

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

CONFERENCE NOTICE.

The Sixty-eighth Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 o'clock on Monday morning, October 4, 1897.

The officers and members of the Church generally are cordially invited to attend the meetings of the Conference.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,

GEORGE Q. CANNON,

JOSEPH F. SMITH,

First Presidency.

THE PELICAN POINT CASE.

The singular and mysterious features connected with the dreadful tragedy at Pelican Point in Utah county seem likely to have placed upon them an intensely dramatic climax by the discovery of the real murderer, and the consequent vindication of the man who is undergoing a life sentence of imprisonment for the crime.

The readers of the "News" will remember that, immediately after the conviction of Hayes, he was interviewed in prison by a representative of this paper. The interviewer was not only an experienced newspaper worker, but was a lawyer as well; and his inquiries into the case, the results of which were published in these columns at the time, strongly indicated that, had all the evidence possible to obtain in behalf of the prisoner been presented before the jury, a reasonable doubt of his guilt would thereby have been created.

The board of pardons commuted the death sentence to imprisonment for life, mainly because the evidence of guilt was purely circumstantial and not absolutely conclusive, though the prosecution undeniably made out a strong case; and in view of what has recently been brought to light, it is most fortunate that this clemency was exercised. On the other hand, it should be borne in mind that nothing more than circumstantial evidence indicating the guilt of Weeks has yet been discovered, and that the case against him may collapse under judicial scrutiny. Hayes has not yet been proven innocent by any means. What is usually the most important link in the evidence in a murder case, is still lacking; a sufficient motive for the murder of three young men.

Unfortunate features of the whole affair are the discredit it tends to throw upon the courts, and the consequent difficulty in enforcing the law in murder cases. If Hayes shall be vindicated, his case will long be cited by criminal lawyers as showing reasons why juries should be fearful to convict, and justice may thus be many times defeated. Far better would it have been, in such a contingency, had the verdict been not guilty.

The case against Weeks demands with peculiar force the most thorough investigation. Every clue should be followed up, and every effort made to bring out the truth and the whole truth, and separate it from everything that is not part of itself. In the

meantime the public may well suspend judgment until what has appeared in the newspapers is substantiated in court.

Not the least dramatic and trying feature of the case is the figure Mrs. Hayes presents. She is the mother of the boy her husband has been convicted of murdering, yet she has always maintained his innocence. At one time she was in danger of losing by death her husband as well as her son, and her experience has been a fearful one.

SLOW TO COMPREHEND.

It was ten years after Appomattox before some of the people of Missouri found out that the war was over; it was more than that after Jefferson Davis's requiem was sung before some of the abolitionists of New England realized that he was dead; and it is only lately that congressmen have stopped waving the bloody shirt.

But Missouri and the rural regions of New England were not in as close touch with the world, through railroads, telegraphs and newspapers, as they are now, or the occurrences of the day would have been sooner grasped by their inhabitants. Or congressmen it may be said that they would have ceased flourishing the sanguinary emblem long before they did had their honesty equalled their intelligence.

There are newspaper writers in Utah who are slower to learn than were the guerillas of Missouri, or the anti-slavery enthusiasts of New England. Either this is true or they must be classed with the congressmen referred to. Periodically these writers pretend to see signs in the political sky which portend things most direful.

Dimly, through the fumes of a heated imagination, they fancy they discern the vague but awful outlines of a vast spectral figure, indescribable yet terrible in form, with name "Church" spelled out in mystical and gigantic characters, right across its back. The havoc about to be wrought by this dreadful creature is appalling, and the patriotic spirits of those who see the vision are perturbed beyond measure.

Among the things this vast and indescribable specter is about to do are the wiping out of the present political parties in this State, the resurrection and rehabilitation of the old parties, with all their old time strength and enmity, the subjugation of the State to the rule of a hierarchy, the transposition of Ensign Peak and Antelope Island and several other achievements equally feasible and shocking.

Reference to some matter connected with politics somewhere in this State, made by some prominent churchman, or especially by the "News," has the effect of unveiling to the gaze of these writers this monstrous apparition; and they immediately proceed to inflict upon the suffering public long, inane and unintelligible descriptions of what they say they see.

For half-a-dozen years this sort of thing has been going on, and it is time to cease it, if the editorial fraternity of our fair young State is to escape the charge of embracing more than its proportion of imbeciles.

The utter senselessness of much that appears in some of our local cotemporaries upon this subject comprises one of the most discouraging sociologi-

cal problems that confront the patriots of our commonwealth. A specter is raised today, only to be laid tomorrow. Suspicions are expressed only to be exploded as soon as an answer to them can be printed. Settled confidence is prevented.

To these people might be suggested that their hindsight is better than their foresight. The former, being the more valuable, should be more often used. They have written acres of rubbish about what the Mormon Church was about to do, and about what would result from utterances by its leading men respecting politics. They have filled their columns with profuse predictions concerning what would result from expressions that have appeared in the editorial columns of the "News." Yet they cannot point out the first single instance in which their predictions have been fulfilled. They cannot find a solitary instance in which their charges against the leaders of the Mormon Church, or against this paper, or their prognostications of results that would follow their policy, have been verified. The record shows that, without fail, they have been not only false prophets but also false accusers. With unerring certainty, time has vindicated the men and measures they have opposed, and almost always the vindication has come so swiftly that it is wonderful they could not have foreseen it.

BISHOP ILIFF'S REPORT.

To the Methodist conference which opened in this city yesterday, was presented the report of Bishop T. C. Iliff. The document deals with the history and progress of the Methodist church in Utah, and contains considerable historical data relating to this subject. The first building occupied by it in Utah, is thus referred to:

"Faust's hall, an unfinished hay loft over a livery stable, on Second South street, was rented May 10, 1870, for one year at \$600."

It may be that this hall had at one time been used for storing hay, but it was for many years regarded as a respectable hall, well suited for public gatherings, and for a time prior to 1870, was occupied as a Federal courtroom. The original quarters of the Methodist church in this city, as indicated by the rent paid for them, were much more respectable than any ordinary "hay loft." This much is said for the sake of historical accuracy.

The report speaks of the rapid growth of the intermountain region, and says that among the agencies that have contributed to it have been the "benediction of the Almighty," and the "American spirit." It then proceeds:

"I regret the necessity that compels any modification of this general statement concerning the true American spirit and idea. I am aware that even a brief and guarded review of some of Utah's history, by whomsoever written, will probably provoke discussion, if not dissent. I hope that those who differ with me may be influenced by that feeling of charity which I pray may lead me to speak considerably of a people among whom I have lived and labored for a quarter of a century, but whose faith I cannot accept as Christian and whose former spirit in some respects, I must criticize as un-American. However, keeping in mind, and bearing willing testimony, that there are individuals, and many of them, in the Mormon Church whose daily lives and deeds are as upright and commendable as those of any church."

"You cannot speak of Utah without speaking of the Mormons. You cannot