Something about Kansas

An article written by Frederick Lockley in the Lakeside Monthly. It reports that Kansas is prospering, growing, and can hold its place as an industrial and wealth producing community in the United States.

Creator: Lockley, Frederick

Date: March 1871

Callnumber: K 917.81 Pam. V. 1 No. 5

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 212588

Item Identifier: 212588

www.kansasmemory.org/item/212588

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No. 5
Lakeside Monthly.
March 1871

allowed the singer to eclipse the song; she has magnified her art above herself, and Art has repaid her. When she has left us, Juliet, Ophelia, Mignon, will live for us in music as they have heretofore lived for us in literature, and the love she has awakened for them shall flow back to her.

The limits of her genius are not difficult to define. The pathetic, the romantic even to the borders of the weird, love, regret, longing, — these are her province. Her voice awakens reverie, aspiration, but seldom passion. In certain kinds of music she produces in her listener a peculiar state of exaltation which hints a near approach to the region of the Sublime; but her powers find their true place in the wider domain of the Beautiful.

For her voice itself, he will fail to penetrate its charm who begins by defining the qualities in which it surpasses that of others. It is not of extraordinary volume, of great force. But it is unique — there is no other like it. Other singers succeed her, and you say that this voice is rich and sweet, and that is clear and powerful, — in short, one is a rose and another a lily; but Nilsson's is more like the century plant, that blooms but once in an age. It has in it notes such as were never heard on sea nor shore — sounds which recall nothing so much as the bugle-song of Tennyson:

> "O hark! O hear! how thin and clear,
> And thinner, clearer, farther going;
> Oh sweet and far, from cliff and scar,
> The horns of Elfland faintly blowing."

To him for whom her exquisite touch has opened the Region of Romance, "the holy land of song," she will remain not only a memory but an inspiration; to him no praise will seem exaggerated. To that other who marvels that this sketch should prefer eulogy to criticism, it might be replied that nothing advances us so far towards the goal of our aspirations as a genuine fit of hearty enthusiasm. But indeed, there is good reason why the critic should say with Cherubino:

> "Mi piace
> Languir così."

For, long before the wonderful, pathetic voice shall break or fail, she shall see the fruits of her presence among us; shall count as one of her greenest laurels, that she gave a new musical thought to America.

CHARLES LANDOR.

SOMETHING ABOUT KANSAS.

TEN years ago, Kansas was admitted as a State into the Union. At that time it was a wilderness of almost unbroken prairie, the hunting-ground of the wild Indian, and the lair of his savage prey. Its position on the map reached far into the territory designated as "the Great American Desert." Its towns were few and unimportant, and its population numbered one person to the square mile; its area being 53,000,000 acres, while its population in 1860 was 107,203. The opening scenes of the great conflict between Freedom and Slavery, which culminated in the Rebellion, had just been fought out upon its soil; and in addition to the terror inspired by this long-continued civil strife, two years of desolating drought came to invest the Territory with a name of evil augury.

To-day the whole scene is changed, "As with the stroke of an enchanter's wand." Seven lines of railroad, with fifteen hundred miles of track laid, render every inhabited portion of the State accessible to travel; towns and cities have sprung up with a celerity unprecedented even in this age of rapid

settlement, and the census of 1870 shows a population nearly quadrupling that of the last decade. The construction of the various branches of the Pacific Railroad has led to the development of a natural wealth scarcely inferior to that of any other State; and the reports of its rich soil and favorable seasons, spread abroad by writers and travellers who have visited its broad plains, have created so general a desire to share these lavish bounties, that the tide of population flowing in from all parts has grown to one increasing flood.

And the productive capacities of the soil would seem to fully justify the expectations thus generally entertained. At the Pomological Exposition held in Philadelphia in the fall of 1869, the gold medal was awarded to Kansas fruit-growers for the best display of fruit in a collection gathered from all parts of the Union. At every agricultural fair held in Kansas during last fall, the display of live-stock, fruits, grains, and other farm products, elicited the highest encomiums from visitors present from several neighboring States. Commissioner Capron's report, published in January, 1870, shows that, with the exception of California, Kansas leads all the other States in the yield to the acre of wheat, rye, and barley; and in the production of corn and oats it beats all the other States in the Union. In Irish potatoes Kansas stands fourth upon the list—California yielding 165 bushels, Vermont 160, New Hampshire 150, and Kansas 149 bushels to the acre. In the yield of hay, thirty States are included in the Commissioner's report: Iowa ranks first, 1.86 tons per acre; Missouri next, 1.77 tons; and then Kansas, 1.75 tons. On this last head, a Kansas journal remarks: "Perhaps, in no other product does comparison do Kansas so great injustice as in the yield of hay per acre. To put prairie grass against cultivated grasses is like comparing a savage with a civilized being. When Kansas meadows shall be covered with clover and other tame grasses, the yield will be immensely increased in weight per acre, and will place her pre-eminently ahead of all other grass-growing States."

This showing of the agricultural properties of Kansas soil must certainly be regarded as satisfactory. The question now is, what prospect awaits the varied population who are pouring into the State from all parts of the earth? Political economists lay great stress upon the fact that a community cannot thrive by agricultural industry alone. To raise grain fifteen hundred miles from the seaboard and pay ruinous freight charges for its transportation to an Eastern market, and then to import all the articles needed for the household and the farm from the distant manufacturing cities, is a practice which may be likened to burning the candle at both ends. It reduces the profits of the farmer and materially adds to his cost of living. The value of a farm is measured by the interest it will pay upon the capital invested. Cheap land is no advantage, if its remoteness from a market so reduces the value of its products that the capital and labor of the farmer will not pay him the same profit that is derived by farmers in more eligibly-situated States. While every article that he consumes comes to him at such advanced rates, he finds the discrimination against the products of his industry exactly corresponding with the cost of getting them to market. It is true that the working of this law is not yet felt to its full extent in Kansas. As regards increase and expenditure, the present condition of that State is abnormal. The industry of the population of Kansas is not generally applied to producing value;—all are crazy with the attractions of speculation. Town-sites and fancy building-lots offer more flattering prospects of money-making than the old slow-going methods of useful industry. Horace Greeley says that the

Kansas people are "railway mad," that they are pushing on the construction of railway lines "with reckless rapidity." This is partly due to the rapid extension of population, but more largely to the desire of property-holders to increase the value of their land. In the more newly-settled portions of the State, counties and townships are all emulously voting local aid to secure the building of a railroad to their limits. With the rapid development of the country and the liberal aid extended all along the line, railroad men show great facility in responding to the call. Almost daily railroad celebrations are held in the southern counties, to jubilate over the arrival of the locomotive at some ambitious town. Thousands of visitors are feasted, buncomb addresses made, and the citizens confirmed in their faith that their town or village is destined to become a great commercial and manufacturing centre. Land-seekers are attracted by the hubbub, and verdant speculators rush in from all quarters. Prices go up, building commences with frantic fury, stocks of goods are rushed in and opened out in canvas booths or upon the streets, and a carnival of fiddling and dancing and money-spending reigns for perhaps six weeks. The delusion then vanishes. Some other place, just reached by a railroad, contains more promising elements of future greatness, and a number of the disappointed draw off. In the mean time the town grows slowly; taxes to pay interest upon railway bonds, inflated rates of living, and an agricultural industry carelessly prosecuted, keep the whole community poor.

This speculative fever is a serious impediment to the prosperous growth of Kansas. Land speculation is its great bane. It is a saying in Kansas among travellers that every second man you meet is a land-operator. Every train that enters the State carries a number of these individuals, provided with charts and county maps, who seize hold of the stranger, determined to have him pick out his location before he leaves the train. At every station touched, fresh relays of these gentry are waiting upon the platform, who appeal to the land-seeker to make his home amongst them, as the advantages they have to offer him are equalled nowhere else in the State. The reckless squandering of the public domain in land-grants to railroad corporations is visiting serious evils upon Kansas. Millions of acres yet remain in their hands. To create a demand for this land, and turn the bounty of the nation into a source of almost endless wealth, every device known to the shrewd and unscrupulous business man is put into practice. Flaming land-journals are published and scattered broadcast through the country, painting Kansas as the Paradise of farmers; offices are opened in our principal cities, and agents sent to Europe, who by appeals to an instinct, which seems universal in our race—the desire to possess a home—have succeeded in creating an excitement in the public mind, which these companies are only too prompt to turn to good account. The Kansas Pacific Railroad Company, whose grant extends to twenty miles on both sides of their road, have already three times raised their schedule of prices. Available unimproved land included in this grant is now held at prices ranging from eight to eighteen dollars per acre—a rate which frequently places it beyond the reach of the industrious settler; or, if he buys, holds him in vassalage for a number of years.

There is no doubt that a large share of the many thousands who are flocking into Kansas have their minds filled with exaggerated ideas of the profitable chances that await them. They are told that they have but to buy land to become speedily rich. The price at which good land is offered them confirms them in this belief. Accustomed to seeing farms of poorer quality sold at prices quadrupling

those at which farm lands are offered in Kansas, they make haste to buy. Before long they find this cheapness is only illusory. When to the price of the land is added the cost of necessary improvements—building a house, sinking a well, fencing in, breaking the prairie-sod, planting an orchard, and so on — the difference of the cost between improved and unimproved land becomes less striking. The disadvantages above alluded to, of a reduced market for crops and an enhanced cost of living and labor, must also be taken into consideration. And when to this are added the discomforts to a family of a pioneer life, separation from old friends and neighbors, the present want of schools and church accommodation, and that general rudeness of surrounding nature which characterizes a new and uncultivated country, it will be at once seen that the land-seeker should use due caution before he makes his purchase.

An immense immigration is now setting in in the direction of the Osage lands, which have recently been thrown open to settlement. On the 15th of July, 1870, Congress passed a law providing for the purchase of these lands from the Osages, and for their removal to the Indian Territory; and, profiting by the lesson of the disastrous effects of past legislation, rigorously excluded all chance of land speculation, by restricting its sale in portions not exceeding one hundred and sixty acres, to actual settlers, at the minimum price of one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. Six months' residence, with certain prescribed improvements, are necessary to establish a claim. This Indian reservation is fifty miles wide, north and south, and about two hundred and forty miles in length, east and west — embracing an area of nearly eight million acres. Its eastern boundary commences at Wilson and Montgomery counties, and then, running to the west line of the State, it takes in the two southernmost tiers of counties. The soil of the eastern moiety is described as deep and fertile; the prairies smooth and undulating; the streams clear, rapid, and unfailing; and good timber is found along the borders of these water-courses. The advantages offered here for agriculture and stock-raising are probably nowhere excelled — its proximity to the great cattle sources of Texas and the Cherokee lands rendering stock cattle easily obtainable, and its mild winters and vast pasture ranges affording facilities for fattening these animals with trifling care and less expense.

Whether so remote and isolated a mode of life would suit a man accustomed to the bustle and excitement of large cities, is open to question. But the improvement taking place here promises soon to relieve this region of its primitive dreariness. A traveller writing from Cowley county last spring, estimates the white inhabitants of that county at seven hundred, or two persons to three square miles. The Indians he found camped in the timber along the Walnut river, with their ponies, dogs, wigwams, and buffalo hides and meat — the sovereigns of the soil and the terror of timid settlers. They cultivated no land, erected no houses, practised no industries, studied no arts. Their few personal wants were supplied by a small annuity from Government, in addition to what they could obtain by hunting, begging, and stealing. But six months of civilized industry has effected a wonderful transformation. The county was organized February 28th, 1870; and a regular election was held May 2d, when a full set of county officers were elected. A small settlement named Winfield was selected as the county seat. During the summer and fall, its population rapidly increased, and now it is supposed to contain three thousand inhabitants. One thousand dwellings have been built, three towns incorporated, three post-offices established, and half a dozen school-houses erected; a tri-weekly

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line of stages are now running, and half a dozen mills are in operation. Three thousand acres of prairie land were broken last spring, upon one-half of which good crops were raised. Farming is highly profitable, as the demand for breadstuffs far exceeds the supply. While in the older settled portions of the State, corn was selling last fall for from twenty-five to forty cents per bushel, its price in the more southern counties, where population is sparse and the flow of immigration most rapid, was one dollar and a half a bushel.

This rapid settlement is mainly due to the exclusion of railroad monopolies and greedy land-speculators. A hardy and industrious settler can here find an ample farm within his means of purchase; and what future enhancement of values results from increased population, serves to reward him for the privations and exposure of his early years. A prosperous condition of a hardy yeomanry, whose industry is devoted to spreading the area of civilization and adding to our national wealth, is certainly evidence of a more beneficent spirit of legislation than in endowing with princely grants powerful corporations, who use the means thus conferred upon them to degrade the cultivators of their domain into vassals, and accumulate private fortunes out of their labors which are inimical to the best interests of society.

This much for the farming community. A consideration of no less interest is, what advantages are offered by Kansas to our vast city population, many of whom have perhaps even greater need of betaking themselves to the growing West, to escape the crowds and the competition, and the unceasing strife with capital, which render their skill and labor at present of but little avail? The city and town folks of Kansas are fully alive to the necessity of building up a varied manufacturing industry, as well to afford inducements to skilled mechanics to settle amongst them as to insure the permanent prosperity of their State. The city council of Leavenworth passed a resolution last spring to pay an annual royalty of three per cent. upon all sums exceeding $10,000, which shall be devoted in that city to certain specified branches of manufacture. One hundred and six firms in Leavenworth pay tax as manufacturers, and the product of their industry for the last twelve months is set down as exceeding $2,000,000. One iron foundry and machine-shop there, which started as a mere germ thirteen years ago, now affords employment to two hundred hands. Lawrence has an iron foundry which turns out several tons of castings daily; Fort Scott has another, and also a woollen mill; and in Franklin county is a velvet factory (the only one in the United States) where velvet ribbons are woven by French experts, fully equal in finish to the imported article. But yet it may be roundly asserted that manufactures do not exist in Kansas. Almost every paper published in the State sends forth an appeal for some needed mechanic to go and practice his industry in some locality mentioned. A colony from Western New York, settled in Marshall county, have a water-power second only to that of Lowell; and they are clamorous to have cotton and woollen mills driven by their streams. In one place a blacksmith is wanted, in another a cooper, and in a third perhaps a brick-maker. And to show the earnestness of these citizens in their demand, a town-site is offered free, and work enough guaranteed to keep the tradesman busy for a whole season.

The natural facilities for a manufacturing industry in Kansas lie around in profusion. The supply of coal is pronounced by geologists inexhaustible; the finest timber—such as oak, hickory, and black-walnut—borders its numerous streams; cotton is successfully cultivated there; the

pastures for wool-raising are illimitable; and the salt springs of Western Kansas and Southern Nebraska are pronounced "several degrees stronger than the brine at Syracuse." To these may be added an extended railway system, growing daily, and a water-carriage upon the Missouri river reaching from one end of the continent to the other. Still, notwithstanding these inestimable advantages, the people of Kansas are almost entirely dependent upon the more Eastern States for manufactured articles. A Leavenworth packing-house last fall slaughtered three hundred beeves daily: the hides were sent to Buffalo to be tanned; the barrels in which the beef was packed were made in Indianapolis; the salt which cured it came from Liverpool and Saginaw. Their superb black-walnut logs are shipped East, and chairs and other cabinet-ware are imported from Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Vitreous sand is found in Missouri, and pebble-rock abounds in Kansas; yet their window-glass is sent to them from Pittsburgh. Fire-brick comes to them from Philadelphia, while the best of fire-clay is thrown out of the Leavenworth coal-shaft as useless. Struck with these glaring anomalies, the writer inquired of a Leavenworth hide-dealer why so ruinous a practice was persisted in. His answer affords a sample of the loose ideas of political economy which prevail in the minds of some of the Kansas people:

"With regard to my business," said this tradesman, "tanning is a cheaper process in Buffalo than we could make it here, and railroad freights do not make up the difference."

"But in what respect cheaper?" I queried.

"We have n't got the bark."

"I replied: "The Pittsburgh glass manufacturers obtain their sand from Missouri, and yet send their window-glass to you. Having to fetch the materials from a distance does not seem a bar to native industry with them."

"Wages are cheaper in the East," persisted my interlocutor; and thus clinched the argument.

It is a standing charge against the Western people that they do not practice economy. Yankee thrift is held by them in supreme contempt. Their rate of profits is based on a magnificent scale. Passenger fares, freight charges, hotel rates, tradesmen's profits, are all at least double those that prevail east of the Mississippi river. A party of "the solid men of Boston" visited California last spring, and the citizens of the Golden State made sport of their old-fogy penuriousness. Upon this a San Francisco paper read its readers a useful lesson. "This party of visitors from the East," said the editor, "represent one hundred and fifty millions of capital. A number of our citizens are disposed to make sport of them because their prodigality does not keep pace with their wealth. Poor Richard's maxim of taking care of the pence, is a practice which first set these men on the road to fortune, and it is one which a number of our people would do well to heed. While these Boston capitalists are scrupulously exact in their dealings, and in their trifling expenditures take account of the last cent, their words are good on 'Change for millions. Many in this community who find it a hard task to meet their obligations, in their daily dealings with tradesmen regard a dime or a half-dime as beneath their notice. A small leak in time will sink a big ship."

Kansas is a young State, and its citizens are ambitious to show the world what they can do in population as well as in agricultural products. Every town and city in the State is straining every nerve to increase its population. They are continually inquiring through their newspapers why they cannot have manufactures estab-

lished. The vision of busy workshops, and throngs of mechanics with their families in their midst, with the agreeable results of increased census returns, improved real estate, and a prosperous retail trade, so fascinates their minds that they are ready to make any sacrifice and incur any expense, to bring about its realization. But they must remember that manufactures are only useful to a country when they produce value. They cannot be forced as in a hot-bed. An industrial enterprise which requires bounties to bolster it up is merely a delusion. The capitalists engaged in it cease to trust to their own skill and industry, to the introduction of improved machinery and the exercise of that strict economy which is a vital element of success, being taught to depend upon public bounty for support. With so unstable a fabric, the slightest contingency is apt to bring ruin. The royalty offered by Leavenworth to manufacturing capital, is in no proportion so useful as the offer of cheap city markets. The market reports of that city in November last quote butter at fifty cents per pound, eggs forty cents per dozen, turkeys one dollar and fifty cents each, chickens eighty cents per pair. In Iowa and parts of Missouri, the ruling price is about one-half of this. Yet Leavenworth, on both sides of the Missouri river, is surrounded with as fine an agricultural country as anywhere to be found.

The social habits of the citizens of Kansas are like those of all new countries; — every person is in haste to get rich. It is a repulsive feature, and is to be accounted for on the ground that in renouncing the enjoyments of older settled communities they are determined to be well recompensed for the sacrifice. But this selfishness defeats itself. The high charges by railroads retard settlement, diminish traffic, and impose a serious bar to permanent prosperity. The high profits of tradesmen lead to the over-doing of this industry, and imposes the burden of an excess of non-producers upon the shoulders of those who work. Their currency, which ignores minute divisions of value, increases the cost of housekeeping and begets a dangerous practice of inexactness among petty dealers.* Inflation of prices is the consequence, and manufactures cannot be sucessfully established because of the high cost of labor.

That Kansas is prospering, its rapid growth in population and wealth affords satisfactory evidence. That it will continue to prosper, there is no reason to doubt. The capital and intelligence and ceaseless activity flowing into the State are rapidly developing the abundant resources that it possesses; and the high intelligence and moral habits of its people are a guaranty that their future course will be in the right direction. And when advantages are so solid, and so many avenues are open to enterprise and industry, no fears need be entertained that our national thrift will assert itself, and the population of Kansas place themselves in the vanguard among other States as an industrial and wealth-producing community.

FREDERICK LOCKLEY.

* Macaulay, in treating of the depreciated currency of William and Mary, says: "It may well be doubted whether all the misery which had been inflicted on the English nation in a quarter of a century by bad kings, bad ministers, bad parliaments and bad judges, was equal to the misery caused in a single year by bad crowns and bad shillings." It may safely be said that a working community never can be prosperous where the smallest division of value known to the currency is five cents.