

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

As if the drouth-stricken districts of Nebraska, Kansas and eastern Colorado were not yet sufficiently doleful pictures of desolation and want, a new affliction has appeared in those localities in the form of a grasshopper plague. It is stated that in one district in the first named state the insects have appeared in such numbers as to cause trouble to railway trains, and to require that locomotives should be provided with steel brushes to clean the rails. In Kansas and Colorado, also, the grasshoppers have invaded grain fields, doing much damage.

To those unacquainted with grasshopper visitations it may seem incredible that they can come in such vast quantities as to interfere with railway traffic; but those who have had experience with the pest realize full well that such an event is not an uncommon proceeding in "grasshopper years." Utah people who have resided here quarter of a century will readily recall the time when service between this city and Ogden was often interfered with by grasshoppers on the track through the Davis county fields. They will also remember when the insects came in myriads, obscuring the sun at noon-day as with clouds, and when whole fields of grain and other vegetation were swept away in a few hours. Later, when the winged pests were driven by the wind in vast quantities into the Lake, the waves piled along the shore masses of dead locusts in an embankment or wall sometimes to the depth of several feet.

The appearance of the grasshopper plague is of such uncertain character that from the experience of one year there can be formed no definite idea of what will follow the next season. Sometimes there will be a visitation of moderately large dimensions such as now is reported in the dispatches, doing damage only over a limited area, and then for a number of years there will be no sign of the pest. At other times the coming as on this occasion is the precursor of a more general visitation the succeeding year, when the planting season is followed by wholesale destruction of crops that never come to a harvest.

The immunity which this region has enjoyed from grasshoppers for the past twenty years has brought a feeling of security from that source of danger; and it is not probable that either this season or next, if at all, there will be a repetition of the experience of "grasshopper years." Certainly there is no indication of danger this season, and only a bare possibility for the next. At the same time it hardly would be wisdom to ignore possibilities in view of a warning given by the proximity of the pest this year as to what may ensue in 1896. Utah may not receive a visit next year; she may not even have a scarcity of water for irrigation purposes, such as some people are now inclined to regard as probable. But there is reason-

able certainly that between drouth and grasshoppers the wheat regions of the Plains may not bring forth a full measure of grain, and that if Utah farmers are able to retain their bounteous returns until the cheap wheat season after harvest passes away, they will be able to secure fairly remunerative prices through the better market which necessarily attends the diminished supply. A large stock of stored wheat in the spring of 1896 would be good thing for Utahans to be in possession of. There will be sufficient need to make it a good investment.

APPRECIATIVE OF THE PIONEERS.

The following letter, the original of which is in the possession of Treasurer H. M. Wells, of the Brigham Young Memorial association, is deserving of publicity and will be read with interest:

United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Irrigation Inquiry, Washington, D. C.

Ogden, June 17th, 1895.

Wilford Woodruff, Esq., President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah:

Dear Sir—I desire to subscribe, through the hand of Mrs. F. S. Richards, five dollars, to the fund for the erection of a monument to the memory of the Pioneers of Utah. In this I am joined by my daughter, Miss Elizabeth Irish, who also, through the kindness of Mrs. Richards, hands you a like sum.

Ourselves pioneers of the valley of the Mississippi and westward of it, deem it a pleasure to honor the memory of those who, overcoming the wilderness of Utah and the savagery of its natives, set up in that wilderness the dominion of civilization, inaugurated prosperity and filled it with a thriving and happy people.

Very truly yours,

CHAS. W. IRISH.

GLADSTONE'S CHANGE OF FRONT.

The announcement that Mr. Gladstone has changed front on the Welsh disestablishment bill and thereby has alarmed the British liberals and brought a feeling of jubilation to the hearts of the conservatives, will occasion no surprise to those who are acquainted with the political career of the "grand old man." At each recurring election in Great Britain for many years past, one of the strong points his political enemies have sought to make against him is that he changes his mind on leading questions, and where at one general election he may be found on the affirmative side, the next is liable to discover him taking the negative view. The response of Mr. Gladstone's friends is that this is an evidence of his being alive to the necessity of the hour, for while the non-progressive man will not change, the progressive one does so when he receives additional light leading thereto, or when changed circumstances require it; and while admitting the liability of Mr. Gladstone to shift as occasion requires, his supporters point

out that he has never returned to a position abandoned by him. Whatever of force there is in the reasoning, it has rendered ineffectual the efforts to show inconsistency because of change of mind, and Mr. Gladstone's friends have been unwavering in their fidelity.

As matters were in the last general election, if the liberal party in Great Britain had not been pledged to the disestablishment of the Welsh church it could not have gained the successes it achieved in Wales, and probably would not have been returned to power. But while success in the Welsh boroughs was essential to the general victory, it was not gained without losses elsewhere. Disestablishment was then a very live issue in Wales, made so by the arbitrary and harsh attempts of church officials to enforce the collection of tithes from non-members, under an English statute permitting such procedure. The lesson of that time, however, conveyed to the church dignitaries an understanding that continued assaults of that character upon non-conformists meant the reduction of the church to the same condition as the non-conformist denominations, not only in Wales, but probably in England as well. Supporters of the dominant church generally did not approve of this enforced collection of tithes from non-conformists, and declared that if nothing short of disestablishment would stop it, then that must come.

In the past the three years the state church has come to realize the danger which threatened from its own injustice, even when approved by form of law. As a consequence, the policy of enforced collection of tithes from non-members has been avowedly abandoned, at least for the time being. This being the case, the reason for the church's members giving support to the disestablishment policy has ceased to exist, and with it much of the antagonism of the non-conformists. There can be no doubt that Mr. Gladstone fully comprehends the situation in this respect, and being a churchman himself he cannot longer support a policy against his own church when it has removed the cause of offense; to pursue it farther would not be only not magnanimous, but unnecessary and unjust. Hence Mr. Gladstone's change is entirely consistent with a peace-loving and statesmanlike career.

There may be also another reason for the ex-premier's action at this time. As the retired leader of the party in power, Mr. Gladstone is a person of considerable importance; with the party out of control he would become comparatively insignificant in political affairs, and might be easily laid on the shelf. Under a continuance of the present regime, the liberal party soon must lose its narrow margin of advantage. But with a movement from within to effect the change which public opinion seems to demand, and the gain that would come from having the disestablishment question quietly removed from the controversy, the Gladstonians could go before the country with renewed courage and brighter prospects than on the old lines. It might cost the sweeping away of the present ministry, but that would be a small price for another victory. Taking