

for relatives and friends were going to disperse every one his own way. The Elders, too, shed tears at the parting with those whom they had learned to love. Many affecting scenes took place and nobody seemed ashamed to give vent to his feelings. Your correspondent found it hard to part with his Maori and European brethren, sisters and friends, who have treated him so kindly during his stay among them.

The Australasian mission has a grand prospect of doing good, and needs more Elders to accomplish the spread of the Gospel in these lands. God speed the work of the Lord and all who would favor the cause of Zion at home or abroad!

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Clerk of Conference.

### POLYSOPHICAL OR MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

Probably the first organization in Utah for mental, musical and social entertainment originated with President Lorenzo Snow, who, in the winter of 1864, invited once a week to his residence in this city a few who had proclivities and more or less talent suitable for such a gathering.

When the names of the choice spirits who contributed there are evoked from the not often used depths of memory, it is easy to see that many of the elements of success were within reach, and it is also easy to account for the refinement and increased interest in such entertainments which came after President Snow's appointment to preside at Box Elder. He had already designated as his successors in the control of those entertainments, Brothers S. W. Richards, C. V. Spencer, and Wm. Eddington, and as these were more or less familiar with incoming talent from the Old World, a greater variety was all the time being added to the already active few.

Instrumental and vocal music, brief lectures and essays, recitations and anecdote, poetry and song, made an evening to be looked for as well as long remembered, so the attendance increased beyond the accommodation, and a committee of twelve was formed to secure further influence and variety. The original Polysophical society thus met with and concentrated congenial element in so modest yet effectual a way, that President Brigham Young tendered the use of the Seventies' Hall, where he and his family became constant attendants and contributors; and his counselors and their families, with other prominent brethren, were regular visitors and patrons all the time.

But the Seventies' Hall became altogether too strait also, when to the surprise of the committee President Young suggested removal to the Social Hall, which was immediately under his control. Here the committee presided alternately, with a generous mental rivalry which was ever active to make each entertainment better than its predecessor; and it can be said now, after the lapse of so many years, that those gatherings, for talent, interest, and the refinements of culture, have not since been equaled, much less excelled. For, standing prominent and alone as the society did, it had command of ability which, when similar entertainments were created in several wards, drew off a large por-

tion of the selected and available material then within reach of that committee. Drawing room entertainments were given quarterly, with an occasional dance and refreshments; and these popular features, while not the primary object of the organization, were yet as adjuncts and concessions to temperamental and decidedly mental, and these addendums swelled that impetus which led to imitation, and Polysophical societies sprang into existence with a readiness which exhibited demand and also popularity. Ward after ward, and outer settlements one after another, did likewise, until kindred societies bade fair for universality.

So ready was the response that the possibilities of a strictly "Mormon" literature began to dawn upon the minds of that committee, and it was continuously in contemplation to issue a quarterly volume of original contributions illustrated by the portraits of the leaders of the Church. But, in an unexpected way and as preparatory to the so-called "reformation," the polysophical yielded its prestige to the theological society, which speedily perished of inanition, until today, the original "Polysophical" name is only retained so far as remembered by the Brigham Young academies in Provo and Logan.

President Snow, the first projector, is still living, hale and hearty. His immediate successors are also yet in the flesh. But of that committee of twelve, seven have passed away, while the five remaining have the privilege of beholding everywhere in the Church, like the "Phoenix arising from old ashes," the Young Men's and Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement associations, based upon the same lines and carrying on the same work. Almost all the young men and young women of Utah are enrolled in this way, and the associations where most successful are officered by the brethren and sisters of more varied experience than the native born.

The observant eye, however, sees that the former class are gradually passing away; but it also sees the wonderful development and gradual improvement of the latter class. Whereas originally (and partly yet) these associations had to allure the youth by amusement and sometimes nonsense, there is a growth toward that which is less frivolous, and in societies lately visited where a manuscript paper is presented occasionally, there is a marked advance toward an enlarged mental or intellectual status. Articles or essays, contributions of one kind and another, have been presented quite in advance of much which passes as literature in many periodicals of this country; and while gladness of heart is consequent on this, after all that fact carries with it a tinge of regret, for as yet the vehicles for preserving many of these good things are not within our reach.

Nevertheless this mental aptitude, the product of physical organization, schools and culture, is being aided all along the line; and as the love of composition and literature grows, so will profundity of thought, facility of expression, and mental power to grapple with a thousand problems, religious, social, civil, political, and financial—these will command the earnest attention of this untraditioned element

which, originating in these mountain valleys, is yet destined to be felt around the world.

It is impossible to see how any man can refrain now from predicting "good things concerning Israel." He may not forget the doubts and tears of years ago, may know of long periods when seed-sowing and gathering were far from being synonymous or as a consequence, when "hope deferred made the heart sick," as it were; when the laborers in the vineyard were "few and far between;" when to be educated was deemed by some as equivalent or preparatory to sure apostasy; when to educate the rising generation was accounted superfluous, and when discipline and restraint of the "bickory witbes" of Zion was denounced in unmeasured terms.

Destiny willed it otherwise. Correction and direction, acquisition and use of every faculty have now become imperative. Listlessness equally with wildness is eschewed, and to secure knowledge, if not wisdom, is deemed the crying necessity of the times. But the latter ingredient of human character and progress will develop itself under enlarged experience and unavoidable responsibility. For all opportunities and acquisitions this generation is far ahead of its fathers and mothers. Things sealed to the latter are "an open book" to the former; while not unlikely, many things are today studied or known which are of doubtful advantage to the recipient, particularly if a dislike for labor, and an overweening desire to live by a profession, legal, medical, political, scholastic, financial or otherwise, is the conclusion; or to look upon these avenues of occupation as the only honorable, respectable or desirable methods of livelihood, as so far ahead of creative energy and capacity that the artisan or mechanic is deemed less valuable to society and so unworthy of recognition or association.

Judging from present drift this idea of superiority needs to be held in check. Even if a son does really know more than his father in some directions, the experience of the latter may be best able to direct into profitable directions the acquisitions of the former. Youth is prone enough already to look down on their progenitors as nobodies, as far from being smart. This, however, is incompatible with the intent and spirit of the latter-day work, and unless due honor is awarded to the authority of relationship, some things meant for blessing may prove to be the opposite of that.

For many years, labor for the present development has been a joy; anticipation has been without duopoly; the results are greater, grander and of wider sweep than once expected; faith looking into the future discerns the ever overruling hand, and in this increasingly active mentality of budding Utah it sees the fulfillment of prophecy. It receives anew the assurance that nothing shall be withheld from the humblest seeker among the chosen seed, until Israel shall be the head in art, science, literature and government, the observed and entrusted of all the nations, the depository of the oracles, the favored of the heavens.

A Prescott (A. T.) man has opened a "bicycle livery stable," which is said to be meeting with much patronage.