THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

TWO AND A HALF MILLIONS.

Two million five hundred thousand dollars is the amount of the indebtedness of Salt Lake City, in round numbers. If the city contains 60,000 inhabitants, each man, woman and child owes nearly $42. The debt of a family of six persons, husband, wife and four children, is about $250. Expressing the average in another way, every man in the city who is the head of a family owes $250 as his share of the debts of the municipal corporation. There are very many families in the city who own no taxable property, which fact increases, in the ratio which those families bear to those who own property, the indebtedness of the latter.

This indebtedness is virtually a mortgage on every piece of realty in the city. Should the city's creditors be forced to extreme measures, they would procure an order of court commanding the City Council to levy a tax on all the property in the city for the purpose of redeeming the city's bonds. That tax would be collected by selling the property at auction, if not paid without such sale. In other words, the city's debt is a mortgage on all the property in the city, and could be foreclosed substantially as other mortgages are. Wherever there is a failure to pay the interest on the bonds, proceedings to enforce payment can be instituted.

Last year and this the payments of interest has been made, promptly But in order to do this and meet other liabilities, the city has been obliged to obtain an overdraft at a bank. To cap the climax, the debt limit of the city is lived up to so closely that questions constantly arise as to whether a certain debt is not invalid because beyond the city's authority to incur. Doubts of this kind have been expressed in regard to an overdraft at a bank, and should they receive any degree of confirmation no bank would extend such an accommodation to the city, and bills and salaries of the most urgent and legitimate character would go unpaid. Such is the status for 1897, with property often assessed at a higher valuation than it will sell for.

Next year the city is peremptorily required by law to set aside $50,000 as a sinking fund for the redemption of its bonds. This means literally that the city will be obliged to pay out $50,000 more next year than it has this, unless running expenses can be reduced. If there is not retrenchment in the current expenses, the deficit or overdraft, which is $25,000 this year, will be $75,000 next year, and the city's credit will be greatly impaired if nothing worse happens.

Now these are cold business facts. There is no politics in them. Neither the silver issue nor the tariff has anything to do with them. In the face of them what are the voters going to do?

What has brought to pass such a condition? The extravagance and corruption of partisan politics, and the payment of political debts, have been among the chief factors that have produced the general result. Do the voters like it? Do they want more of it? Do they want this year's deficit of $25,000 increased to $75,000 next year? Do they want a lot of political debts paid at their expense? Do they want the heeler remunerated out of the city treasury? Do they want vital interests confided to politicians regardless of honesty or capability? If the voters want these things, they ought to vote for one of the party tickets.

But if the voters want an honest, capable and conscientious administration by careful and able business men; if they want the city's affairs manipulated with skill and good judgment; if they want strict economy to prevail; if they want no political debts paid at their expense, let them vote for the ticket from which the politicians have been rigidly excluded. Not a candidate on that ticket has promised either a place or a job to anybody. If elected, not one will enter office with any political pledges to redeem, or any political debts to pay. The suffragists should say by their ballots that politics and politicians must have no place in the control of this city; but that it is a business proposition to be confided to business men.

ELECTRICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

The world hardly appreciates as yet the greatness of the achievements of Thomas A. Edison. They are so stupendous that a longer period of time than has elapsed since they were brought forth is necessary to enable people fully to realize their magnitude. But great as are the triumphs of Edison in subjugating to the control of man the mysterious and potent forces of nature, there is reason to believe that they are about to be outdone by Nicola Tesla.

Tesla is undoubtedly a formidable rival of the Wizard of Menlo Park in the field of electrical discovery and invention. He has for some months been laboring to perfect a system of telegraphing without wires, which he declares will be entirely practicable, and that distance is not an element of difficulty in the solution of the problem. A wave of electrical vibrations at a given pitch is started at a given point. The earth conducts the vibrations to the point where the message is to be received, and where an apparatus, attuned to the vibrations, will receive and record them.

One of his latest propositions is to run a train from Jersey City to Chicago at the rate of from 100 to 150 miles per hour. He insists that it is perfectly practicable to do this by means of an alternating current motor which he has invented. It was recently announced by the press that a company was being formed with a capital of two hundred million dollars to construct an elevated railroad between the cities named, on which trains would be run by the means and at the speed suggested. The track will average about eight feet above the ground, and will be free from sharp grades and curves. Trains will pass over it with a minimum amount of vibration, and Tesla holds that a speed of even 150 miles per hour will occasion no discomfort to passengers.

Tesla is said to entertain the theory that communication between this earth and other planets, by means of sound waves, is feasible. In a late newspaper interview he is reported as saying, in answer to a question as to the possibility of communicating with Mars;

"That is exactly what I hope for. The people of Mars must be intelligent, and if we send sound waves, with intervals between the beats, they will readily understand that we are communicating the signals to them, and our whole system of notation will at once become plain to them. There is hardly any doubt about this matter of communication with Mars, and in a scientific sense the time will be comparatively short."

The production of light without heat is a problem to which Tesla has given much attention, and he talked about it as follows:

"'Now as to light without heat. That is already accomplished, but is not as yet in practical use. You see here in my laboratory this vacuum tube, which is vastly more economical than either the arc or the incandescent light. See, I will turn on the current.'

"In an instant a bright, soft light, mellow as the light of a summer day, filled the room, and melted the shadows.

"'The fact of the matter is,' he continued, 'I have found the causes of the loss of energy and have largely overcome them. I can now deliver 10 per cent of the initial energy in a pure white light, which has three times the efficiency of the ordinary incandescent light. I have discarded my old plan of vibration, as the machine would not last more than a few hours under that system. In fact, I have found a better way and can start the ether in the exhausted bulbs at the rate of about 6,000,000 vibrations per second. I expect to attain 50,000,000. I measure the vibrations by my ear, just as a musician listens to his tuning fork. You see, there is no direct communication between my copper wires and the exhausted tube. The current passes through the glass.

"'Ah! you ask what the next decade will bring forth. I do not know. I only hope that half the ambitions I have will be fruitful. I believe they will. When I know you shall know—the world shall know. I want to see this great force under control. I care not who makes the discoveries. The mind that unfolds the mysteries of the electrical world deserves praise, and I believe that with this force nothing is impossible. What is to come will astound us all. What has come is still even a mystery to many.'"

COUNTRY AND CITY.

An exchange devoted to the interest of farmers gives the timely advice to young boys in the country, who may have a longing for the supposed advantages of big city life, to remain where they are and gain independence by honest work on the farm. It might have gone farther and suggested to many of the city boys to seek the advantages of life in the country rather than to waste their years in futile attempts at obtaining an independent living where the competition is most keen.

The fact is that to the average man and woman the larger cities all over the world are about as inviting as the island of Robinson Crusoe was to him. If they manage to exist at all it is because of the exercise of constant ingenuity and care. But many are carried away by sicknesses traceable to want. The "situations wanted" by people who have "experience" and "good references" indicate the true situation. He who has piece of land and knows how to make it yield its treasures is his own master. He is free from the tormenting question where to get the next meal, or the supply for the coming winter. Generally he is able to save up a few dollars every year, at least if he lives within his income.

To those who are conversant with large city life only from a superficial contemplation of large buildings, paved streets, electric lights and the abundance of amusements, it looks alluring. But the thousands of men and women and children who never know what it is to be free from the pangs of hunger; whose lungs are filled with the dust and smoke of the streets, and whose ears know hardly any other