

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

CONSTITUTION AND SCHOOLS AGAIN

The NEWS has published two letters from Mr. Moffat, of South Cottonwood, on the subject of the Constitution and the public school system, and has made reply to inquiries in each. Now the gentleman comes with a statement of his view of the situation, in which he figures out that dire consequences will follow to the public school system under section 8, article 10, of the Constitution, which provides that the schools in cities of the first and second class shall be maintained and controlled separate and apart from the counties in which said cities are located. Upon this point a brief review of the real status will show, we think, that our correspondent is wholly mistaken in his fear of disaster, as also in his assumption of what the proposed supreme law of the State provides.

Before proceeding with the proposition of tax levies as the gentleman presents it, reference may be made to his expressed fear that wealthy school districts will "bear such force upon county selectmen that they will refuse to levy a county school tax." If there were any inducement to lead city school districts to invoke such influence, it exists in the present method whereby, as he puts it, \$15,000 of Salt Lake City taxpayers' money goes to the support of the county schools. If the city taxpayers were as illiberal as his suggestion imports, the present is the very system to induce them to act in that line. The fact that they do not so act should be conclusive evidence of an intention not to do so, and in that respect city taxpayers are less illiberal than some who clamor against them.

Upon the other proposition, examination of our correspondent's statement regarding the levy of taxes shows misapprehension on his part as to Constitutional provisions. He names: 1—Two mills for "current expenses of the Territory (State); 2—Three mills for "a State school fund; 3—Three mills for current county expenses; 4—Two mills for a "county school fund to be divided in the county precisely as the State fund." Now these are not in the Constitution at all, but by that document are continued in force as statutory regulations, subject to the will of the Legislature. What he calls a "State school fund" is not such fund under the Constitution, but merely an incident subject to legislative manipulation for adding to the State school fund, which is described in section 3 of article 10, and is made up of school land proceeds, money from the sale of timber, minerals, etc.—itself a very large resource. As the statutory regulations, including the fourth enumeration made, are continued by the Constitution, then, if the whole question lies in handling the county school fund, as stated by our correspondent, his entire contention is swept away, and the matter is left just where it is under Territorial rule—subject to the will of the Legislature.

Regarding the suggestion that the separate control named in section 8 of article 10 is "an entering wedge which means the destruction of the whole free school system," the fallacy of the proposition is shown in the same article of the Constitution, which says "the Legislature shall provide for the establishment and maintenance" of such system, and that "the common school shall be free."

Even if the extreme position were taken that the "county school fund," which has been named as of such importance, but which really is no figure in the case, being subject entirely to the Legislature and not provided for in the Constitution, were done away with altogether, what is the effect under the State Constitution? Plainly this: That by the State school taxes the rich school districts, cities and all, help the poor ones; the rich counties aid the poor ones. If Salt Lake City has the property which pays the taxes, then those taxes go to aid not only Salt Lake county schools, but the schools of every poor district in the State. That is the undeniable fact in the case, under the State Constitution. The public school system is not a system by counties at all, but by the State, and supported by the whole State, under legislative provisions not inconsistent with the Constitution, which distributes the school fund according to school population, and requires a uniform and equal rate of taxation throughout the State.

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF WOMEN.

A curious religious sect is said to exist in Texas. Attention has been called to it by the visit of three of its members to New York recently. The name of the sect is "Sanctified Sisters," or "Sanctificationists." As the term implies, it consists of women only. The founder is Mrs. Martha McWhirter and the fundamental principles of their religion are celibacy, common property and an isolated existence.

As an instance of what can be accomplished by co-operation the financial success of the little community in Texas is remarkable. Nineteen years ago the society was formed. One of the first efforts made was to render it self-supporting. For this purpose each member employed a method of her own. One woman, who had previously lived in affluence, bought wood as it stood in the forest, and with the aid of another sister cut the timber and hauled the fuel to market. Others accepted positions as domestics in households in adjoining towns, their earnings being pooled for mutual benefit. Others sold country produce, and a few took in laundry work to add a mite to the assets.

The community now consists of thirty-two members, all of whom live at the Central hotel, in Belton. This building is their own property. The Central Hotel company is a corporation

well and favorably known in financial circles, and represents the united interests of the colonists. The estimated wealth of the sect is \$100,000. The hotel building and furnishings cost \$50,000. The rest of their capital is distributed in small enterprises.

The labor necessary for the existence of the association is divided among its members. One of them will teach the children. One of the sisters is an expert dentist, and has an office fully equipped for working at her profession. The income from the hotel is the principal source of revenue, but every investment seems to have been a profitable one, rendering the organization self-supporting and entirely independent. They are leaders in making public improvements, and all are among the most active and progressive citizens, always ready to advance the interests of the town. Mrs. McWhirter is a member of the board of trade and a director of the Opera House syndicate of Belton.

There is no formal worship of any kind practiced by the sisters, says the report from which these facts are taken, but daily devotional exercises are part of their creed, and they are also largely guided by "dreams." A recital of religious experience by members forms a basis for all their important actions. They also claim to be possessed of a delicate sense, which is their greatest help, and by it they detect mistakes made, and through it correct them.

They try to improve themselves intellectually, and are regular subscribers to the leading papers of the great cities. In their library are all the standard works, but the works of Tolstoi, Bellamy and other authors of that class are most liked.

THE CAMPAIGN.

The lines are now distinctly formed and the great political campaign in which Utah is laboring like a ship in the trough of a tempestuous sea, is fully if not noisily under way—the noisy part will be here early enough, however. Here are two great parties and one that is not so great arrayed and marshaled, each claiming everything for itself and denying all things to both the others, as usual on such occasions; meantime the coolheaded citizen who does not permit himself to be carried away by partisan claptrap and cheap buncombe looks on and smiles. It all falls on him like a June shower on a well-fed duck; he is going to vote according to his convictions, and no amount of Chinese tactics can change him for long if at all.

It is a perfectly proper thing to discuss the issues in an intelligent and fair-minded way during a campaign; neither is there anything reprehensible in orderly and well arranged parades with their concomitants of music and red fire, since these serve to awaken interest and cause some who are not sufficiently posted to set about it at once. There is, however, nothing to commend in misrepresentation and ridicule of opposing candidates such as goes on every day, and much