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DESTITUTION IN DENVER.

Do any of our readers understand that in the once and up to a short time ago continuously prosperous city of Denver men, women and children are starving for bread? Perhaps they do not, and it is most unwelcome information at the best; but like other calamities at home or abroad it must be made known. We learn from the *News* that "bread money," for the first time in the history of Denver, appealed to the sympathies and pocketbooks of church-goers last Sunday. At the conclusion of the morning services at his church, after the plates had been passed around for the regular contribution, Myron Reed spoke a few feeling words on the destitution now beginning to thrust its grim visage into view. He requested that the plates again be passed for the relief of the starving men, women and children. The result netted $121.21 toward the bread fund.

This is the way Mr. Reed spoke of it afterward to a reporter:

When a man eats dry bread it is pretty good proof that he is hungry. We pay big sums for the large loaves and cut them in two. The bread is eaten on the spot, except in the cases of women who have hungry children at home. The wolf is right here at the door and it behooves every property owner to assist in relieving these people.

The *News* declares that Mr. Reed is in a position to know whereof he speaks, and he views the situation with grave concern for the future. We are feeling somewhat the stringency of the times here, but not to such an extent as that, and do not believe we are likely to. While we have many who have small resources and some few who are at present unemployed, no cases of actual suffering are reported from any quarter. While we have our "hands full," however, and have to make every edge cut to get along, let us not forget our sister city on the other side of the mountains, and if the worst comes to the worst we can spare something toward helping along.

THE BANK FAILURES.

When a great bank fails like that in Milwaukee, which we are advised the people had learned to regard as a financial Gibraltar, it accomplishes very much more in the way of mischief than what is imparted to its vicinity. Such examples coming from more diminutive sources are infectious abroad as well as at home; and when a giant concern gives up the struggle and goes to the wall the effect is naturally heightened many fold. And most of it is so useless if one considers when we come to examine into it closely! What reason, for example, can there be for a huge banking or other establishment closing its doors and thus contributing largely to a panic which in itself is grounded in senseless animal fear more than anything else, when the institution has more assets than enough to settle with everybody within its control?

And what is true of the bank spoken of is true of the majority if not all that have so far surrendered. They are all solvent, so far as possessions and liabilities equating each other or nearly so can make anything; indeed, in nearly all cases, the holdings or credits are largely in excess of the liabilities. Yet these seem as feeble when the storm comes as is the little concern in some obscure town which "putters" along with about enough capital to buy a small farm. It may properly be classed as one of the mysteries of our day and age—a problem that remains unsolved in the presence of the [illegible] light of science and the analytical power brought to bear by advanced education and research.

Hamlet has it—"What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!" Yet let one of these paragons—these reflexes of a mythological deity—have a hundred dollars or so in a banking house and read in some paper that a similar establishment has "gone by the board" in a neighboring city, and he will drop the paper and rush frantically forth to the abiding place of his treasure intent upon stirring up a similar state of affairs there. If a neighbor learning what he is up to also take fright—for it is the most "catching" thing on earth—and like a flock of sheep every depositor is soon at the doors (or as near as he can get to them) of the now doomed institution. These beautifully and conveniently described in our language as a "run." As soon as the bank officials realize that they are confronted by one of those things, they are supposed to round up the cost and if they have not enough on hand to meet all comers to send out and get the difference; or, if it cannot be obtained readily, to pay out as fast as the depositors present themselves at the window till what they have is gone. But they do not always do this; they want to get over it all at once, and so they conclude to suspend—the doors are locked, then the people "know" they were justified in doing as they did, confidence is destroyed, credit is gone, and even if the bank does start up again its prestige is curtailed, the ghost of suspicion haunts it and affrights timid money-holders away. The chances are that in nearly every case if the bankers would not strike their colors at the first attack, but would go on paying out as long as they had a cent, the rush would be over before that point was reached and all would be satisfied. Nothing so thoroughly soothes the savage breast of an inflamed depositor as to know that he can get what he wants; he doesn't want it so much then as he thought he did. General Sherman humorously expressed the idea when he quoted the anxious German during one of the early monetary crises in San Francisco: "I just vant to know if I can get mine gelt; if I can I don't vant him, but if I can't I vants him mighty quick!"

SHORT CROPS AND THE RESULTS.

Discouraging reports of crop prospects are brought from beyond the Atlantic. The shortage in the product of cereals and hay is marked and a source of foreboding. This is bad in one sense and perhaps fortunate in another; bad because of the suffering that must result therefrom during the winter months at least, and fortunate because it may prove the means of warding off a greater calamity—war. Russia wants to control as much of Asia as is contiguous to her already vast possessions, and the slaughter of a million or so of men and the incurring of such colossal indebtedness as no one generation could pay would be small considerations with the Muscovite power if it could only know that sustenance for man and horse was in abundance.

Then, again, the loss of Europe is the gain of the United States. Not that we should or would willingly profit by others' misfortune, but such is the logic of the situation and we could scarcely evade it if we would. Here we are having a magnificent grain and hay season, albeit not quite so large as last year because of the decreased acreage sown, and perhaps forty and it may be fifty per cent of it can be spared. Grain, especially wheat, is always a standard article in the Liverpool market, but with the European shortage universal or nearly so the price would increase immensely; and hay is now selling in London at $40 a ton! With cheap transportation what a harvest of gain this one item would now be to us!

We are advised that the official returns of the harvest prospect in Germany show that the outlook, which was not very bright last month, has become most serious, especially with regard to the hay harvest. Some papers urge the suspension of import duties on fodder, and others recommend also the free importation of oats and maize. In Bavaria, Hesse and Alsace-Lorraine the local authorities are setting on foot active measures for the relief of the distressed peasantry. This does not look very much like readiness for war, either. It is scarcely to be wondered at that on scanning the returns from the late elections in Germany Chancellor Caprivi was enabled to declare that it was "no victory;" people who have not enough to eat are [illegible] savage but not exactly warlike; fighting somebody else for a monarch's selfish aims is about the last thing on the program with them, and there is no enthusiasm even in a condition of increased militarism.

ELECTRICAL DANGERS AND DAMAGES.

A suggestion has been made in the city of Newark, N. J., that managers of city waterworks whose underground pipes are paralleled by electric street car lines on which high currents are in use should be on the lookout for the destructive effects which have lately been observed and even experienced in other cities. This is not out of place here, where our street railway and telephone wires are not only numerous but lengthy, conducting very powerful currents all the time. They have not so far proved too heavy for their conduits, but whether they could withstand a strong counter attraction elsewhere or not is the question; and besides, the wires, both county to rural and suburban additions, are constantly being extended, making it [illegible] to proportionately raise the electric current without enlarging the wire's capacity for carrying it.

The following extract from a paper published in the city spoken of is also applicable here:

A current of great strength and sufficient pressure [illegible] made supply wires from the power house to feed the trolley wires along the lines. The current then passes down the trolley arms of the cars, operates the motors on the trucks and then goes out through the wheels to the tracks, which are supposed to conduct it back to the source. The tracks are never insulated from the ground, which is a fairly good conductor of electricity. The joints of the rails are electrically connected, and between the tracks there is a good copper conductor connected at intervals with the rails and running back to the dynamos in the power house. It was supposed that these provisions would enable the currents to the straight path home, but it did not do so in any instance.

Those who do not already know it are advised that it is a peculiarity of electricity that if it finds two conductors of different resistance it will divide between both in a proportion in inverse ratio to the resistance of the conductors. Thus the current after reaching the ground finds that there is a water main or a gas pipe paralleling the tracks. The pipes are fairly good conductors and the current divides between them and the path provided by the company. Through the pipes the current travels in every direction as it proceeds upon its homeward way, and it sets up an action due to differences of potency and resistance which corrodes away the metallic matter just as a silver anode is eaten away in a plating solution. The pipes gradually become thinner and thinner and are finally honeycombed by the powerful agent so quietly at work. It does not require much time to destroy a lead, iron or copper pipe placed in moist ground. Its destruction is not a question of years, but of weeks. So that we are constantly menaced by damages if not dangers underfoot as well as overhead.

In Boston these troubles have so perplexed the managers of one of the railway systems that they have devoted large sums to the employment of scientific and expert men and methods. Similar troubles are reported from Chicago, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and Los Angeles. It is explained that in places along car tracks where the copper conductors are eaten off, if a person places his foot on the rails at such place he will obtain a shock of greater or less intensity; the rail not being grounded and the current seeking the earth will pass into one leg and through the other to its destination.

Professor Weston, the noted electrician, was asked how the difficulty (of electrolytical decomposition) could be met and replied that it could be done in one way only, if a single trolley line continues to be used (as is the case here) with the earth in circuit, and that is by insulating the pipes in some moisture proof material. "With a double trolley road, that is with two wires above the car and two trolleys, there would be none of this trouble. The managers of electric roads in Newark are keenly aware of the ravages of electrolytic action, but as yet have had no complaints either from the water board or gas companies." The professor, however, did not mention the other trouble spoken of—the disposition of over-charged wires above to "unload" on the first object capable of containing or transmitting their surplus; when this happens to a human or other animal it generally means death.

THE BEGINNING OF WRITING.

A distinguished German, H. von [illegible], has an article in a recent number of the *Deutsche Rundschau* on the subject of the origin of writing. It is quite interesting, to those philologically inclined decidedly so. He shows that it was somewhere near the beginning of our era, and he thinks not later than the second century, that this great adjunct to man's education and communication was given to the Teutons. Some shrewd old Germans were awakened to the signification of letters as used by the Romans for communicating ideas. The German people were densely ignorant, according to Tacitus; they knew nothing of corresponding by letter, and if the wise men of that day had known the art of writing, the wisdom of love would soon have found a way to acquire it also.

The writer disclaims mockery in describing writing as a high and secret art. Nowadays, when even young people are proficient in it, it may appear as an eminently simple but placing ourselves in fancy in primeval times, is it not a fundamentally wonderful conception that the whole wealth of sound and tone in which we reveal all our inner thoughts, sensations and imaginings, could be analyzed into some four and twenty distinct sounds, capable of being represented in visible characters. The discovery of printing in the fifteenth century excites our justifiable admiration. But infinitely more important and fruitful in results was the ancient discovery of the four and twenty symbols through whose medium has been brought could be materialized and transferred to other minds. For all the [illegible] peoples of Europe the discovery was made only once, and from one point has spread out on all sides. All our alphabets, however much they may have varied in the lapse of centuries, are modifications of one and the same primitive alphabet invented by some old Asiatic-Semitic race in the unknown past. In Europe the Greeks were unquestionably the first to possess an alphabet, and they got it from the Phoenicians. The name of the alphabet is itself evidence of this fact, for it is composed of the names of the first two letters in a Semitic script, alpha, beta, which is said to have no signification in Greek.

Those symbols are what we call [illegible] came under the observation of the old Germans spoken of, and when the inspiration entered their minds as to what could be done thereby, the decline of barbarism began. Look at the world now with its books and papers and tons of letters in every village!

VALUE OF THE HUMAN BODY.

A human body weighing 154 pounds is said to contain 97 pounds of oxygen, 15 pounds of hydrogen and 3 pounds of nitrogen. Besides a good sized lump of carbon there are 1 ounce of silicon, 3½ ounces of fluorine, 8 ounces of phosphorus, 21 ounces of [illegible], 14 ounces of sodium, [illegible] ounces of potassium, one-tenth of an ounce of iron, 2 ounces of magnesium, and 3 pounds and 13 ounces of calcium. This little substance is said to cost at present [illegible] an ounce, so that the ordinary human body according to that is worth considerably more than $18,000. "Few of our fellow citizens realize that they are worth so much intrinsically," says a writer in the *American Analyst*.

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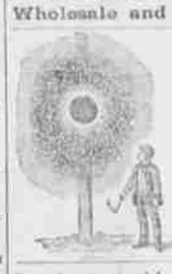

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