

UTAH

Meteorological Matters—The Weather and Business—Introduction of Phonotypy into the Territory—Theatrical Intelligence.

From Our Own Correspondent.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY,

Thursday, Dec. 26, 1867.

Meteorological matters are of an extraordinary character hereabout just now. The temperature is exceedingly mild, and scarcely a day passes without rain. The streams are almost as high as at high-water in the Summer, and the roads, in many places, are impassable. Some of the canyon bridges have been washed away, and portions of the roads also. This continuous wet weather, and the consequent wretched condition of the roads, have tended to make business much duller than it otherwise would have been, inasmuch that the complaint is general that a duller Christmas was never known here. This, however, may be an exaggeration of the flat and unprofitable state of things in matters of business here at this time; but certainly it is bad enough without exaggeration.

INTRODUCTION OF PHONOTYPY.

The "University of Deseret" has lately taken a step toward reform in orthography, a decided step, by resolving to adopt PITMAN'S phonotypic characters for use in the schools of the Territory. It has been for many years one of the favorite schemes of BRIGHAM YOUNG to improve the characters representing the English language, and many meetings have been held, and propositions considered, looking to the accomplishment of that object.

One of the principal notions entertained in connection with this subject is that the distinction between consonants and vowels is more assumed than actual, and that such distinction should be abolished, or no longer assumed. Consequently attempts were made to form an alphabet on this new plan, and also embodying another, which was that the written and printed characters should be one, and further, that distinct letters for capitals are unnecessary.

An alphabet in accordance with these views was formed and type obtained. Some years ago a column or so in these new characters appeared regularly in the *Deseret News*, and exhortation and encouragement were given to the community at large to learn and adopt this alphabet. A few sanguine persons did learn the new alphabet, and corresponded considerably in it. But the community generally were oblivious to it, certainly it did not "take" with them, they cared naught about it. It was like learning a new language, and it is a difficult thing to teach a new language to a whole community. The result of this indifference was that after a short time, the regular chapters in the new characters disappeared from the pages of the *News*, and by the people generally the whole subject was soon apparently forgotten. Now, it is probable that the "Deseret Alphabet," as the new characters were called, is given up as an unsuccessful experiment, and consigned to oblivion. They are uncouth in appearance, and the type was none of the neatest, and to read it, looked as bad as learning Hebrew, or German, or Greek.

In the construction of this alphabet, however, there were insurmountable difficulties in the way of its general adoption. It was designed that each character should represent one sound, and only one, and that sound should be the name of the character. There was a character to represent t. T was its name and t was its sound, under all circumstances. There was a character to represent o. O was its name and o was invariably its sound. Now how shall we spell "to?" We can't do it. We can say t o, to-o, but the "Deseret Alphabet" does not furnish characters to spell "to." There was a character to represent n. N was its name and n was its sound always. Now to spell "no." It is not possible. N o, in the "Deseret Alphabet," would be en-o. There are no characters to spell "no." There was a huge difficulty, and after years spent in the endeavor to surmount it, the "Regency of the University" fell upon PITMAN'S phonotypy as the most available means of escape from the dilemma.

What steps, if any, have been taken to make use of PITMAN'S system of phonotypy do not yet appear, but it is fair to presume that books or type, or both, in that character will be procured at an early date and used. It may be an interesting question in arithmetic also to ask if it took the "Regency of the University of Deseret" ten or fifteen years to decide on a phonotypic alphabet, how long will it take the inhabitants of Utah to adopt the same and use it generally?

THEATRICAL AFFAIRS.

COULDOCK and daughter have been the stars at the theatre this month. They have been giving SHAKESPEARE and the domestic drama chiefly, to audiences not so large as they would have had if business had been brisk and the grasshoppers had not visited the Territory. The COULDOCKS soon leave for California. They will be succeeded here by STARK, the tragedian, who will play a short engagement in this city previous to returning to Denver. Cheyenne, South Pass and Montana, it is presumed, will be good fields for dramatic talent during the next few years.