

EDITORIALS.

UNRELIABLE FIGURES AND EGOTISTICAL ASSUMPTION.

THE next section of the burlesque report of the quartette is a selection of figures from the assessment rolls of Weber County and Ogden City, garbled, as usual, and designed to mislead. The impression intended to be created is that assessments have been made in some instances too low, and that some taxes have been remitted when the parties were able to pay them. It is charged that furniture has been assessed at a certain amount, when the quartette, "on information and belief" state such furniture to be worth over ten times the amount. Also that the property is not enumerated, and it is impossible to tell the valuation the assessor has put upon the property of any person who owns more than one piece of real estate in the county.

We are not informed how those four ignoramuses are able to make these reckless assertions. They quote figures with the comment, "assessed too low." Are they qualified appraisers? Did they personally inspect all the property enumerated? Do they know anything of the circumstances that prompted remissions? Or is not their "information and belief" but a little more of the gossip which they have been serving up in daily dishes, and accumulated during the two weeks roystering at the Keeney House, spinning out the time at public expense?

Their quotations from the assessment rolls are unreliable. Some of them we know to be incorrect, and like figures put in their dish yesterday, the "hundreds" marked on the record have been changed to "thousands" in their published report. Whether this is muddle or malice we do not undertake to decide, but it destroys dependence on their pretended quotations.

It has been the custom in many places to remit the taxes of widows and indigent persons, under powers conferred by law, as anybody can learn by reading the statutes. But the Revenue Act, passed at the last session of the Legislature, limits the remission to five dollars. If the power to remit has been exercised too freely—the quartette offer no evidence that it has—the law now estops any further undue freedom in that direction.

Assessments are made as prescribed by the statutes, "at a fair cash valuation." The form of assessment lists is given in the law. The assessor must fill them out as provided. The complaint about the "enumeration of property" is therefore only one among the signs of the ignorance of the quartette, freely exhibited throughout their so-called "report." The assessment rolls, with all county records, are all public documents, open to inspection to any taxpayer at reasonable hours. Ample opportunity is always given to the taxpayers to object to the assessments made upon their property, both in Ogden City and Weber County. And nobody but a few malcontents, who contribute little or nothing to the public revenue, and who are of the same kidney as the quartette, make any pretence that the public affairs in those places are not conducted in fairness, equity, and strict regard for the public welfare. As an exposition of anything with which the public are unfamiliar, the quartette's serial story is a conspicuous failure.

"FALSE IN ONE THING, FALSE IN ALL."

THE quartette's serial further charges that the same state of affairs exists in Salt Lake County as in Weber County—"the rich man under assessed, and the middle class fully taxed." But they fail to give the slightest evidence in proof of this assertion. They are not personally competent to pass judgment on the valuation of property, and do not appear to have made any examination, nor to have obtained the assistance of experts, with a view to any decision, but to have jumped at their conclusion

and hurled it, at a venture, before the public. If Salt Lake County affairs have been managed in the same way as Weber County affairs, the people of this county are to be congratulated, for the Weber County finances have certainly been handled with the strictest honesty and economy, and greatly to the benefit of all parties concerned.

They go on to state that the "Deseret News Publishing Company" do not pay any county or territorial taxes. Very true. There is no such company in existence and never has been. But they admit that the Tithing Office corner, which includes the establishment where the DESERET NEWS is published, is assessed \$20,000.

Complaint is made because the Temple Block is not assessed. This is strictly church property and is exempted by law. Why did they not report the exemption of the Catholic, Episcopal, and dissenting churches and the grounds thereto belonging? The answer is plain; any one can see in what direction the animus of the quartette is directed. The old revenue law puts in the list of exemptions from taxation, "buildings for worship and the grounds and materials and appurtenances thereto belonging," and the new revenue law makes a similar exemption. But then what do they know about law; or, apparently, even plain common sense?

A long list of taxes remitted for 1876 and 1877 is appended to their "report," but it is difficult to tell from its arrangement how much has been remitted. Taking it as it stands, the remissions are scarcely worth mentioning. But if they mean that all of them have been remitted, the reasons for the remission are not given, and therefore the public cannot judge as to the rightfulness thereof or otherwise, and the figures may be just as erroneous as those purporting to be from the Ogden and Weber County records, many of which we know personally to be grossly incorrect. The names of persons whose taxes are said to have been remitted cannot be depended upon, for the quartette are just as likely to have maliciously changed them as they did in the case of Ogden City, in which amounts that appear on the record as expended for Liberty Square, a public square on the bench, are placed in the quartette's report as expended on "Union" Square, which is private property in the lower part of town, and a great outcry raised upon the manufactured "injustice."

False in one thing, false in all, is a legal adage which has been frequently quoted by those who support the cause of misrepresentation adopted by the quartette; they can now apply it with propriety to the serial story which is chiefly distinguished by its numerous palpable deviations from the truth.

A SINGULAR SCENE.

A SINGULAR scene was witnessed by over two thousand persons at Snow Hill, Greene County, North Carolina, on the 12th inst. A colored man named John Shallington, had been convicted of murder, and sentenced to death. He married a woman who had a daughter. The mother died when the girl was sixteen years old, and a criminal intimacy was commenced with the step daughter, which lasted two or three years. The girl, Serena, was then courted by another negro, and Shallington, becoming ferociously jealous, put a charge of buck-shot into Serena, as a proof of his affection. After his trial and sentence, he made several desperate attempts to escape. He was a very powerful negro, and broke his chains, wrenched off iron bolts and forced open his cell door, but was unsuccessful in getting away.

When brought to the scaffold he joined in prayer with two colored preachers and demanded baptism. He addressed the crowd, and warned them against evil company. He was then taken to the creek, "baptized" by having water poured upon him, walked back to the gallows, smoked a cigar, and was then hung by the neck, death ensuing from strangulation.

It is about time that such repulsive public exhibitions were abolished, and the death penalty, when necessary, administered only in the

presence of a requisite number of witnesses to insure and certify to its execution. This case we believe is unique. We never heard before of the baptism of an assassin immediately followed by the hanging of the cigar-smoking convert murderer.

STRETCHING IT OUT.

THE quartette are still stretching their story out. Another long list of the assessments in Salt Lake County is given, making the number altogether about 660. These are placed under the general head of "Taxes remitted for 1877" but subheaded "Assessed." Under the subhead of "Remitted" a few figures are given, showing that out of this total of 660 persons assessed, 24 only have had partial remittances. What object can be gained by copying all this from the assessment roll does not appear. If the 24 amounts named are all that the county has remitted, it has done marvellously well. But while starting in to copy the assessment roll, why did not the quartette give it entire? What are these 660 names picked out for? They say: "It seems if a man is called on a mission, it has been sufficient cause for the remittance of his city, county and territorial taxes." But they have failed to do this. In the list they have given not one missionary's taxes are presented under the head of "Remitted." Then they mention the names of certain persons as "not assessed" who had no property in the county at the time when the assessments were made. Why single out those names when there are hundreds of other persons residing temporarily or permanently in the county who are in the same fix?

They further say: "It appears that one half of the tax-payers are bearing the expenses of the government of the county." But they fail to show wherein this appears. It is not exhibited in their report, certainly. And how is such a thing possible? If a man pays taxes, however small, he bears a share of such expenses. If he contributes nothing to the county revenue he is not a tax-payer in the county.

What with blunders, contradictions, confusion of words and downright falsehood, the pretended "report" of the would be famous quartette is a singular conglomeration, fit for the museum as an exhibition of folly, but an utter failure as a document designed to show something damaging to the officers of any city or county in this Territory.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

QUITE a stir has been made in literary and orthodox theological circles, over an article sent by the celebrated historian, James A. Froude, to the *International Review*. He takes the position that religion is in an extremely critical condition throughout the world; that orthodoxy cannot agree on what ground to defend it; that the existence of God and of a future state, the origin of man, the nature of conscience and the distinction between good and evil, are open questions; and that religious opinion is moving with increasing speed along a track which it will never retrace and towards issues infinitely momentous.

The New York *Herald* commenting on this says:

Underlying these propositions of the English historian there is a great truth of current experience and observation. Religion or Christianity does not occupy the strongholds in human hearts which it once did. The Bible is not held in such high estimation as it once was. The doctrines which it teaches are not as firmly believed as they were in other days, and the ministry of the church fails to command the reverence—may we say, respect—which it once had.

"The secular and religious press often precede the preacher, so that there is no reason now, as there was in the olden time, that theologians should speak with authority,

unless it be with that of a "Thus saith the Lord." This kind of authority is as needful now as ever—indeed, we believe more than ever."

This is an alarming condition of affairs when viewed from the standpoint of orthodoxy. After many centuries of dogmatism, and the training of the public mind in fixed theological channels, the churches and denominations into which Christendom is divided, have less power on the popular mind than at any period during their existence. The *ipse dixit* of the priest or professional preacher is no longer viewed as authoritative. The halo of holiness which they once conjured up before the eyes of the multitude no longer appears around their persons. Their opinions are viewed as only opinions, nothing more. Men and women think for themselves. Even in Catholic countries, at least among the male population, the old-time reverence for Mother Church has almost departed, and skepticism is fast taking the place of undoubting faith in creeds and ceremonies and their administrators and expounders.

The truth is, the pretended authority of priests and clergymen has been, for hundreds of years, nothing but a sham. Good men as well as bad men have ministered in sacred things. But while the former labored in sincerity to benefit mankind, their administrations were without authority, and the doctrines they taught were only a matter of belief. And the latter have been many and unscrupulous, making merchandize of the souls of men. The result is confusion—Babylon—and there is no standard in its midst to which the people may come. The Bible cannot explain itself, and those who interpret it differ themselves as to its meaning, and thus "Christianity" is chaos.

The *Herald* truly says: "Thus saith the Lord" is as needful now as ever." But when did the world ever receive "Thus saith the Lord," while the inspired prophet delivered the decrees of Jehovah? "Which of the prophets have not your fathers slain?" was the query of Jesus to the Jews. Those who said that if they had lived in the days of the ancient seers they would not have rejected them, crucified the greatest prophet of all, the Savior of the world.

In our own times "Thus saith the Lord" has again been sounded in the ears of mortals, and the same principles enunciated by the prophets of old have been made plain once more. But the "Christians" of the nineteenth century shed the blood of those whom God raised up as guides, to direct honest souls out of the mists and fogs of error and the mystery of man-made creeds, and into the light of the divine spirit which leadeth into all truth.

The reason why such revolution is going on in the religious world is that God has commenced the work foretold by all the prophets since the world began. The truth "as it is in Jesus," has been restored, and while a few are receiving and rejoicing in it, many who will not embrace it because it is strange and unpopular, have become unsettled in their minds and, while holding back from the straight path that leadeth unto the life and the light, they are rejecting the by-ways and guide-boards of sectarianism, moss-covered and cobwebbed with the traditions of ages.

The Lord is at work among the nations. He will turn and overturn, and cause current events to point attention to His gospel and those who have received authority from Him to expound and administer it. And those who love truth more than Mammon, and the glory of God more than the praise of the world, will cast their idols to the moles and the bats, and their hoary traditions to the winds and the waves, and march to the standard which God has reared in the mountains, as a rallying point for the good and true of all nations. The Lord has spoken as in times of old, and those who really desire to learn His will and come to the knowledge of His truth can approach, through obedience to His ordinances, the Fountain Head of all intelligence, and rejoice in deliverance from the doubt and perplexity that now confuse the whole world. The points made by Froude are manifest signs of the latter times.

WORSE AND WORSE.

CACHE County comes in next for remarks from the quartette. No fault could be found with the county administration nor the Probate Court, but an extremely flat and badly worded attempt is made, to show something wrong in the transfer of certain land in that county known for a long time as the "Church Farm."

This land was purchased from the pre-emptors by the late President Brigham Young, who showed his "hostility to education" by deeding the whole of the property for endowing a college. The quartette say they have examined the records in the land office for the purpose of finding something informal and irregular in the filings and proofs, but failed. Yet they infamously make the assertion, founded on gossip, in their usual manner, that "in some cases the parties filing were not citizens of the United States, the purpose of the whole transaction being for the benefit of Brigham Young."

After admitting they could find no proof of irregularity, and stating that all the land in question had been deeded by President Young for educational purposes, they are foolish enough to expose their malice and love of scandal by making the above groundless accusations, in direct contradiction of their own admissions. No wonder the grand jury refused to receive such a volume of inconsistency, bad grammar, and petty spleen.

The bogus "report" gets worse and worse, in these respects, as it drags its slow length along and unfolds itself before a disgusted public.

THE FINALE.

THE last chapter of the quartette's serial story, falsely called a grand jury report, is out, and their twaddle is at an end. They wind off with a list of divorce cases from the records of the Probate Court of Box Elder County, prefaced by some silly remarks on a matter that has been settled by legislative action, and a few more opinions upon what might have been, coupled with a little further hearsay and gossip.

The story is attested by the following:

"Report accepted by the Foreman, George Clark, and committee discharged."

GEORGE CLARK,
Foreman of the Grand Jury."

The Foreman, to be truthful and explicit, should have added, "but rejected by the Grand Jury."

The "report" is the sickest thing of the kind ever submitted to a body of men organized to further the ends of justice. The majority of the grand jury showed their good sense in rejecting it, but ought to have filed a protest against it when presented to the Court. However, they had no idea, perhaps, that anyone would have the impudence to present a document rejected by the panel, as a "report," or they thought that if it were presented it would certainly not be filed, being of no more legal value than blank paper.

But since it has been officially noticed and published, by permission of the Court, what does it amount to? Simply a desperate attempt, which has signally failed, to make out a case of fraud and corruption against certain corporate bodies, and to prejudice the public mind against certain leading "Mormons." The committee—Archie McGown, Joseph Sewell, N. C. Boatman and George F. Culmer, have not made a single point. But they have made, as we have proven, many blunders or wilful misquotations from public records; they have changed names and figures with evident malicious design, or inexcusable carelessness, or a mixture of both; they have offered stupid suggestions which, if wise, would be entirely outside of their province to make; they have advanced opinions and repeated gossip for facts, frequently in contradiction to their own assertions founded on the records they examined; they have so badly arranged their story that in some parts it