THE OMAHA DAILY BEE: THURSDAY, JULY 21, 1881.

A DEAD LAND.

More Barren Than The Great Basin, And More Deserted Than The Sahara.

Great Colorado Desert. The

Views of Gov. Fremont on the Great Inland-Sea Project.

Yuma Special Cor. Chicago Tribune.

"Now we shall soon leave civilization behind," said the train-boy to me as we stepped aboard the Southern Pacific overland train as it pulled off we have traveled many miles farther, the very heart of the desert will be reached. Batton up your duster, put your eyes from the sand, and in a

few hours the ride will be over.' We were now 575 miles from Sab Francisco, and still a good 150 miles from the crossing of the Colorado river at Yuma. The mountains waves had before glittered in the sun. waves had before glittered in the sun. crumbling wreck of past ages, and the air grew botter and more oppres-sive. In less than half an hour we and sand. Rocks and mountains had gone nine miles, and were at sometimes vary the monotony of the White Water, near which station a small creek makes it way through the dry and thirsty land. In this distance we had descended 653 feet, and were now only 1126 feet above the level of chacho, and elsewhere. Silver, cop-the sea. On our right and left the per, and lead occur in various localimountains faded away like shadowy sentinels on the horizon, while in the front was the hot and scorching basin is found near the San Gorgonio pass; -a silent, lifeless monotone of russet and the pumice stone is used in polishgray. To every traveler the Colorado ing the engines on the railroad. Borax desert is an awe inspiring land. Sa-harah or the valley of the Lower Jor-tities to glut the markets of the world; dan is not more unsuited for human and immense deposits of pure salt habitation, while the stories of its ex- everywhere abound. Banks of sultent, its giant cacti, its translutent at- phur occur, which rival in size and mosphere! its wonderful mirages, its caravans dying of thirst, buried by sand storms or murdered by Indians, ning into Sonora, has beds of soda, are not less fascinating than Stanley's from which vessels were loaded on famous explorations in Africa or the their return trips from the gulf of Calfairy tales of the Black Forest and ifornia to Europe. Potters' clay and the Rhine.

BELOW THE LEVEL OF THE SEA. We were descending rapidly. In seven miles from White Water we had Five miles south of Frink's Springs gone 542 feet more; and twenty miles station, on the railroad, are a large further we were on a level with the number of mud springs, the whole water. The thermometers at the sta-tions marked 110° in the shade. Every miles. Some of these have the apwindow and door in the cars was open- pearance of craters, and gasses and ed, every man took off his coat, and to steam issue from them; but no extencounteract the effects of the drifting sive geyser-action has been noticed. sand and heat, a multitude of devices Some of the springs are hot, some are run on a track of velvet. On every are 200 feet in diameter, boiling up as side was a howling wilderness of rock though forming a huge caldron; while -an unfinished realm which needed others are cone-shaped, like miniature to be ground over once again by the millstones of the mighty glaciers, and mush over a slow fire, and the smell furrowed and made musical by rivers reminds one forcibly of sulphurreted and rills and springs. At Indio, 36 hydrogen. miles from Cabazon, we were 20 feet below sea level; at Walters, 13 miles further on, the depression was 135 feet; and at Fink's Springs, 260 feet. Eleven miles east of Walters the dethe Pacific. The entire length of this remarkanow running is about 150 miles, with the American continent; but, if the low the level of the Colorado river, statement of Dr. Lenz in a recent was once in direct communication the river?" the river?" the river?" "There are twenty-nine feet of "There are twenty-nine feet of the sulf of Califorgether different. The African desert found that depression below the level of the ocean which is shown on the maps of certain geographers, and which has led to wild schemes of con-Moreover, the desert is not one dead, ridge of land interposes, through its aspect. Rocks are succeeded by sandy plains; here and there are oases covered with alfa-grass; and even stagnant, shallow sheets of water are found. The fresh water fossils which are met with in many parts show that the bottom is not that of a dried up sea; and again, the temperature is not nearly as hot as might be expected. In short, the desert is not so bad as it has been called. LIFE ON THE DESERT. If the above be characteristics of separate this basin from Arizona all is the Sahara, then it is much less a dry and barren, as in the basin itself; desert than the famous one of Southern California. No pen can describe tion is possible. The introduction of the utter desolation of this region. For many miles not a shrub, or even blad of grass, is seen; at other times palm trees, various forms of cacti, the mesquite trees, and sage brush eke moisture the parched and arid plains. out a sickley existence. In many places the vegetation seems to live on air. The giant cactus often grows and steamers as sail on the Pacific. and flourishes with its roots mostly Another result of creating this inland exposed, or growing down into the sea would be to develop settlements around its borders, where there is ed sandstone or gravel is the only nothing to be seen now but the barsoil. In this situation the plant appears strong and healthy, and, with the palm, is something fifty or sixty make vegetation and life possible; and feet in height. When water can be this can only be obtained by flooding obtained on the desert, fine crops of this vast basin with the waters of the grain, vegetables and fruit can be gulf of California. In short, it would raised, and, even where irritation is make the whole surrounding country impossible, the culture of the yucca to blossom like a rose." and date palm is something rendered profitable. Growing of dates is a success on the deserts of Asia and Africa, and the value of the ghostly yucca in paper making has long been establish- sea for more than sixty miles, one The animal life of the Colorado desert is scarcely more varied than the vegetables. Coyotes, hares and rabbits are the largest animals; but finished realm. Here are no trees to chipmunks, gophers and moles are the most abundant. Large flocks of the most abundant. Large flocks of quail are also found in the vicinity of surface water, and mocking and hum-ming birds are often seen. The ming birds are often seen. The lizards serve as food for the ravens and crows; and rattlesnakes, tarantulas and toads everywhere abound. A species of tortoise grows to the weight of twenty-five pounds, and the meat of twenty-live pounds, and delicacy of this is considered a great delicacy among the Indians. Inture years, when the popular with land route is more popular with travelers from California and the east,

zon. On account of the rarity of the atmosphere the heat is nearly so op pressive as the unitiated would suppressive as the unitiated would sup-pose; and, although a man requires and self-denial. five gallons of water per day to quench his thirst, he can still do a hard day's TRADE ON THE MISSISSIPPI. work, enjoy good health, and not suffer any more than he would in a harvest field in Illinois. The climate is a healthy one-the perfect health of the station-keepers and other inhabitants of the desert attesting this fact,

during the summer months.

and, in addition, the records at Yuma show that to be one of the healthie t The thermometer at Yun a frequently registers 125 degrees in the shade

for Europe in a few weeks. He returned from Mexico on the same steamer with Gen. Grant, after hav-As our train passed through the steamer with Gen. Grant, after hav-very heart of the desert, we witnessed ing his concession to authorize the a mirage which for brilliancy of effect building of a ship railroad across the could scarcely elsewhere be equaled. isthmas of Tehauntopee confirmed by from Cabazan. "Do you see that snow capped mountain over there? On our left and in front appeared a the Mexican congress. Recently he well defined sea, with rocky bluffs has been examining the harbor of snow capped mountain over there? well defined sea, with rocky bluffs has been examining the the Cana-We shall go around that, and before jutting out from the shore, and with Toronto, at the request of the Cananumerous islands rising abruptly in the midst of the water. The effect discovering its capacity for further your car window down, and protect passenger thought he had erred in his to him to be earnestly engaged in geography, and was unwilling to be- leaving no stone unturned toward

All this immense stretch of land is

kaolin are also met with; and the thermal springs are noted for their on it.

A GIGANTIC UNDERTAKING.

000,000 a year, but the figures prove that it does. There were about two thousand million bushels of grain The beach surrounding the great depression through which the Southern Pacific trains pass is forty feet above the level of the neighboring Pacific, produced in the entire country last year, and three-fourths of that quanpression was 260 feet, and not far from the road the lowest point of the de-sert was 287 feet below the level of tity came from the states tributary to

SAVING OF A CENT A BUSHEL ing waters. In addition to the marine

Benefited By Its Growth--The Barge Tystem:

Capt. James B. Eads, of St. Louis, was in town yesterday, at the Fifth avenue hotel says the New York military posts in the United States. Herald. He has been traveling a good deal of late, and expects to leave

improvement. The Canadians appear utilizing all the advantages they NEW YORK, POSTON,

river since the deepening of the water at New Orleans, said: "The ship-ments of grain from the mouth of the river have increased forty-fold in six years. Before that time not half a million bushels of grain were shipped from New Orleans, while during the past year the exports were between 17,000,000 and 20,000,000 bushels. The cotton export has also greatly increased, and the cost of transportation has been reduced \$1. to \$1,25 a bale. The only drawback at this moment to a rapid and continuous increase in the grain-carrying business is the lack of barge capacity. Mr. Jackson, president of the elevator company of St. Louis, tells me that they could do twice as much shipping

they could do twice as much shipping IF THEY HAD THE BARGES. So great is the pressure on their re-sources that they have been forced to. fix the price for carrying grain at 8 cents a bushel, when it would pay them to carry it at 3 cents if they they have been for the price is the price is the price is the they have been forced to. The celebrated PULLMAN (16-wheel) PALACE SLEEPING CARS run only on this line C. B. SLEEPING CARS run only on this line C. B. Surger Chairs. No extra charge for the celebrated PULLMAN (16-wheel) PALACE SLEEPING CARS run only on this line C. B. Surger Chairs. No extra charge for seats in Reclining Chairs. The famous C. B. & C. Palace Dining Chairs. Gorgeous Smoking Char atted with elegant high-backed rattan revolving chairs, for the exclusive use of first-class passon-rors. had the accomodation; but of course efforts are fast being made to meet the wants of shippers, and the present state of affairs only goes to show

that a strong and widespread appreciation of the advantages of the Mississippi river as a channel of transportation has taken hold out West. Railroad iron from abroad intended for roads in the northwest now comes to New Orleans, though it formerly went by way of New York and the Erie canal. The Mississippi threatens were attempted. The train seemed to lukewarm and some are cold. Some of the Erie canal, and in order that at no distant day to be a serious rival the latter's capacity may be enlarged the State ought to abolish the tolls

> "People think it is an idle boast that the deepening of the water at the mouth of the Mississippi river saves the States tributary to the river 25,





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was so natural that more than one lieve that it was a delusion when the

CLIMATE EFFECTS.

The atmosphere is very dry and and more mineral wealth has been rare. An object 100 miles distant found, then the region of the San seems not more than one-fifth that Joaquin will be no more renowned for seems not more than one-first that Joaquin will be no more renowned for far; and the view is unlimited save by its wheat fields and stretch of level plain than the Colorado desert for its OFFICE-North side, opp. Grand Central Hotel.

shells, fresh water shells are also nu on that amount would to \$15,000,000 ble depression in which the train was merous, indicating the existence of a but the actual saving cannot be less fresh water lake here subsequent to than five cents a bushel, and if it a width of from ten to fifty miles. It its being a part of the ocean. It is were not there would be no inducea which of from ten to fitty mues. It has often been called the Sahara of the American continent; but, if the statement of Dr. Lenz in a recent to which over 1,600 square miles lie be-low the level of the Colorado river, "What is the present condition of

nia, and the feasibility of turning the water at low tide, so that the largest gether different. The African desert is really a great plateau, about 1,100 feet above the level of the Atlantic. In part of the plateau is there to be found that depression helow the level

the following language: "The plan is perfectly feasible. Between the upper end of the gulf of California Orleans?"

and the basin or valley in question a "There was a proposition originally to devote \$5,000,000, to the improvewhich it is proposed to cut a canal for ment of the river above, but this was sandy level, but is greatly varied in a distance of ten miles to a lake about cut down to \$1,000,000, which, under twenty miles long, and at the other a commission appointed for the purend of the lake continue the canal pose, will be applied initially to the some fifteen miles more. The cost work of improvement at a point in of the canal might be \$1,000,000 and the river about 100 miles below the time necessary for the work per- Cairo.

haps six months; but the benefits to the two states of California and Ari-zona would be incalculable. The great of the river?"

want of Southern Califernia and the "It is perfectly practicable to secure adjoining region of Arizona are water twenty feet of water from Cairo and moisture. On the eastern slope down. of the low range of mountains that

"How long does low water interfere with navigation to any extent?" "For three months of the year-

the heat is intolerable, and no vegeta-September, October and November.' "What other shipping ports are this great body of water would change there on the river besides St. Louis?" the whole face of things. It would "Cairo must become a great shipping point. It is already doing a induce cool and tempering winds to blow over and form clouds to large business. Davenport and other places are mentioned, and, as I said The canal should be made deep and before, there appears to be nothing wide enough to admit such vessels to stop the increase in the traffic on the river but the want of sufficient means of conveyance '

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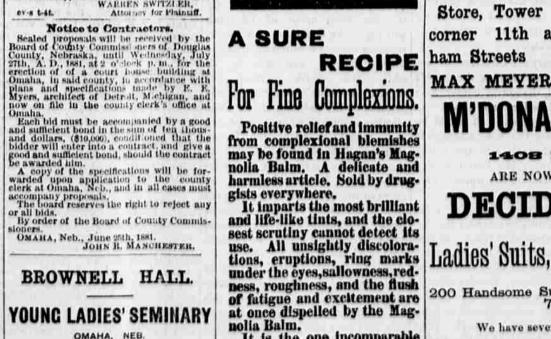
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