

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

CHARGES AGAINST REV. MR. KNAPP.

The charges against Rev. Mr. Knapp, an American missionary in Armenia, as officially stated, have now reached the public. It will be remembered that he was arrested by Turkish officials and expelled, but that he secured a hearing before the United States charge d'affaires at Constantinople, unwilling to leave the country before having had an opportunity to state his side of the case.

By the Turks he is accused of being one of the chief conspirators in Armenia; according to their affidavit he had a bell in the belfry of his church, and this he tolled as a signal for the rebels to commence disturbances; he supplied assassins with weapons and even hired his servants to kill Mussulmans; in his sermons he used language calculated to inflame "the faithless," and the general tendency of his labor was to incite rebellion and disorder.

To anyone acquainted with oriental conditions it appears quite probable that the Turks who preferred these charges against Rev. Mr. Knapp fully believed that they are true. An illiterate people necessarily depends on hearsay for the distribution of news concerning what is going on outside the limited circle of personal observation. But it is well known that a rumor, a story, cannot travel very far from lip to lip before it assumes fantastic shapes. This is the case everywhere, and particularly in the orient, where imagination plays such a role. A stranger comes to town. He stays for a shorter or longer period, and after a while everybody in that town has made up his mind as to the antecedents, present purposes and future course of the visitor. Is he a Christian, the current of thought takes a hostile direction, and the Mohammedans will soon have him set down as an enemy to good order. In this way it is quite easy to perceive how a peaceful missionary should, at a time when disturbances occurred in Armenia, in the minds of the Turks, be connected with those sanguinary outrages as the chief cause of them. The credulity out there is so great that if an old sheik should express suspicion that a Christian missionary's chief diet is human flesh and blood, it would be looked upon as plausible, and it would take but a few days to assume all the dignities of a fact, to which hundreds would be willing to testify. Without actual observation it is impossible to form a correct idea of the real condition of a people that has never been under the educating influence of a free press, free speech and some measure of self-government.

But notwithstanding the utter absurdity of the special charges preferred against Rev. Knapp, in a general way it is true, that the presence of Christian missionaries in Armenia is indirectly responsible for the disturbances there. It is the light from the far west that has enabled the oppressed race to perceive a possibility of better conditions. It is the doctrine of Christianity about a

universal brotherhood, that has inspired within them a hope that by embracing those doctrines, western nations would extend their sympathy to them to the extent of fighting for their liberty. This was plainly shown at the late gathering of Christian Endeavorers, when speakers from Armenia appealed to Christians here either to help them in their struggle for liberty, or take back the Bibles they have sent them. They cannot understand a brotherhood in religious matters which ceases at the threshold of temporal affairs.

It will be well for Christian missionary societies to consider carefully the responsibilities they undertake with their enterprises in foreign lands. Are they in a position to meet those responsibilities to the full extent?

Reverend Mr. Knapp will, of course, be acquitted, provided he obtains a hearing before an impartial tribunal, and probably his experience will be a needed lesson both to his friends and opponents.

ANOTHER HORROR.

Still another sickening railway horror comes, to tell the tale of awful results that follow neglect of duty. At present writing, the responsibility for the railway collision at Atlantic City, by which nearly a hundred excursionists were hurled into eternity, has not been fixed; but there is no question as to the fact that somebody disobeyed orders. So far as can be ascertained, the excursion train, running on a special schedule, came to the railway crossing, and not observing the express attempted to cross. Just then the express train, which had the right of way and was upon its own time, crashed down into the other, catching the excursion train broadside, with terrific results.

It is quite clear in this case that there has been criminal negligence somewhere. If things are as claimed on behalf of the Reading line passenger train, that it had right of way and was on regular time, with no requirement to stop at the crossing, then the trainmen who moved the Pennsylvania road's excursion train on to the crossing on the express train's time are the culpable parties. They had not the least justification for attempting to get over until they had ascertained definitely that the other train was out of reach. If, on the other hand, the express was out of its time and should have slowed at the crossing, the blame belongs there. In either event it should not be difficult to clearly establish the responsibility.

Here is a case where the state ought to push investigation and prosecution to the utmost limit. Railway men get so accustomed to risks that they frequently take them in carrying on their work; but where those risks involve the safety of other persons, the state ought to punish severely the assumption thereof, whether or not they are followed by disaster. A notable feature of recent railway accidents is

that excursion trains are especially liable thereto, indicating that the men given charge of such trains are not always as well acquainted with the passenger service of the road as they ought to be. More care in the selection of crews for excursion trains, and a more vigorous prosecution of those whose negligence causes railway accidents, are a necessity which should be supplied unless we are to have a continuation of these frightful sacrifices of human life.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH.

The season of the year is on when excursions and outdoor amusements of every kind are the order of the day. It is natural for man to long for the beauties of nature and to admire the handiwork of the Eternal Father, as seen in the surrounding creation. From the heavens above with its millions of glittering worlds, from lake and brook, from the ripening fields, the verdant hills and the majestic mountains, there comes a testimony of the glory of the Eternal, and as far as nature is being admired with the soul open to this testimony, the enjoyment of its beauty is edifying and ennobling. Very often, however, outdoor amusements assume a character entirely inconsistent with a spirit of devotion to higher duties. They are made occasions of levity, perhaps revelry, or conduct leading to transgression in various ways. It becomes a duty to warn particularly the young against that class of amusements, because they are obstacles to their progress on the road to eternal exaltation.

Sabbath day excursions are generally objectionable. According to divine law, one day out of seven is set apart for spiritual exercises. The reason for this is stated in sacred writ: "And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unpotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacrament upon my holy day." Thus without the observance of the Sabbath day, it is presumed to be impossible for any man or woman to keep himself or herself "unpotted." Worldly influences are contaminating, and it requires constant and regular application of the purifying element to be kept pure and spiritually vigorous. In every age, therefore, whenever the Almighty has had a chosen people on earth, He has given special precepts relating to the observance of days of rest from worldly labors. And the way in which the children of men keep such commandments has always been a sure indication of their spiritual condition.

But the observance of the day of the Lord has promises of temporal prosperity as well as of spiritual advancement. In the revelation given to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on this subject (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 59) the Lord says:

And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving; with cheerful hearts and countenances; not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance; verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fullness of the earth is yours: the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth; yea, and the