

THE DESERET NEWS:

SEMI-WEEKLY.

GEORGE Q. CANNON, EDITOR.

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FEMALE RELIEF SOCIETIES.

We have fairly entered upon the Winter; but, so far, we have experienced very little severe weather. If we were to judge by present appearances, we should conclude that our Winter would be a mild one. But in our changeable climate it is not safe to trust to such appearances. A mild beginning is not a sure sign that the entire Winter will be similar. So far, the season resembles the first Winter we spent here—1847. Plowing was done during every month of that Winter, the ground being frozen only at short intervals. The mild open Fall that we have had has been one of great advantage to everybody engaged in out-door pursuits. The farmers have taken advantage of it, and in the city, improvements of various kinds have been pushed forward with energy.

With the rich, or those who are well provided with the comforts of life, the severity of the Winter makes but little difference. The intensity of the cold outside, by its contrast with the comfort in-doors, enhances their enjoyment. With good food, and plenty of it, warm clothing and comfortable houses, and an abundance of fuel, most people can contrive to pass the winter very pleasantly. But to the poor, in most northern lands, the Winter comes laden with terror. They dread the approach of its bleak winds and biting storms. The wintry landscape possesses no charms in their eyes; for with them and their little ones it is a season of suffering.

Our land is a cold one in Winter; but for the number of our population, and the large proportion of laboring people there are here, we have comparatively few who are destitute. Hundreds of poor people have been brought here yearly, most of them entirely ignorant of the modes of obtaining a living in a new country, and in many instances they have had to adopt new employments. But, through the guidance and example of experienced men, they have been enabled to live, and, not unfrequently, surround themselves with the comforts and even the luxuries of life. The success which has attended the labors of the people is truly wonderful. But though prosperity generally prevails throughout our settlements, there are some helpless persons in every Ward who are dependent upon the Bishops for the necessities of life. The care of the indigent at this season of the year forms no small portion of a Bishop's labors and responsibilities. As a people we should be sensitively careful of our poor. Their prayers and cries ascend to the Lord, and the people whose hands are open to relieve their wants, are blessed of Him.

There is really no necessity for any person to suffer in this community for want of the necessities of life. Our people believe too firmly in the Scripture that "he that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth to the Lord," to knowingly permit any person to go destitute while they have anything to share with them. The Bishops have so many cares devolving upon them, so many duties to attend to, that it would not be surprising if, occasionally, some persons, who need assistance should escape their attention. If proper measures, however, were taken in the various Wards, the wants of all might be duly attended to. Many of the poor have heretofore, been dependent upon the Tithing Office for their support. It is

now desirable that that Department should be relieved from their calls, that the work of cutting stone, &c., for the Temple may be prosecuted. The care of the poor, therefore, now devolves upon the Bishops.

President Young has suggested a plan which, if rightly carried out, can not fail to relieve the Bishops from the care which they otherwise will be likely to have in providing for the poor. He suggests the organization of Female Relief Societies in the various Wards, whose duty it will be to visit the sick and the helpless and the needy, and learn their wants, and, under their Bishops, collect the means necessary to relieve them. This suggestion must strike every one, who reflects upon the subject, as admirably adapted to meet the wants of the case. These duties would be accepted readily, we believe, by our sisters, if they were satisfied that it was the wish of their Bishops for them to attend to them. There are very many who, we feel assured, would take especial pleasure in the vocation. It would present a field of usefulness to them that they would gladly enter upon. Though women are precluded by their sex from going abroad as missionaries, and from performing many labors which fall to the lot of man, they are not, therefore, devoid of interest in the progress of the Work, or destitute of the desire to contribute, to the full extent of their ability, to the accomplishment of God's purposes. In the sphere which the President proposes they should occupy, there is room for extended usefulness. Woman is peculiarly adapted to fill it. She is, by nature, kind and sympathetic, and the sight of suffering awakens the kindest emotions within her breast, and until that suffering is alleviated she cannot rest.

Man has his calling—there are duties for which he is peculiarly fitted. But for this class of duties to which we allude he has not the adaptability possessed by woman. They seem to come particularly within her province, and we have no doubt, if the Bishops will act upon the suggestion of the President, and organize these societies, and call the sisters to their aid, they will find that they have an auxiliary force on which they can rely, and one, too, that will relieve them from duties which sometimes press heavily upon them. It is President Young's wish that the Bishops take this suggestion into consideration, and that in the Wards of this City, and in the country Wards where such Societies can find employment, they will take early steps to organize them.

THE NIAGARA OF THE WEST.

A week ago, Mr. C. R. Savage, of the firm of Savage & Ottinger, went north to obtain by photographic process, pictures of some of the finest scenes at and around the vicinity of Snake River Falls. The result of his trip appears in a series of views, which are entitled to rank very high as works of art for their delicacy of outline, and the exquisite manner in which they are toned, the manipulation being very superior. But apart from their superiority as works of art, these views are interesting and valuable for the scenes represented. The Great West is still to a considerable extent unexplored; and its beauties and sublime scenery, now comparatively unknown, will in a few years attract the attention of thousands of sight-seers, tourists, and earth-wanderers, who, tired of the oft-looked-at scenery of Italy and Switzerland, will seek the wonderful and sublime in nature now hidden in the Rocky Mountains, or yet to be developed in Central Africa.

Here, in the views before us, is the "Niagara of the West," the great Snake River Falls, the savage grandeur and wild sublimity of which are almost indescribable. Snake River, or the Lewis Fork of the Columbia, winding its way in a north-westerly direction, suddenly reaches and dashes over a fall of thirty feet, its volume being broken

into half a dozen streams by dark rocks rising out of its flood. A little farther on, divided into three streams, it bounds down a wall of rock some sixty feet in depth; while still a little farther on, its waters suddenly narrowed to about four hundred feet, the whole river leaps in one unbroken body down a precipice of two hundred and ten feet. The ever rising mist, with its changing prismatic hues; the wild leap of the mad river down into the abyss beneath; the frowning and jutting rocks of black and grey, which cast their shadows over the sluggish, leaden-looking water, that seems exhausted after its desperate leap; the dark look of the towering banks which rise a thousand feet above the river; and the deafening roar which ever meets the ear, combine to form a picture of nature's power, sublimity and grandeur, before which man can only stand awe-struck, filled with reverence and admiration. These Falls are four miles from the crossing of Rock Creek, on the coach road between this city and Boise, the capital of Idaho.

Another view is that of the rising of the Unknown River, a marvel in nature which will attract many a tourist. It pushes out of the bank of Snake River Valley, near the Overland Ferry, with a volume equal to that of Big Cottonwood, and empties into the river.

Then follow scenes at and around Bear River bridge, including the bridge, the hotel of Godbe & Hampton, and the office of Wells, Fargo, & Co. at Bear River north. The hotel is a much finer looking building than any one would expect to see in such a locality, being built of rock, two stories high and beautifully finished; and is presided over by our well known citizen Ben. Hampton, Esq. The bridge, also erected by Messrs. Godbe of this city and Nichols of Box Elder, is a substantial looking and apparently well built structure, judging by the sharp and well defined photograph of it which has been made.

But the points of greatest interest are those first mentioned, least known, and now for the first time photographed, though, we believe, they have been sketched before. Messrs. Savage & Ottinger deserve credit for their enterprise, in giving to the world, for the first time, correct views of these scenes and marvels of nature, which may be expected to be soon much sought after by those who admire nature in her wildest and sublimest moods.

The public will be interested in knowing that the great Shoshone Falls, or Snake River Falls, and absorbingly interesting natural wonders which abound in that region can be reached, within a short distance, by Wells, Fargo & Co's regular coaches on the northern line.

AMUSEMENTS.

In the first settlement of this valley, the people were thrown upon their own resources for means of amusement. If they had any fun, they had to create it. Performers could not be imported, neither did they come with the same facility as at present. But the necessity for some means of innocent amusement was soon felt. The unremitting toil, which was necessary in the beginning, was too heavy a strain on the physical energies of the people to be continued for any length of time without relaxation. Dancing, therefore, became very popular. Old and young alike enjoyed the social intercourse which gatherings of this character afforded. Balls were not patronized so much for the sake of dancing as for the opportunities they presented of meeting with friends and enjoying their society. Years have elapsed since then; but our balls still maintain these characteristics. They are social gatherings, where friends meet and indulge in friendly intercourse and conversation, and brighten up old acquaintanceship.

But this amusement did not supply all the wants of the people. Recreation of a mental character was needed. The recognition of this want gave rise to the "Deseret Dramatic Association"—a society which was organized under the auspices of President Brigham Young. He erected the Social Hall,

and, in 1852, it was dedicated as a place of recreation and amusement. During that Winter the Association gave performances on its boards to the great satisfaction of the people, who never failed, especially of later years, to crowd its walls whenever its doors were opened. We still remember the sensations of pleasure which we experienced at witnessing the performances at that elegant little hall. Every one gave way to unrestrained enjoyment, for all felt at home. The audience were always in good humor, and very readily overlooked any defects in the scenery and appointments or shortcomings in the performers—they were "our folks."

As population increased, the Social Hall was found to be too small to accommodate the public. The erection of the present Theatre was decided upon. This magnificent building was opened to the public early in 1863. If any doubts ever existed as to the propriety of building such an edifice and for such uses, they must, in view of subsequent occurrences, have long since vanished. The good that it has accomplished can not now be questioned. Like every great movement that has been undertaken by the Latter-day Saints, under the direction of the President of the church, it was the right thing at the right time.

There is a class of people in the world who have a holy horror of the very name of theatre. Such persons imagine that impiety and vice are inseparable from dramatic representations. But in this country, with a theatre conducted as ours has been in this city, there is no room for entertaining such feelings. The moral purity of the drama has been maintained, and nothing has been permitted, knowingly, to appear on the stage that would cause a blush to mantle the cheek of the most sensitive and virtuous. In order that these results might be attained, and that the drama might be the means of elevating and instructing the audience who would be likely to frequent the theatre, President Young, for some years kept the entire control of everything connected therewith in his own hands. He was determined that the influence of theatrical representations here should be healthy; and, therefore, watched them with jealous care. Now, his scrutiny is still exercised, but he can intrust the care to other hands, who carry out the design for which the building was erected.

It would be unwise to underrate the power for good or for evil, which the drama is capable of exercising. In every age, and among every people who have been its patrons, the results accomplished by it have been very great. In early ages, especially among the Greeks, the drama was intimately associated with religion. The influence of such representations upon them was almost unbounded. Even the news received by the Athenians, while engaged in witnessing a play, of the total defeat of their army before Syracuse, could not check their enthusiasm or cause them to withdraw their attention from the performance. Among the Romans the drama became terribly degraded, especially in the latter days of the empire. It is an agency that must be controlled. Too strict a surveillance can not be maintained over it. It is capable of accomplishing much good; but, if misdirected, its power for evil is also very great. It is the earnest wish of every right-feeling person that the same care which has heretofore been exercised over our amusements may still be continued. Every thing that would belike to excite impure thoughts or in the least corrupt, should be carefully suppressed. It is better to err on the side of being too fastidious, than to permit even a *double entendre* to find expression. Better for a community to be deprived of amusements, than to partake of those of an indecorous or impure character.