

## A few Kansas items

This pamphlet apparently, was a speech written by F.D. Coburn, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, giving information about Kansas' crops and livestock and their impact on the state's economy. The speech was delivered at the Kansas City Land Show, February, 13, 1912.

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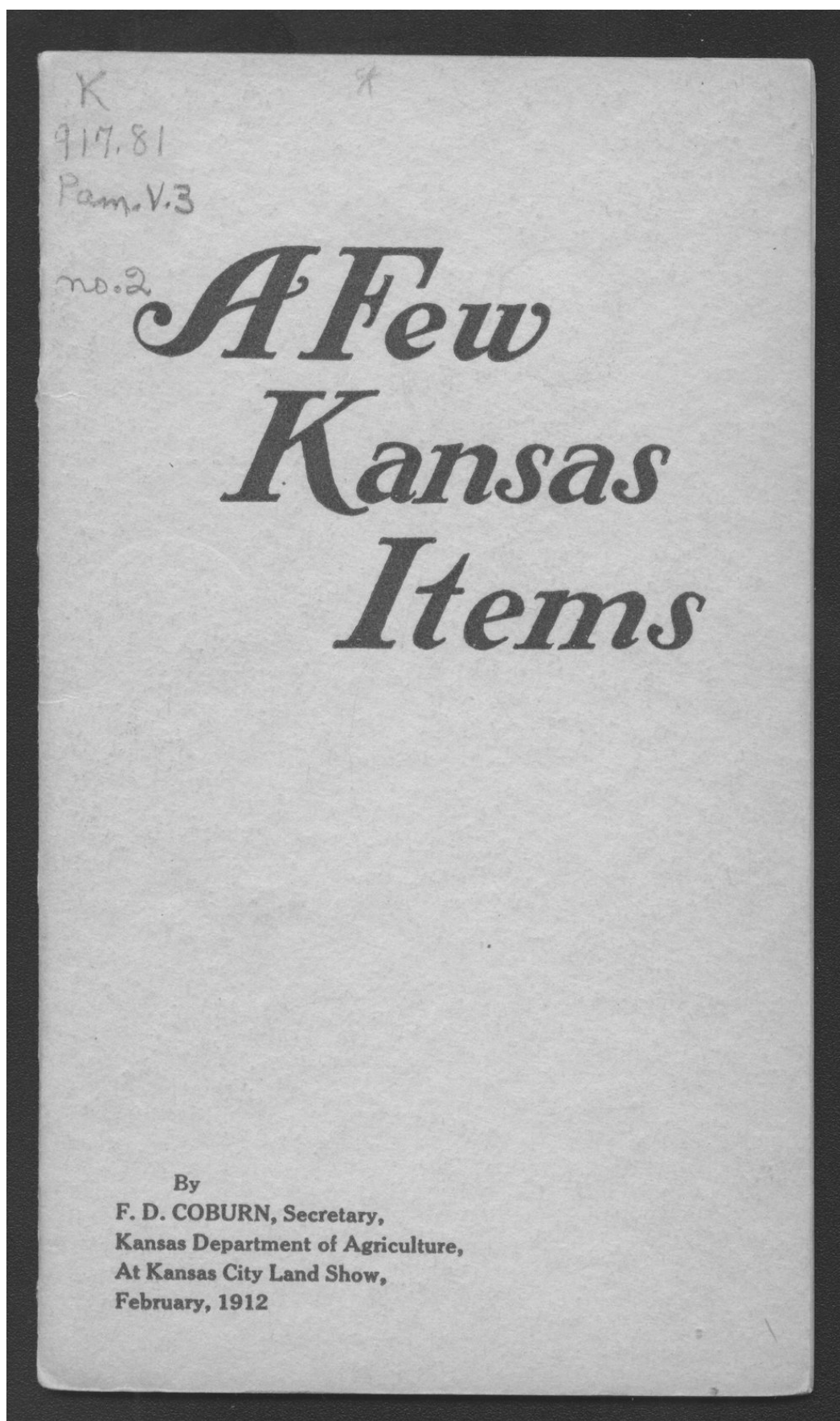
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By  
F. D. COBURN, Secretary,  
Kansas Department of Agriculture,  
At Kansas City Land Show,  
February, 1912

## A FEW KANSAS ITEMS.

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### *Ladies and Gentlemen:*

This hour has been allotted to a survey, in part, of the grassy quadrangle geographers call "Kansas," of which John James Ingalls said, "Her undulating fields are the floors of ancient seas. These limestone ledges underlying the prairies and cropping from the foreheads of the hills are the cemeteries of the marine insect life of the primeval world. The inexhaustible humus is the mold of the decaying herbage of unnumbered centuries. It is only upon calcareous plains, in temperate latitudes, that agriculture is supreme, and the strong structure and the rich nourishment imparted essential to bulk, endurance, and speed in animals; to grace, beauty and passion in women; and in man to stature, courage, health and longevity."

Occasionally a good man becomes dissatisfied with Kansas. The milk is too yellow or the honey too sweet, and he doesn't like to have them flow over his land, anyway. So he parts with his land and sells his live stock and other things too numerous to mention, and moves to Oklahoma, where his good Kansas money buys a farm which to-day is and to-morrow is not, because the wind has blown it away; or tries Colorado, and wades about in the mud while trying to irrigate a stip of bottom so limited a cow could jump it. Then he hears of Texas, and goes there to hunt the pot of gold he has been told is at the end of the rainbow. In the daytime he scratches for the sandburs that are in his flesh and in the silent watches of the night, his ears are regaled with the

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love murmurings of neighborly coyotes, while he swears at the centipedes that burrow in his whiskers. When his money and courage are gone, he yearns for good old Kansas, and the yearn sticks in his throat and chokes him till the tears come in his eyes. Memory is a marvelous painter and paints the things we love best. It pictures to the one who has strayed, the corn silking in the fields he used to own, the wheat yellow for harvest, the alfalfa stretching away in a carpet of purple and green, richer than the rugs of Persia. It portrays to him the apple trees and the elms as they whispered to the children at play in their shade; points to the roses in the corner of the garden, and in infinite detail paints a thousand things that touch the heart and prove memory's whimsical power. Happy is the man who wakes to find that he has wandered from Kansas only in a dream.

You used to hear of Bleeding Kansas! And now, as Leigh Mitchell Hodges, of the Philadelphia *North American*, says, it's leading Kansas, and feeding Kansas, and everything but needing Kansas. "When Kansas is mentioned, I see in my mind's eye the playground of prosperity spread out in front of the great rocky steps that lead up to God's blue house. I see real men and women doing real work, and getting good out of life by being what they are in spite of what anyone else is, or was, or might be. I see a stretch of fertile lands, where the Creator seems to have set His gold seal of wheat and corn, so the world need never go hungry; a succession of rolling plains, bursting with pregnant riches. I'm proud of Kansas, because she grows more thinkers than any other State. I'm proud of her because of her cranks. It will be a big day for our land when every American is a Kansan in spirit, and a Kansan in enthusiasm and effort. God bless her cranks, and corn, and courage."

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As Walt Mason puts it—

“KANSAS: Where we’ve torn the shackles  
From the farmer’s leg;  
Kansas: Where the hen that cackles  
Always lays an egg;  
Where the cows are fairly achin’  
To go on with record breakin’,  
And the hogs are raising bacon  
By the keg!”

Kansas, agriculturally speaking, is described as the silo of the universe; where are all the ingredients for the making of a balanced man. He has the chance for those most desirable of all things, the balanced mental, moral and physical rations of a triune entity.

To quote Ingalls again:

“Kansas exercises the same fascination over her citizens that she does over all who have ever yielded to her spell. There are some women whom to have loved renders it impossible to ever love again. As the ‘gray and melancholy main’ is to the sailor, the desert to the Bedouin, the Alps to the mountaineer, so is Kansas to all her children. No one ever felt any enthusiasm about Wisconsin, or Indiana, or Michigan. The idea is preposterous. It is impossible. They are great, prosperous communities, but their inhabitants can remove and never desire to return. They hunger for the horizon. They make new homes and endure no homesickness. But no genuine Kansan can emigrate. He may wander. He may roam. He may travel. He may go elsewhere, but no other State can claim him as a citizen. Once naturalized, the allegiance can never be foresworn.”

As Captain Joe Waters has said, “Privation and vicissitude in Kansas have flowered into blooms that smell of prosperity and happiness. No millionaire, mendicant, Mormon or mugwump in all our borders; all is now buck-

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wheat cakes and pure maple syrup. There is nothing in the heart of a Kansan to vinegar his lips. He is the best man in the solar system, but the women folks are still better than he is; he has the greatest civilization of the world, the greatest prosperity, and the utmost attainable human happiness; he has the most equitable laws of any State or Nation. The mud on his boots that stuck to them when he first looked in hope at the stars is there now, and the scars of past conflict with nature and the Missourian show freshly-healed cicatrices on his person.''

Beware of the Jayhawker who asks you simple questions. In your large egotism you may elaborately discuss some proposition on which he is much better posted than you, since upon the wall of many a Kansas farm house hangs a college diploma. Also do not talk in condescending manner of the "toiling masses" to the man in overalls. It might interest you to later ascertain that he has a thousand acres of fat land and enough good hard coin in the First National to buy you and sell you and forget to tell his wife about it. Walk softly in Kansas, for there the law of appearances has gone glimmering.

Kansas stands first over all as the producer of winter wheat, and bread and pastry made from its flours are demanded and feasted upon by the epicures of two continents. Her pre-eminence in this is so conspicuous as to leave with the superficial an impression that wheat must be her chief source of wealth, yet in the last two decades the corn crops have out-valued the wheat by more than \$200,000,000, or 26 per cent.

Other States grow winter wheats, but the unapproachable specialty of Kansas is her hard winter wheat, and its annual production the State has led for years, to such extent, in fact,



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as to be well-nigh monopolistic, and the flours from this are superior to others, wheresoever made in America, and conceded equal to those of Hungary. In 1900 the yield was sixty per cent greater than that of any other State, and but little less than one-sixth of the total wheat of the United States.

In 1901 Sumner County was credited with a yield of 6,812,102 bushels of wheat, or more than was produced the same year in the whole State of Texas, or in North Carolina, or in any one of twenty-two other States and Territories, and exceeding by over 1,000,000 bushels the aggregated wheat of New England, Mississippi, Alabama, New Jersey, Nevada, New Mexico and Wyoming. The acreage of wheat in Kansas in 1907 was more than the entire land areas of Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut and Porto Rico combined. The yield was more than the wheat grown that year in all New England, Illinois, Iowa and eleven additional States and Territories. The records show that in the five years ending with 1910, Kansans put in their bins something more than 385,000,000 bushels of wheat, worth on the farms where grown over \$304,000,000.

In the ten years ending with 1910, Kansas raised more wheat, hard, soft, winter and spring, than any other State, or an aggregate of 750,150,000 bushels. This far exceeded the yield of her nearest competitor and was worth at home \$554,558,000. In the past twelve years, as shown by the Government reports, Kansas has raised more wheat than any other State by 37,000,000 bushels.

Kansas raised in this past year of admittedly general shortage, and in many States almost failure, more winter wheat than any other State, and according to Uncle Sam's figures, no other, whatever her size, pretensions or location, had so much by about 35 per cent.

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The wheat grown in Kansas in twenty years ending with 1911, amounted to 1,222,500,000 bushels, with a farm value of 801,339,000 dollars. An imaginative Chicago University professor is said to have made calculations showing that the Kansas wheat of these two decades would have made a biscuit bigger than the State of Rhode Island and seven hundred feet high, or a doughnut with a hole in it nine million miles in diameter.

The significance of the showing for Kansas agriculture in 1911 is all the more apparent when taken in connection with the United States census report and comparisons with the figures of ten and twenty years ago. The census credits Kansas with an increase of two per cent in the number of her farmers in the decade and four per cent increase in total acreage in farms, but the increase in the value of last year's farm products over those of ten years ago amounts to 44 per cent. In other words, two per cent more farmers, on four per cent greater acreage, raised crops and marketed products worth 44 per cent more. The gross returns from the farm in 1911 were 70 per cent more than twenty years before.

Her spectacular crops have focused the attention of the world upon Kansas as the foremost wheat grower. Wheat is supposed by many to be the State's chief agricultural asset. It might, however, appropriately be termed but a curtain-raiser to the main performance, as corn is the big crop in Kansas and by far the greatest contributor to the State's wealth. Our wheat has made us famous, but it is the corn that makes us rich. Corn not only is the greatest income-bringer to Kansas, but is the buttress of the State's immense meat-making industries, which represent over one-half of the value of the total manufactures, or approximately \$165,000,000 annually. Sixty-three per

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cent of the total value of all Kansas soil products for twenty years was contributed by corn alone.

It is the conversion of her corns on the farm into beef, pork, poultry, dairy and similar products that brings the surplus to provide the comfortable homes and build the school houses, colleges and churches that are such common objects on the Kansas farmer's horizon and so largely a measure of his ambition.

In the past ten years the value of Kansas' corn crops has been \$149,415,802 more than that of the wheat product in the same period, which included eight of the State's greatest income-bringing wheat crops. In the preceding ten years the corn was worth \$89,529,395 more than the wheat. Kansas' corn was worth over \$6,000,000 more than all her other products of the soil in 1902, and in two preceding seasons, corn out-valued all the other Kansas field products, wheat included. In 1905 Kansas raised about an average crop of corn, but the yield was more than that of all South America, which of course includes the much-advertised Argentina; was over 80,000,000 bushels greater than the combined crops of Canada and Mexico, and exceeded the same year's crops of Egypt, Italy, France, Bulgaria and Russia proper, together.

The aggregated yield of corn in Canada for the six years preceding was less than the output of Kansas in the single year 1909. Our most valuable corn crop was in that year, and was worth on the farms where grown, \$83,067,000, exclusive of the stalks.

According to the Government Yearbook, the value of our 1907 corn was \$68,262,000, which, as reported by the same authority, was greater than the value of the combined corn crops of that year of New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, California, and nineteen additional States and Territories. Jewell county raised





in 1896 nearly 11,000,000 bushels, or more than the corn that year of Maine, Rhode Island, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut, or considerably more than the aggregated output of California, Colorado and Florida.

In corn Kansas is a billionaire. In the last twenty years the State has raised 3,009,646,905 bushels, worth on the farms where grown over \$1,041,084,985. Corn is our monarch cereal and the barometer of our prosperity. Besides the foregoing, we raised in the twenty years \$107,000,000 worth of Kafir corn, a health-giving delicacy for man and beast, of which the farmers of most other States are pitifully ignorant.

Such figures as these, all official, disprove the beliefs entertained by many of the gullible to the effect that Kansas is much of the time in such a condition of aridity that cows can live there only by sucking themselves, her hogs must be soaked over night to make them hold swill, and that mourners have to be primed before they can weep at a funeral. Statements of such a character are as misleading and even more harmful than those representing that other extreme, whereby, to draw attention to the fertility of Kansas soil and the bigness of its vegetable growths it is averred that in Wichita three policemen have been seen sleeping on a single beet.

In Kansas the hog finds the favored zone—his Eldorado—and it is here that he always make both ends meat; for Kansas is a corn orchard parked with grasses and fragrant with the bloom of alfalfa, in a profusion elsewhere unknown. Hence it is that she possesses more of these latest model, self-lubricating, mortgage-removers than all New England and fif-



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teen other States and Territories. There is probably no other region of the same area as Kansas where the conditions of climate, soil, food and care are more congenial to the hog's health and wholesome development, and he is nowhere found so developed except among and by a high order of people. High-class swine are unknown and impossible among a low-class people. Kansas swine, coinage of Kansas grass, grain and brain, in the world-arena at Chicago, and then at St. Louis, met the world-beaters and beat them. She has given Poland, China, Chester County, Berkshire and New Jersey a thousand years the lead and easily distanced the namesakes of all.

The Kansas hog, in his sphere typifying the good, the true and the beautiful, is a joy even to the Hebrew, and like the State that lends him as a solace to humanity, is in but the morning of his career. His one passport everywhere demanded and always sufficient for entree to peasants, potentates, or presidents, is—

“KANSAS” ON THE RIND.

Walter Neff, editor of the *Drovers Telegram*, and recognized as one of our profoundest students of zoölogy, avers with truth that “it is hard to understand how any Jew, even the most orthodox, being acquainted with the beneficence, commercially and artistically, of the Kansas hog, can fail to appreciate him. It is one of the misfortunes of evolution that the Kansas hog should be classed with the animal upon which Moses laid the embargo. There is, perhaps, a nice question involved, which Hebrew theologians doubtless have long since discussed, as to whether the alfalfa hog, sweet of nature and of flesh, cultured through association with the benign atmosphere of Kansas and the cleansing delicacy and uplifting in-



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vigoration of her alfalfa, can conscientiously be classed with the wild hog of antiquity."

No one who knows horses, no one who loves horses—and who does not love a horse?—need be told that Joe Patchen, John R. Gentry and Dan Patch, foremost equines of all the ages and distance-demolishers which have put their rivals in the tortoise class, came out of Kansas, and it took "the lamb that Kansas had" to yield by several pounds a heavier year's fleece than ever grew in a like period on the back of another sheep in the history of the world. He was the typical tame and woolly Kansan.

Kansas is pre-eminently the home of the Helpful Hen. It is in Kansas that by simply laying around she earns enough to pay all the taxes, and build a Dreadnaught every year. The value of her surplus products in twenty years, aside from those consumed at home, has exceeded 15½ times what the United States paid for all Alaska, and more than five times the cash exchanged for both Alaska and the Louisiana Purchase, in the largest two real estate deals the amazed world ever witnessed. If the great Cardinal Richelieu really said that the hen was mightier than the sword, there must have been in his prophetic soul a foreseeing of her achievements 300 years later on the plains of Kansas, then undreamt and beyond the sea. Records disclose that the surplus poultry and eggs sold in Kansas in 1911 brought \$11,369,000, which includes nothing whatever for the millions of dollars worth kept over, the vast quantities consumed by the producers, or the chickens that entered the ministry. Here the grains and other desirable foods, including alfalfa, are abundantly and economically raised; mild winters and early hatching seasons greatly lessen the cost and risk of rearing and housing, and excellent transpor-

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tation facilities render the Sunflower State especially adapted for poultry's profitable production on an unlimited scale.

The editor of the *New York Tribune* says: "Sonnets on hens, herbs and hogs, odes on alfalfa and dithyrambs on Kansas men and women are contained in the thousand-page biennial report of the Kansas Board of Agriculture. A document full of hog and human nature, more fascinating than any work of fiction, it is infinitely different from the academic dullness expected from an agricultural board, and suggests an uplifted condition of the Kansas farmer that leaves nothing to be desired.

Kansas is unique in many things, but in none more than in the commanding position she occupies in relation to alfalfa-growing. Her development in this industry has been one of the marvels of her prolific agriculture, and as in winter wheat, no other State is her equal. It is here that alfalfa finds its affinity, and our farmers are taking advantage of this to their great profit. It is the "stock food" par excellence, and there is no other "just as good." Here alfalfa-growing was the advance agent of prosperity. From obscurity it leaped to the foremost rank of her hay plants and multiplied many times the State's output of tame hay. All who know alfalfa best esteem it as one of the richest acquisitions to American agriculture, and in Kansas conditions seem naturally adapted to its most abundant and economical production.

Wherever it grows the land is enriched and the grower as well, for it not only fills the soil with valuable plant-food, but as hay and pasture it brings returns that annually enlarge the owner's bank account. Through its wonderful root-system it fertilizes and strengthens rather than depletes the soil, to the great ben-





efit of whatever crops may follow. It makes poor land good, and good land better. Its hay yield per acre is from two to three times greater than that of the justly prized red clover. Besides one to three cuttings of hay in the same season, a seed crop harvested is often found a source of greater profit than if hay alone was the consideration. There is no other hay as good for all live stock, and for horses and hogs alfalfa is simply invaluable, as a hay, a soiling crop, or as pasture. It is the excelling hog pasturage, and, with hogs, makes one of the most profitable farm combinations. An alfalfa pasture is said to be a hog's idea of heaven.

As a meat-maker, milk-maker, and money-maker, alfalfa is equally prized, and as a rejuvenator and improver of soils it has no rival. It supplies the one requisite which Providence has apparently failed to provide in establishing here the otherwise ready-made conditions for dairying.

In her acreage of this wonderful legume Kansas has every other State left at the pole. The alfalfa now growing in Kansas approximates nine hundred and eighty thousand acres, and but three cultivated crops exceed it in annual area, viz.: wheat, corn and oats. In combination with these, alfalfa furnishes Kansans with the most complete and cheapest rations anywhere available for the maintenance of live stock, for the excellence of which they are famed. It is a perennial blessing to those so fortunate as to have an area given to its growing.

The increase in its popularity with us is disclosed by the fact that in 1891 its entire area was but 34,384 acres, and in 1910 Jewell County alone had more than 60,000 acres. It supplies the protein to construct and repair the brains of statesmen, build up the muscles and bones of the war-horse and endow its



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rider with sinews like steel. It causes the contented cow to yield the creamy milk, the pig to grunt with satisfaction, the hen to cackle at her lay, and gives the Christmas turkey a bosom that for appealing tenderness, bulk and breadth of beam is elsewhere unknown and unattainable.

The program arranged here by the capable managers makes it impossible for me to touch on but a few of our State's possessions and possibilities, and only those above ground. Her underground wealth, in many forms unsuspected until in recent years, is apparently inexhaustible and immeasurable.

I could dwell upon our cattle and horses, our orchards, our developing irrigation, our coal, lead, zinc, salt, oil and gas, our schools, colleges, churches, our banks, railroads and the innumerable institutions that spell progress, prosperity and growing prominence, but it is not in this wealth of material possessions, desirable and admirable as they are, that we have the largest pride. Boundless fruitful acres, earth opulent in minerals, sleek kine, bursting bins, and plethoric bank accounts are not the first in esteem, nor rated as giving the State her high place in civilization's scale, for far over and above these are counted the high moral standards and ideals of her citizens, the beneficent laws they have devised and the spirit of obedience to these. It is the far-reaching influences for future good, radiated from temperate lives, devout homes, the schools and the churches, that, next to the boys and girls, are objects of her most jealous and generous care.

Furthermore and better, those who have their homes in Kansas live in a State where the man who sells intoxicants, thereby encouraging drunkenness, poverty, crime and the making of more drunkards out of the rising generation, is





an outlaw, who when convicted lands in jail or on the rockpile, and found guilty a second time goes to the State penitentiary. The booze-dispenser has, as such, no standing in Kansas legally, financially, morally or socially. He is classified as an "undesirable," whose presence and investments are shunned rather than sought. There may be for him somewhere fields less congenial, but no map is yet printed which indicates their location. Whatever her foibles, whatever she is, whatever she may be or fail to be, the pen that in the coming years shall indite the Kansas story must write:

**"Here was a State builded by those who worshipped God, loved their fellow men despite color or creed, and were sober."**

The warden of the State penitentiary writes me: "Under enforced prohibition the drunkard-making business is stopped; illiteracy and crime are decreasing, poor houses are empty in many counties, and families of laboring men are better clothed, better fed, better housed and have more advantages than in any other State in the Union, and the saloon vote no longer counts in elections. We have more home-owners and fewer renters than any saloon commonwealth in the world, and the church is stronger because its worst enemy, the saloon, has been dethroned."

The State Superintendent of Schools also writes: "The beneficent results of more than a quarter of a century of prohibition are nowhere more manifest than in their influence upon those grown into manhood and womanhood under its provisions. Children are reared without the temptations of intemperance and arrive at the point of fixed habits with no experience and no inclinations relative to liquor such as present themselves to young people elsewhere. Thrice blessed are State's children, because they have as their rightful heritage, sober and



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industrious parents; because they have always before them the example of sobriety, and because in the most impressionable period of their lives they are free from the insidious influence and example of intemperance."

The youth of Kansas has his eye fixed far above the horizon of the saloon, and you can raise your boy in Kansas without the temptation of the saloon, its ally, the gambling house, and dens of shame, which around the world are the haunts and plotting places of assassins, hold-up men and professional criminals generally.

After all, the pleasant scene to contemplate is the situation of the future Kansan. Born within those parallels where Nature's prodigality in gifts of earth and air and sky, of seed time and harvest, of energizing days and reposeful nights has largest manifestation; in an atmosphere electric with wholesomeness for physical, moral and mental well-being; with a parentage in which has blended the best of the robust, the venturesome, the coolly masterful and the uplifting blood of all the worthier civilizations transmuted by the alchemy of the centuries; of a stature proven by all tests most enviable for achievement in peace or in war.

Beneficiary of a past richer than fell to Czar or Caesar, and looking out with enlightened vision upon a future presenting promise and possibility in which are coined a consummation and culmination of all the best for which mankind has wrought since time began, this Kansan will typify the fruition of the ages. Surely the product of such an environment and such an age, so rich in opportunities, should be counted the most enviable of God's creations.



Thinking with his brains rather than with his lungs has made the Kansan always the hardest man to boss, and least responsive to the party lash. As against his convictions he cares less for political or creed regularity than any other man on earth. Having reached a conclusion on a given issue he acts or votes accordingly, regardless of consent or advice from any neighbor or nation. If later convinced he is in error he can reverse himself instantaneously, without blinking and without apology.