

insinuations in Mr. Wight's letter that cannot properly be passed by without notice. So far as concerns the figures given by him as to the membership of the Josephites in the Society Islands, the "News" raises no question. But in relation to the "deceiving the natives" proposition, by which Mr. Wight adroitly seeks to make it appear that the "News" correspondent made an implied misstatement, we most emphatically dissent. The "deceiving the natives" referred to by our Society Islands correspondent is the claim of Joseph Smith, who was martyred in 1844, which Church was organized by command of the Lord and never has been disorganized, but remains intact and is now presided over by President Wilford Woodruff; whereas the Josephites referred to are not Elders of that Church, but by the very name of their society are shown to belong to a "Reorganized" association which is not and cannot be the successor of the Church which has no successor, but continues in existence fully organized. As to the alleged "favorable decision" of the courts, the one judge who gave the decision referred to, in a suit for property, was overruled by a higher court on a vital point, so that the Josephite suit failed. But no matter which way a district or state court should have given its opinion, it is the fundamental law in this country, and the principle of right, that a church itself is the exclusive adjudicator as to who are and who are not its officers and members. And all those who claim membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or who assert title to any part of the name or calling that belongs to such membership, without having the right thereto confirmed by the authority that is in the Church, are pretenders or deceivers. Upon this point Mr. Wight may well consider the statement of the truth which his cunning assertion invited and has elicited.

FISH-HATING INDIANS.

A writer in the Popular Science News for October reports the singular fact that the Apache Indians, who are not considered particularly dainty in their diet, being occasionally known to make a gladsome feast off the carcass of a horse or cow that has been dead for several days, are still so utterly averse to fish that they will starve before eating it. He observes that the tribe seem to have within them a lingering spark from some nobler and higher past civilization, the inference being that they had for an ancestry some cultured, dominant race long since blotted out; and that many of them—indeed the great majority—have typical clear-cut profiles with high foreheads, prominent noses and firm jaws—features that never originate in a degraded people.

These facts led him more closely into an inquiry as to the reason for the singular antipathy which the whole race manifest toward the finny tribe. An army officer was the first to testify that no Apache will eat fish, but he could assign no cause. It appears that the Mohave and Yuma Indians who dwell on the Colorado river subsist entirely on fish and vegetables and kill no deer, while at one point where a number of Apaches were found living side by side with the Mohaves, the former could never be persuaded to taste fish, though the latter subsisted on a fish diet almost exclusively.

Conversation with a number of In-

dians failed to reveal the cause of the peculiar difference in custom. Some said "no good," "all same water," the latter probably hinting at tastelessness, while all gave a shrug of disgust whenever the subject was mentioned. Finally our traveler found an Indian who was able and willing to give the true reason, or at least the traditional one among his people. We quote:

"He was a handsome, grey-headed man, tall, stout and well knit. He informed me that he had served the government as scout for three years, and that he had a fourteen-year old boy at the Indian school at San Carlos, who was learning everything, 'all same white man.' He himself spoke English quite well. In answer to my question he told me that, a long time before his 'first grandfather' was born, there came five or six years when Apaches could not get enough to eat. Deer and antelope were very scarce, because there were too many to hunt them. The wise men said, 'we must make a big war and kill many people, so that the other can live.' But first came a big powwow. All the mountain Indians went on a visit to the river Indians and had a big talk. Then they made a big swear. The mountain Indians agreed not to eat any fish, and the river Indians agreed to eat no deer. So, after that, everyone had enough."

This explanation is said to be commonly accepted by the Indians themselves, though it does not look a very plausible one. Our authority concludes with the suggestion that there must have been, in the distant and long forgotten past of this tribe, some event or experience of a most startling character—something more impressive than a mere verbal agreement—to have stamped this custom so indelibly into their nature. Since the Apache has a rather unique reputation for not abiding by other agreements or promises, it is almost inconceivable that merely on account of a promise made by his forefathers, he should continue to refrain from the favorite food of his neighbors. The suggestion is ventured that this is an ethnological fact that may lead to the discovery of the source whence this tribe differing as it does from every other on the continent, derived its origin. Cannot some of our own Indian missionaries or interpreters, of whom there are no doubt many well acquainted with Apache customs and traditions, adduce further evidence or inferences on the matter?

THE WESTERN DESERTS.

Even since the Mormon Pioneers entered these valleys, the deserts west and south of the Great Salt Lake have attracted the attention not only of residents here, but of travelers who have looked with wonderment on the vast stretches of gently undulating land spreading out before them. Only one thing is lacking to transform these regions into an immensely productive area, and that one thing is water. Cedar valley, which is almost the same size as the metropolis of England, contains only from 300 to 400 persons, while the city alluded to has a population of nearly 5,000,000. Of course that city is the great market of the world's commerce, and for purposes of comparison may not be properly mentioned further in this connection. But if an effort could be made to secure artesian water in Cedar valley—of which there must be a large supply, as it springs from the ground near the old camp of Johnston's army—and this were conveyed in pipes and distributed in that way, being conducted

to orchards by sub-irrigation methods, the valley could be made to produce an immense amount of sustenance for both man and beast, while Mercur and other mining towns would afford a ready market for any surplus. A sample of what could be done is found in the waterworks system from Ophir to Mercur and Sunshine, which has its water supply brought to it from the first-named place through pipes running over mountains and through ravines and furnishing an abundance of water for many hundred people, and this through a four-inch pipe, while a two-inch pipe supplies Sunshine.

If this can be done in one valley it can be done in another, and thus instead of families having to go hundreds of miles north or south to find abiding places they could populate the land nearer home. Will not some one make the move? Once the thing is started, other communities will readily follow suit.

THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

The sixty-eighth semi-annual Conference of the Church, held this week, has been a time of pleasure and refreshing to the Saints who had the privilege of attending, and will be fruitful, as all other general conferences have been, of good to the Saints everywhere. The instructions given by the Church authorities have been of a practical character, and attended by that power which is associated only with the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Those who participated in the Conference and partook of its spirit will recognize the necessity, at this time, of the Saints making a practical application of the counsels given them, in order to perform their duty in the plan of salvation. The many members of the Church who reside in distant parts, and whose circumstances did not permit them to be present at the meetings, will have opportunity to learn from the detailed report of the Conference proceedings, which will be published in pamphlet form for general circulation, what transpired there, and will realize the advisability of rendering prompt and close observance to the counsels given them through the servants of the Lord.

A special event connected with the business of this Conference was the filling of vacancies in two of the general quorums of Church authorities—the Council of Apostles and the First council of the Seventies. The selection of Elders M. F. Cowley and A. O. Woodruff for the vacancies existing in the quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and of Elder J. W. McMurrin as one of the First Seven Presidents of Seventies, have been made by divine authority, in the revelation of the will of the Lord to His Church, and as such the brethren chosen will receive the unwavering support of the Latter-day Saints, by their faith and confidence, in the high and responsible calling placed upon them. Each of the brethren has shown by his humility, energy and faithfulness, both at home and abroad, his devotion to the work of the Lord, and in the broadened and more responsible callings in that work now made upon them, they may be expected to continue to display the noble characteristics which have marked their lives in the past, and do a mighty work in forwarding the purposes of the Lord and laboring to establish His kingdom.

To all that has been done by the Conference, every true Latter-day Saint can respond with a hearty Amen, and with praise to Jehovah for His presence and power that have attended His servants and people. And now that again the voice of the Lord