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Editorial Thoughts

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Abstract: Describes a disease called epizootic, which killed many horses in the Eastern states. The Book of Mormon (3 Nephi 21:14) “foretells a time when, if the people would not repent, the Lord would destroy their horses.” Author the asks “who can say that the epizootic has no connection with that threat of divine displeasure?”

The Juvenile Instructor.

GEORGE Q. CANNON - - - EDITOR.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1872.

EDITORIAL THOUGHTS.

THE Epizootic is the theme for editorial thought or comment in this number, and those of you who have seen and read the newspapers for the past two or three weeks, have become familiarized with the word, odd and strange as it is. It seems as though excitement and sensation are the order of the day now. A few weeks back, in fact for several months past, the principal topic of conversation over the whole land, has been the presidential election; and just as that event reached its accomplishment, another tidal wave, by way of sensation, sweeps over the entire country in the epizootic, the name given to a disease which attacked the horses in the eastern States some two or three weeks back.

The word epizootic is another of those scientific terms derived from the Greek, and means literally a disease upon animals; and as the horses in nearly every eastern State have been attacked with a malady somewhat similar to that which human beings call the influenza, the term epizootic has been applied to it, because of its general prevalence among this class of animals. Any disease among human beings as prevalent as this is among the horses, would be called an epidemic, that word meaning a disease wide-spread or general among the people. So much for the meaning of the word, now for a few reflections as to its effects.

Here in Salt Lake we can form but a very faint idea of the amount of inconvenience caused by such a wide-spread disease among the horses. The largest city in the Territory of Utah—Salt Lake City—is very small when compared with the principal cities of the East; and the amount of business transacted, and the number of horses used for freighting purposes, here are correspondingly small. However, should the epizootic reach us, its effects would be very unpleasant, but nothing at all when contrasted with such cities as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and many others. In all the above-named places extensive lines of street railroad exist, and they have become such a public necessity that tens of thousands of passengers are carried daily to and from business thereon. Just picture to yourselves, if you can, the inconvenience which must result to the public when, as has been the case in many eastern cities lately, very nearly all the horses are too sick to work, and the thousands of street cars are standing still for want of animals.

But serious as has been the inconvenience thus caused; the loss to the great commercial interests of the land has been beyond computation. In an extensive country like ours, between nearly all parts of which there is railway connection, the amount of freight of all kinds transported, both by land and water, is inconceivable. Well, tens of thousands, and perhaps millions, of tons of this freight have been delayed, on account of the epizootic or horse disease, and there has been no possible remedy for it. It is true that in a good many places the aid of oxen and of men has been brought into requisition; but all that could be done by such means has proved of trifling avail in remedying the evil.

If the epizootic had been confined to one or two States it would have been serious enough, but as scarcely one has escaped, and it is impossible to estimate the amount of pecuniary loss, or personal discomfort which have ensued therefrom, it has risen almost to a national calamity.

To the minds of those enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, it is salutary and instructive to contemplate the seemingly simple means with which the Almighty can bring upon men evils which they can not remedy. The people of this Territory have learned this lesson well, in their experience during the several grasshopper visitations, since the arrival of the pioneers in 1847. It is scarcely possible to think of anything more insignificant than a grasshopper. Look at it! It is ugly, almost repulsive, and, isolated, it is utterly powerless for evil. But when millions of them come together they are a dreadful scourge. In a few hours, without noise or display of any kind, they destroy the labors of a season and reduce tens of thousands of people to the verge of famine; and no device of man, with all his power, ingenuity, wisdom or skill, avails the least to stay their ravages. Well may they be called the Lord's army, for, in working out the mission assigned them, they are irresistible—omnipotent.

The horse disease is another illustration in point. Who would pay any particular attention or feel the least alarm when looking at a horse troubled with a cough or running at the eyes and nostrils? One would be very apt to think, Oh it is only a cold, and will be all right in a day or two! But so far as the epizootic is concerned, the day or two has gone by, the disease has spread with surprising rapidity, afflicting tens of thousands of horses, and in its progress a fatal disease—the dropsy—has been developed, which has caused the death of many hundreds of these valuable animals.

There is one thing in connection with the epizootic worthy of note, and to which we desire to direct your attention. The Book of Mormon contains a paragraph foretelling the destruction of the horses throughout this land. We very well know that this book is rejected and wholly disregarded by the millions, but the Latter-day Saints regard it as equally sacred with the Bible, and it contains many revelations regarding the destiny of this nation and generation. One of these revelations, to be found on page 478, paragraph 12, foretells a time when, if the people would not repent, the Lord would destroy their horses. Who can say that the epizootic has no connection with that threat of Divine displeasure, and has not come, at least in partial fulfillment thereof? Many would no doubt be inclined to cry "fanaticism" at the mention of such a thing; but there is the revelation for all to read who will, and none can deny that in this visitation the horses of the nation have been stricken, that man's skill to stay the progress of the disease has been powerless, and that the hand of the afflicter has been omnipotent.

We would not suppose that, were the revelation we have referred to now to be published in every newspaper in the land, it would have any effect in convincing the scoffer and unbeliever; that revelation, however, in connection with this prevalent malady, can not be disregarded by the believer in modern revelation. But such visitations, whether in the past, present or future, can only be understood by those whose minds are enlightened so as to understand the signs of the times; for the scoffer and unbeliever of to-day, like their predecessors in the days of the Redeemer, would not be convinced though one rose from the dead.

MEN who are exceedingly blind to their own faults, are oftentimes exceedingly quick-sighted to the faults of others.

SENTIMENTS of friendship which flow from the heart cannot be frozen in adversity.