. How many hundreds lower in the scale than she is are also suffering from a diseased social state cannot be determined. It is only when railroad directors are killed that railroad accidents are inquired into; so it is only when great personages fall that our social

condition is reviewed. An editorial in a Sunday paper says, that many a female will innocently inquire, "Why shouldn't Mrs. Belknap receive a present of several thousand dollars from Mr. Marsh, if Mr. Marsh was a friend of her husband, and her husband had done him a valuable service?" The woman that would be logical enough to reason thus ought to be a little further and ask herself, "If I receive a present I bring dishonor on my house, what will it avail me? If my husband conferred favors on some individual through friendship, then I have no right to exact payment for what was done in friendship?" Could not this logical lady pursue a train of inquiry that would help to set her right? No. The truth is, there is no healthy thought anywhere among us. If there was, prominent men and women would be honest from sheer roguery. MRS. D. B.

The Bear Lake Homicide.

LAKE TOWN, Rich Co., Utah, April 10, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

I write you a few lines, wishing to correct a false statement which appeared in the NEWS of April 5th, concerning the shooting of James C. Swenson, at South Eden, by Mrs. Sallie Johnson. Your informant either wilfully misrepresented the matter or was ignorant of the facts in the case. Mr. Swenson was well known to be a man of sterling veracity and as he was brought to my house after he was shot I had an opportunity of hearing his statement concerning the whole brutal and inhuman proceeding. He had no quarrel with Mrs. Johnson and had no gun in his hands. There was only one of her boys with her, the one that is now under arrest. She came to the house where he was at work between one and two o'clock p. m., the boy carrying a shot gun. When she got to the house she took the gun and sat down on a log, which lay in front of the house. Mr. Swenson stood in the door and talked with her about half an hour. She told him, in a very quiet manner, that that was their home, that Mr. Johnson would do nothing about it, and so she thought she would attend to it herself. She told him that he had better leave if he did not want to be hurt. Mr. Swenson tried to reason with her, telling her he did not like to walk home (a distance of about eight miles); that it would make no difference to her, as he was only hired to work for Mr. Pratt, the gentleman who is contesting the land claim with Mr. Johnson; that he had nothing to do with the land; and that Mr. Pratt was the man for her to talk to. She remarked, "I will shoot you," and he saw her cock the gun. He then stepped back into the house and put up the door, which was not hung, and put a prop against it. The boy got a club and beat the door, trying, as Mr. Swenson thought afterwards, ostensibly to force it open, but really to attract his attention, while his mother went around the house and shot through the window, the shot taking effect in the right leg, just above the knee, shattering the bone in a terrible manner. He then hopped on one leg to his bed, which was on the floor, and lay down.

Mrs. Johnson then came into the house and talked with him, telling him she was sorry she had shot him. He told her it was too late to be sorry. He asked her if she would not send to Lake Town and let his friends know of his condition. She told him that she could not, as Mr. Johnson had gone to Lake Town and taken all the horses there was on the ranch. She then went away and left him there alone until near sundown, when she returned with a team and two boys, her story of there being no horses there being untrue. It was Mr. Swenson's opinion that her first intentions were to let him lie there and die alone, but afterwards thought it would make less trouble for herself to send him home. He said she handled his leg in a very rough and cruel manner while assisting him in the sleigh, lifting it up and twisting it around, causing him great pain. He was shot on Wednesday, March 22nd, about two o'clock p. m., and lived until Sunday night, twelve o'clock. Though he suffered great pain, he bore it with wonderful fortitude, never making a moan when Dr. Harrison probed his wounds for the balls, which were lodged in his leg.

Mr. Swenson was too

and brave a man to draw a gun on a woman, and it is a burning shame that any one should malign his character in such a manner. When asked why he did not defend himself, he replied that he could not make up his mind to hurt the woman. Had it been Johnson himself the case would have been different. Johnson knew this, and that is why (in my opinion, and it is the opinion of all who are acquainted with the low intriguing character of the man) he sent his wife to do the deed that he was too cowardly to do himself. It seems to be a family failing to wish to take the life of their fellow man. None of them have ever been punished for their crimes, and I hear that Mrs. Johnson is out on bail. I think it is a cruel wrong to the community to let such people run at large. Of course it will not give back the life they have taken, but the lives of others that will be in danger from their malice. MRS. SARAH J. AUSTIN.

Mass Meeting—Water Rights—The Liquor Business—Farming Prospects.

SPRING CITY, Sanpete Co., April 8, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

A mass meeting of the citizens of this place was called to take into consideration the course and necessity of guarding and protecting our farming and agricultural interests and water rights, that have accrued to the citizens of this place since 1853, as parties have gone above our settlement and more are preparing to go, and divert the water from the channels into which it has been flowing for the last seventeen years, to the great detriment of the citizens of this place.

Prest. O. Hyde was elected chairman of the meeting. He stated the object of the meeting and pointed out the best course to pursue. A number of other citizens expressed their views on the subject.

A motion was made to petition the city council to pass an ordinance to control the waters and canals pertaining to this settlement, which was seconded and carried unanimously, all agreeing in case of a law suit to furnish their quota of the expenses incurred.

Of late we have had a little progressive civilization in our midst, viz., whiskey, law, and their concomitant evils, which very much annoyed the law-abiding citizens.

A petition was got up asking the City Council to prohibit the sale of spirituous liquors. The ladies of the Female Relief Society stepped boldly forward, one and all, and signed their names to a petition. Prest. Hyde, at the last meeting, also spoke of the evils resulting from the use of the same.

The two petitions above named were numerously signed by the citizens by upwards of 200 signatures to each petition. It now remains to be seen what disposition the city council will make of them.

The health of the people is generally good, with the exception of the whooping cough, and a Winter cough, amongst the children, which is very common at present.

Farming operations are somewhat tardy, on account of the lateness of the season. Nothing has yet been done on our farms. It is snowing at the time of writing, with a covering of three inches, which fell through the night.

Very respectfully,

J. T. ELLIS.

The Temperature—The Snow.

ST. CHARLES, Oneida Co., Idaho, April 4, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

We have had plenty of snow and wind this winter, yet it has not been very cold. The thermometer has generally ranged from twenty to thirty above zero, and two or three nights it went below. On the 27th of March it went down thirteen below zero. The Bear Lake did not freeze over until March, and it is still frozen.

Last Saturday, the first of April, I thought I would try, as is the custom of this country, to sow black dirt on the snow to melt it off. It has a great effect. I went into my garden south of my house and dug holes about twenty feet apart to get dirt to scatter over the snow; they are only two feet and six inches deep. There is

no frost in the ground. The snow is not quite so deep all over the country, and it is going very fast now.

Some of the settlements have lost some cattle, but in our settlement there has been none lost for want of feed. I have written about as I see things, and you may think this is a hard country, but I do not. My horses and others have run out all winter, and done well. We have nothing to hinder us from enjoying ourselves and living our religion but our own dear selves.

Yours truly, C. MERKLEY.

Suicide—A Bilk, etc.

OGDEN CITY, Utah, April 14, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

Accidents, fatal and otherwise serious, suicides and attempts at suicides are becoming alarmingly frequent in and around this section of country. You will have heard that on Wednesday afternoon a man named E. B. Ball, shot himself at the Beardsley House.

Yesterday a man, B. Bramlett, who was on the east bound emigrant train from California, when about three miles on this side of Corinne, was seen to enter the water-closet on the car and shortly afterwards the report of a pistol shot was heard to proceed thence, which caused much astonishment and conjecture amongst the passengers on the train. One of them went to the closet looked through an aperture and saw the man in a sitting posture and apparently dead. He scarcely had time to inform his fellow passengers of this, when they heard a second report of fire arms, and on repairing to the closet they found the man still in a sitting posture, but quite dead. He had first fired a shot which had entered his ear, but this not proved fatal, he fired a second shot, which entered the top of the head, tearing away the bones and making a frightful chasm in his head. His brains were completely blown out. On the arrival of the train at this city an inquest was held on the body and the jury returned a verdict to the effect that deceased came to his death from pistol shots fired by his own hands, while in a state of temporary insanity. On his person was found a watch, a ticket, over two hundred dollars in currency, and about \$60 in coin, &c. The pistol was found on the seat in the closet. The remains were conveyed to the Court house in this place, where I saw and examined them this morning, and a more frightful and ghastly sight it has never been my lot to witness since the Butler tragedy in 1869. Deceased appears to be about forty years of age, has dark hair, sandy whiskers or beard, is near six feet high and is strongly built. A letter was also found on him, from which it is supposed that he had been in business as a bar-keeper in California, and that he apprehended some trouble to arise from some recent transaction there. He was interred here this afternoon.

The boy, who a few days since was published as an absconder from the employ of L. D. Young, was here this morning and "sold" one of our prominent citizens. The little scamp had an order to Mr. —, for \$12 in clothing, signed "L. D. Young," and was seeking some one to identify and endorse him, which the gentleman in question was very willing to do. They started together for some establishment, when the boy suddenly remembered that he had a "little business" with a person just across the street, and shot off to attend to it, and that was the last our friend saw of him. He subsequently remembered that he was the same little bilk who had been published.

SEMPER.

A Good Place for Settlement.

CURLEW, April 9, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

This place is situated about fifty miles northwest of Brigham City, near the Idaho line. The valley is about forty miles in length, by about eight in width, and is principally heavy sagebrush land, with a stream of good water averaging eleven feet wide, and four feet deep, with a fair current, and the best place to get firewood in the mountains, pine timber being plentiful in from fifteen to twenty miles. The population numbers fifteen families, with a prospect of

more, and a good chance for many more. We raise good grain here, and I think at no far distant day it will be a great grain growing district. There has been an influence used against the settling of this valley by stock men, but the facilities for making a settlement are becoming known. Our winter has been one of unusual length and severity. Our deepest snow has been eighteen inches.

The Semi-Weekly NEWS has been a source of comfort to me this winter. J. O.

Mud and Snow—Hay Scarcity—Scalping—Marriage—Charivari, &c.

PROVIDENCE, Cache Co., April 12, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

As long as this weather continues the people of this region need not apprehend trouble on account of the dryness of their shoes, the mud and snow being plentiful. Hay stacks in this town and surrounding locality are small, all that left on any one man's stack yard (with few exceptions) could easily be hauled at one load, the shed also being overhauled and robbed of the last vestige of straw (this being termed scalping).

Multiply and replenish being the motto of the Saints in general, Providence is no exception, marriage being sought with alacrity by the old and young.

It is the custom of not a few, more especially amongst the young, to form in mass at dead of night and wend surreptitiously to the houses of the newly married. The slumberers, on being awakened, hear the vociferation of tin pans, and cow-bells, interspersed with the human voice. The chorus above this din is repeatedly heard, vibrating in words, to this effect—"Shell out! Shell out!" MYRON.

Hard Winter—Loss of Stock—Heard the Explosion—An Earthquake—Co-operation—The Drama.

PARIS, Bear Lake, April 8, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

We still have about two feet of snow, with poor prospects of going off at present. Hay is nearly all gone, and everybody is asking the question, "When will Spring come?" The old adage certainly proved true in regard to March—it came in very beautiful and went out with all the fierceness that was possible to conceive of. Owing to the high winds that prevailed in the early part of winter, most of our hills are bare and they are pretty well covered with stock. I presume there has been more stock lost this year than any previous year since the settlement of the valley. G. W. Serrine has lost between thirty and forty head, T. G. Rich about twenty, and others one and upwards.

The great explosion at Salt Lake was heard very distinctly by a great many of our citizens, they thinking it was an earthquake, and some positively assert that they felt the ground move. However, on the morning of the 6th, between four and five o'clock, there was an earthquake which awoke nearly all of our citizens from their peaceful slumbers.

The Paris Co operative store expect to start their cheese factory about the middle of May. The committee to value the cows prior to receiving them are visiting the people and meet with very good success in getting cows. It is to be established in Nounan Valley, about eighteen miles from Paris. The company are going to take a claim of 1,440 acres, and intend wintering their stock there, as there is plenty of hay and timber, in fact it is one of the finest places in the country for the purpose intended.

Our Dramatic Association close their season's performance to-night by playing "Ben Bolt" and "Crossing the Line." I think that Paris can boast of as good a stock company as any settlement in the mountains, and they deserve great credit for the manner in which they strive to perform their parts and to amuse the people.

Yours truly, FELIX.

Snow—Late Spring—Stock Perished.

SPRING CITY, Sanpete, April, 1876.

Editor Deseret News:

Since the beginning of April, I should judge there have fallen, at least, two feet of snow in the aggre-