

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THAT DISCUSSION.

Elsewhere in today's "News" will be found the first of a series of articles on Mormonism. The opening argument is by a Congregational minister of this city, and the reply of this journal follows.

It has been noticed lately that Christian ministers have been very active in circulating throughout the land pamphlets and periodicals purporting to contain Mormon doctrine, or to explain Mormonism; and also that much of this literature does not contain Mormon doctrine properly speaking, but something else. It may not, in every instance, have been the intention of the writers or compilers to mislead the public on the matter, but that is certainly the effect of it, whatever may be the intention. When, therefore, a local clergyman challenged the "News" to discussion, this was accepted in the hope that a free and gentlemanly exchange of opinions, conducted in a Christian spirit, would serve to remove much misunderstanding and perhaps bring into prominence truths which may have been overlooked. It has been asserted that Mormonism is not true Christianity; we feel sure our Christian friends who may entertain that opinion will, after a thorough examination of what Mormonism is and teaches, feel the necessity, in justice to themselves, to change that view.

THE GRATITUDE OF BIGOTRY.

That address of the released Spanish prisoners to their captors reads very much like a leaf from a highly colored novel whose incidents are laid among the semi-barbarous chivalry of a couple of centuries or so ago. This is but another reminder of what a wonder-worker the late war was, what a prolific breeder of sensational occurrences, what a rapid-fire demolisher of long-cherished customs and beliefs. The grand finale, the departure of the valiant foe who fought our men face to face in the trenches and out of them, as released captives on their way home at the expense of the conquerors, was a fitting one to close such a conflict with; while the "card of thanks" in well-chosen language adopted by the former and presented to the latter is the soulful music to which the curtain falls.

That the Americans would so deport themselves as to deserve such a tribute, was exactly what was looked for when the tocsin of war first sounded. That they would fight as becomes a valorous race until the enemy retired, surrendered or were slain, needed no telling. There is nothing to excite special wonder in that, even though the manner in which the climax was worked out was at times so much unlike the doings of a hostile force that even those who knew that humanity and forbearance at the proper times would be the rule, were somewhat amazed. The special cause for astonishment resides in the fact that the beneficiaries of our humane treatment should not only recognize but express their recognition of it, and then give such expression the widest possible publicity. These were the men who a short time ago could see nothing big, or valorous, or advanced, or worthy, in any forces which the United States was able to place in the field—forces which, according to the enemy's view, relied exclusively upon their greater numbers and more abundant possessions, advantages which that enemy would punctuate with shrieking shot and gleaming

steel and take as prisoners all who were not slaughtered on the field. Truly, truly, the world moves.

While it is distinctly gratifying to us as a nation to know that our valor and humanity are thus appreciated, especially by those who have measured it by practical methods, it is still the case that all of the remarkable document spoken of cannot be concurred in or overlooked. It speaks contemptuously of the race which, unaided and against the most discouraging odds, held the Spanish at bay for forty long months. It says they are of "doubtful origin," as if that were a matter of reproach. With the new light which has been thrown upon the mind of our former enemy, let us hope he will be able full soon to understand that it is not ancestry nor station that constitutes true greatness.

Honor and fame from no condition rise,
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

The ancestral pride of which the Spaniard boasts is the one thing that has made him indolent, shiftless, incapable, and permitted a horde of titled mendicants to live off the sweat of his brow in peace and drive him like an ox to the shambles in time of war. Heredity is a delusion and a snare. The man that has poor parents or none at all, who has no wealthy or influential connections and who cares not whether he was born in a barn or a castle, but is filled with a determination to make his own way through life, to deserve well of all and fear the scoffs and jostlings of none, is worth more to his Maker and his fellows than are all the pensioners on the dead that ever marched in tawdry array upon this stage of action.

There is yet another thing to be considered. The insurgents are spoken of as being poor and despised outcasts and their method of fighting as that of the bushranger. Perhaps this is true, but if so, why? Who made them poor and who besides their oppressors despises them because of their poverty? And why do they fight from behind cover and flee before an effective return can be made? These questions almost answer themselves. When a race has been subject to steady drafts upon its brawn, brain and blood for centuries; when nearly all of the increment of its toil has gone into the possession of licensed thieves, pirates and assassins until it has become so narrowed in its methods of living that it is unable to realize what breadth of purpose means and can only comprehend the one inextinguishable impulse to be free; when such things as these and others as bad exist and are passed along from generation to generation, how much better showing would likely be made than the native Cubans have made? There are two sides to every question, and one of the difficulties in dealing with the Spaniards is that they refuse to see any side but their own until they are compelled to.

A SON OF SOLOMON.

The London Globe in a recent issue notes the fact that the ruler of Abyssinia, Menelik, intends visiting Jerusalem in 1900, and expresses a hope that one of the results of this visit will be some further light upon a sacred chronicle of the country, purporting to prove that the present king of the

Ethiopians is the lineal descendant of King Solomon, the famous ruler of the Jewish nation upon the throne of David. The Abyssinians themselves maintain that there is documentary evidence of this, and firmly believe in the authenticity of the legend, while the Christian missionaries as a rule deny it.

The information concerning the existence of a sacred record of the Abyssinians came to the world through Alvarez, who visited the country in the first part of the sixteenth century. He reported as follows:

"We stayed in Aquaxumo for eight months. This town was the city, chamber and abode of the Queen Saba, who took the camels laden with gold to Solomon when he was building the temple of Jerusalem. There is in this town a very noble church, in which we found a very great chronicle written in the language of the country, and it stated in its commencement how it had been written first in Hebrew and afterward put into Greek, and from Greek into Chaldee, and from Chaldee into the Abyssinian tongue, in which it now is, and it begins thus: How the Queen Saba hearing related the great and rich works which Solomon had begun in Jerusalem, she determined to go and see him, and she loaded certain camels with gold to give for these works, and on arriving near the city, and being about to cross a lake which they passed by some bridge, she dismounted and worshipped the beams, and said: 'Please God, my feet shall not touch the timber on which the Savior of the world has to hang;' and she made a circuit of the lake, and went to see Solomon, and induced him to withdraw those beams from there; and she came to the works and offered her gifts, and said: 'These works are not such as they told me in richness and beauty, because their beauty and richness have no equal, so that they are greater than what was related to me; so much so that the tongues of men cannot tell their nobility and richness, and much I grieve for the small gift which I brought. I will repair to my countries and lordships, and will send whatever abounds, for the works, of gold and blackwood to inlay.'"

Alvarez further states that the chronicle in question asserts that the queen resided for some time in Jerusalem and bore a son to King Solomon, called Melmelek, or Menlek. He was brought up at the Jewish court, but at the age of seventeen, the people demanded his return to his mother. He then became the king of Abyssinia and is said to have ruled "from sea to sea" and to have had a fleet of "sixty ships in the Indian sea." Bruce, who went to Abyssinia two hundred years after Alvarez, speaking of the church at Axum, says:

"In it are supposed to be preserved the ark of the covenant, and the copy of the law which Menlek, the son of Solomon, is said to have stolen from his father in his return to Ethiopia; and they were reckoned as it were the palladia of the country."

Later travelers do not mention the sacred writings referred to, but this is accounted for by the fact that the ecclesiastical authorities are guarding the literary treasures with great care lest they should fall into the hands of the invaders.

The question whether there today remains a lineal descendant of Solomon with an authentic genealogy covering the intervening period of, say 3,000 years, is one of immense interest. It may possibly become one of political importance, too, in case the labors of the so-called Zionists should result in the creation of an independent Jewish state in Palestine. At all events the