

DESERET NEWS.

WEEKLY.

TRUTH AND LIBERTY.

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AN OPEN VENIRE.

A PERSISTENT effort has been made for many years by the enemies of the "Mormon" people to obtain the passage of a bill for an open venire for juries in Utah. This is how the system works in California, as reported in a San Francisco paper. A case being on trial requiring a jury, the Judge issued a venire for fifty jurors:

"The officer made his return, and when the time came to impanel the jury those who had been summoned were examined as to their qualifications. Of these twenty-two were excused because they were not citizens. Of the remainder twenty-one proved to be saloon keepers on the Barbary Coast, and they were all excused because their names were not on the assessment roll. Of the remaining seven, three were excused by the counsel for the prosecution, who had been informed that they were not of immaculate character. The four others were excused by defendant's counsel on general principles. This exhausted the venire, and a new one was issued. Since these jurors were excused, two who had been summoned appeared in the Police Court as defendants in a case of receiving stolen goods."

The object of the agitation for an open venire here is to throw all "Mormons" out of the panel, and open the way to pack juries for the conviction of those against whom charges may be trumped up. As a step towards this, it is now urged that the provisions of the Poland bill, for a list of two hundred jurors chosen in equal numbers by the Probate Judge and Clerk of the District Court, are insufficient for the requirements of the Court, the lists being sometimes exhausted and business consequently delayed. And it is proposed to allow the United States Marshal, under such circumstances, to summon as many as may be required.

If the list of two hundred is too short, it would be very easy to extend it to three hundred or four hundred. But this is not the end desired. This would remove the alleged objection, but it would not effect the wished for object, which is to get up accusations against "Mormons," and then try them before juries composed of their avowed enemies. We do not think this little scheme will prevail, at any rate during the present session of Congress, and the results of an open venire, it is well known, are not at all unfrequently as bad as those exhibited in the California case which we have cited above.

EVIL TIMES.

We are living in strange times. The Government of the United States was established for the purpose of securing civil and religious liberty and equal rights to all the people under its jurisdiction. It was founded in honor, integrity and truth, and these virtues shone brightly in the illustrious men who fought, bled and labored to build it up as a bulwark against fraud, oppression and wrong.

After the lapse of a hundred years we find the powers invested in the legislative body for the perpetuation of the above named objects, being prostituted to effect the very reverse, and employed for the destruction of the principles which they were intended to maintain inviolate. Special legislation is passed against an "establishment of religion," and more is contemplated looking to the overthrow of jury rights and equitable rules of evidence, with the object of further infringement upon religious freedom.

Then a law is being hurried through Congress in order to make party capital, discriminating against a certain race who happen to be unpopular, and this in utter contravention of a solemn treaty entered into with the Government of that race at the solicitation of

this country, which proposes to repudiate its own contract.

And now a petition, which appears in the *Cherokee Advocate*, has to be presented from the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminole Indians, asking that Congress will not violate the treaty made with them in regard to certain lands secured to them by the provisions of said treaty, but which are now coveted by the superior race, bills having been introduced for the opening thereof to be seized by white men.

Treaties made in conformity to the Constitution are, by the provisions of that instrument, made equal with it. Yet measures in utter defiance of treaties are not only contemplated with complacency by both political parties, but urged with vehemence for the furtherance of party purposes. Who can wonder at this, when even the Supreme Court of the United States yields to popular pressure and renders decisions swayed either by party bias or by religious bigotry? Verily we have fallen upon evil times.

SPECIAL LEGISLATION.

"A REQUEST for special criminal legislation always excites a suspicion of persecution. When the Anti-Polygamy Society of Utah calls on Congress to change the laws regulating evidence in the courts, so as to enable them to strike more directly at polygamy, we think it likely that the request is prompted by a spirit of persecution. The rules of evidence in other criminal suits ought to suffice in polygamy cases."

"Laws can never be so framed as to prevent their violation, or even insure detection and punishment. Men will steal and kill in spite of statutes, and courts, and prisons, and the hangman. So there may be occasional violations of the statutes against polygamy, but it by no means follows that greater facility for conviction should be afforded for the last named than for the other violations of law."

The above is clipped from the *Washington Post*, which further remarks, "There is no doubt that many of the loudest enemies of the Saints are inferior in morals to the people whom they denounce." Also, that "There is no doubt that there is a deal of Pecksniffian hypocrisy and assumed sanctity in the outcry against these deluded followers of a false prophet."

The real motives of the persecution of the Latter-day Saints, are pelf and ambition. There are a few unscrupulous individuals who think they can see in the breaking up of what they call "Mormonism," a chance to obtain official power, including control of our local treasures. Give them the means of packing every jury with the enemies of the "Mormons"—which they call a proper jury law; and of stuffing the ballot box—which they call a free election law; then, by the aid of judicial and executive Federal authority, their way would be clear, and the people who made this Territory would be delivered over, bound hand and foot to the minority who want to gather in the fruits of our toil.

Polygamy is merely a "cry." It reaches the popular ear. It is a plausible pretext for their assaults. It is a sufficient mask to cover their designs. The hypocrisy of their pretence—as discerned by the *Post*, is of the rankest character. If we were to follow their example in morality, or, rather immorality, and the social evils of the age, would this afflict their canting souls in the slightest degree? Not at all. It is because of this that allusion is often made to prostitution when polygamy is opposed. Not that there is any similarity between them, or that the prevalence of the former is any excuse whatever for the latter. But we recognize the fact that those pretended opponents of polygamy can accept of prostitution without a twinge, and many of them, particularly the most bitter and pious, are steeped to the chin in vice and practice in secret, sins which, taking their own strongest denunciations of polygamy as truth, are far worse than that which they attack.

Special legislation is demanded against one religious society to punish its members for marrying wives, but none against the wide-

spread evils of seduction, prostitution either male or female, or any of those kindred crimes which are so widespread and destructive to soul, body and the state. This is one reason why we repel these attempts against our social system, and scorn and despise the hypocrites who incite them. They are not content with the enactment of laws against what we consider an essential element of our creed, but would break down every safeguard which the jurisprudence of ages has thrown around persons accused of crime to insure a fair and impartial trial, regardless of the consequences which may ensue to society at large, in their eagerness to break up an ecclesiastical system which has shown itself proof against argument, ridicule, misrepresentation and mobocracy. Their greed, vindictiveness and spite are criminal; but their hypocrisy is disgusting in the sight of heaven, and should render them despicable to every honest man and woman on earth.

A SINGULAR SENTIMENT.

In a recent issue, the New York *Herald*, commenting on the testimony of a witness before the Blaine committee that the negroes in his district were "miserable individuals who hardly dare strike back, and are killed like sheep," says, "Free government rests, at bottom, upon the belief that if A strikes B, B will strike back."

This, to us, is an entirely new idea. We were under the impression that the object of government was to protect citizens in their rights, and render it unnecessary for "B" to strike back when smitten by "A." Retaliation is not allowed by the law. Governments are supposed to take vengeance out of the hands of the individual and place it under legal exercise and control. They provide penalties for A as the representative of brute force, and protection for B as its object. If every assaulted person is expected to defend himself and punish his assailant war will become the normal condition of society, and continual conflicts will cause social chaos.

Free government it appears to us, is based upon the very opposite of the idea advanced by the great journal of Gotham. It "rests, at bottom, upon the belief" that the law will do all the striking back that is necessary, so that might may not rule in the place of right. Free government preserves the weak from the strong, and exalts justice while it casts down oppression. It is the conservator of peace because the preventer of retaliation, and says to the enraged B, when prompted by passion to return the attack of A, "Hold back your hand, vengeance is mine and I will repay."

The *Herald* writer who penned the above singular sentiment, ought to go to some night school and learn the first principles of "free government."

RELIEF OF THE "VEGA."

THE whereabouts of Nordenskjöld, the explorer, is still a matter of doubt. He is supposed to be locked up in the ice to the northward of Behring Straits. The Russian expedition which was ordered to proceed to his relief, it appears has been stopped on account of the supposed starting of the *Jeannette*, James Gordon Bennett's vessel, to search out the *Vega*.

But it appears that the *Jeannette* is still at San Francisco, and according to the *Chronicle* is not likely to sail until June. Lieut. DeLong, who has command of the vessel, was expecting, a few days ago, to start by rail for New York to receive final instructions, after which he will return, fit out the vessel and leave for the Arctic regions about the middle of June. There are to be thirty-three men on the *Jeannette*, twenty-five forward and the "after-guard," numbering eight, to include the commander, two lieutenants, a master, two surgeons, a scientist combining in one head a knowledge of geology, mineralogy, hydrography, botany, etc., and a recorder who is also a photographer. A correspondent of the *Herald* will most likely accompany the expedition.

Unless new orders are received

by the officers of the *Jeannette*, she is not likely to be of much service in relieving or finding out the position of Nordenskjöld, for, by the time proposed for starting, the daring navigator will either have perished in the ice-bound regions of the north, or have worked his way through the Strait and accomplished the great object of his voyage.

Meanwhile something should be done towards discovering his condition, and the most feasible point for an expedition for this purpose is the north-eastern coast of Siberia, or else from Alaska. It is to be hoped that Russia will learn quickly of the intentions concerning the *Jeannette*, and proceed with the expedition commenced, or that the Government of the United States will take the matter in hand, and employ American enterprise in relieving the gallant Nordenskjöld and his brave companions.

AN "INDIAN OUTRAGE."

A SHOCKING and inexcusable tragedy occurred five miles from Mariposa, Cal., on Sunday, the 26th ult. Four peaceable Indians were killed and a squaw dangerously wounded by a party of white men, who afterwards went to church and proceeded about their business as though they had been engaged in the most laudable of purposes.

Some time ago Willie Ross, an Indian, was convicted of killing a man named Thompson, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. An attempt was made to take him from the officers and lynch him, but it failed. An old Indian said to be Willie's father was living on a ranch near Mariposa, and the other Indians lived in a wickiup close by, and were industrious farm hands. Early in the morning a number of white men burst upon the sleeping Indians, bound them, strung up the old man and hung him to a tree, then shot the rest through the head. The old squaw, who gained a living by washing, was shot in the side of the face but was not killed.

All the men implicated in the murder but two have been arrested, and the popular feeling against them is intense. Their names are E. O. Laird, Robert Laird, Samuel Laird, Fred Holt, John Hale, Nat. Green, Hendrick and a man whose name is unknown. It is said they have great influence in Mariposa County, but we hope that law and justice have still greater influence, and that the murderers will be treated exactly as if their victims had been white men.

MIRACLES AND SIGN-SEEKERS.

WE have on two previous occasions replied to communications from "G. M." of Lexington, Mo. His last letter was too lengthy to notice at once. We now refer to it again. He says: "You speak of the miraculous powers of the Church established by Christ, claiming the same for your own as evidence of its being the true one."

This is a mistake. We do not consider the exercise of so-called miraculous powers proof of divinity, either of the persons who exhibit them, the church they belong to or the doctrines they teach. We merely showed that Christ promised certain gifts to his church as signs to "follow them that believe," and that these blessings were enjoyed among others in the primitive church. The legitimate inference is, not that everybody who performs a "miracle" is a true believer, but that a church claiming to be the Church of Christ lacks one of its essential characteristics if these are entirely absent.

G. M. takes the ground that "revelations from heaven are deviations from natural laws," and says: "In this state of things we can conceive no evidence sufficient to make such doctrines be received as the truths of God, but the power of working miracles committed to him who taught them. This would indeed be fully adequate to the purpose. * * * Would not the only possible objection to the man's veracity be removed by this miracle; and his assertion that

he had received such and such doctrines from God be as fully credited as if it related to the most common occurrence?"

"Now from these facts it is argued that miraculous powers were given that the Church of Christ might be firmly established. Revelations from heaven were the methods taken by infinite wisdom and goodness to convince a bewildered and vicious race that He had come to accomplish their deliverance. And having enabled his first servants to give the world unmistakable evidence that their words were inspired, a continual display of these powers was no longer necessary. Miraculous powers have therefore long since ceased as being no longer needed."

In the first place G. M. is in error when he states that revelations from heaven are deviations from natural laws. In the second place he is wrong when he asserts that the gifts and signs and manifestations of God's power were given to convince mankind of the truth of doctrines or the facts of revelation. In the third place he is mistaken in thinking such signs as he refers to adequate to convince unbelievers or to remove objections to a religious teacher's veracity. In the fourth place he is in the dark in thinking these gifts have ceased because "no longer needed."

No natural law is violated when God communicates with man. If the laws of nature were truly understood and observed, man's spiritual powers would be in active exercise instead of lying in a dormant condition, and intercourse with higher powers would be common. An uncommon occurrence is not necessarily unnatural. Whether by God's own voice, by the visitation of angels, by divine dream or vision, or by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost heavenly communications are made to man, the laws of nature are undisturbed, and that which is called supernatural is only so to the mind unenlightened in regard to spiritual phenomena, which are as rigidly governed by eternal laws as those things that are usually called natural. Nature is continually disclosing modes of being and action new to the scientific mind as the uneducated, and many things now recognized as natural, a few years ago would have been deemed miraculous or supernatural.

The gifts of the gospel were not bestowed as wonders to create belief. They were to "follow believers" as the result of their faith. They are the effects, not the cause. Christ healed the sick on account of their faith, not to make them believe. In his own country he did no mighty works "because of their unbelief." On G. M.'s hypothesis, in which he expresses the ideas of the "Christian" world generally, Jesus should have performed his mightiest miracles in that locality. Not only are they not given for such a purpose, but they do not produce that effect. The powers exhibited by Moses did not convert Pharaoh nor his courtiers. They temporarily disturbed him, but he remained in darkness and pursued Moses unto death in the depths of the sea.

And here is offered evidence that "miraculous" signs do not prove the truth of doctrines taught by those who exhibit them. The magicians of Egypt turned their rods into serpents, and the fact that the rod of Aaron swallowed the rest, in itself was only evidence that Moses and Aaron had more power than their competitors before the King. The truth of their teachings was not demonstrated thereby any more than the doctrines of the magicians. In the latter times, according to the Scriptures, great wonders are to be wrought by "the power of the beast," even to the "calling down of fire from heaven in the sight of men." G. M. and his friends, if true to their belief, would receive such signs as proof beyond question that the possessor of such power must be sent of God.

Now as to the continuance of the gifts. G. M. claims that they ceased because no longer needed. Let us see. Is all the world converted to Christianity? Are there not millions upon millions of heathen who do not believe in Christ? If signs are to cause belief, should they not be performed for the benefit of those benighted myriads? Are there not hosts of infidels among all professedly Christian nations? Why should they not have the privilege of being convinced beyond the possibility of cavil, if those signs were