

[COMMUNICATED.]

A WORD IN SEASON.

Superficial views on any question are almost sure to be erroneous. "Truth," the old proverb said, "lies at the bottom of a well," and those who really love and desire it as a rule have to seek for it "as for hidden treasure." The drift toward exaggeration, and, shall it be said, deliberate falsification, is in a fair way to become chronic in this high pressure nation if the indications count for anything in considering the question. This feature exists more or less elsewhere, and if others were as familiar to us as our own nationality, it is possible that no special rivalry or supremacy exists.

The telegrams of the daily press verify this position; whatever may be the reason, certainly one of the most common manifestations is the everyday contradictions which so upset and unsettle a truthful observer (and others) that the non-reliability of the press has become proverbial. It used to be a clinching argument that a statement was almost necessarily true "because it was in the papers." Today things in general are doubted or disbelieved for the very same reason. An editorial noted but the other day that the sensational in many stated directions was usurping the place of candid statement, nay that villainous fabrications were now being "made out of whole cloth," either to be commented upon or quoted so as to suggest enterprise and secure increased notoriety, and, by the way, "circulation" of course. Whether in this direction the press ministers to national development in this way, or national character insists upon this erratic and fateful manifestation by the press, is for controversialists and philosophers to decide. The moralist and the religionist would fain hope that this is but the foam upon the crest of the national waters, but it seems to so thoroughly and universally manifest itself that the hopeful view is every hour subject to such obscuration that the man of truth despairs of the future and asks himself whether truth hath indeed fled from association with modern man.

Without claiming any Pharasaic righteousness, memory realizes that when a lad of brief experience, the lesson was ineffaceably fixed that an opponent rarely if ever gives the truth regarding the one opposed; vilification and misrepresentation were the weapons too freely used by both sides, and the lad framed in his own mind the idea predicated upon wider experience, that inherited prejudice against Frenchmen and Irishmen (our nearest neighbors) as Catholics was not based upon that consideration which was due to both, for the securing of approximately correct conclusions. It was also found that jealousies between Protestants of various grades was just as unreal as between the two most prominent of the churches. The Methodists were denounced in their day, the Primitives in theirs; the Baptist and the Quaker found it no "royal road" to honesty differ with their predecessors, and in fact all religious organizations have had for a time to endure those ordeals which might be called "persecution," and was such until they, by dint of success, popularized their constituency and their innovations by familiarity.

A case in point (under this heading) was presented last week in remarks concerning the "Salvation Army," which during the few brief years of its existence, has passed through the scoffs, sneers and insinuations of religionists until it has now become popular. It commands compliments in "Old England" from her majesty the queen; and as a consequence from the

archbishop of the established church downwards, and by imitation if not by sycophancy, to the admiration and laudation of all classes in the mother country. We may not wonder that the anglophobians and caricaturists of New York "society" now honor the same "Salvation Army" which they once despised as the very incarnation of religious extravagance and zeal and unworthy of recognition by the weathercocks of political and social exclusiveness—why, only, yesterday. These patient workers in our city already see the fashionable inclination of ministers and churches toward their labors, and by and by their eccentricities in obedience to outside recognition will become as "a dream of the night!" Then popularity may play smash with street praying, tambourine exercise and even "the mourner's bench" may become absolute, though the military organization and colonization with attendant phases may secure religious individuality for many a year to come.

The slanders heaped upon the Mormon Church by this lying generation have perhaps been beyond all precedent, for the facilities of modern times have given wings to countless fabrications of the same drift, and in part for similar reasons to those organizations already referred to. It is doubtful whether this Church itself has ever counted the cost of the misrepresentation in which the world has indulged. Interested opposition, created, fostered and fanned by "ministers of the Gospel" demonstrate that the record has been one of continuous spoliation, resultant arson, persecution, mobbings, drivings and death. The record has of course never been written on the earth, but it is written, and it will be known that martyrdom of men, women and children has been common, and countless cases of suffering, languishing, disease and death unnoticed in the chronicles of greater events are yet recorded elsewhere, and will be made known upon "the housetops" when the books are opened and the judgment is set.

Well, say you, what is the use of raking from the dead embers of an almost forgotten history these lurid facts of Mormon experience? Simply this, that spite of increased intelligence, spite of corrected public opinion, spite of missionary effort and unselfish representation, the same lying spirit is yet abroad in the land; it is within our own borders. We note its manifestation every day, strange to say; most of this originates with the very same element as originated the dark and dastardly doings of the past.

When a conclave of ministers deny that the "Mormon" people are Christians, they arouse antagonism wherever denominational or religious influence extends. Whenever traveling ministers proclaim the duplicity of the Mormon leaders and people in their public utterances abroad, they add fuel to the fires of ignorant fanaticism which without such encouragement would be dead as an extinct volcano, yet, perchance relit, may bring destruction on many souls. When this class for denominational extension play upon the prejudices and feelings of well-disposed people to secure ducats for colleges, schools, churches or other missionary effort, they should be called down incontinently, and find no countenance or patronage among the people they traduce.

Besides, much of the past and present local political plotting and scheming has its origin in religious circles also, and in social circles where the same subtle influence exerts itself; for most of these politicians are members of churches, professed religionists claiming to be exemplars and as being pioneers among a benighted people

toward liberty and prosperity, and yet they have in mind that final issue which practically contemplates the exclusion from all places of honor, trust or responsibility, this very Mormon element that made this country by sacrifice and struggle, in the deepest of poverty and privation; looking far beyond even present development to such glory of statesmanship and patriotism as become "a city (people) set upon a hill."

This ignoring of the people is distasteful, this determination to ostracize the older citizens riles the masses; and misrepresentation of conditions and intent on the part of the Mormons in no way soothes, it rather exasperates. To rebuke them as being ignorant, as being priestridden, as having ulterior purposes, and even a something concealed, is not the way to win their confidence or secure their esteem. This criticism is only for those who are really and deliberately plotters. The large numbers who would be fair and considerate are esteemed, even if at times they do seem to lack backbone and yield halfway to sophistries and suspicions of the principal wire-pullers whether in religion or in politics. The people here are in no way probably the equals of their opponents in the manipulation of caucuses or conventions; they are not so ready in debates or in expressions partaking more or less of buncombe. But without being in any way the apologist of the Mormons, it may be said that they love honor, honesty, fair play, justice and truth quite as much as the best, and vastly more than the ever blatant and most scurrilous of their opponents.

RAILROAD RIGHTS OF WAY.

Attorney General Bishop transmitted an opinion to the State land board today on the following question:

"First. Whether or not the act of Congress of 1862, granting a right of way to the Union Pacific and Central Ry. Companies, included a right of way over sections 16 and 36?"

"Second. Whether the act of the legislature of the State of Utah of 1897, granting a right of way to railroad companies over the State lands, would apply to, and grant rights of way to railroads now constructed and operated within the State, or whether it would apply only to railroads hereafter constructed?"

To the first question Mr. Bishop answers in the affirmative and the second in the negative.

The opinion in full is herewith given:

The act of Congress of 1850 reserving sections 16 and 36 for the use of schools was merely a withdrawal thereof from the public domain for the sole purpose of preventing the entry of the same under the general laws of the United States.

It is as follows:

"And be it further enacted: That when the lands in said territory shall be surveyed under the direction of the government of the United States, preparatory to bringing the same into market, sections numbered 16 and 36 in each township in said territory shall be, and the same are hereby reserved for the purpose of being applied to schools in said territory, and in the states and territories hereafter to be erected out of the same."

In the act of Congress of 1862 granting right of way to the Pacific roads, it is provided, "That the right of way through the public lands be, and the same is hereby granted to said company for the construction of said railroad, etc."

It will be observed from the language used that the grant is absolute and contains no reservation or exception, and is subject to no conditions except those necessarily implied, such as that