DESERET EVENING NEWS

Organ of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

LORENZO S. O. Y. TRUSTEES-IN-TRUST.

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THE DESERET NEWS,
Salt Lake City, Utah.

SALT LAKE CITY, APRIL 18, 1899.

"MORMON" LIBERTY.

"As a matter of fact the Church was never freer from such political tyranny and dictation than it is right now under President Lorenzo Snow."

The foregoing is from our esteemed morning contemporary, in a spirited reply to outrages in the anti-"Mormon" organs. It is absolutely correct. We can justly complain of any party bias, or influence in favor of any political organization or faction, on the part of the presiding authorities of the "Mormon" Church. They have abstained from expressions of their own choice as to candidates in many instances, but their utterances of personal opinion might be construed as "Church influence in politics."

We have been of the opinion that they have been, if anything, too particular on this question. They have, certainly, as many political rights as other citizens in this State. Their election ought not to be curtailed. Freedom of speech is theirs under the laws as much as anybody's, and their experience and standing in the community entitles them to the respect of their friends and associates.

As to advice and counsel in political affairs, we think they should be as free as any lawyers, or doctors, or merchants or journalists. They should be free to impart, and those who value their opinion should be free to seek for and receive it, without any imputation of using or submitting to that awful scarecrow, "Church influence."

If a voter was commanded to cast his ballot for some person or measure to which he was personally opposed, or threatened with any pains or penalties for the free exercise of his own judgment, or exposed to any disabilities on account of his difference in politics with leading Church authorities, there might be some ground for objection, and for strictures against ecclesiastical influence in political affairs. But in their entire absence, the cry that is raised is as absurd as it is groundless and false.

President Wilford Woodruff frequently declared that he never directed any person how to vote. He mentioned the fact repeatedly that no son of his could say that he had ever asked them to use their ballots in favor of any particular candidate, and they differed with each other freely as to party politics. The present President of the Church has never interfered with the political liberties of members or officers under his jurisdiction, and when asked for his opinion has been very chary of saying anything that could be distorted into the exercise of ecclesiastical authority in party affairs. We do not believe any one can tell positively, whether he favors one political party more than another.

During the campaign of last fall, prominent churchmen were not limited in their liberty for or against any party or candidate. The utmost freedom was enjoyed by all. The Church had no candidate, it leaned to no particular faction, it supported no special cause, it took no part in any political discussion. If the Presidency had declared against some nominee for the suffrages of the people, it would have given occasion for raising the charge of "Church influence." But there was no such expression of views as to see one seeking for popular support, and no voters in the United States could possibly be freer in the exercise of their political privileges than were the Latter-day Saints in the State of Utah.

The "Mormons" delight in liberty. Their religion promotes it and teaches them to maintain it. Its spirit is the genius of freedom. It recognizes the dominion of law, however, and upholds its majesty when legitimately displayed. It infringes on no other religion, it invades no man's hearth and home. It requires submission only to that which is true and beneficial, and compels no one to bow to its decrees. What it offers to humanity can be taken or left at will, and those who attribute to it any form of despotism, either wilfully assign it a whole of that which they do not understand.

WHERE ARE THE TRACTS?

A dispatch from Washington, D. C., says that the American Tract society printed about 1,500,000 pamphlets during the past year. The report states that the society is "distributing Christian literature in the Mormon" domain of Utah through a system of colporter wagons and missionaries." On the strength of this and other evidences of work accomplished, "an appeal is made for additional offerings."

If there has been any such systematic distribution of the society's literature in this State, we have failed to hear of it. We doubt very much that there has been any extensive work of that kind done in Utah. The titles of the tracts said to have been circulated here are not given. If any of our friends know about this alleged distribution, we should be pleased to receive word concerning it.

"Christian literature" would be far better to circulate than anti-"Mormon" stories, and would possibly accomplish something when profane and silly tales of its purpose. By all means send us the literature, if money is to be collected for the purpose, but don't get hilarious, as the assertion preachers do, if the "Mormons" are not converted to the notions the tracts contain. Bring on your strong reasons and let the truth prevail.

"Mormonism" courts comparison and serious investigation. If the Tract society has anything better to offer than what we have, we will be grateful for it. It would be a grand thing if those who want to enlighten the "Mormons" would themselves receive the light that has been revealed in latter days.

LAY THE DUST!

The dusty condition of the streets of this city is made almost unbearable by the whirls which have stirred things up lately. It is an unfortunate combination, and many complaints arise with the dust, against the City Council, because there is so little sprinkling done. Of course the intention is to economize and at the same time perform the work thoroughly, as soon as the carts arrive which have been ordered for the purpose. But meanwhile the whole city is suffering from the dust, and it is but natural that there should be a great deal of grumbling. We suggest to the Council that the carts which are now available be made to do contingent duty. Put another force of drivers and teams on and keep the carts running all night. Why not? They will be wanted for day work when the new sprinkling carts, and we need the work done now as much as at any time. This is a matter that relates to the health as well as to the comfort of the people, and it ought not to be ignored or put off to a more convenient season. Wake up, city fathers, and lay the dust!

PEACE TO THE STATE.

The Ogden Standard, in a strong editorial on a question that has been agitated of late, and in response to some pertinent sayings of the Logan Journal, makes these remarks:

"No man who is intermixed and familiar with the history of Utah for the years back, can honestly say that the Mormon people in the last half of the decade have not more than met the Gentile half way in an honest effort to bring peace to the State. Their adversaries have been greater than it was thought possible prior to the issue of the Manifesto prohibiting polygamy. Nothing has occurred of late to cause the Gentiles to distrust the Mormon people, unless we accept idle rumors as the basis of criticism or the acts of a few individuals to be a complete condemnation of all the people."

We believe that these statements will be endorsed by a very large majority of the non-"Mormon" citizens of Utah, and they ought to join in frowning down the attempts that are being made to raise antagonism on matters that were buried long ago.

"JINGO" AND "SLAVE-DRIVER."

The Springfield Republican, with reckless disregard of consequences, puts the brand of "jingo" and "slave-driver" upon a local contemporary. The Republican says:

"The Jingo Salt Lake Tribune is a little more rattled over the situation than the Ogden Standard, and blazes away in the reckless manner."

It then quotes a paragraph of said contemporary about the future relations of the white race to the Mongolian and the Malay, and comments in part as follows:

"But what does the Tribune mean by control of one race by another? Slavery? The quoted passage is not intelligible unless that be the meaning which it seeks to convey. Jingo and 'slave-driver' are becoming almost interchangeable terms.

Outsiders are evidently becoming aware of a fact long well known in this region. But what will become of the Republican after having dared, in this manner, the monopoly of Americanism, of patriotism, and of purity—the thundering Tiber of reckless journalism?

THE PHILIPPINE PROBLEM.

General Lawton, according to a World dispatch, left of the original force of 30,000 men he needed to conquer and hold the Philippine Islands. The difficulty is explained to be guerilla warfare in a tropical climate. Were the question only of traversing the country from one end to another, that could be solved easily; but the necessity of leaving garrisons to guard each conquered place, makes it imperative to have a large force in the field.

The Philippine situation is rather puzzling. Only last August Aguinaldo's emissaries before the Paris commission admitted the inability of the natives to protect themselves against possible European aggression. They desired American protection, and suggested the presence of a few American officers from time to time, while the first experiments in self-government were being made. Now the Americans have come with a strong force. Our navy offered to assist the natives in establishing a government, and to protect them against foreigners; but instead of accepting the friendly offer, Aguinaldo has continued the hostilities begun under Spanish rule. Either the Filipinos do not understand the intentions of their liberators, or they do not wish the benefits made.

In either case, the United States cannot now withdraw from the islands. If the misguided native cannot be reasoned without being subdued, this must be done, even if it takes 100,000 men to effect it, or 200,000 men to effect it, or 300,000 men to effect it, or as many as may be either to establish self-government or to extend protection over the people against the superior force, until all the people realize the futility of fighting the power that freed the country from Spanish rule.

Lately a suggestion has been made that the United States seize only a small island as a naval station and then invite the civilized Filipinos to set up an independent government of their own. The people of Mindanao, it is said, who are mostly Mohammedans, might not be permitted to form a separate government, and then the other islands would be in turn given the same privileges. This, it is thought, would be entirely satisfactory to all concerned.

The trouble with this idea, however, is that a Filipino government, entirely independent of the United States, would offer no guaranty whatever against future troubles and complications. Ambitious leaders, like Aguinaldo, might incite the natives to renew hostilities at any time, if our government were to take any step that might be construed as weakness or fear. And, further, an independent Filipino government might be induced to intrigue with some European power, or with Japan, and cause trouble. There is less danger of this as long as the archipelago is retained as part of the domain of the American Union, and consequently the position taken in the proclamations by the Philippine commission ought to be maintained. If force is needed, it is better to apply it at the outset, than to risk having to do so later and perhaps repeatedly.

When the Filipinos understand what liberty under the American flag is, they will lay down their arms and help to subdue those responsible for the present disturbances.

FRIENDLY RELATIONS AGAIN.

Peace being established between this country and Spain, the diplomatic relations will be resumed which were interrupted by the departure of Hon. Woodford from Madrid on April 21, 1898, and the Spanish representative from Washington. President McKinley is said to have decided to send Bellamy Storer, U. S. minister to Belgium, to Spain, and the Spanish government will probably send Duke Arcos to Washington, the latter being regarded as persona grata there.

It is clear that much diplomatic skill will be needed in both capitals. By the war all treaties were terminated, and it will be necessary to formulate new agreements covering the respective commercial and other interests of the two nations. Spain will naturally endeavor to obtain as favorable conditions as possible, and the United States will probably grant as much as will be consistent, true to the chivalrous spirit displayed by this nation both before and during the war. But notwithstanding this, the situation of ambassador will certainly not be a sinecure for some time to come.

LONDON SUNDAY PAPERS.

In this country the public has been supplied with the Sunday newspaper for twenty years. The San Francisco Chronicle claims to be the pioneer in this enterprise. London is now to have its Sunday papers.

It seems that the London Daily Mail is responsible for the innovation. That paper adopted American methods to such an extent that it became a dangerous rival to its contemporaries. The Telegraph, which is leading in the race, announced its intention of issuing a Sunday edition, and the Mail subsequently stated it would follow suit.

Great Britain is watching this new enterprise with much interest. Efforts are being made to stop the circulation of these papers, by boycotting them, or by legal means. It is believed, though, that the Sunday paper in Great Britain has come to stay.

When Sunday publications first appeared in this country, their purpose was to supply instructive reading matter. But a marked degeneration has taken place. Many Sunday papers are now but miserable assortments of frightful pictures, sensational stories, startling headlines and "spicy" scandals. They have become the conduits through which much moral disease is conveyed from one end of the country to the other.

We think the British public is justified in looking upon the experiment with distrust. The color and tone of some of the publications on this side of the water are not pleasant to a conservative public anxious to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath day.

"HOSS" RULE.

Mr. Croker, in his testimony before the investigating committee in New York, seemed best upon disappointing the public. He refused to enlighten it on his "private business transactions, which might throw some light upon the source of his present wealth. Years ago he was a poor man; now he is a poor man; he has had no remunerative office and no particularly profitable business, and yet he has, to all appearances, made a fortune. How did he do it? He refused to say.

The gentleman was perfectly frank in his replies, as to his political management. He admitted that he respected the Tammany organization, and, consequently, the nominations and elections in New York city. He argued that the people had confidence in the organization, and showed by their votes that they wanted that organization, that is to say, its "boss," to run the city. He therefore only did his duty. He did not deny that juries chosen by his aid were expected to do his bidding in their decisions, by forcing, for instance, judicial sales into channels where he will receive emoluments from such sales. This and much of the same kind he considered perfectly legitimate. But all questions as to contracts, he stubbornly refused to answer. We do not see how he could or why he should be compelled to reply.

The testimony before the committee should be carefully read. It is a revelation of the management of a certain kind of politics in this "free" country, where every citizen, if voters have wheered they speak, is a sovereign. Every large city in the country has more or less of an element of politicians of the Croker school, including his methods and the purpose of attaining wealth and influence by the aid of votes. In several municipal elections lately, the boss rule has resulted in well deserved rebuke. It can only be put down anywhere by the act of the people themselves.

Electoral honesty is to murder what sacramento is to shoplifting.

The recipe for curbing a Filipino revolt is to fire. First catch him and then kill him.

Whatever style of architecture may be employed in the Salt Palace, people will certainly expect to see Lots of pillars.

The Wade court of inquiry is now holding sessions behind closed doors. What is the use of closed doors after the skeleton is out of the closet?

"Temporary insanity" will be the well-worn plea of the defense in the Mrs. George murder case. "Mental epilepsy" was the plea in another famous murder trial. That, at least, showed some originality on the part of the lawyers.

Weber and Provo rivers are rising rapidly and this will be the way with all our mountain streams pretty soon. Now is the time to take the precautions against probable floods. When the overflows come they will not be in places where they will do the most good.

The reason why the "dust" referred to by the Herald has not been so "dry" as it might have been is because when buried against the morning condensation, which is styles the Storm Starter, and scattered in kind, it was so moistened that it should have been spelled mud.

Ex-United States Consul at Manila, Edwards, says that in his opinion it will not be necessary to keep a large force of soldiers in the Philippines. The Spaniards did not do so, and the experiences of their own attrocious acts frightened them into augmenting the number of their troops.

The students of the High School of Elgin, Ill., recently held a public entertainment which took the form of a "Congress of Peace." One of the boys was the czar of Russia, and president of the conference; others were delegates from Switzerland, France, Austria, Italy, Germany, etc. Other schools of the country might profitably arrange similar entertainments.

Some people are wondering where that money has gone, spent by the American Tract Society for literature to convert the "Mormons" in Utah. We have seen nothing of the "colporters" or of the "wagons." Is it possible that it has gone into the coffers of local anti-"Mormon" concerns, and that this accounts for their re-awakened zeal?

The City Council, it is hoped and expected, will act favorably on the petition to preserve and restore the old mill which is one of the historic features of this city. The sentiment is almost universal that the structure should be preserved, and we believe the Council will respond to it and not destroy that old landmark. To keep it intact will please the public and not hurt anybody. Let the old mill stand!

In quoting the word "fascinating" from a contemporary in reference to horrors dished up for Sunday reading, we did not mean that such literary attractions, the "News" did not refer specially to the story of the Pelican Point mystery, but to the general collection of tales of depravity which is common with papers purchased for that day, and which are considered "fascinating" by their publishers. They are baneful and degrading in their general effects.

General Gomez, judging from his words and acts recently, is free from personal ambition. When empowered to represent the Cuban army in the negotiations with this country, he asked that a commission be appointed to consult with, and in a recent speech to his associates he said: "We must recognize that the only power today in Cuba is the power of those who have intervened, and, therefore, for the present, thoughts of a Cuban independent government can be no more than dreams." What a pity the Filipinos have no Gomez to direct their efforts!

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP.

New York Journal.

European cities conclusively disprove the contention of the American corporations that private enterprise is the only agency that can give the people transportation, gas, electric power and water. They have shown that the people themselves can furnish these necessities to themselves much better and cheaper, and that, if they choose, they can even make them profitable enterprises.

Chicago News.

When ex-Congressman Tom L. Johnson of Cleveland compels municipal ownership of the street railway system he is dealing a staggering blow to the usurpations of public possession of street car lines. What may result in time cannot be forecast, but under the present management of American cities municipal operation is a thing not to be seriously considered, while the ownership of traction franchises may properly be contemplated within proper limits.

Denver Post.

As a matter of fact the principle of municipal ownership of public utilities is the only tenable one. But for the moment it is which private corporations controlling these utilities have abused their privileges and perverted the franchises granted them by an indulgent public toward extortion and oppression, the opposite march of reform is the one upon which we have been making rapid one. It can already be asserted that during the coming two decades a revolution will be effected for, including every large city in the country, and at the end of that time very few municipalities will be found dependent on private ownership of gas works. Detroit has undertaken ownership of the street railways. Toledo has declared in favor of municipal ownership of all public utilities, and there are others.

New York Independent.

The violence at Toledo and Detroit represents a mistaken idea of the people, however, the influence of which may become decisive in fickle contrasts and thus wonderfully complicate the administration of municipal affairs. They cannot safely be ignored, however, and the wisest and strongest statesmanship will have to be used to public interests have won for them the respect and support of many thousands of the plain people of the United States.

THE CLEVELAND ELECTION.

The Cleveland Plaindealer.

The Republican party was planning the fourteen hour of justice. That the machine has been smashed to another crushed and that the public service which it sought to degrade will be lifted into a purer atmosphere are elements for the most hearty congratulations.

Cleveland Leader.

A personal machine, created to advance the political fortunes of one man, has been destroyed. Good government will now have a chance in this great municipality and the people's real interests will be considered to be paramount to the interests of a boss and his machine.

Cincinnati Inquirer.

In the shouting of delegates to the Republican state convention Mr. Hanna cannot have the benefit of Democratic coalitions. It is not thinkable that the citizens who voted with them on his political armor with his official duties.

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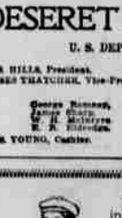
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