

PRESS COMMENTS.

The Blood-Soaked Mormon Church and its Monarch Head.

[St. Louis Republican.]

The Mountain Meadows Massacre.

To the large majority of readers the confession of John D. Lee will have all interest which attaches to an entirely new revelation of facts, and few persons will believe that every fact of real importance in this confession has been in the possession of the federal government for at least fifteen years. Yet such is unquestionably the case. It was, of course, impossible to fix the responsibility of the Mountain Meadows Massacre on the shoulders of the Indians so that it would remain there. The crime was too great to be covered by any lie, however ingeniously devised. The truth soon began to leak out, and within twelve months after the event every "Gentile" in Utah knew that the Mormon leaders planned the deed of blood, and that Mormons superintended and took part in its execution. The first United States officials who went to Salt Lake City after the massacre obtained the evidence they needed on this point, and that evidence was promptly forwarded to the proper department at Washington. Other officials who came later were furnished with additional evidence, which took the same course—but nothing whatever was done in the matter until the arrest of Lee. The only explanation of this shameful indifference on the part of the federal authorities—if explanation it can be called—is that Mormon influence at Washington was strong enough to cause the rejection of any and all proposals for investigation. It was noticed and commented on at the time that whenever a federal officer in Utah made an attempt to draw the attention of the Government to the terrible business, he was certain to be removed and his place filled by somebody who was willing to keep his mouth shut. In this way Brigham Young and his associates managed to postpone the day of retribution which, now that it has come, is miserably incomplete. Lee could have been arrested, tried, convicted and punished just as well in 1853 as in 1877. And what is of quite as much importance, Lee's partners in guilt could have been compelled to share his punishment—a fate they are likely to escape now. Two or three years ago Stenhouse, formerly a prominent Mormon but a backslider from the faith, published an interesting book on Mormonism, which contained, among other things, a long and accurate account of the massacre, giving names and dates and all the material necessary for immediate action on the part of the Government. It attracted little attention—none whatever in the only quarter where attention was imperatively demanded. Had the hundred and twenty men, women and children butchered at Mountain Meadows been black instead of white, Congress and the administration would have turned Utah inside out rather than missed hanging every person connected with the affair.

We presume it is now too late to do more than has already been done, but the shooting of Lee is certainly a poor atonement for the crime committed. If justice were allowed to have its dues the master would quickly follow the servant. Young was the originator and instigator of the slaughter; Lee merely the willing tool and accomplice—and we can but think that if the case had been properly managed on the part of the prosecution the Mormon high priest would to-day be sleeping in a bloody shroud by the side of the miserable wretch who perpetrated wholesale murder at his bidding.

[New York Tribune.]

Retribution at Last.

The telegraph brings to us intelligence of the execution yesterday of the Mormon, Lee. For nearly twenty years the murders at Mountain Meadows have remained unavenged. A massacre horribly unique in character, though reminding us in some of its particulars of the assassinations of the Indian Thugs, has continued all this time to be a mystery, while in some respects it is a mystery still. For a crime so deliberately planned and so remorselessly executed, conjecture is at fault in assigning an adequate motive. There was an opportunity for plunder. There was the implicit obedience paid by inferior fanatics to the brutal behests of their leaders, but this merely transfers the inquiry from the execution to the plot. There was irritation at what had been called the insolent demeanor of the emigrants, but this theory has been rejected as inconsistent with their peaceful character and conduct. An incentive, partial at least if incomplete, may be found in the dark and dreary depths of Mormon superstition, and in the unscrupulous brutalities which it encourages. Certainly the interference of the Government with the remorseless ecclesiarcliy which had so long ruled this outlying province had awakened a race which naturally resorted to the methods of savages. The discipline of the "church," the most consummate tyranny over the minds of men which this continent at least has ever witnessed, furnished instruments more than enough to forward the designs of the Salt Lake hierarchy, to avenge its fancied injuries, or to do without definite instructions that which it might find it convenient afterward to disavow. The massacre itself was one of the most revolting of all the dreadful deeds which are the red stains of history.

But whatever may have been the motives which led to these frightful murders, it is well known that they were followed by robbery, and the very presence of the spoils must have given Brigham Young and his confederates a sufficient knowledge of the methods by which they were secured. From this point of view, it matters not whether he was an accessory to the crime before or after the fact, the presumption is that it would hardly have been perpetrated without his connivance; but even if it were, his subsequent silence, inaction, and virtual condonation of this fearful felony, put him in a position quite as guilty as that of Lee and his active associates. Unfortunately for him, he is in the minds of all intelligent men between the horns of a dilemma. If he is not a religious imposter, he is a religious fanatic, and in neither character is he entitled to or likely to receive a charitable judgment, since even his fanaticism, if it be allowed, is of a coarse, brutal, and sensual nature, not the less sinful because it may be sincere. Whether he was directly or indirectly concerned in it, the Mountain Meadows Massacre was of his doing. It was the fruit of his undecidable and frequently and openly expressed contempt for and defiance of the law of the land—the unreasoning and slavish obedience to the "church" and of the hatred of the "Gentiles" which he had inculcated in all his Tabernacle deliverances—of his belittling and sensualizing system of polygamy—of the recourse to assassination which has, as all men know, been a part of his church polity. The fifty or sixty white men who were engaged in the crime were all his disciples, and the crime itself was the harvest of his long labor in the vineyard of Latter-day sainthood. If so many of the sheep turn out to be wolves, what shall we think or say of the shepherd? From the logical conclusion of Young's responsibility, there can be no escape, though it may be technically impossible to convict him of guilt.

The execution yesterday marks something more than the beginning of the end. It indicates the speedy decay and disappearance of that wretched compound of lust and blasphemy which is called Mormonism, with all its unclean social system, its ignorance, fanaticism, imposture, and charlatanism. It compels the divorce of the political government of Utah from its absurd and repulsive paganism. The wretched old man to whose misapplied abilities its perpetuation may possibly owe the delusion which he has done so much to propagate. If he, too, would make a full confession of the offences against human nature and the soul of men of which he has been guilty, the narrative would be as interesting as the statement of the guilty wretch who suffered yesterday, and vastly more instructive.

[Leavenworth Times.]

The Mountain Meadows Massacre.

We publish this morning a portion of the dying confession of John D. Lee, and will give the remainder of his story tomorrow. Twenty years ago the Mormon power in Utah was at its height, Lee was one of Brigham's most trusty bishops, and the policy of the church was to prevent general immigration, as dangerous to its existence. But the tide of emigration to the Pacific States was so strong that nothing could stay it short of the total annihilation of the "Gentiles." The Mormon creed did not stop

at any obstacle to its progress; Brigham and his saints had experienced the opposition which the sentiment of the civilized world must make to their demoralizing system, and they determined upon desperate measures. The horrors of the "Mountain Meadows Massacre," where scores of innocent emigrants, men, women and children, were slaughtered in cold blood, are familiar to all. The circumstances pointed almost directly to certain Mormon authorities as guilty of this awful crime, and for many years Lee was supposed to be the man of all others who was familiar with the whole affair. He was finally apprehended, tried and convicted, and last Friday suffered death by shooting upon the very spot where, twenty years before, the blood of his innocent victims had been poured out. His confession was the deliberate act of a man who stood in the face of death, and without any motive for lying. It exposes the most diabolical system of crime in the name of religion that stains the history of the 19th century, and it cannot but hasten the downfall of Mormonism. President Hayes, we understand, has ordered the arrest of Young and the other persons implicated, and their punishment should, and probably will, speedily follow. The offense is so rank that the public will be impatient under the law's delay to give the finishing blow to a system whose corner stone is ignorance, idolatry and violence.

[Territorial Enterprise.]

Obiterate Utah.

We notice that many of our exchanges are calling for the indictment, trial and conviction of Brigham Young, Dame, Haight and the rest who were principals in or accessories to the Mountain Meadows Massacre. We do not expect that any such convictions will ever be had. We do not believe that Lee would have ever suffered had not Brigham Young deserted him. Dame and, we believe, Haight were indicted at the same time, but for some reason the cases were dismissed against the others. That reason doubtless was an understanding that Lee should be sacrificed, and that for the sacrifice the others should not be molested. Were Brigham Young arraigned and convicted, we believe that he could successfully appeal for protection to the treaty made between himself and the Commissioners of the United States and confirmed by the Washington authorities, which treaty led to the withdrawal from Utah of the army under Albert Sidney Johnston. We do expect that the confession of Lee will work physical hardships upon the heads of the Mormon Church. Its chief use will be to open the eyes of the world to the enormities which are practiced in Utah under the name of religion; to show to the weak-minded and credulous that the thing called the Mormon Church is but a trick intended by the few to gain power and wealth through ministering to the lusts of brutal men and through appeals to the fears and to the faith of ignorant women. We think the dreadful story may also induce Congress to disfranchise, and to partition Utah out among adjacent Territories. The existence of the pretended church rests solely upon a substratum of ignorance, and will fall of its own weight as soon as its members are generally educated. In the meantime the people of the United States ought, in self-respect and in justice, to demand that Utah be Polandized, and that no Mormon should be permitted to exercise any of the prerogatives of a citizen of the Republic.

[New York Herald, 25th.]

A Good Thing to Wipe it Out.

As a matter of right every leading actor in the terrible crime for which the monster, Lee, has just paid the penalty of his life on Mountain Meadows should be brought to punishment. Especially should the arch fiends of Mormonism, the Brigham Youngs, who, with devilish cunning, work upon the weak minds of deluded followers for their own selfish and vile purposes, be made to atone for the most horrible butchery the present century has known. This is simple justice, and the promise, written over the graves of the victims, "Vengeance is mine," saith the Lord, "I will repay," will not be fulfilled until the last of the murderers has been swept from the earth. But aside from this, the implication of all the leading Mormons in the Mountain Meadows crime affords a good opportunity to finally rid ourselves of an evil that has already been too long tolerated in a civilized, Christian country.

Lee's confession shows how many of the leaders of Mormonism were prompters of or accessories to the slaughter. Not one who still lives should be suffered to escape arrest, trial and, if convicted, punishment. Brigham Young should be the first to be arraigned on Lee's dying statement, at least as an accessory after the crime. If the leaders should thus be disposed of according to the measure of their guilt, by death or imprisonment, the vile imposture would soon die out. It is the ingenuity and cunning of the vagabond leaders which keeps the "twin relic" alive. Get rid of them and Mormonism would cease to exist. It has already been allowed to live too long.

[Kansas City Journal.]

We print to-day the confession of the Mormon bishop, John D. Lee, narrating the circumstances attending the massacre of the emigrants at Mountain Meadows. The confession shows that the massacre was by the order of the head saints of the Mormon Church, and that the Indians were set on and kept to the work by them. Lee, according to his own account, was a sordid instrument in their hands, obeying their orders to organize this massacre as if it were a duty of pious obedience to spiritual authority. It establishes the character of the church whose high priests ordered it. It will be a great wrong if justice has to stop with the execution of this subordinate disciple.

[Pueblo Chieftain.]

That blood-thirsty old pirate, John D. Lee, of Mountain Meadows notoriety, will be shot to-day, the Governor having refused to do anything further for him. Lee richly deserves death, but he should not die alone. There are in Utah about one thousand more, Brigham Young included, who should suffer with him if they had their just deserts. It is said that Lee will make some exposures previous to his death. In the interest of justice we hope this may be true, and prove the means of sending a few more guilty "Latter-day Saints" to the place where they belong.

[Hartford Post.]

The execution of John D. Lee took place as announced. It is a satisfaction to all citizens of the United States, to feel that law can be and is enforced in the district where it is so much needed, but comparatively so weak. Lee's confession, left with United States District Attorney Howard, is to say the least, an interesting article. How much truth there is in it may be disputed, in fact Brigham disputes it altogether, but there is much internal evidence in its favor, and if correct, the law might be pressed further with most desirable results.

[Philadelphia Times.]

A Long Chain of Crimes.

The confession, or autobiography, as he calls it, of John D. Lee, is an extraordinary document in many other ways than length. It is something more than an autobiography, for it lets us into a great deal of the inner history of that remarkable institution, the Church of the Latter-day Saints, with its strange combination of fanaticism and hypocrisy, folly and craftiness, religious zeal and sordid crime. It tells the story of the horrible massacre at Mountain Meadows with startling detail, and making all due allowance for Lee's desire to exculpate himself, it fastens not only that, but a long chain of like crimes, upon the leaders of this "church," in which Lee still professes himself a believer, though he abuses Young and the rest of them, as they deserve. Let us hope that Lee's dying speech was more sincere than his life appears to have been, a life of romantic vicissitudes fitly ended by the dramatic manner of his death.

[The Starling Thousands.]

CHELSEA, March 31—Advised say that by the end of the month 25,000 laborers will be paid off from the colliery estates, and in a month or two there will be some 60,000 to provide for. Meantime gangs of starving men, women and children are coming over from India.