

ing numerous dead bodies from all wards of the hospital were deposited in the death chamber, which exhaled constantly nauseating vapors, carrying death with them. The counts Bielgorsky, Palen and Kreiton, who had been sent to the Crimea to distribute gifts from the empress's privy purse, died of these very odors.

It is night. Small lamps shed a pale light through the wards of the lazaretto; here and there the shadows of the nurses going from bed to bed, the white hood of a sister of charity kneeling before the holy statues. Ten patients cough at stated intervals. Hundreds moan with pain.

The theatrical performance is in full blast; the band of the regiment garrisoned in the city plays so loud as to disturb those in the hospital who are able to sleep. Army officers fill most of the stalls. They want to be amused and have engaged a traveling company containing several pretty women. Suddenly, while the prima donna, Mlle. Gousseva, was singing her piece de resistance and the orchestra was braying its best, an outcry from the court-yard below, a terrible expression of pain, of despair.

The fiddlers and cornetists pause. The woman in her decolette dress grows pale beneath the rouge and powder. The officier du jour arises to see what has happened. He returns after a few minutes and reports in his snarling voice:

"A transport of wounded has arrived; they allowed one man, who had lost both legs, to fall from the wagon, that's all!"

"Ah! Is that all?" And the public quiets down. More French plaisanteries obscenes, more applause."

It is evident that the soul of the czar recoils from the incidents of war. The peace of Europe can hardly be threatened by Russia as long as Alexander's will is supreme there.

## THE PRIESTHOOD AND POLITICS.

The correspondence which appears in another column of this issue between the Salt Lake Tribune and President Wilford Woodruff will be read with varied feelings by the Latter-day Saints and the community generally. It deserves a place in current history, and that place it will now occupy by reason of its publication in the columns of the News. It also deserves careful consideration, and this it will undoubtedly receive, along with a great deal of discussion and a huge flood of comment.

To those who know the attitude and conduct and views of President Woodruff, and who have watched with honest eyes the course of political affairs since "party lines" were drawn in the Territory of Utah, the alarm and uneasiness which the Tribune alludes to will appear whimsical and childish in the extreme. Has it suddenly become so great and portentous a menace that influential men should declaim from the pulpit against the impurity, the scandal, the scurrility and the filth of modern politics as witnessed in almost every part of the world? Brave preachers of any and all sects do it, and are applauded for their opportune and appropriate courage. Independent writers, lecturers, and even political leaders make fame for themselves and win the approval of all patriotic citizens by unmasking and rebuking and blistering the evils and abuses whose existence

every reader and observer must admit. It is the placing of country above politics, the cultivation of patriotism above partisanship—this highest duty of citizenship and most lauded of all public acts—that such men advocate. It will be a sad and sorrowful time when such advocacy shall be resented by any considerable class as "meddling" and be criticised by any reputable element as "improper interference!"

But we shall be told that it was not this particular sort of advice that causes the "unrest" and "uneasiness" spoken of—it is the assertion of the claim of the Priesthood to counsel, and advise and even to "dictate" in political affairs; that it is not what the past two years have shown, but what the next two, or ten, or twenty years may show. President Woodruff, it seems to us, gives a dignified and an all-sufficient answer on this point, when he emphasizes the free agency which the Mormon creed accords to every being born into the world, and the responsibility which every one must assume for his own acts. The theme might be elaborated indefinitely, for it is the grand basis and ground work of the Gospel, and of all that pertains to present rectitude and future exaltation. As to these latter, no mind is so obtuse as to believe they can exist or be obtained save through honor, integrity and the resolute obedience to one's convictions according to the best light and intelligence of which one may be possessed. The Priesthood cannot exonerate any man from the penalties of deception, falsehood or wrong-doing of any kind; it does not assume the responsibilities of another. Those who hold and magnify it are in duty bound to charity toward all men, to respect for those who may differ with them, to give good counsel and set a good example to all who will hearken to and follow them. Evil-doing they are called upon to rebuke, error it is their duty to correct; they are at constant enmity with sin, and against depravity they must always be ready to wage warfare. The powers of the Priesthood are many and exalted; but not one of them is improper, unpatriotic or unholy. The Saints understand this by the light of the Spirit which they have received, and they cannot be won over to the fears of those who imagine dangers where none exist, or who seek technical opportunity to criticize, cavil and revile.

## TRADITION NOT HISTORY.

A correspondent of the News says he has come across a statement somewhere that the very heathens admitted the fact that Pilate wrote to Emperor Tiberius assuring him that Christ, who was a very extraordinary person and who had been put to death at Jerusalem, was risen again; also that Tiberius proposed to the senate at Rome that His name should be enrolled among the number of their gods.

The correspondent presumably wishes to elicit some comment on these statements. It is beyond doubt that Pilate, the governor of Judea, had to make a report of the trial and con-

demnation of Christ, to the Roman emperor. It is also clear from the brief narrative of those events in the gospels, that Pilate was thoroughly convinced of the innocence of the victim and that his consent to the execution was given chiefly because he feared that a denial would be represented in Rome by his enemies as treason, since the political charge against Jesus was that He aimed at kingly authority in Jerusalem. There are not, as far as known, any authentic records of the correspondence between Pilate and Rome on the subject, but considering the facts referred to, a reasonable conclusion would be that it was in the interest of the governor to represent Christ to the emperor as a dangerous and fanatical conspirator, whose death was necessary to the peace of the country. He might personally have entertained a different opinion, but he could hardly have justified himself in proclaiming the death sentence and refusing to exercise the executive clemency he extended to a convicted outlaw, if he had officially admitted not only the innocence of the persecuted Prophet but still more His divinity, as attested by His exit from the grave after having been put to death. The probability of such a course by Pilate is too remote to be credited, unless the strongest evidence should be produced for the genuineness of the records in which the proceedings are said to be found. There are a great many traditions concerning the transactions of the leading men of those remote ages, but on investigation most of them are found to be unsupported by authentic documentary evidence.

This does not change in the least the foundations upon which the Christian faith rests. The evidence for the divinity of Christ is not affected by anything His executioners may have said or not said of Him, any more than the mission of Joseph the Prophet is affected by the opinions promulgated by those who were responsible for his martyrdom.

As to the second statement it is well known that it was the policy of the Roman emperors to give the deities of all the conquered dependencies a place among their own gods. This was done in order to avoid religious contentions. At the same time the conquered peoples were required to almost worship the emperor of Rome. The statement has been made that at an early time the question was seriously considered of giving Jesus a place among all the other deities, but it is self-evident that that idea would necessarily have to be abandoned, since the Christians could never co-ordinate Him with pagan gods. On the other hand, it is apparent to students of early history that Rome never treated the early Christians with the toleration accorded to other "sects." Their position in the Roman empire was similar to that of the Saints in this age. Gibbons shows that the early Christians were considered and treated as atheists, because they had no places of worship similar to those of their neighbors, and their so-called secret meetings were looked upon as held for the purpose of political conspiracies. Rome seemed to be able to use every other religion for political purposes, except Christianity; it was a