

## LEE AND THE PRIESTHOOD.

**A Talk Over the Trial—He is Ready to Apostatize—Preparation His Statement—"The Church in Danger."**

Editorial Correspondence Tribune.

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As the Court has adjourned over till Monday, leisure is afforded to discuss these criminal trials with some deliberation. The fear all along has been that the witnesses placed upon the stand would know nothing of the great tragedy, which has been the staple of talk for the past eighteen years; and that juries, under instructions from their priestly masters to see these Saints in bonds through, would pay no regard to testimony—should evidence of the most convincing nature be elicited—and give no heed to their oaths in finding verdicts. Lee and Dame were

**THE INSTRUMENTS OF A HIGHER POWER** in wiping out that peaceful company of emigrants at Mountain Meadows, and they must be absolved from the offense if there is any faith in Mormon masonry.

But this doesn't appear to be the condition of affairs just now. The Church is playing a shrewd game, and is willing to offer up a victim as an oblation to the increasing clamor petrifying the country, providing this sacrifice will appease the storm. Artemus Ward, the reader will remember, was patriotic enough to consent to all his wife's male relatives going to the war. If the coun' 's the life of Lee, the Church will make the surrender. It has been this man's misfortune to win all the odium of the treacherous assassination, and if he can be loaded as a scapegoat with the sins of his brother priests, it would be very handy to get rid of him and there have an end.

But "the butcher Lee," with his multitudinous family and a large number of sympathizers and friends, are not willing to have the matter disposed of in this summary way. They say that Lee has been

**UNFAIRLY REPRESENTED IN HISTORY.**

That he is not the chief assassin in the bloody butchery, and that the stories of his violating young girls as they begged for the lives of their lovers, and then cutting their throats to finish the bloody work, are mere rhetorical flourishes thrown in. Any way there is no doubt that he and his wives and the whole Lee outfit have soured on the Church, and now there is a keen contest being waged between the rival factions to determine who shall come out ahead. The Church attorneys are here, Bates, Sutherland, and McFarlane from St. George, to defend Dame, and render such aid to Lee as may best suit their purpose. For awhile he received their counsel, and those gentlemen were closeted in earnest deliberation with Lee's three attorney's. But it soon became apparent that Lee's attorney's and Dame's attorney's were working with different ends in view, so the latter are dismissed from the council house, and appear to be foiled in their neat little negotiation.

I was told yesterday by a man who has been in close communication with the prisoner Lee, that no apostate ever left the Church with a bitterer feeling towards his former oppressor, than possesses Lee's mind towards

**HIS COLD BLOODED BETRAYERS.**

An old Mormon of this city, and an apostate Mormon, detailed to me a conversation he had with Lee at the military post a couple of months ago. George A. Smith had held a meeting in Beaver as the royal party passed through, and during his discourse had said that if Lee was really guilty of the heinous crime charged against him it was only right he should be punished. In the next breath he asked the prayers of the congregation for the safe deliverance of brother Dame.

This invidious discrimination had come to the knowledge of Lee, and when my informant visited the prisoner, he spoke bitterly of such sanctimonious treachery. His visitor said Lee's only plan was

**TO MAKE A CLEAN BREAST OF IT.**

These fellows, he said, have piled all the odium of the massacre upon your shoulders, and now they are signing to give you up as a victim and thus clear themselves. This has been suggested to Lee by scores of his friends; and his wives and sons, who are circulating about the streets of Beaver, have become also impressed with this fact.

When we read of thick scales dropping from the impetuous Saul's eyes as he was on his way to hurry the Christians, we have a correct figure of the mental process which has been working itself clear in John D. Lee's reflective faculties. For seventeen years he has been a fugitive from justice, execrated by the entire American people as

**THE GREATEST MONSTER OF THE AGE.**

So long as he remained in his religious delusion, he could submit to all this, and blasphemously speak of himself as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But converse with the military, with the Marshal's subordinates and the irreverent non-Mormons in Beaver, has taught him a thing or two, and he now sees the world through differently colored spectacles. Besides this, Lee is a man of delicate susceptibilities like Iambro, he is

The mildest-manner'd man  
That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

He wept while planning with his savage allies the details of the horrid butchery, and any pathetic story now told him, moves the stern old zealot to lachrymal effusion. The people say he is hospitable and compassionate, ready to divide his crust at all times with any person in distress.

Mr. and Mrs. Stenhouse and other writers, represent Lee as a former bishop in the Church, and a Major in the Iron county regiment; but this is denied here. A dozen old settlers with whom I have conversed, say that Lee

**NEVER HELD A PRIESTLY OFFICE,**

and at the time of the massacre had been deprived of his military commissions. There is a disposition here to make a hero of this penitent murderer. The feeling against the Church in the southern portion of the Territory is said to be more bitter and more widely diffused than in Salt Lake even. Lee in arraying himself in opposition to the hierarchy, meets with hosts of sympathizers, and many who openly proclaim the blindest devotion to the prophet, convey secret assurances to "the man of sorrows" of their friendly interest.

Then there is a generous impulse in the human breast to side with the weaker party, and Lee having been used by the brutal priesthood as a

blind instrument of their ferocity and rapine, the general disposition is to have him tell under whose and what orders he acted, and thus shift the infamy to where it belongs. This work he is now engaged upon. An order from the Marshal secures the prisoner from interruption, while he prepares a full statement of the dread occurrence. This will be signed by a number of witnesses who vouch for the truth of his story.

Upon the face of it, this present state of things is eminently satisfactory. We are not thirsting for Lee's blood,

**THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WANT EVIDENCE.**

Judge Carey is acting with due caution. He is gathering his witnesses together, and expects to be able when the trial is held to uncover the mystery pretty thoroughly. Lee's statement will not be received as testimony, but it will be valuable in guiding the prosecution in their cross-examination. If he tells enough to direct inquiry into the proper channel so that the whole truth can be arrived at, justice will be potently willing to release this man in order to seize hold of others more deeply dyed in guilt.

Thus the case is likely to stand until Court meets next Monday. I have been cautioned to be discreet in my utterances, but I cannot see now what the Church is to gain by a full knowledge of the facts. The secret machinations of the priesthood are foiled. If Lee had been tried last April, he would have been acquitted. Witnesses and jurors had received

**STRICT INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO ACT,** and ignorance in the former and perversity in the latter would have cleared the man as sure as shooting. But the tactics are changed since then. Lee would be a good man to get out of the way, and if witnesses choose to blab and jurymen to be impressed with testimony, it will be a perfectly correct proceeding—let the sword of Justice fall upon the guilty culprit.

F. L.