THE

DESERET NEWS

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EVENING NEWS.

Friday - - February 15, 1878.

DESTITUTION IN WALES.

A CHILDREN'S BANQUET.

This has been a great day in Merthyr: 2000 children have been fed in the Drill Hall, and 2000 little hearts, weary of the long monotony of dry bread for breakfast, dry bread for dinner, and dry bread for tea, have been cheered by a bountiful supply of warm and fragrant soup. For days past nothing has been talked of among the children but the soup that was to come on Friday. It had grown to be impossible for the rector to take his walks abroad without being waylaid by troops of children, who, standing immediately in his path and making it absolutely necessary that he should stop if he would remain free from the charge of infanticide, asked, with elaborate salutations, when the soup would be ready. They must have known the day and the hour; for infantile chatter has centered upon that topic for more than a week past; but they liked to be personally assured that there was to be soup on Friday, and this accounted for their lying in ambush in the path of the overworked rector. Yesterday cards of invitation were issued in the shape of plain oblong bills, posted on the walls, announcing that the children's dinner would be ready in the Drill Hall on Friday at twelve o'clock. No tickets were necessary, the sole condition of admission being that the guest should be a child and be hungry. Yes, there was one other; that each child should bring its own spoon and basin. I hear that there was much rummaging through many households that night in search of something that would do to hold soup in. Some of the little ones with a prevision that bodes well for their future career, took their cups and spoons to bed with them, so that they should be quite ready for use at noon on the following day.

The drill shed, which was to-day employed as a banqueting hall, stands at the back of High Street, one approach to it being from the quarter where the deepest poverty reigns. Long before 11 o'clock the guests began to gather, each firmly grasping an iron spoon in the right hand, and carrying a piece of crockeryware in the other. I use the general phrase crockeryware advisedly, and even that does not cover a variety of receptacles which the children exhibited, and which themselves bore eloquent testimony to the poverty of the household. A basin was of course the correct thing, but I do not suppose there was an undamaged basin in the whole two thousand. All the cups were cracked, and all the basins battered. There were jugs of all shapes, all sizes, and in all stages of decay. Some had no handles, others had no mouths, and many had large pieces out of the rims, as if falling bread or turnip, some ravenous brother had bitten a piece out. Wounded jugs were present in great force. More than one guest had brought a square bread-tin, which, though difficult to drink out of, had the compensating advantage of holding a good deal. One youth sported a beer-can, which evidently had formerly belonged to the public house; another had the lower portion of an oval tin box, which still retained marks of the padlock; but perhaps the most ingenious youth was he who, finding a total absence of crockeryware on the household shelves, had appropriated a small round wooden soap-box, out of which he evidently absorbed with intense satisfaction repeated relays of soup. Nor were the garments of the guests less remarkable for variety of style and color. An effort had evidently been made in some quarters to do honor to the occasion by washing hands and faces, but this was not general. In respect of clothes, the family wardrobe had been laid under contribution with marvellous results, more particularly in the matter of boots and shoes. A shockheaded youth of eight, laboriously making his forward way in a pair of his father's or mother's boots, was a sight common enough. The girls had done the best they could with the materials at command, but on the whole the reality was fresh and striking evidence of pitiable poverty. Most of the children were too obviously half clads; hundreds were shoeless, or at best wore boots that were a mockery as far as protection against wet or cold was looked for; but nothing could hide, or even mar, the singular beauty of the girls or the sturdy make of the lads. I have again been struck, whilst going through the homes of the colliers or ironworkers, to find a pretty gentle little girl sit amid the squalor and the dirt, like a violet in a heap of wet bog. To-day there was full opportunity for noting this national peculiarity, and its proportion was triumphantly maintained throughout the 2,000 children. There were some perfectly charming little girls among the youthful throng that, as soon rang out, burst into the banqueting hall, with the iron spoon in one hand and the indescribable piece of crockery in the other.

It was a great sight to see the children dash in through the narrow doorway and spread themselves out all over the room. Outside was hunger and wretchedness; inside was soup and a hearty welcome. Their faces instantly beamed with delight as they at last found themselves really walking into the room where soup was stored. They were of all ages, from two to twelve. Some carried little babies in their arms, others bore them on their backs, few came singly, and in the twinkling of an eye there were flying across the room volleys of chain shot, in the shape of collections of brothers and sisters holding each other by the hand and making for the nearest bench. Four benches set in lines stretched down the room, and as the rush filled in they knelt down on either side of the bench, which thus became the dining table. When all the places were filled up, the rector, standing on a form, called for silence. When it was obtained, which was not immediately, for so highly strung were the nerves of the children with the excitement of the occasion that they could not be quiet all in a minute, the rector said—"I dare say a great many of you remember that two years ago God put it into the hearts of good people to feed the children of Merthyr. Do you remember?" A shrill shouting, "Yes, sir," was the response. "Well," the rector continued, "the same God has again put it into the hearts of good people to give you some dinner to-day. Now, don't you think it will be well to begin by praising God?" This was hot soup, but it plainly leading up to soup, and accordingly another cry of "Yes, sir," greeted the rector. Then, again, standing on a bench under the platform, with the steam of the hot soup curling up around him, the rector raised the strain, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," beating time with a large blue jug he held in his hand. Whether it was the enervating influence of the soup, or whether it was simple ignorance of the words and tune, I don't know, but, however that might be, the singing was not what might be called congregational. Once more the rector mounted on a form and addressed them. "Remember," he said, "if any child comes here to-morrow without washing its hands and face, it will be put up on the platform where everybody will see it, and it will not have any dinner till the rest have finished. Do you understand?" "Yes, sir." "Is there plenty of water in Merthyr?" "Yes, sir." "Then use it," shouted the rector, with which contentious injunction he descended from his impromptu pulpit. Now surely there were no more preliminaries; there was the bread in great slices, lying layer upon layer in clothes baskets; there was the soup, smoking hot, in huge zinc reservoirs; and there was the gentleman who had raised the hymn dipping the wash hand jug into the reservoir, and pouring the soup into smaller jugs to be carried round. A thousand glistening eyes beheld this sign, and they moved by a sudden impulse, 500 voices raised a singing cheer. After this there was a sudden and prolonged silence. Ladies and gentlemen carrying the clothes baskets, passed down each form, handing out huge slices of bread; others went around with jugs full of soup, with which they filled the miscellaneous receptacles, and the serious business of the day commenced. It was truly appalling to see those children eat. I have watched an ant walk across a garden path with a crumb of bread as large as itself, but it took 24 hours to finish its lunch. Here 24 seconds made a serious difference in the aspect of a slice of bread that seemed almost as large as the human palate that attacked it. The soup suffered in equal degree, and the full force of those present were occupied in bringing up the reserves. Various professions and divers denominations were represented amongst the waiters and serving men at the banquet. The dignity of the law was worthily upheld by the superintendent of police, a terror to evildoers, but no diligent purveyor of more soup; medicine was represented by the gentlemen who holds the honorable position of high constable of the borough; a gallant young Lieutenant of the Inniskillings upbore the reputation of the British army, charging again and again along the ranks with a large jug of soup under his sword arm; the Church was represented by a gentleman who, foreseeing much hard work, had provided himself with an ample apron, such as housemaids wear. A Unitarian minister cut the bread; a Methodist divine carried it round; a Wesleyan clergyman ladled out the soup; whilst in a position of general superintendence was the good genius of the feast, the rector of Merthyr. About 500 dined in the first batch, and meanwhile there was outside a pent-up string of children ineffectually dammed by a single policeman, waiting their turn. They found it in due course, and then followed the same scene thrice repeated, till the 2,000 were sent away happy and full.—*London News.*

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Rates of commission, in United States currency, charged for issuing International Money Orders, to be transmitted by the Postmaster at New York to Switzerland:
On orders not exceeding $20.....10 cents.
Over $20 and not exceeding $40.....15 "
Over $40 and not exceeding $60.....20 "
Over $60 and not exceeding $80.....25 "

Rates of Foreign Postage.

	Letters.	Newspapers.
Greece, closed mail, via England	5 cts.	2 cts
Hong Kong, American packet, via San Francisco	10 cts.	2 cts.
Italy, direct closed mail via England	5 cts.	2 "
Italy, via North German Union, direct	5 cts.	2 cts
Japan, American packet, via San Francisco	10 cts	2 cts
Mexico	10 cts	2 cts
New Zealand, via Southampton	12 cts	2 cts
Norway, via North German Union direct	5 cts.	2 cts.
Norway, closed mail via England	5 cts.	2 cts
Portugal, via England	5 cts.	2 cts
Russia, via North German Union direct	5 cts.	2 cts.
Russia, closed mail via England	5 cts.	2 cts.
Sandwich Islands, by mail from San Francisco	5 cts.	2 cts.

MONEY ORDERS.—All persons post offices now receive small sums of money and issue drafts for the same upon other post-offices, subject to the following charges and regulations:
On orders not exceeding $15.....10 cents
On orders not exceeding $30.....15 "
Over $30 and not exceeding $45.....20 "
Over $45 and not exceeding $60.....25 "

INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS on Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland, may be obtained upon the payment of the following fees, viz:

GREAT BRITAIN.
On orders not exceeding $20.....20 cts
Over $20 and not exceeding $40.....40 "
Over $40 and not exceeding $60.....60 "
Over $60 and not exceeding $80.....80 "
Over $80 and not exceeding $100.....1.00 "

GERMANY.
Fees same as Great Britain.

SWITZERLAND.
South American States, Atlantic Coast, via England.....27 cts. 4 cts.
Brazil, from New York.....30 cts. 8 cts
Argentine Republic and Uruguay, via American packet from New York.....22 cts. 10 cts.
Peru, Chili, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chili.....32 cts. 4 cts.
Spain, via Bremen.....5 cts. 2 cts
Sweden, via North German Union direct.....5 cts. 2 cts.
Sweden, closed mail via England.....5 cts. 2 cts.
Switzerland, direct closed mail via England.....5 cts. 2 cts.
Switzerland, by North German Union direct.....5 cts. 2 cts.
West Indies (British and Danish) American packet direct from New York.....5 cts. 2 cts.
West Indies (British) and British mail via Southampton.....17 cts. 4 cts
St. Thomas.....17 cts. 4 cts
St. Croix (British).....5 cts. 2 cts

The standard single rate to Great Britain is 5 cents; to France, Belgium and the Continent (by French mail) is 4 cents, or one-quarter ounce avoirdupois. The asterisk (*) indicates that prepayment is optional.

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