DESERET EVENING NEWS.

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

The message of the President to Congress is long enough to suit those who love a good solid hour of reading, and positive enough for those who dearly insist that in politics, press and people there is no mean of a boundary to light-mindedness and timidity. As for the rest of mankind outside of these two classes, there are few, we fancy, who will like all parts of the document, and perhaps still fewer who will like none of it. To Mr. Cleveland's own party it will doubtless give reasonable satisfaction throughout, and the more thoughtful of the opposing party will have to admit that to break its light and lines, something more will be needed than mere criticism of its literary style and of the aggressive self-importance of its author. On the whole it bears many evidences of soundness, sagacity, statesmanship and courage; weakness, however, by profusion of detail, and by sundry flings at a policy with which the writer had to send to say he was not in accord. There are some things which even a President may safely leave to the intelligence of his less exalted fellow-citizens.

The opinion that the statistical and tedious details of departmental work could have been as well reserved for the departmental reports, emboldens one to the criticism that the message would have been better if it had been shorter. Western readers would have been more pleased, too, if there had been less about—the navy, say—and a small paragraph urging a compliance with the pluck of the party platform as to statehood for the territories. Whatever expected any signs of the administration's conversion to a friendship for silver, will have received such disappointment as he deserved; eastern influence is too potent yet a while to permit any such change. And yet the President talks on the subject logically, and with an earnestness that, mistaken though the silverites may deem it, is still worthy the same of patriotic conviction. In like manner, those who anticipated as a result of the late elections a relinquishment of his demand for radical tariff reforms, find themselves immediately mistaken; he is not that kind of a man. Without at all entering into the merits of a tariff for protection as opposed to a tariff only for revenue—a controversy that will last as long as governments endure—we shall probably not be disposed for saying the President makes a strong argument, turns his periods skillfully, and presents his views of himself and party altogether intelligently and capably. This part of the message could not have been more forcibly and ably written by the earnest tariff reformer in the country.

There are parts of the message which this section of the Union will heartily approve. The News thinks the President's course with regard to Hawaii, in so far as it relates to the rights of those who officiously would interfere in the domestic affairs of any foreign government, is wise and proper. His policy of the free seal distribution as at present practiced, his observations of the land-grabber and speculator, his recommendations as to the Indians, his contention that the pension list shall be a roll of honor, unassailed by raiders and unencumbered by fraud, his views on the civil service, his suggestions as to public economy—all these are treated in an earnestness, vigorous, statesmanlike and patriotic manner, and can meet with no objection from fair-minded men anywhere.

Finally, there have been Presidential messages that created more of a sensation, and some that were more interesting. All, or nearly all, have been shorter, and we have all been marked with more of the graces of diction. But taken as a whole the present production will bear comparison with most of them for comprehensiveness and strength, and when it goes into the archives to take position of its predecessors it will have no cause to resent to be addressed of itself as mere dissertation upon.

SENDER OF AN ANTIDOTE.

The quiet, unobtrusive manner in which the John Dillon war went to its final interment is worthy of a big sting of revenge by sensationalism in a hollow community on the value of newspaper activity. The sensationalism of Prosecutor Garfield demanded strongly more of the public attention and newspaper activity than did the malice and execution of the Rice murder. Wanted, yet with electricity, a great many more than half of the newspapers in the United States dedicated themselves to the popular sentiment that to execute a murderer with electricity was a crime almost as heinous as the original sin of the culprit. But the stupendous quantity of newspaper ill-room worked against the debate on the electrocution law, the trial, appeal, resuscitation and final execution of the first case, united after the unveiling act "into the infinite space of the past," and only one editor has since gone so far back as himself as to even attempt to call it out of oblivion. The fellow that was put out of the way by the same process just recently was dismissed with a few line notice in the dispatches.

ANOTHER ANCIENT TOWN.

The ancient city just discovered in Guatemala is located upon the large estate of Don Manuel J. Arzamalo, at the foot of the Volcano de Agua, and about a mile and a half east of the present village of Santiago de los Caballeros. Our several advices to the owner of the estate had evoked articles having strong resemblance to the domestic utensils of the North American Indians so far had read of their aborigines at the period of the discovery of this part of the new world. This fact finally led to an excavation, and at a depth of from seven to eighteen feet there were unearthed a number of interesting articles such as domestic utensils, idolatrous vessels, engraved and fancy painted glasses, vases and kitchen pots, all in good preservation. Besides these there were axes, axes, hammers, swords, knives and spear heads; in fact the whole series of weapons in use in pre-Columbian times seemed to be represented.

Along with these there was a great number of painted clay idols, fine pearls, turquoises, and other precious stones. Among the latter was one of a magnificent green color, called by the native chiquitos, were only by gleams. One of the gleams was mounted in colors. The statues, carved in black basalt, displayed great artistic skill, and are considered all the more remarkable from the fact that it is believed their sculptors had only stone implements. This conclusion has been arrived at from the fact that so far no traces of metal has been found in the excavation, and it is therefore held that the buried city belonged to the stone age. Further developments may modify this view.

At a depth of five feet the workmen came on the walls of the house of the buried city. At the level of the floor of these they discovered a mass of human skeletons, some in sitting postures, some lying on their backs, and some on their faces. Among the skeletons were some of very large stature, almost indicating them to have been giants. The position of the skeletons and in fact the whole condition of the ruins, says the New York Telegram, "point to the conclusion that the city was suddenly swallowed up by an earthquake." Further excavations are being made by the proprietor of the estate, who has become deeply interested in the investigation.

A GOOD RULE.

Kissing is a very common as well as very popular custom among some classes, notably young people and those of the gentler sex of all ages. It may be the outcome of spontaneity or affection, or a method of greeting between female friends and acquaintances, sometimes it is even used as political accoutrement in an election campaign, as is stated was the case with a candidate for office in Bevier county at the last election. The local paper of his town gave as the actual reason of his running ahead of his ticket and leading his opponent by a small majority that he went around winning the hearts of patriots by kissing their babies while the other man was prosaically shaking them in what he mistrusted to be regular business.

Kissing is all right and proper in its place. And where that is we will not now discuss further than to say that there is a vast amount of it carried on outside of the rules of propriety, and that a large share of the responsibility for this improper circulation rests upon parents and people of mature years. One particular in which kissing is carried on to a dangerous extent is suggested by the health officer of San Francisco, Dr. J. W. Kerner, in the promulgation of the following Rule laid in that city. These instructions are addressed to a Chinatown day festival, in which the officer explains the grievous problem to practical hygienic consideration the kissing of children by the representatives of Santa Claus. "This notice," says the health officer, "is taken to prevent any possible danger from the spread of contagion of other sickness among the thousands of children who will visit the place during the next few weeks."

It is the experience of medical men and others who have investigated the subject, and whose observations are not to be treated lightly or, that not only a great deal of sickness has sometimes resulted and directly traceable to the evil of indiscriminate kissing, particularly in ladies to other people. It is some question of a person, particularly a married man, who knows a great many children to transmit the contagion of diphtheria from one child to another without being affected himself. The percentage in the numbers of cases of the indescribable kind, and which be of no easy and rapid transmitting may be taken a considerable distance and sting disease and death to a large city far from where the germs were scattered.

It is not a great while since a peculiar case occurred at a wedding in the East, where eight of the guests became victims of diphtheria. At the time of the reception the bride had what was believed to be only a slight cold but which was found to be diphtheria, which had been communicated to those who, supposing no evil, kissed the lady in offering their congratulations.

A good place for a start to check indiscriminate kissing is with the children. They should be taught that which victims of strangers pucker their mouths for the customary embrace. It is time to be on guard. Babies do not usually enjoy being kissed by strangers, and sensation is frequently gained by complaints. Children in the schools should be taught the dangers of the practice, and when this is done the extent of its range may be limited in the next generation. It may be impossible to effect a reform in this generation for the reason that the mass of people are averse to shaking off a long-cherished habit, even when their judgment is convinced that it is injurious. But elements of the young should place before their people demonstrated facts, and if this is done with tact, under considerations, indiscriminate kissing, particularly of babies, will be relegated to its place among the foolish crimes of the past. The San Francisco health officer has started a good rule. The News warmly endorses and commends him in it, not only on the sanitary ground, but for moral reasons and considerations of modesty and purity, which may form the subject of a future article on the subject.

TO REFORM FRENCH.

The interesting news comes from France that important reforms are contemplated in the orthography of the French language. After much discussion the members of the Academie Francaise have resolved to propose not less than 1200 changes and to issue a pamphlet containing them, for the benefit of the public.

It is stated that the Academie has taken this step as a counterblast to public pressure in the matter. Petitions from a great number of literary institutions were received, and among others from the Institut de France, which is considered second to importance only to the Academie itself. This accounts for the promptness with which the academicians, contrary to custom, seem to have acted in the matter.

Among the proposed changes are the following: *Ph* will be discarded where it has the sound of *f*; *th* words will be turned only by the addition of an *e* in the singular. Generally an effort to words simplification will be made. For will be *ceu*, *je ceue* is to take the place of *je ceus*, and so on. It has also been decided to introduce some English words for which the French language has no true equivalent, as for instance *cow* (*vache*), *spleen* (*spleen*). This will give some idea of the proposed reformatory measures, although a full understanding of them can be obtained only when the announced brochure appears.

One of the objects of the French academy, as set forth in its statutes, is the purification of the language. "The principal mention of the academy shall be to labor with all care and diligence to give certain rules to our language, and to render it pure, eloquent and capable of treating the arts and sciences." In a letter to Cardinal Richelieu, to whom the academy owe its official recognition it not its existence, it was stated that the members proposed "to cleanse the language from the impurities it has contracted in the mouths of the common people, from the jargon of the lawyers, from the mannerisms of ignorant courtiers and the abuses of the pulpit." It is therefore strictly within the scope of this famous institute of learning to take the initiative in a matter of this kind.

The great question, however, is, what are the prospects of success? Experience teaches that efforts to change languages by the imposition of new laws and rules generally fail. Spanish follows certain laws of development, as every other growth of civilization, but it is necessarily slow, a century often being required to mark any great difference. If people in general are conservative in anything, they are so regards the medium by which they communicate their thoughts to each other. It is much easier to continue the inconvenience with which one is made familiar almost from the earliest days of childhood, than to adopt initial changes in after years. A good illustration of this is furnished in the present condition of the written language of Norway. Some after that country had been separated from Denmark, patriots conceived the idea of creating out of the various Norwegian dialects, as spoken by the mass of the people, a written language, distinct from Danish. Dozens of attempts have been made during the last forty years to introduce some Anglo-Saxon words for which the French language has no true equivalent, as for instance *cow* (*vache*), *spleen* (*spleen*). This will give some idea of the proposed reformatory measures, although a full understanding of them can be obtained only when the announced brochure appears.

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