

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

## CONCERNING AMUSEMENTS.

It is characteristic of the Latter-day Saints that a definite policy of their leading men has been to deal directly with the subject of amusements for the people, and to bring them under a religious influence whereby all forms of suitable recreation would be hallowed to the good of those participating therein. In pursuance of this policy, musical and dramatic entertainments, parties, reunions, celebrations, etc., have been conducted under the supervision of local Church authorities in various wards and districts, and as a consequence the amusement feature, which is so essential to the cheerful life especially of the young, has been relieved of objectionable associations that may accompany it under some conditions, and has been conducive to the good of the community.

In a religious view, participation in recreative amusements in a temperate degree is commendable. It is one of the agencies productive of "a glad heart and a cheerful countenance," in which the Lord delights, therefore is to be encouraged in that form. But immoderate or untimely indulgence therein is religiously wrong, just as coarse, loud laughter is sinful, while the merriment and smiles of happiness are of heavenly beneficence. Therefore while parties and entertainments should be provided in which the people may participate, they should not be carried to excess, nor be countenanced outside of proper regulations and associations.

The counsel to ward authorities has been to have amusements in their jurisdictions conducted under certain managements and safeguards that would render them beneficial, excluding everything of an unseemly character, and taking special care to debar from these assemblages among the Saints those whose association would tend to evil. Parties and entertainments where this counsel is conformed to thus are agencies in preserving an elevated moral tone and in producing social improvement; while a disregard of this advice is sure to bring results of a different character.

This religious control of amusements has developed highly commendable features, one of which may be named as an illustration, this being the season at which it is timely. This is the old folks' gatherings, which in the summer take form in highly enjoyable excursions for which Utah has gained more than national renown. Throughout various States of Zion there have been receiving the usual attention at this season, the next one on the tapis that we have information of being the old folks' party at American Fork, on Wednesday next, the 23rd instant, and following upon that will be the regular old folks' winter entertainment in the Salt Lake Theater, on the afternoon of February 5, when all over 70 years of age, all the widows, the orphan, deaf mute, and others whom too often the world forgets, are given a free and open welcome, regardless of any distinctions of creed, color, or wealth. All

are invited, all are wanted there, to be made happy.

These gatherings are only one of the practical suggestions of good that result from religious control in amusements. The benefits that come to the aged, infirm, and unfortunate are no greater comparatively than those which accrue to the light-hearted youth. Every ward in Zion should afford opportunity to its youth for recreation within reasonable limits. Whenever this is not provided for and, as a consequence of the neglect, the young are compelled to go elsewhere for the amusement essential to cheerfulness and for which their natures yearn, there is a culpability on the part of those responsible for such a condition. A shepherd is recreant to his trust if he refuses or wilfully neglects to provide for his flock that which is essential to their well-being and protection; and any who may to some extent thus force those under their watchcare to seek recreation in other channels, bear a responsibility they would be better rid of. At the same time, pandering to an extreme desire for hilarity and folly is not to be thought of as permissible.

Experience in this Territory has shown the virtue of religious influence and control in amusements. So far as the Latter-day Saints are concerned, its application should be more extensive than it now is in practice; it should be made to more nearly approximate with the counsel of the general authorities than it now appears to do in many instances. The present condition of the world presents numerous dangers to the moral welfare of the young, and in no direction do these need to be more carefully guarded against here than in the recreation and amusements for the youth of Israel, which should be sufficient for the occasion and be sanctified by the most exalted influences that can be brought to bear thereon through appropriate supervision.

## THE FRUIT THEY BEAR.

The *Wave*, published in Bay county, Michigan, has in its last issue an article on the people of Utah, with special reference to the Mormons. Its tone indicates that the writer has been here and has personal knowledge of the general conditions, for he presents a straight story. He tells of the schools, churches, and religious faiths, making reference to the employment of teachers in the public schools here without regard to their church affiliation; he also calls attention to the fact that "all through the settlements of Utah are Presbyterian and Methodist parochial schools and churches, giving employment to eastern young men and women as preachers and teachers."

Regarding these latter individuals, the *Wave* is moved to righteous indignation by the procedure of two of them, who are mentioned as "Elders Grant and Cooper," and who were engaged in delivering a series of lectures at the Birchard block, Bay City,

against the Mormons. The *Wave* points out the courteous treatment these same preachers have received in this Territory, and then upbraids them for their dishonesty and hypocrisy. They are friendly enough with the Mormons when in Utah, but, as the *Wave* says, "it is different when they return east for monetary support, and while in the East tell that which is not true, or what is just as bad, only half tell the truth."

In refutation of the assertions made by these preachers, our Bay county cotemporary enters into a discussion of the subject, and assures its readers that the Mormons "are, as a people, as devoted to free public schools, patriotic to the Republic, alive to the benefits of free speech and freedom of the press, as are the Baptists, Unitarians, Catholics, Adventists, or any others. They enjoy the confidence and respect of the people of California, Nevada, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona." This, and much more that is good is enumerated; and regarding the religious belief of the Latter-day Saints it is said: "The Mormons differ somewhat from the other Protestant faiths, but use the same Bible and the New Testament. In addition, however, they have the Book of Mormon—a literary curiosity. Whether Mormonism is true or false, it contains much that is good. Its membership are devoted, devout and sincere, and are at all times loyal to their faith." Turning again to the Grant and Cooper misstatements, the *Wave* concludes with the suggestion that "neither of these divines would dare nor care to repeat one of the Bay City lectures in Utah."

That class of preachers at which our Michigan cotemporary directs its criticisms are getting to be a back number, so far as the people's confidence is concerned. They may be able to arouse much prejudice and create considerable antagonism to the Saints for some time to come, but their influence is on the wane. They are being judged by the infallible rule laid down by the Divine Master: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Their fruits being evil, their real character is becoming known. The same rule will mark the editor of the *Wave* for honor and courage, in his voluntary defense of those who have been unjustly assailed; and by it the Mormons also can be judged with their religious system for the evidence of the truth of Mormonism is in the good that it produces, wrought out by a higher Power than mortal man.

## LA GRIPPE EPIDEMIC.

Salt Lake has had a few cases of la grippe this winter, but it has about disappeared. Cities of the East are not so fortunate, for in several of the great centers of population the disease is reported as epidemic. Boston has a large number of cases, and New York is so near panic-stricken that a special consultation of the mayor and heads of departments was called to consider the subject, and two thousand men were employed at \$2 per day to clean the streets, the filth and accumulations in the latter being blamed for the general prevalence of the disease, which selects its victims