DESERET EVENING NEWS.

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LIGHT AND HEAT.

The matter of light and heat is a specially interesting topic at this season of the year, when these essential comforts are specially in demand for long nights and cold weather. The people of Salt Lake are in a frame of mind to receive anything that will improve conditions so far as heat and illuminants are concerned, for the long imposition they have borne has had another effect than causing them to be resigned to the situation that has existed. In the matter of fuel there has been much of a change for the better in the reduction in price of coal, but yet enough has not been done in this direction. As to artificial light, however, the conditions are yet extremely unsatisfactory. There are continued interruptions by which the electric current is shut off, or it does not come on early enough in the evening, or it is too unsteady, or something of other is wrong; then there is the natural gas nuisance, by which public halls and private dwellings which have trusted to that source of supply are plunged into cold and darkness at critical periods when the need for coziness and gaiety is greatest and consequently failure to receive them is most injurious. In this state of affairs the suggestion comes often and emphatic that the real source of trouble is not at the supply points of electricity or natural gas, so far as the ability to produce is concerned, but in some sort of jugglery that is going on by which heavy corporate interests are being worked to establish a vast monopoly, in which the "dear public" is to act the part of victims.

Whatever the cause of the difficulty, there is hope, however, in the excellent prospects of competition that are now on the verge of being realized. Whether or not the gas and electric light interests as at present established and operating are to be subverted to the insidious influences referred to, there is good promise that ere long there will be competition from an equally powerful source which will prevent a giant trust from being operated all one way. There are at at least two projects for independent competitors for light and fuel, the advent of which will be welcomed. One of these is in this county, and one comes from Ogden with a rise that will make its preliminary street lots the city this week. As to the latter, there has been some disposition to ridicule the idea of Ogden furnishing Salt Lakers with electric light and power, but ridicule cannot stay the progress of sure and popularly welcome facts. In the success of these enterprises the people might be, and probably will, realize considerable benefit. And if the inconvenience and difficulties that now have to be borne by the public in the way of the poor service complained of are the result of corporate greed, the people will ascertain the facts sooner or later, and return measure accordingly.

THE SALOON QUESTION.

The critics and watchmakers which attend the celebration of 1 year saloons are destined to keep the question of their regulation prominently before the public, at least until it is settled in a way that the general public will not be seriously molested in their peace and property as a result of drinking resorts. In Salt Lake City and other municipalities in the State the saloon not since is a painful infliction upon the people which is being exhausted each year in its injurious influence. There are laws to regulate the liquor business, but these are practically a dead letter in many respects, both by reason of the difficulty of their enforcement and the disinclination of officers to afflict the saloon element for offenses who depend on political considerations do not care to invoke the enforcement of that element, and the mass of voters have not been awakened to the necessity of their special action in this regard, not on behalf of prohibition, but in the interest of demanding an enforcement of the laws toward all those alike.

Utah is not the only place, or the most extremely pushed on this question. Elsewhere the citizens are being awakened to the necessity of settling this saloon business on much fair lines, so that those who favor the continuance of drinking resorts may be given their way under regulations that will preserve more prosperous people from the injury they are now compelled to bear. During the present condition several eastern cities, among which Boston is taking the lead, are seriously contemplating adopting the Minneapolis reservation system as a remedy for the problem. There is a very strong prohibition sentiment in Boston, yet the conservatism of public leaders there is against such radical measures as the complete suppression of the saloon would make necessary, hence the recourse to the other system, which would locate all the drinking resorts in one quarter of the city, and mainly away from schools and the resident portion.

As for the Minneapolis system of saloon restriction, it seems to have given the greatest satisfaction of anything yet attempted; and so gratifying have it been to the people in that spirit people that the Boston Total Abstinence society, after a careful investigation, has given full endorsement to the plan, while the people of Minneapolis will not listen to any proposition to change, and even the saloon men say it is more pleasing to them than was the old system, which operated much as effort now go in this city.

The "saloon reservation" scheme was adopted in Minneapolis in 1894, when the city had 320 saloons to a population of less than 120,000. Being scattered throughout the city, the saloons drew hoodlums and criminals to the very thresholds of the respectable citizens. The police force, which had to cover a total area of 58.33 square miles, was utterly inadequate to control the saloons, and to enforce the prescribed closing hours was out of the question. An increase of police was not practicable in the financial condition of the municipality, and Mayor George A. Pillsbury recommended establishing restrictive limits. The idea was taken up enthusiastically by Judson N. Cross, city attorney, who is known by citizens here as an able lawyer and broadminded in his philanthropic views. He drafted a resolution providing that the saloon reservation cover about four square miles, outside of which saloons were forbidden. This ordinance was passed by the Minneapolis city council in April, 1894.

As was to be expected, the saloon men made a great fight against it, and lawyers declared that it could not be upheld. Test cases were at once brought before the district courts and from there carried to the supreme court of the state. The agitation was immense. The saloonkeepers of Minneapolis held large meetings every day during the four weeks while the case rested with the courts. Threats were made and all available influence used to defeat the measure, which had the full sympathy of the respectable element of the community. As big array of lawyers assailed the ordinance, but Judge Cross won the battle, and the saloon men succumbed to the inevitable, at the same time the saloon license was raised from $100 per year to $500.

The effect of this in 1894 was that the saloons located outside of the patrol limits were at once closed, and in a few weeks the number of saloons decreased from 320 to 220. Since that time the population of the city has almost doubled, being now over 200,000, but the number of saloons has increased only about 15 per cent. Last year 250 licenses were issued. The police force, which includes four captains, four lieutenants, fourteen sergeants and one hundred and forty-six patrolmen, is a little larger than it was before the establishment of the patrol limits. Out of the force four captains, four lieutenants, thirteen sergeants and one hundred and ten patrolmen are located within the patrol limits, while the immense outside area is taken care of by thirty-eight men. Yet the inhabitants make no complaint, as they seem to have ample protection. As an official remarked a few days since, "The system has proved so satisfactory that no one wants it abolished, not even the saloon men." No mayor has dared to run since 1894 on a platform including the abolition of the patrol limits. In 1895 an attempt was made in the legislature to extend the limit two blocks, but the citizens rose against it, indignation meetings were held, and the legislature defeated the proposed amendment. The license was raised to $1,000 per year.

The Minneapolis system has stood the test of five years, and from all the reports made it is the best method yet adopted to keep the saloon element and patrons to control. It substitutes the high license, local option and restrictive laws in a modified form, and, where saloons are to be allowed at all, seems to be the best plan yet devised for minimizing the evil of the liquor traffic and the consequent crimes between prohibitionists and devotees of the wine glass. From its practical results where it has been tested thoroughly, it is clear that the Minneapolis system is generally preferable to methods now in vogue in Utah and other western states, where saloons are allowed at all.

MAKING A GRAIN OF ARGUMENT.

As a general rule parallels are of the remotest character. Of the north by means of a collision with other worlds originate on the side of the Atlantic, but at present the storm is sounded by certain German astronomers who think the newly elected President of the United States will not serve his full term out, because the earth is to pass in November, 1899. So extensively does the subject seem to be considered over there that Professor William Foerster in the official organ of the government, the Reichsanzeiger, furnishes a refutation of the statement that the catastrophe is imminent. He says the supposition is founded on the fact that the earth again in November, 1899, will pass through a comparatively dense swarm of meteors, as was the case in November, 1799, 1833 and 1866. As nothing serious has happened to the surface of the earth on those occasions, there need be no apprehension, he thinks, for the interview scheduled for 1899.

Moving in about the same place as these meteors is also a comet, which, it was thought, would collide with the earth in January, 1897, but our globe, at the time the comet intersected its orbit, was millions of miles away from the point of danger. In 1899 the distance between the two will be still greater, but even if an actual collision should take place, the professor thinks the effect would be less formidable than a violent thunderstorm or a cyclone.

BUILDING FOREIGN WARSHIPS.

The awarding to shipbuilding firms in this country of the contract for warships for a foreign nation is such an unusual occurrence as to call for special notice. In the latest event of the kind, by which the Union Iron Works of San Francisco secured the order for one of the new Japanese cruisers, shipbuilders in England, Germany and France were vigorous competitors for the work, which makes its coming to the Pacific coast bulletin all the more notable. The Union works have shown excellent skill and facilities in the shipbuilding line for the United States, and there is reason to believe that the Japanese vessel will be one of the best the shops have turned out, because of the pride in having secured the order and the care sure to obtain other and similar contracts now in waiting.

The new warship is to be a second class marmoreo protected cruiser, with a speed of twenty and one-half knots under normal draft and two knots higher under forced draft. Her length is 435 feet, with 67 feet, and displacement 4,700 tons. The engines are to be triple expansion, propelling twin screws, giving a collective indicated horsepower of 15,000. The armament will consist of two 8-inch 45-caliber quick-firing guns, twelve 6-inch, twelve 12-pound, and six 47-millimeter quick-firing guns; there also five torpedo-launching tubes, 14-inch. This will make quite a formidable vessel in her class.

Incidents of securing contracts of this kind indicate that the time is reached when the United States should assume rank alongside of Britain as a manufacturer for foreign trade, instead of remaining in second or third place among the nations.

GIVING OUT NEWS.

Chicago has a chief of police who recognizes the fact that it is not the business of his department to suppress news that may be given legitimately to the public. On the other hand, he comprehends that there is a public desire to have the news of the day, and that, as public servants, the employes in his department should make reasonable efforts to gratify the public wish in this regard. Of course this does not apply to that police business which, for the sake of administering justice, should be postponed to a successful issue; with as much secrecy as possible, but that matters to which public interest will not be regarded by the dissemination of news. In carrying out his idea, Chief Badenoch of Chicago has issued an order reprimanding desk sergeants for negligence in forwarding reports intended for the press, and has directed that all reports of fires or any other matter of importance in the department that is suitable for the press should be telephoned to headquarters, whence they are conveyed at once to the newspapers. This manner of doing business is adopted, not for any convenience to newspapers, but as a necessary and commendable service to the public, that the latter may be apprised in any reasonable capacity by the servants whom they employ. There is quite a number of police officers under here than Chicago who can get a pointer from Chief Badenoch's order in the way of suggesting how they could both accommodate and please the people by gratifying a reasonable public demand for official news.

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