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THE DEFINITION OF "DESERET."

WHEN the bill to change the time-honored name of the University of Deseret to the University of Utah was under discussion, Mr. Sargent, of Garfield, made a strong plea against the change. In the course of his remarks, which we are sure will be endorsed by a very large majority of the people, he explained the meaning of the word "Deseret." Next morning the "Liberal" organ attempted to ridicule both him and his definition, and finished its diatribe in this way:

"The Garfield man got off the old chestnut about 'Deseret' meaning 'honey bee,' an absurdity altogether, for by no possibility could the word mean anything of the sort. Deseret is little desert; only that, and nothing more."

Next morning Mr. Utter, the eloquent Unitarian minister, addressed the annexed communication to the *Tribune*:

Editor Tribune: In your issue of this morning I read: "The Garfield man got off the old chestnut about 'Deseret,' meaning 'honey bee.' * * * 'Deseret' is 'little desert,' only that and nothing more." As this word is not found in any dictionary in any language, opinions may differ as to how its meaning should be determined. The structure of the word itself leads many to the conclusion that it is a diminutive of "desert," and yet nowhere else except in Utah has such a diminutive been formed or used. Who should know the meaning of a word better than he who used it first? Now the first use of this word is in the Book of Mormon (Ether, chapter 1), where it is said to mean a honey bee. The language in which the word is said to have the meaning is the original language of man, the unconfounded speech of Adam and Noah. And if this record is to be received as true, we have in the word "Deseret" the only specimen of that primitive human language. As I suppose myself to be the only man in the city who has read the entire Book of Mormon this winter I venture to write this. DAVID UTTER.

The *Tribune* made an awkward attempt at reply, assumed philological airs and said: "It is a fantastic idea to go to the Book of Mormon on a question of philology."

This morning Mr. Utter came back at the philological sophist and utterly demolished his sneering effort to belittle the Book, and his awkward assumption of learning, as follows:

Editor Tribune:

"It may be true, as you say, that the

man who said that Deseret meant, by interpretation, the honey bee, was ignorant of the fact that words and syllables have real meanings that are not changed by combining them; but it is also true that usage is the final authority as to the meaning of all words. The first use of the word Deseret was in the Book of Mormon, and the only other use the word has ever been put to has been as a name here in Utah. It probably was never used to mean little desert by any writer of English or any other language.

It is true that we have many diminutives ending in et, as the following: Pellet, palette, roulette, parquet, chemisette, cigarette, sachet, parquet, statuette, etiquette, coquette, parquet, quartette. Most of these retain something of the meaning of littleness, though some, through usage have lost it. I believe they are, without exception, from the French, and have been adopted or borrowed for use in English. In our language we do not make diminutives with the syllable et; we use instead kin, as in lambkin, or ling, as in gosling.

"It might be foolish as a general thing to go to the Book of Mormon to settle a question of philology, but when we say that Yazoo river means River of Death, or that Manitobeh means Voice of God (Manitou), we go to more ignorant people than Joseph Smith for our authority. They used these words to mean a certain thing. We use them as names, but if their meaning is asked, we do not split them up into syllables and call in a philologist, we simply ask what they meant to those who used them first. I think we should do the same with the word Deseret, or else take the bee hive off of our seal and not use the name at all. The folly of supposing that such and such syllables must have a certain meaning appears if we try to make Olivet mean little olive, or, in similar fashion, to dissect minaret, trumpet, parapet, market or bucket. These words happen not to be French diminutives, and, as usage has determined, they have no sense of smallness in their meaning.

"So, after all, the gentleman from Garfield had the right to his question, and to answer otherwise is to strive for victory rather than truth." DAVID UTTER.

The response to this is a lot of roundabout and rambling sentences and a jeer at Mr. Utter and Mr. Sargent. Here is one sentence that is measurably clear:

"To get at the true meaning of such words as we take, in the language we take them from, is philology; to affix to them foreign and irrelevant definitions would be to do what Smith did in this case with a word of our own tongue, and would not for a moment be tolerated among critics of language."

But the subsequent sentence is a jumble that the "philologist" himself could not make sense of:

"But here is no question of a syllable, but of a complete word, taken and applied in a way utterly foreign to its meaning; and the word made its definer also has no such roots in any language."

Now the translator of the Book of Mormon did not take "a word of our own tongue" and affix to it a "foreign" or "irrelevant definition." There is no such word as Deseret "in our own tongue," nor if we take off the "syllable" which the *Tribune* says Joseph Smith added, will the remainder—Deser, be recognized as "a word in our own tongue." Neither did Mr. Smith attempt to give a "defi-

nition," either relevant or irrelevant, he gave the translation of a word that is not "in our own tongue." If the wonderful philologist of the *Tribune* cannot perceive the difference, we are afraid he needs education in common English, and ought to come down to first principles before he essays a flight to the higher regions of philology.

To make the word he attempts to distort mean "a little desert," as he so bumptuously asserts, it would have to be changed to Deseretette, and even that would be a "philological" coinage that would scarcely pass for genuine. In an attempt to assume the role of a learned critic he only plays the dogmatist, and in his encounter with Mr. Utter he has become involved in a tangle of words which serve to show that he is at the mercy of a superior antagonist and is too little-minded to acknowledge his utter defeat.

DON'T LET IT DIE.

THE vote on the liquor bill in the Council on Monday neither killed it nor passed it. Seven votes are required to pass any legislation in that body, and only six voted "aye." The bill is to be discussed again. We hope it will pass. But it should receive one amendment at least. The sale of intoxicants should be prohibited in any place communicating with a theatre, dance-house, variety show or other such place of amusement, and power should be given to County Courts and City Councils to revoke a license held by the saloon keeper, or amusement proprietor, or both, when such communication is found to be established.

The evils arising from the connection between saloons and places of entertainment need not be dwelt upon. They are known and universally condemned by the promoters of peace and good order. Also the attachments called "wine rooms," wherein females of loose character congregate and lure foolish men to drunkenness and sin, ought to be suppressed by law.

An amendment was introduced to the bill on Monday, which was intended for a good purpose, but it was so framed that it caused opposition to the bill that perhaps would not have been aroused but for that reason. It was to forbid the granting of a liquor license to any establishment, except a hotel, within a hundred feet of a theatre, variety show, etc. The objection to this is that a saloon might be kept in all respects under the provisions of the law and therefore be without legal objections, and yet if a show house should be opened within a hundred feet of it no license could be thereafter obtained.