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OUR TRAVELER.

His Account of Interesting Objects.

THE KANSAS CITY OF TO-DAY.

Some Immense Establishments—The Prohibition Law in Iowa.

KANSAS CITY, Jan. 24, 1890.

EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—

One often believes that the good old times were best, but those old days are going. The small towns are enlarging and our big cities are choking and gorging with people, elbowing each other into the gutters, and fighting right and left for a living. It is a question for scientists whether our country is not better off when the people are evenly distributed over the land, rather than crowded into the cities. But, after all, we modern people must follow the tendency of the times. Some day people will look to these days and talk of the good old times to their youngsters. All things have their state of flux and increase of action, and it probably is not safe for man to set up protests against the natural evolution of things as they take place in this world of ours. These were some of our quiet meditations as we rode over this proud city of two hundred thousand inhabitants. This city has as good a system of cable cars as any in America, and for five cents you can ride over seven miles on one road by transfers. The entire city is interlaced with them, one elevated road and cable route beneath the same on the entire system. Trains pass every three minutes. Kansas City is situated on a hilly bluff on the bank of the Missouri river, and the streets in some places are on an incline of some 45 degrees. The cable cars seem to stand on end as they go head-long down the track. It makes one's hair raise to make the first trip. The Metropolitan Cable Co. have electric lines and own the machinery that run both lines. The power used is two Corless engines of 350 horse power each. These cables cost from \$14,000 to \$16,000, are made of steel wire and last from four to five months. Their earnings for 1889 was over one million dollars. That alone will tell of the volume of the street travel in Kansas City. A grand sight is from the top of the bluff looking at the legion of lights burning, of all colors, and moving, flickering signal lights of the sixteen different railroads hedging in around the Union depot. One who sees it will never forget it. There are twenty thousand negroes in the city and one sees them everywhere. There is two negro school houses, the Sumner and Lincoln, where the shady urethins can learn "A B C's." Our inspections of one day around the stock yards convinced me they are second to none but those of Chicago. They cover several acres of ground and one yard can accommodate 20,000 head of cattle and that many hogs. Besides there are two other smaller yards. I saw 14,000 head in the pens one day on my visit there—a grand sight indeed. Hogs by the thousand, Armour's packing house, working 21,000 men, killing hogs at the rate of ten per minute. What I saw there and in the various other firms we have visited will be given in some future letter. The telephone company of the city has 12,600 boxes in use. The New York Life Insurance company's building is twelve stories high. I rode in an elevator to the pinnacle, and saw the top of Kansas City, a black, smoky, dirty prospect indeed. The smoke, on our first view, thirty miles distant, could be plainly seen hovering over the city like a mantle of hades we read about. Quite an excitement prevails around the stock yards on account of the Alton railroad cutting cattle rates to Chicago. The average shipments are 12,000 per day, and the reduced rate was swelling this number greatly, and speculations were running high. The rate war is now only begun on cattle and it is to be hoped it will not stop until the deserving Nebraska farmers can get reduced rates on corn to relieve them of the hard times they are having, with millions of bushels of corn and only 15 cents per

bushel offered. A portion of the city that now contains near 50,000 population was a corn field ten years ago. All the way down the Missouri river there are hundreds of teams and men engaged putting up ice. There seemed to be no limit to the wholesale demand for this product. The sycamore, white elm, hackberry and buckeye trees on the river bottoms were a feast for the eye. We are asked so many times "where in the west do you reside," and we ask "where in the east do you board?" One man, a New Yorker, says he is "going east" when he goes to Maine. In Dakota a man who makes a journey to Chicago says he is "going east." At Cincinnati people go to the "far west" when they take a trip to Kansas City. Lately the Kansas City Times said of a representative who had just returned to that city from an extended tour in the west: "Where is the east and where is the west in this country, anyway?"

The prohibition law of Iowa is a complete failure. Everywhere in our travels through the state can be seen men who have liquor all the time and plenty to give away. I saw whole jugs full of it in stables and barns, bottled up and stored away in every conceivable place, and as bad as the drinking habit may seem in the inland towns it is nothing compared to the river towns outside of Iowa, such as Kansas City, Hannibal and St. Joe. The shocking sights that meet the eye in the low parts of these liquor towns are horrible and distressing.

Only one railroad represented in Kansas City would sell us a through ticket with a three days' layover at Exter, Nebraska, where we wished to visit a brother. The B. & M. most graciously granted our humble request and we leave the city rejoicing over all our good fortune. Having found Mrs. Logsdon and her family, the mother of Mr. Bernard Logsdon, of High valley. They are happy and contented, the girls especially. Four of them are at home and they don't want to marry. With Mr. Joseph H. Logsdon for guide we "took in" the town for two days and nights. With many regrets we bid them adieu and start for our brother's home in Nebraska.

J. W. MINNICK.

COVE CULLINGS.

Cove, Feb. 12, 1890.

Items this week are a variety and those which appear are not of the most startling moment.

Mr. C. G. Olsen has commenced building a commodious dwelling on his premises. Mr. J. L. Gibson, assisted by Mr. Ed Robinson, is doing the carpenter work.

Mr. S. B. Burroughs sawed 20,000 shingles last Tuesday. He uses both steam and water power.

Mr. J. E. Hough will try gardening on an extensive and scientific scale. His soil is of the very best and he no doubt will raise a large quantity of the choicest garden "sassa."

Prof. E. B. Conklin will hereafter accompany the choir of the Sunday school class at the Morrison church on a cornet.

A prominent and popular instructor of Cove says that walking from Union here is better than could be expected, and that a pedestrian is well treated along the route. He does not believe in allowing a stage line to become a monopoly.

Several of our young men bid their friends an affectionate farewell and started on a brief vacation Sunday. Failing health made it necessary that they should seek a different climate for a time.

Mrs. M. H. Eaton will give an anniversary ball and supper on the evening of the 21st inst. She will make every effort to insure her guests a splendid time.

Mr. Swain has recommenced work on John Wagners house, and will hurry it through to completion.

Frank Kelly has secured the agency for Stanley's African Explorations. It is a book of absorbing interest.

Millinery Goods at Cost.

Mesdames Bidwell & Benson the enterprising milliners of this city will now sell all fall and winter goods at actual cost. As their goods are all of the newest styles, those wishing bargains will do well to call at once.

AN IOWA LETTER.

Written by a Former Resident of Union.

VISITING THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

A Somnambulist's Freak—Chicago's Lingo—Personal Mention.

RIVER JUNCTION, Iowa, Feb. 1, 1890.

EDITOR SCOUT:—

Doubtless you have placed me on your correspondents' black list before this, but with the old maxim in view that it is never too late to do good, I will at once proceed to let you know I am still on earth.

I am no more an obscure denizen of that truly wonderful city, Chicago, but have, to use some of its own elegant "lingo," once more got a "slant on me" toward the western slope or a slope on me toward the western slant, or to be more accurately accurate or explicitly explicit, in Bill Nye's birds-eye-view style of introducing his birds-eye-view sketch of himself to the public, I will say this is W. H. McComas looking west.

I arrived here two days ago and am writing these lines beneath the roof of the palatial three-story brick where I spent the last few days of my stay in my childhood's hunting grounds nearly eighteen years ago. I am a guest of my brother-in-law, Henry Walker, who has lived on the farm that now supplies his every want for about two score years, whose kind heart and generous hand was ever ready to administer to his fellow-man, whose noble life is worthy of emulation, and whose namesake I am proud to acknowledge I have the honor of being. But while voices that once added to the cheerfulness of these surroundings are hushed in death, and faces we would almost involuntarily look to see are scattered and gone, there is still a stoically unchanged surrounding of an almost monotonous sameness—the farm with its varied and familiar landmarks—its substantial improvements but little worse for their wear, to revive the same old home-like cheerfulness and almost enable one to forget the vast number of years the same old clock that solemnly tick ticks on the mantle now, and has for nearly forty years, has faithfully counted since my departure. But a visionary reality seems to loom up before me of life beyond a range of snowy mountains where the sturdy pioneer wrestles with the playful Grande Ronde slyphr as it persistently insists on playing a tune through his whiskers, and thus I am again reminded that I have been in the talons of time, and the old bird has been on the wing.

I left Chicago in charge of a lady friend, Miss Hinkley, whose many friends in Union county will be sorry to learn, is, at present, a helpless invalid from the effects of a four months' siege of inflammatory rheumatism. She is an acquaintance from my childhood and has been for ten years in the railway ticket department of the J. M. W. Jones Printing Co. of Chicago. Since placing her safely in the hands of friends I have spent one day in visiting my uncle, whose eldest child is now older than his mother was when I saw her last, and chatting with others whom I chanced to meet. The more people I come in contact with the more enormous the duty I owe to the friends of other days seems to be, and I will either have to make an unceremonious "sneak" or spend the summer here. Be the latter howsoever true, the former I will never do.

The nearest town, of any consequence, to this point is Iowa City which is situated twelve miles north of here on the Iowa river. It is a beautiful country seat and like many another town, and many men as well, it lives in proud remembrance of what it used to be. Although a warrior bereft of the implements of war, it is still possessed of that suavity of manner characteristic of its station, and while its population, eight thousand, eighteen years ago, has scarcely doubled, there is much about its varied resources to attract capital, and much about its stately majesty to be admired. It was at one time the capitol of the Hawkeye state, but the old state house has

for more than a quarter of a century done service as the state University, thereby adding much to the general prosperity of the city.

Iowa, as a state, is slow to develop political changes, and as she has now firmly perched on the democratic banner it is safe to calculate that she will remain there some forty or fifty years, or will at least be the last to "come off the perch." The flag of prohibition now floats over the domain of Iowa, and while it receives many a hiss and jeer and I have been informed that there are thirty-nine places in Iowa City where whiskey can be procured, I am yet cognizant of the fact that there are those who are ever ready to misrepresent and malign the results of any attempted reform, and my own judgment would lead me to pronounce it not the embodiment of reform as concerns the liquor question, but the trunk of a tree from which strong branches must grow and good fruit must, as a natural consequence, be the result.

As I write a big double-fisted cousin of mine, named Theodore Kirkpatrick, who has lived with Henry Walker since he was a boy of seven years, comes strolling in, in his good-natured, careless way, which suggests to me an incident of somnambulism in his life of a strange and frightful nature which I will here relate.

Several years ago while sleeping in the third story of this house one night, he dreamed he had a personal encounter with John L. Sullivan, and realizing that he had somewhat overmatched himself and that John was about to "do" him he began seeking a means of escape. He raised the window at the south end of his room and leaped out, awakening to a sudden realization of what he had done just as he made the almost fatal leap. It was several hours after that before he realized who and where he was, and several months before he could walk out. He has one game leg as a forcible reminder of that escape from a visionary foe into the jaws of stern reality.

I have not yet visited the old homestead of my parents where I first learned to lip the words so dear to all, but will probably do so before taking my leave. From here I expect to go to Esbron, Kansas, and after a short visit to a brother, John H. McComas, I shall return to the home of my adoption. I think my disposition to ramble has been sufficiently appeased by what little I have seen and experienced and I can be content in the knowledge that Oregon is hard to beat.

W. H. McCOMAS.

JIMMIE CREEK.

The prospects of having a school here this summer are not very flattering. The district contained 16 pupils last summer, but now it contains only 8. They seem to be going out faster than they are coming in.

Mrs. E. E. Newman of Ladd canyon, has been quite sick for about a month or more.

The following named persons that were on the sick list about two weeks ago, have recovered: Mrs. W. H. Stafford of Hog valley; Mr. S. F. Cusick of Jimmie creek; Mr. G. E. Allen, Thos. Shaw and J. H. Stevens of Clover creek.

The snow drifts were deeper here this winter than they have been for four years, and in consequence the prospects for a good crop next summer are better than last. The wind has made the hills bare in some places which is a good thing for stock.

On the 4th inst. we had the biggest chinook that has been here for five years. About two thirds the ground here is bare and the other third will be if it rains much longer. Grass is good on the hills for this time of the year.

Mr. S. F. Cusick lost a valuable horse the other day. Death was caused by distemper.

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SCHOOL MATTERS.

A Timely Article by an Old Teacher.

SOME VALUABLE SUGGESTIONS.

Old and New Methods—The Assistance of Parents Required.

EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—

Have you room in your columns for a few thoughts concerning the mutual relations existing between our public schools and the communities in which they are located? The teachers of our state are striving to bring the commonwealth to a higher plane in educational matters and, thanks to the efficient leaders we have had, no small progress has been made. But we need other help beside that of our state and county superintendents, we need the co-operation of the fathers and mothers of pupils and particularly those who serve in the capacity of directors. Upon these last depend in no small degree the general advance of education. We are too much accustomed to think the schools of our country districts, because the attendance is small and the course of study limited, are insignificant when compared to the educational institution of the town. But it is not necessarily so. That it is so in any degree is a fault, not a misfortune alone. It is a misfortune to the pupil who desires and needs the best educational advantages to be obtained, but it is the fault of those who have charge of the school work.

The city school has advantages in the first place because of its superior teachers. But it is necessary that the country school should employ the scurf and residue because the city school has an efficient corps of teachers? Nearly all teachers who are worthy of the name, look forward to a position in a city school for two reasons, which, if they could be obtained in district schools would serve to draw the higher grade of teachers to them as well. First, because the city school is a graded institution with a specific line of study in each department, it entails less difficulty upon the instructor. In truth the greatest disadvantage under which the district school labors is its lack of systematic study. But this may be, and is being overcome. At our annual institute last fall, a committee was appointed to form a plan of systematic grading for our country schools. This system, upheld by a good corps of teachers will remove the great disadvantage of having a mass of pupils without respect to respective standing in class work. Another thing which we, as teachers, may follow which will prove of value to the school and a source of assistance to the succeeding teacher, is the making a record of classes and members thereof at the close of the term. This will enable the same classification, substantially, in succeeding terms and will be a material benefit to the pupils.

And this thought of district gradation brings me to the second point—the efficiency of the teacher. A poor teacher will be unable to fulfill the conditions necessary to retain this classification when made. It means advanced methods, it means more systematic toil, more scientific, artistic labor. The teacher as well as the school must grow, energetically. It is because of the intermittent line of careless or second quality teacher, so rapidly changing, which detracts from the apparent value of the training under the efficient teacher, that adds a third reason for the slow progress of country schools as compared to their city cousins. Even the common practice of changing teachers every term or so is a great evil, but when one adds to this the detrimental influence of the careless or unqualified successor of a thorough teacher the evil is aggravated. And much of this lies directly chargeable to the district and its officers. Most good teachers are not inclined to apply for a school a second time, believing that the term already taught is their recommendation for future employment and that it is not their place to add to this reputation. But, as the board do not trouble themselves

Continued on last page.