

to seek an interview with him, draw him out in conversation, and publish the account for the delectation of their readers. So common is it now to give reports of interviews, in which there is a dialogue between the reporter and the notable personage "interviewed"—very frequently well constructed and made pleasant reading—that it is said that many of these reputed conversations are wholly imaginary.

A case in point is that of Father Hyacinthe, the French Roman Catholic priest, who recently landed at New York. His fame as a preacher is very great, and to this is now added his recent recusancy. Of course he was a good subject for the reporters; but he was difficult of access. He evaded those ubiquitous individuals, the Bohemians, and shut himself up in his hotel. Not to be foiled in this manner, however, they hung around the lobbies of the hotel, peeped through the key-hole, waylaid the waiters, and pounced from dark passages upon the chambermaid. From the servants they got what descriptions they could of the gentleman's looks, garb and appetite. The New York Tribune, while boasting that its reporter was the only one who had a really good opportunity of conversing with the distinguished priest, tells a story about the dodge adopted by the reporter of the World to obtain a sight of him. Not to be beaten, he bribed a waiter, it is said, to change clothes with him, and got access to the room under the pretext of a pitcher of ice-water; but as he did not understand French, the result of his attempt was not the most favorable. The next day five or six of the New York city papers had long reports of conversations with him, and each one of the reporters boasted that he and he alone had access to the stranger, and wormed his opinions out of him. Father Hyacinthe, upon seeing these reports, must have been astonished. He denies having held any conversation with any of them, though he had answered one or two questions, and the "interviews" were built on the very few words he spoke to them; but they put sentiments into his mouth which he never uttered.

A reporter of the Philadelphia Post of the 28th ult., learned, he says, that Elder Brigham Young, Jr., was in Philadelphia, and made up his mind to "interview" him. He accordingly repaired to the residence of the gentleman whose guest he was, and sent in his name. During the few moments which he spent in waiting he says, his feelings and thoughts were something similar to those of a country bumpkin in his first visit to a theatre, prior to the raising of the curtain. He had heard so much about the Youngs—father and sons—he says, that for a time he was at sea as to what he should expect. He did not know but that he should see something other than a mere man, and he had serious doubts as to whether he should not catch a glimpse of the "cloven foot" so often spoken of. "But," he adds, "alas for human expectations, he that appeared before us was nothing more than a plain, blunt man, made in God's own image and likeness, and in no way dissimilar from the majority of human beings."

After describing him he says "the whole appearance reminded us more of a country gentleman farmer rather than anything else, and was plain evidence to us that, so far as healthiness is concerned, there is no 'discounting' the climate of Utah. From the first moment we judged him to be what he afterwards proved, a thorough highly educated and cultivated gentleman." He had objections to being "interviewed" or placed before the public; but upon the reporter stating that he was seeking after genuine information, he entered into conversation. Then follows a report of the conversation, nearly two columns in length, which, whether real or imaginary, is very favorable to affairs here, and is free from any of the flings so often indulged in by writers when commenting upon Utah and her affairs. Such "interviews," reported as this has been, do no harm; on the contrary, they make many people familiar with the views of the people of Utah, who, drawing their opinions from the many misrepresentations and slanders which go the rounds of the press, might entertain gross misconceptions of their real character.

THE DETERIORATION OF THE SOIL.

A TABLE has been prepared for the Illinois Prairie Farmer, which shows the average value of products per acre in each State. We were surprised to learn from this how low the average of grain per acre had fallen in the West. Illinois

and Ohio, so famous in former years for the productiveness of their soil, and which, at one time, yielded an average of twenty-five or thirty bushels of wheat to the cultivated acre, now scarcely yield twelve. The soil of the Western States has been exhausted by too frequent cropping of wheat and corn without being allowed to rest. The average in Pennsylvania and the New England States is much higher per acre than in the West. This is explained by the fact that in those States farmers, who desire to raise crops, are compelled to strictly attend to the application of manures, plasters, lime and other substances which enrich the soil.

This is a subject which deserves attention in this country. It is true that our soil is remarkable for its fertility—a fertility that is not easily exhausted. This is doubtless due to a great extent to our system of irrigation. Land which is continually irrigated will yield heavier crops for a long series of years, without manuring, than land which is watered only by the rains of heaven. But there is a limit to the fecundity even of irrigated land. Cropping it year after year without rest, and with but little or no manure, as many farms have been in the older settled valleys, will exhaust and ruin the soil. Our system of farming in this country admits of better cultivation than the system usually pursued in the States. The farms of our agriculturalists are small. Dependent as they are, upon irrigation for the necessary moisture to produce a crop, they cannot cultivate large areas of land. This is a disadvantage in some respects; but it also has its advantages. These small farms, by judicious management, can be made as rich as gardens. Instead of being cropped continuously without manuring, they should, at least, be kept in as fertile a condition as they were originally. If this be neglected, our soil will be worn out, and it will be with our Territory as it is already with Illinois,—instead of raising crops of grains such as we do at the present, we will not produce more than half a crop. We cannot defraud Nature of her legitimate dues without having to pay the penalty.

Where water is too scarce to admit of all the land being cultivated, as is the case in many parts of the Territory, experience has proved that a system of summer fallowing is attended with excellent results. The Mosaic law required the children of Israel to let their land rest one year in seven. Experience has proved the excellence of this law. Like the law of God to man, which commands him to labor six days and to rest the seventh, both him and his animals, the requirement for land to rest should be observed, and, when observed, results in the happiest effects. In many parts of the Territory the land can be allowed to rest, and be summer-fallowed, without the least inconvenience, and in no part of the Territory should a man cultivate the land longer than six years without suffering it to rest and recuperate. We thoroughly believe that the law given to Israel by Moses to this effect had its origin in truth and sound philosophy. In the greater portion of the Territory however, the land has been allowed to rest one-seventh of the time, regardless of the farmers, through the devastations of the grasshoppers.

The New York Sun, of the 27th ult., contains a sensational story about a Scotch girl who had reached New York, having just escaped from Salt Lake City. The wonderful trials and vicissitudes which she experienced in reaching this city and getting back to New York, as described by the Sun, would furnish material enough for a modern novel. If the Sun and the citizens of New York will publish that they will render pecuniary aid to every one who "escapes" from this city, they will find numerous opportunities of spending their superfluous cash, as adventurers and adventuresses can be found in any number to relate the sufferings they were compelled to endure on account of the "Mormons."

All that is necessary, even if they never saw Salt Lake City, is to relate a story, the bigger and the more improbable the better, about the horrors of polygamy, the terrible despotism which prevails, and the dreadful groans from anguished hearts, praying for deliverance, with which this city resounds, and the sympathies of such persons as this writer of the Sun are moved. A tale of this kind touches him; but the appeals of hundreds of poor wretches who nightly prowl the streets of New York, and against whom he jostles in his walks, fall dead upon his ear. His heart is as hard and impenetrable to their appeals and miseries as a nether millstone. He has no word of pity or commiseration for them, they are too near home.

Correspondence.

AMERICAN HOUSE, BOSTON, MASS.

[Oct. 20, 1869.]

To the Editor of the Deseret News:—Dear Sir,—I have read with a great deal of interest the speech of the Hon. Schuyler Colfax, delivered in Salt Lake City, Oct. 5, containing strictures on our institutions, as reported in the Springfield Republican, wherein there is an apparent frankness and sincerity manifested. It is pleasant, always, to listen to sentiments, that are bold, unaffected and outspoken; and however my views may differ—as they most assuredly do—from those of the Hon. Vice President of the United States, I cannot but admire the candor and courtesy manifested in the discussion of this subject; which, though to him perplexing and difficult, is to us an important part of our religious faith.

I would not however, here be misunderstood; I do not regard the speech of Mr. Colfax as something indifferent or meaningless. I consider that words proceeding from a gentleman occupying the honorable position of Mr. Colfax, have their due weight. His remarks, while they were courteous and polite, were evidently calmly weighed and cautiously uttered, and they carry with them a significance, which I, as a believer in "Mormonism," am bound to notice; and I hope with that honesty and candor which characterise the remarks of this honorable gentleman.

Mr. Colfax remarks:

"I have no strictures to offer as to your creeds on any really religious question. Our land is a land of civil and religious liberty, and the faith of every man is a matter between himself and God; you have as much right to worship the Creator, through a President and Twelve Apostles of your Church organization, as I have through the Ministers and Elders and creed of mine; and this right I would defend for you with as much zeal as the right of every other denomination throughout the land."

This certainly is magnanimous and even-handed justice, and the sentiments do honor to their author; they are sentiments that ought to be engraven on the heart of every American citizen.

He continues:

"But our country is governed by law and no assumed revelation justifies any one in trampling on the law."

At first sight this reasoning is very plausible, and I have no doubt that Mr. Colfax was just as sincere and patriotic in the utterance of the latter as the former sentences; but with all due deference permit me to examine these words and their import.

That our country is governed by law we all admit; but when it is said that "no assumed revelation justifies any one in trampling on the law," I should respectfully ask, What! not if it interferes with my religious faith, which you state "is a matter between myself and God alone?" Allow me, sir, here to state that the assumed revelation referred to is one of the most vital parts of our religious faith; it emanated from God and cannot be legislated away; it is part of the "Everlasting Covenant" which God has given to man. Our marriages are solemnized by proper authority; a woman is sealed unto a man for time and for eternity, by the power of which Jesus speaks, which "seals on earth and it is sealed in heaven." With us it is "Celestial Marriage;" take this from us and you rob us of our hopes and associations in the resurrection of the just. This not our religion? You do not see things as we do. You marry for time only, "until death does you part." We have eternal covenants, eternal unions, eternal associations. I cannot, in an article like this, enter into details, which I should be pleased on a proper occasion to do. I make these remarks to shew that it is considered, by us, a part of our religious faith, which I have no doubt, did you understand it as we do, you would defend, as you state, "with as much zeal as the right of every other denomination throughout the land." Permit me here to say, however, that it was the revelation (I will not say assumed) that Joseph and Mary had, which made them look upon Jesus as the Messiah; which made them flee from the wrath of Herod, who was seeking the young child's life. This they did in contravention of law, which was his decree. Did they do wrong in protecting Jesus from the law? But Herod was a tyrant. That makes no difference; it was the law of the land, and I have yet to learn the difference between a tyrannical king and a tyrannical Congress. When we talk of executing law in either case, that means force,—force means an army, and an army means death. Now I am not sufficiently versed in metaphysics to discover the difference in its effects, between the asp of Cleopatra, the dagger of Brutus, the chalice of Lucretia Borgia, or the bullet or sabre of an American soldier.

I have, sir, written the above in consequence of some remarks which follow:

"I do not concede that the institution you have established here, and which is condemned by the law, is a question of religion."

Now, with all due deference, I do think that if Mr. Colfax had carefully examined our religious faith he would have arrived at other conclusions. In the absence of this I might ask, who constituted Mr. Colfax a judge of my religious faith? I think

he has stated that "The faith of every man is a matter between himself and God alone."

Mr. Colfax has a perfect right to state and feel that he does not believe in the revelation on which my religious faith is based, nor in my faith at all; but has he the right to dictate my religious faith? I think not; he does not consider it religion, but it is nevertheless mine.

If a revelation from God is not a religion, what is?

His not believing it from God makes no difference; I know it is. The Jews did not believe in Jesus, but Mr. Colfax and I do; their unbelief did not alter the revelation.

Marriage has from time immemorial, among civilized nations, been considered a religious ordinance. It was so considered by the Jews. It is looked upon, by the Catholic clergy, as one of their sacraments. It is so treated by the Greek Church. The ministers of the Episcopal Church say, in their marriage formula, "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder;" and in some of the Protestant churches their members are disfellowshipped for marrying what are termed unbelievers. So I am in hopes, one of these times, should occasion require it, to call upon our friend, Mr. Colfax, to redeem his pledge.

"To defend for us our religious faith, with as much zeal as the right of every other denomination throughout the land."

I again quote:

"But to you who do claim it, as such, I reply that the law you denounce only reenacts the original prohibition of your own Book of Mormon, on its 118th page, and your Book of Doctrine and Covenants, in its chapter on Marriage."

In regard to the latter of these I would state that it was only considered a portion of the discipline of our Church, and was never looked upon as a revelation. It was published in the appendix to the Book of Doctrine and Covenants long before the revelation concerning Celestial Marriage was given. That, of course, superseded the former. The quotation from the Book of Mormon, given by Mr. Colfax, is only partly quoted. I cannot blame the gentleman for this; he has many engagements, without examining our doctrines. I suppose this was handed to him. Had he read a little further he would have found it stated:

"For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things."

In answer to this I say the Lord has commanded and we obey the command.

I again quote:

"And yet while you assume that this later revelation gives you the right to turn your back on your old faith and to disobey the law, you would not yourselves tolerate others in assuming rights for themselves under revelations they might claim to have received, or under religions they might profess."

Mr. Colfax is misinformed here. All religions are tolerated by us, and all revelations or assumed revelations. We take the liberty of disbelieving some of them; but none are interfered with. And in relation to turning our back on our old religion we have never done it.

Concerning our permitting the Hindoos to burn their widows, it is difficult to say what we should do. The British government has tolerated both polygamy and the burning of Hindoo widows in India. If the Hindoos were converted to our religion they would not burn their widows; they are not likely to come to Utah without. Whose rights here have we interfered with? Whose property have we taken? Whose religious or political faith or rights have been curtailed by us? None. We have neither interfered with Missouri nor Illinois; with Kansas, Nebraska, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, California, nor any other State or Territory. I wish we could say the same of others. I hope we shall not be condemned for crimes we are expected to commit. It will be time enough to atone for them when done. We do acknowledge having lately started co-operative stores. Is this anything new in England, Germany, France or the United States? We think we have a right, as well as others, to buy or sell of and to whom we please. We do not interrupt others in selling, if they can get customers. We have commenced to deal with our friends. We do maintain that we are rigid in the enforcement of law against theft, gambling, debauchery and other civilized vices. Is this a crime? If so we plead guilty.

But permit me here to return to the religious part of our investigations; for if our doctrines are religious, then it is confessed that Congress has no jurisdiction in this case, and the argument is at an end. Mr. Webster defines religion as "any system of faith and worship, as the religion of the Turks, of Hindoos, of Christians." I do not think that Mr. Colfax had carefully digested the subject when he said

"I do not concede that the institution you have established here, and which is condemned by the law, is a question of religion."

Are we to understand by this that Mr. Colfax is created an umpire to decide upon what is religion and what is not, upon what is true religion and what is false? If so, by whom and what authority is he created judge? I am sure he has not reflected upon the bearing of this hypothesis, or he would not have made such an utterance.