

center, in response to the efforts of musicians of that faith. Intelligent people will be slow to believe that a community can be very bad when it enthusiastically encourages the divine art, from which the spirit of worship and refinement is almost inseparable.

We look, therefore, with satisfaction for the approach of the great musical festival to be held in the Tabernacle next month, and with pleasure note the engagement for the occasion of two renowned singers, Emma Thursby, the soprano, and Whitney, the basso.

The management of the festival are to be congratulated upon the prospects of its success, and there is no doubt that it will prove an event of note in local musical history. That the attendance will be large and the financial returns satisfactory, seems equally well assured. That the result in every way may be such as to stimulate a repetition of such events, is much to be desired.

REDEMPTION OF ARID LANDS.

THE agitation looking to action by Congress for the reclamation of the arid lands belonging to the government, has been taken up in the Western Commercial Congress, now in session at Kansas City. A paper written upon the subject by M. H. De Young, of the San Francisco *Chronicle*, read before that body, presents some of its phases in a manner well calculated to arrest wide spread attention. Mr. De Young gives, as an estimate of the amount of land, now worthless because of aridity, but which might be reclaimed, fifty million acres; and he gives as the estimated cost of reclamation, five dollars per acre.

He admits that \$250,000,000 is a large sum for which to ask the government, but urges that the outlay would be only temporary, and that even this enormous sum would quickly be returned to the national treasury by the rapid sale, at advanced prices, of the reclaimed lands. The paper recognizes an objection to the government engaging in a speculative enterprise, but in reply argues that it has a right to improve and enhance the value of its own property by a proper expenditure of the public revenues.

Notwithstanding all that can be said in favor of Mr. De Young's plan, objections will be urged against it, of a character in line with some that have been stated in opposition to the proposition for a postal telegraph, governmental control of railways, etc. The past experience of the American people has taught them the necessity of avoiding the multiplication of oppor-

tunities for jobbery and political corruption, which could hardly be prevented in the carrying out of Mr. DeYoung's plan.

The greed for land which so eminently characterizes the Anglo-Saxon race will impel them to a solution of this great problem, and the arid lands of this country will, in time, be reclaimed, whether public funds shall be appropriated to the purpose or not.

THE KANSAS FARMERS' ALLIANCE.

THE Kansas Farmers' Alliance has made a name for itself that is world-wide. Independent of the fact that it discovered Sockless Jerry Simpson and Senator Peffer, of the luxuriant whiskers, it has made a record in the annals of legislation. It knocked all the phosphorence out of the iridescent Ingalls and probably it had something to do with the resignation of Mr. Edmunds. At all events, it has made a name that will cling to it for some time.

The latest development in the political economy of that Alliance is what is now evoking comment of various kinds. This scheme is the construction of a trunk railroad from east to west through Kansas, with branches reaching to every important centre in the State. The main line, it is proposed, will be built by the State government, and the branches by the County Boards. This project is, in truth, a practical one, and within the domain of possibility, but is it sensible, or wise. Kansas has an immense railroad mileage, more than any other State except Illinois. There are several systems that are not paying. The stocks and bonds of these lines are in the market, and if the Alliance so desires, it could very quickly acquire a controlling interest in one of them.

Several newspapers view this scheme with gravity that borders almost on the ludicrous. Among them the *Chicago Tribune* which points out a number of impediments, handling the matter as if it were the outcome of a congress of international political philosophers. There is very little use in arguing with the Kansas Alliance, because it is in no mood for argument. Let it set to work, and raise the \$100,000,000 necessary to build the proposed road, then enter on the construction, and it will soon learn a lesson. For one State in the centre of the country to attempt to ameliorate the transportation evils of the nation by a State railroad is the wildest kind of absurdity. Granting that the Kansas road were built, and that it moved grain at cost from east to west, what benefit would it be to the farmer, who should use other roads to transport his pro-

duce from Kansas to Chicago or New York.

The Kansas farmers have been educated in national politics through party schools, for the past thirty years, and this Quixotic scheme is the result of all their education. It shows that a correct solution of economic problems can be arrived at only by studying each, on its merits, irrespective of party or of personal interests.

THE FARM MORTGAGE EVIL.

THE census bulletin, published a few months ago, stated that abstracts of 9,000,000 of farm mortgages were obtained by the enumerators of the 1890 census. The preliminary report had reference to Iowa. That State measures in area 35,504,000 acres. It was found that over 3,000,000 acres of that area were covered with a mortgage indebtedness of over \$191,000,000. At first these figures created consternation, inasmuch as it was inferred from them that one-tenth of the State was in the hands of money sharks. Special agents were appointed to inquire into this matter. They found that about 90 per cent. of this indebtedness was incurred by purchasing farms. A man had not money enough to purchase a farm outright, and had to let part of the price remain as a lien to be paid off subsequently from his earnings. If the report of the special agents is correct, then the mortgage evil is not as bad as at first supposed. This system of part payment by mortgage prevails largely in cities and it is not regarded as indebtedness in the way of loans.

The farmers in Kansas and in Iowa, claim that the indebtedness was incurred by reason of depression in agricultural products, and that they are justified in repudiating these mortgages, either in the way of cheap money, or by legislation restricting the operations of the money lender.

Mortgages incurred, especially those given in the purchase of land, should not be nullified. To take such a step would be socialistic, or anarchical.

THE CONTESTED SEATS IN THE CITY COUNCIL.

THE remarks recently made in the Third District Court by Judge Anderson, when the case of Folland vs. Wolstenholme came before him, has occasioned a good deal of inquiry regarding the contested seats in the City Council. Mr. Folland was one of the candidates of the People's Party elected from the Third Precinct. Mr. Wolstenholme was the candidate of the "Liberal" party. He was not elected,