

nized by law, custom and religion as eminently proper, such as the re-entering of a widow into a state of wedlock.

### MR. CRITCHLOW'S GREAT ACT.

Like every showman who understands his business, Representative Critchlow has "worked" the papers cleverly for advance notices of his coming attraction. Like many another show, his performance when it comes to be presented, does not justify the expectations that had been raised concerning it. If those who read the advertisements whose insertion he procured in yesterday morning's papers, have waded this morning through the communication then promised, and survive the ordeal, they need no lexico grapher to tell them what the word "disappointment" means. The gentleman's travail has been severe, that much at least is evident; the product is a cold, clammy mephitism which can only become offensive by being poked up. "Parturit montes, nascetur ridiculus mus."

Through four weary columns of nonpareil type is this morning's Tribune, about eight thousand words in all, Mr. Critchlow comes back to the defense of his old charge as to a mysterious "junta" or committee appointed by the Mormon Church leaders to dictate and control legislation. The Tribune people no doubt intended wall by Mr. Critchlow; their paper was the first, in fact, to air his imaginary grievance. But he has no right to make continued demands upon their complaisance, though he rather intimates that he has still a few shots in reserve, to be fired at a later date. Until he shall fulfill this threat, and give something that has not been already answered or that is worthy of answer, the NEWS hardly feels like wasting much ammunition upon him.

He calls his communication an "Open Letter." It is—so open that there is no trouble in seeing through it everywhere. He has introduced a few new names but little new evidence of any value—as a sample, observe the importance he ascribes to the nimble note-book of Councilman Dale, who is made to appear as having the habit of dotting down the names of the alleged "junta" when given to him by passengers on railway trains and in business houses in this city. Then there is what Mr. Monton said, and Mr. Kerr and others, also what Mr. Critchlow himself said or wrote to various persons at various times—tremendous evidence surely, yet claimed by him yesterday to be no less strong circumstantially than had sufficed to hang men before this. If he thinks it is strong enough to hang any men here and now, he is pitifully and egregiously mistaken. The public will not have much use for the judgment of an attorney who would rest his case on such evidence; though he would not be without his uses in furnishing fun for the defendant and witnesses and jury.

Mr. Critchlow's first letter had the merit of directness and of apparent sincerity, though its fears were baseless. This letter has none of the merit first-named, while as to the latter

element there is nothing but a specious, labored, sophistical plea formed out of scanty material but the best at hand. We believe the NEWS article on the subject last Monday completely answered all that he had then or has now said. We believe it answers all he can say, for it is the truth and nothing but the truth. He and his readers ought to peruse that article daily and diligently until they can go to their peaceful couch without seeing spooks between the blankets and under the bed.

### RUSSIAN STUNDISTS.

Quite often reference is made in the press to a religious sect in Russia known as Stundists. They have suffered much persecution, and the sympathy of Christians all over the world has been enlisted in their behalf. Yet, reports concerning their tenets and numerical strength have been so contradictory as to leave the outside world practically in ignorance on these points. Now it appears that Prof. Godet, who has made the subject a special study, furnishes in a recently issued brochure reliable information concerning these dissenters from the Russian church. In a synopsis of his pamphlet published in the Literary Digest, the following points are of special interest.

The Stundists have no common confession of faith. They acknowledge only the Bible, the interpretation of which is left to their appointed teachers. They have, however, some common tenets. They reject infant baptism and regard the Lord's Supper as a memorial feast only. They are diligent students of the Bible and are noted for cleanliness, honesty and temperance.

As they have no common creed, they have no fixed organization. At the head of their congregations are presbyters and elders, and for these offices older and experienced men generally are selected. These lead the public meetings and officiate at marriages and funerals. They are expected to be well versed in the Scriptures and to visit the members of their congregation for their instruction, encouragement and guidance. They labor with their own hands and serve the congregation without remuneration. There are also deacons, generally younger men, whose duty it is to look to the sick and poor, to keep records and occasionally take the place of the elders when required.

As to the public services, they have no regular churches, but worship in some large hall or in private houses. When the members enter, they salute each other with a fraternal kiss. Women and men sit apart. The service opens with a hymn. Then the elder reads a chapter of the Bible and comments on it, and each one present is allowed to make remarks. Women are not permitted to preach, although they may pray in public.

The order of marriage as observed among the Stundists is peculiar. The parents of the bride and bridegroom present the couple to the elder. He asks them if they wish to enter the matrimonial state, if they love

one another and if there is any compulsion in the matter. These questions being satisfactorily answered, the union is sealed by singing and prayer. The bridegroom embraces his bride, and the ceremony is ended.

From this it is apparent that the Stundists of Russia represent in that country the great religious undercurrent that obtained renewed force by the Reformation of Luther and penetrated various countries, assuming different names—Anabaptists, Mennonites, Baptists, etc. They seem to have preserved the spirit of the Reformation with great conservatism. The reason why they have suffered so much in Russia is probably not on account of their peculiar religious tenets, but because they are looked upon as dangerous to the state. Their marriage ceremony, for instance, is looked upon as a violation of the law, which gives to the established church the authority to solemnize such unions. Endless complications are sure to ensue, the children being regarded as illegitimate, just as was the case in the Scandinavian countries before the legalization of civil marriage contracts. Then they positively refuse to carry arms, though how they can escape military duty in Russia, except by spending their life in prison, is not easily understood. They have other peculiar views. They regard the taking of interest on money a sin, and believe the agrarian property laws of Russia are wrong. All this, of course, furnishes the civil authorities with a cause of persecution which has been freely indulged in since 1870.

There are numerous sects and religious factions in Russia, but most of them present only different sides and shades of the great orthodox church. The Stundists' faith is a foreign element to Russia, and it is not improbable that the principles it embodies will prove the precursor of the Gospel, as similar principles have been in other countries of the European continent. A people free from stagnant creeds and an arrogant clergy, bent on the investigation of the Scriptures and inspired with heroic faith, cannot be wholly unprepared for the testimony of the Son of God.

### MISSIONARY INCIDENTS.

Elder Charles L. Olsen, writing from Cincinnati, Ohio, under date of the 10th inst., sends, as a clipping from the Cincinnati Post of the 7th, a special dispatch from this city on the "Mormon Manifesto," the subject of course being the declaration of the Church leaders as to high officers in the Priesthood counseling with and obtaining the approval of their associates before engaging in any other pursuit that would withdraw them from the ecclesiastical duties they are pledged to perform. In answer to this dispatch, which in some respects materially distorted the actual facts, Elder Olsen wrote to the Post pointing out the difference between the status of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that of any other religious organization; that with the former the promulgation of the Gospel, as with the Master Himself and His disciples,