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A TELEGRAPHIC FIRE.

The headquarters of the Western Union Telegraph Company, 195 Broadway, corner of Dey Street, were greatly injured by fire on the morning of July 18. The chief operating room, with its grand array of instruments, simplex, quadruplex, and many other kinds, operatively connected with thousands of wires, leading to all parts of the world, were almost instantly destroyed, and the telegraphic communication of the country interrupted and disorganized. The effect upon business and domestic affairs was like a stroke of paralysis.

The company, with commendable activity, proceeded to secure temporary quarters in various parts of the city, obtained instruments from other towns, and, in the course of a few days, succeeded in restoring to a great extent its normal facilities. Much inconvenience is, however, still felt by the public, by reason of the tardy and uncertain dispatch and delivery of many messages.

The Western Union building was built of iron and masonry, and has always been claimed and bragged about as a fireproof structure—one that could never be seriously damaged by fire. But now it turns out to be simply a fireproof shell with a combustible lining—in fact, a dangerous sort of building.

The fire broke out at 7 a. m., when only a few operatives were on duty, otherwise, probably, there would have been loss of life. As it was, there were several narrow escapes.

The fire is supposed to have been occasioned by the overheating of a telegraph wire from contact with an electric light wire on the street. This ignited the insulating materials of the other wires concentrated within the building, and the flames rapidly spread to the mass of woodwork of which the interior was composed.

It is said the loss to the company is about half a million dollars on the building. The report is, the company will now proceed to repair the edifice, and put it in an actual fireproof condition.

Quicksilver in South Africa.

Mr. W. J. Smith, of Zeerust, is at present in Cape Town, and advantage was taken by an Argus reporter to ask him a few questions about the alleged valuable deposit of quicksilver at Marico, in the Zeerust district. The substance of Mr. Smith's statement is that some time ago, while inspecting Witkop farm, his attention was attracted by a peculiar formation of rocks there, and also by the color—vermillion—of the rock itself, indicating, as it did, the presence of quicksilver.

Since then operations have been carried on by Mr. Lemmert, Jr., and specimens of the rock have been submitted to experts, including Dr. Hahn, with the result that a rich mineral discovery has been made. Quicksilver exists in very large quantities and of excellent quality, while silver, zinc, lead, and other minerals are abundant. The Witkop mine is at present worked by a syndicate with successful results; and this success led to prospecting operations on the adjoining farm of Buffelshoek, where precisely similar conditions were observed, and where a scratching of the surface has revealed the fact that there are equally good results to be anticipated from the mine being worked.

A syndicate has been formed to work this mine as well as that of Witkop; and a movement is also in progress for further exploration in the district, where quicksilver is evidently abundant. Professor Hahn has expressed an opinion that the quicksilver mine at Witkop is one of the richest in the world.

Salt Every Day.

Dairy cattle should have access to salt every day, and salt should be added to their stable feed. A series of experiments has convinced me that when cows are denied salt for a period of even one week they will yield from 14 1/2 to 17 1/2 per cent less milk, and that of an inferior quality. Such milk will on an average turn sour in twenty-four hours less time than milk drawn from the same or similar cows receiving salt, all other conditions of treatment being equal. Comfortable quarters are indispensable to the health and well-being of cows. Stables during the winter should have a temperature constantly within the range of 40 to 55 degrees Fah. In summer time a shade should be provided in the pasture fields or adjacent thereto to protect against the bristle-making influence of July and August suns. In all the management of cows such conditions should be provided and such care given as will insure excellent health and apparent contentment. When practicable, milking should be done by the same person, with regularity as to time. He only that hath clean hands should be allowed to milk a cow. I say "he" because I think the men of the farm should do all the milking, at least during the winter months. I have exercised the right of changing my mind on that subject since I left the farm. It is no more difficult to milk with dry hands than with them wet. It is certainly more cleanly, and leaves the milk in a much more desirable condition for table use or manufacture.

Pure stable atmosphere is indispensable to prevent contamination from that source. Immediate straining will remove impurities which otherwise might be dissolved, to the permanent injury of the whole product.—Orange Judd.

Revival of American Ship Building.

According to the Marine Record, the new tonnage of the first six months of the present year is represented by 79 steam vessels, with a tonnage of 63,922, and 30 sailing and tow vessels with a gross tonnage of 15,559, making a total of 109 vessels having a gross measurement tonnage of 79,481 tons, including steel, iron, composite and wooden vessels of first class design and equipped with all modern inventions.

Of the new steamers, 18 are vessels having a tonnage between 1,000 and 2,000 tons, and 13 have a tonnage between 2,000 and 3,000 tons. The average tonnage of the above 18 is 1,609, and of the 13 it is 2,307. It must be said, however, that from 15 to 35 per cent should be added to the foregoing tonnage, as several of the modern high classed, steel built propellers are already on record as exceeding 3,000 tons capacity.

Of the above new steam tonnage (excluding the smaller vessels), Cleveland shipyards are to be credited with at least 30,000 tons, as against 12,000 tons for West Bay City, 11,000 tons for Detroit, and still smaller totals for Buffalo, Milwaukee, Grand Haven, Duluth, etc.

Civility in Trade.

A gentleman bought some machine tools of a certain firm, and, not receiving them when promised, wrote, requesting to know why they were not delivered. To this he received no reply. Waiting for three days longer than it would take for an answer, he telegraphed briefly: "Send tools at once, or let us know why; in great need of them." This brought a reply from the superintendent, who fancied that this called for what he thought was a dignified rebuke. So he answered: "Tools will be sent when we are ready, not before." The customer took the next train to the works—only one hour's ride—and brought the telegram with him. He ignored the superintendent, and went to the president with his grievance, who, being a sensible man, soon arranged matters to the buyer's satisfaction. Then the president interviewed the superintendent, and gave him some good advice on the subject of politeness in trade, which it is to be hoped he profited by.

Human nature is weak, and the best of us are liable to err, but it is a bad thing to err on the side of incivility. No matter how large or small an order may be—five cents or fifty thousand dollars—the buyer is entitled to courteous treatment and prompt attention. The mouse gnawed the lion free of the net, and the five cent order man may know a fifty thousand dollar order man, whom he will take where he will be well treated. As the Engineer, from which we copy, says, civility pays every time. It is a cardinal point in business, and buyers should remember that rudeness always recoils upon those who exhibit it.

To Rectify Turpentine.

CHARLES C. FARIS.

As it is difficult to obtain nice, clear turpentine for microscopical purposes, I want to give other workers the benefit of my experience in rectifying the ordinary fluid. I proceed as follows:

Take one pint of the common turpentine and mix in a quart bottle with four fluid ounces of 98 per cent alcohol. Agitate well, and let stand until the two fluids separate. Decant the turpentine (which will form the lower layer) from the alcohol, and mix it with one pint of clear water. Agitate thoroughly, and let stand until these two fluids separate, then from the water decant the turpentine (which this time will form the upper layer), and, finally, mix with the turpentine about one ounce of powdered starch, and filter through paper.

By pursuing the foregoing plan any one may secure a pure, limpid, and brilliant turpentine. The alcohol used in rectifying it need not be wasted, as it will do to burn, to clean slides, or for other purposes. I usually make a large quantity and recover the alcohol by distillation.—The Microscope.

Where Traveling is not Altogether Pleasant.

Travelers on the Eastern Bengal Railway have placed before their eyes on entering the stations of the road a placard containing the following cheerful information: "Passengers are hereby cautioned against taking anything to eat or drink from unknown persons, as there are many who live by poisoning travelers. They first of all court acquaintance with passengers in a sarai or some other place, and then gain their confidence on the plea of being fellow travelers going to the same place. When they reach a place convenient for the purpose, they poison the water or food of the passengers, who become insensible, and then they decamp with all their property. They also at times poison the passengers' water when being drawn out of wells, or sweetmeats brought from the bazar, or food when being cooked."