

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

THE CRITCHLOW ISSUE.

It is quite evident that in the judgment of some people, the existence of Mr. Critchlow's "junta" must be established, whether the facts warrant it or not. When the statement was first made it was emphatically denied. Then alleged proofs were adduced in the shape of a letter from somebody, setting forth that somebody else had told the writer that somebody had appointed, etc. That somebody else was emphatically denied the chief point of the alleged conversation. And yet the people first above referred to, with unworthy persistency, take the ground that everything Mr. Critchlow and his supporters say must be true, and that everything said on the other side must be false. Against that logic there is of course no protection. It shows how easily trifles can assume the appearance of portentous events, and how miserably suspicion plays upon the fears of its victims.

The issue at present is well defined: those who believe all that Mr. Critchlow and his followers and newspaper friends have said and insinuated, are forced to believe that the gentlemen named as members of the alleged "committee," as well as the Mormon leaders, are liars. Nor is it merely a question of veracity as between the two sides. If we choose to dignify Mr. Critchlow's communication by answering it in detail, it would be easy to show numerous contradictions which the impetuous and inconsiderate gentleman has himself made. But outside all this, the important fact remains, and cannot be lost sight of, that Mr. Critchlow only pretends to venture his suspicions, heifer and hearsay, while those who dispute him speak from actual knowledge. What does the community think of a man and an element and a newspaper that on such a flimsy issue would attempt to raise such a scare as has been diligently fabricated and foliated upon the people of this State within the last six days?

AN UNMANLY LETTER.

The NEWS is in receipt of the following communication from the head of the Reorganized church:

HERALD PUBLISHING HOUSE,
LAMONI, Iowa, March 28, 1896.
DESERET NEWS, Salt Lake City, Utah:

In your semi-weekly issue for March 6th, present year, page 6, there occurs the notice of the death of "Mrs. Almira Barton," at Parowan. There is that in the notice that somebody should correct, as some of it is terribly false and some of it grossly stultifying.

1. It states that "Mrs. Barton" was "married" to Joseph Smith, the Prophet, at Macedonia, Ill., in 1832. This makes Joseph Smith, the Prophet, to have been a bigamist, as at the time he was married to and living with my mother, Emma Hale, whom he married legally in 1827.

Allowing for a mistake of ten years in the notice, in date, and it still leaves the same crime of bigamy charged against the Prophet.

2. The notice gives the inference that "Mrs. Barton" left five children, the result of her marriage with the Prophet. This is rather stultifying to the character of "Mrs. Barton," and her husband Mr. Barton.

It is a matter of regret that the system represented by the NEWS has made such a notice as the one referred to a possibility; and that men are found who can state such things and believe them.

Yours, hoping for better things,

JOSEPH SMITH,

Son of the Prophet by his only wife, Emma.

The notice referred to is the following telegram to the NEWS, in which, by a typographical error, the date 1842 was made ten years earlier, but was subsequently corrected in the NEWS; this, however, cuts no particular figure, as the writer of the foregoing communication recognizes:

PAROWAN, March 4.—One of Parowan's oldest residents, Mrs. Almira Barton, died this morning at 9 o'clock of a paralytic stroke. She was born and joined the Church in the state of New York. She was married to the Prophet Joseph Smith at Macedonia, Ill., in 1842. She was the mother of five children; came to Utah about 1858, removing to this place shortly afterward, and has resided here ever since.

If Mr. Smith's "hope of better things" is directed to making more truthful statements in the future, we heartily agree with him in that anticipation. As matters stand, however, we regret to have to point out that in his communication he states what is not true. As to the notice he criticizes, with the correction in date which he admits as appearing proper, there is not in it one assertion or intimation that is either "terribly false" or "grossly stultifying." Mrs. Barton died in Parowan, Utah, March 4, 1896; she was born and joined the Church in New York; she was married to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1842; she was the mother of five children; and she came to Utah in 1858.

As to whether the children were by the first marriage or the second, by which she became Mrs. Barton, there is no statement; but if they had been by the first marriage, the fact that a widow with five children remarried is neither stultifying to herself nor her second husband. That idea may do in a country where the suttee prevails, but not in this land. And in expressing such an idea when Mr. Smith's mother, Emma Hale Smith, a widow with children, remarried Major Bidamon, the letter shows the writer thereof in a most unmanly light in this particular action. We do not forget that well meaning persons make mistakes perhaps as bad as this; and when they are called to their attention they regret them and make amends therefor where there is opportunity. We may state further, however, in view of the fact that the first marriage took place in 1842, which Mr. Smith shows he considers the date intended, that he must know that the proba-

bility of five children being born to a man murdered before the second half of 1844 was reached was not strong, and that the fair intimation is that the widow subsequently met and married Mr. Barton, to whom children were born; and there is nothing stultifying about such a procedure, either.

Regarding the statement that the writer of the communication is "son of the Prophet by his only wife Emma," it also is untrue; and Mr. Smith has had presented to him as much evidence at least that other wives were married to his father as he has that Emma Hale was. The question of the legality of the ceremony under a state enactment is not involved here; the fact of the ceremony, performed on more than one occasion, is established beyond doubt. This fact is known not only to persons who have lived and who yet live in Utah, but was within the understanding of persons prominently connected with the organization of the Reorganized church, as they have admitted on more than one occasion.

With reference to the practice of plural marriage in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the man, if men are to be considered in matters of Church doctrine, to whom the full honor and responsibility for its introduction belong is Joseph Smith, the first Prophet and President of the Church in this dispensation. He introduced it by practicing it himself, by enjoining it upon others, and by officially performing ceremonies which gave to men their plural wives. That fact cannot be got away from; and no honest man will try to evade it in the face of the evidence thereof which has been available for the past half century. Mr. Smith may have the pleasure, if pleasure it is in him, of calling his father "bigamist," or anything else, but it does not change the fact of that father having more wives than one married to him by his express direction as President of the Church and of placing other men and women in the same relationship to each other. And in realizing that truth, and taking it in connection with the other labors of the Prophet and Patriarch who were martyred in Carthage jail, the Latter-day Saints are proud to recognize that in their veins was "the best blood of the nineteenth century," in the sense that they were the chosen of God to stand at the head of the great work of latter days.

We hope for "better things" in future from Mr. Smith than to apply offensive epithets when there is no occasion or justification, as in this case. We attribute it to an overzealousness to maintain a certain view rather than to any special animosity on his part; and we believe the majority of Utah people will so consider it, since they have a kindly personal feeling for him. He perhaps may claim the privilege of doing as the writer Hazlitt says the modern scollist does, viz: of stultifying all understandings but his own, and that which he regards as his own; but it is unseemly and undignified, to say the least, to denounce as "terribly false" a statement of any fact of history such as the practice of plural marriage by the Prophet Joseph, or as "grossly stultifying" an action recog-