

EXCLUDING POLYGAMISTS.

THE dispatch from Washington, which appeared a few days ago, in regard to the exclusion of polygamists from landing on the shores of the United States, is rather indefinite. No account is given of the specific charges against Petersen and his wife, who it is said hail from Sweden, and about whom some affidavits have been made. On what ground is it claimed they are polygamists? Is it because they believe in polygamy? It is very unlikely that they are practical polygamists. There is some mystery about this case that future information will probably dissipate.

The ruling of Secretary Foster appears to be merely a repetition of a clause in the immigration law passed at the last session of Congress. It excludes polygamists as well as paupers and convicts from entrance into the ports of the United States.

But how is the term "polygamists" to be understood? Clearly, it must mean those who practice polygamy. If so, the inspectors at the respective ports should look somewhere else than among "Mormon" companies for people who may be lawfully excluded from landing on that ground.

The "Mormons" abroad have never practiced polygamy, but have been, taught and required as Church members to live according to the laws of the respective nations where they reside. Therefore when the idea has been entertained that "Mormon" immigrants could be returned whence they came, on the ground that they were polygamists, a great mistake has been made both in fact and in law.

We presume no one will argue that an immigrant can be lawfully excluded from these shores because of his or her abstract opinion on any religious, social or political question. Belief in the Bible would be a sufficient ground of objection to the landing of any immigrant, if matters of faith were to be inquired into. The law certainly was never intended to operate in any such absurd fashion.

We shall look for some further particulars in regard to this case, believing that neither the emigration officers nor the Administration will attempt to exclude people from these shores on account of a belief they may entertain upon any question.

"MORMON" POLITICAL LIBERTY.

IN THE heat of political discussion occasioned by the loosening of local party ties, a great deal of nonsense is uttered by extreme partisans. Also some untruths are set forth as un-

disputed and undeniable facts. This is perhaps to be expected when we consider the agitation and the character of some of the agitators.

Among these errors is the hackneyed story about "Mormon" Church domination in political affairs. It seems useless to present the facts. The notion that the "Mormon" people are under some kind of compulsion as to voting, that they are told what ticket they must vote and that they dare not disobey, is industriously disseminated, and it is not strange that many newcomers who do not take trouble to investigate believe the groundless statements made concerning it.

Suppose then, as past issues are being put aside by the better portions of the community and living questions are taking their place, we let the statements about what has been, no matter how foolish and false, go into the grave of past quarrels. How about the situation today? that is the question. Does the "Mormon" Church assume to dictate and coerce its members in political affairs? Does the Church claim the right to control the State? What are the views of its leaders on these matters?

President Wilford Woodruff is the recognized head of the "Mormon" Church. His official utterances must be regarded as authoritative. His Declaration on the polygamy question is taken by respectable people and journals in good faith. He has spoken in no uncertain tones in regard to political affairs. He has stated publicly the fact that he never interfered with the free agency of the people, that he never told men how they should vote, and over his own signature as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he affirmed and declared before God, in his letter to the *Illustrated American* published February 7th, 1891, that the articles of faith and discipline which he quoted are the true doctrines of our Church. These included the article on "Government and Laws in General" contained in the Doctrine and Covenants, from which we quote the following:

"We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man, and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, either in making laws or administering them, for the good and safety of society.

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life."

"We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same, and that such as will administer the same in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people (if a republic), or the will of the sovereign.

"We believe that every man should be honored in his station; rulers and magistrates as such, being placed for the protection of the innocent and the punishment of the guilty; and that to the laws all men owe respect and deference, as without them peace and harmony would be supplanted by anarchy and terror; human laws being instituted for the express purpose of regulating our interests as individuals and nations, between man and man, and divine laws given of heaven prescribing rules in spiritual concerns, for faith and worship, both to be answered by man to his Maker.

"We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government, whereby one religious society is fostered and another proscribed in its spiritual privileges, and the individual rights of its members, as citizens, denied."

Assertions of individuals interested in the promotion of strife and bitterness and the maintenance of old strifes, that the "Mormon" leaders either exercise or claim the right to control the consciences of men or curtail their freedom in political or other matters, should be treated as the vaporings of demagogues, the windy harangues of stump declaimers, the labored efforts of unscrupulous scribes. They are unsupported by facts or by any effort at proof. There is nothing in them but words, and they uttered to deceive.

Whatever may be believed of the past, today the "Mormon" people are as free as any citizens of the United States, and, if they hold the lawful right of suffrage, may vote for any man or measure, according to their personal preferences and convictions of what is the right thing to do. No fact can be cited in disproof of this. Let no one be hoodwinked by the designs of the scheming and party-serving disreputables, who hate the "Mormon" people and desire their utter destruction. But let the decent and just of all parties weigh well the facts and the authoritative declarations of "Mormon" authorities today, and refuse to place themselves under the bondage of a party founded in greater fanaticism than is charged upon the "Mormons," and championed by persons who are greater tyrants than any so-called priestly dictator who ever figured as a "Mormon" leader.

THE SELF-MURDER MANIA.

A SUICIDAL mania has swept over Utah during the last few days. The record is appalling and unprecedented. Not many years since in this territory a case of self-destruction was so rare that when one occurred it created a sensation that did not subside for weeks, and was perhaps made a subject of reference for months afterwards. Such an event is now so common that it scarcely occasions more than a passing comment, and it is soon lost sight of