

Railroads and Agriculture.

The full effect of railroads upon our farming population and upon their habits of life, modes of farming, kinds of crops, etc., I suppose can hardly now be estimated. Their general political effect is uniting and assimilating the parts and people of every country, however much deprecated by lovers of the curious and unique in the developments of human nature, it is one to be rejoiced at by patriots and philanthropists. Human nature loses its narrowness of thought and its bigotry, and advances made in any department of human thought or practical life spread rapidly, and the general advancement of civilization goes on with accelerating speed. I have seen it intimated that the unification of Germany, which we may now perhaps regard as substantially accomplished, is more the result of railroads facilitating intercourse between her petty states than of any master-strokes of Prussian statesmanship; and no doubt as time advances, and these iron ways of traffic and travel penetrate the by-places of Europe, we shall find them an influence more potent for peace, good-will, and general progress than any, or perhaps all other causes combined. Travelers tell us, somewhat regretfully, that the characteristic costumes, manners and dialects of the formerly isolated rural districts are rapidly disappearing, and peoples, dress, manners and language, becoming homogeneous. The end of this process when all Asia is girt with railways, to the extent that India is to-day, when the African Central and Patagonian Shore lines run through trains without change of cars, can be only partially and imperfectly imagined, but it is more than half believe that the "thousand years of peace" will see the land girt with railways and the ocean-depths with the magnetic wires, and that another iron age will bring the political millennium.

But I started to speak of the effects of railroads upon the agricultural industry rather than upon general civilization. The topic is less pleasing in some of its more immediate aspects, though not, I presume, in its more remote consequences. It brings in unpleasant thoughts of the railroad gamblers and swindlers who have abused their trusts as railway officers to plunder the people, and even the stockholders who elected them. It suggests freight charges that consume the farmer's crop before it can reach tide-water, and express rates that leave a very narrow margin of profits, if any to the fruit-grower. The producer and the consumer are taxed, sometimes plundered, to support extravagant and unwarranted expenses of management, and to pay usurious rates of interest on watered stock. Such is the visible present, with which all honest men are at war in railroads, and which it is sometimes difficult to discern the future advantage of a system so inequity managed in some of its parts.

Yet the advantages of railroads to the agriculturist are numerous and indisputable. I do not reckon one of them to be, though many would, the additional facility with which the farmer can despoil his land of its better constituents in the shape of grain, and send it to any of the fields of New or Old England. But the increased facility of exchange, whereby each part of the country is enabled to grow what it can grow best, and send it to less favored sections in quantity, even though perishable in its nature, is a decided advantage. It is no small mutual benefit to Delaware and New England that the peaches of the former State can be placed in the markets of the latter in a few hours. It is well for Illinois, as well as for New York, that the fat bullocks of the Sucker State can have so rapid, and compared with earlier methods, so cheap a transit to the metropolis. And these are only specimens of a great variety of instances that might be adduced.

Then there is the advantage of a more general equalization of opportunities. All men are, in one sense, near the market, and the farmer near the great cities or towns does not have the same relative superiority that he once did, except in the use of very bulky products. The daily or weekly account of markets reaches one man but a few hours later than another; and the new ideas and new improvements in farm implements, seeds, or live stock are spread rapidly over wide extents of territory. Thus a more homogeneous, more intelligent, and advanced agriculture is the result, and no part of the country suffers at the expense of another. I see that the Illinois correspondent of the Country Gentleman, whose ideas are always worth noting, whether we agree with them or not, takes the ground that the towns are not going to thrive as well as the cities, under the new order of things. I have seen something of this kind indicated in the arguments of others, who suppose a town loses its advantage in being made a station upon a railroad, instead of a terminus. But whether this be so or not, which I doubt, if it prove anything it is the welcome fact that the present necessary evil of commercial towns may yet pass away, and future aggregations of human beings, based upon a higher law of self-interest than that of trade, may take their place.

Railways tend, perhaps, to special rather than mixed farming, because of the facility of exchange and the greater ease with which the farmer can dispose of a large amount of one staple. And while, in view of many results, I would strongly deprecate the growing of a single crop, yet there is an opposite extreme which may be avoided, and a greater simplicity of management reached than some of the advocates of mixed farming would adopt. Thus railroads have created numerous exclusively fruit farms in Southern Illinois. Many of these have been planted exclusively to one kind of fruit, as the peach or pear. The result is, often, perhaps generally, disastrous from this extreme tendency. Yet a fruit farm, planted so as to furnish fruit all the year round—strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries, currants, blackberries, peaches, pears and apples, all in their order—can hardly in any season make a total failure. A similar variety within a fixed range may be allowable in a stock farm, perhaps even in a grain farm, if the inexorable law of rendering back to the land that taken from it, in the shape of grain, in the new form of a proper fertilizer, be observed.

But the future farmer, whatever else he be, will be wonderfully different from the farmer of the past. He will in the railroad age now dawning upon us be a quicker moving and quicker witted man. He will need steam ploughs, and other appliances beyond the means of most farmers, and hence will come cooperation in farming, or at least in the use of implements. Familiarity with specialties will lead him more of an adept, and travel will have made him more of a cosmopolitan than the plodding farmer of to-day—or rather, shall I say, of yesterday? W. C. F.

Star King, when asked to define the difference between Universalists and Unitarians, replied that "Universalists believed that God was too good to damn men eternally, and the Unitarians believed that men were too good to be eternally damned."

THE HARBORING EXPEDITION.

Another Balloon Letter From Our Special Correspondent. Balloon Correspondence Cincinnati Times. DAY OF SAMANA, Feb. 2, 1871. San Domingo, last! Wade's first exclamation when he caught sight of the island and was, "San-Domin-go to—," well, no matter where Wade, you know, belongs to Greeley's church. When we reached our anchorage in Samana Bay the shore was fairly black with people. They had come from all parts of the island to see us. When we landed seventeen distinct revolutionary factions were there to welcome us, each professing to represent the island, and claiming the honor of receiving the Commissioners. As each delegation had a speech-maker, and they all "orated" together in the heathenish language, the effect may be imagined. Now, when, from evaporation the air is highly saturated with vapor—though it is invisible—if its temperature is suddenly reduced by cold currents descending from above, or rushing from a higher to a lower latitude, its capacity to retain moisture is diminished, clouds are formed and the result is rain. Air condenses as it cools, and like a sponge filled with water and compressed, pours out water, which its diminished capacity cannot hold. How singular, yet how simple is an arrangement for watering the earth—Scientific American.

How Vanderbilt Started. Every little while the newspapers contain an account of Vanderbilt's beginning. Most of these accounts are apocryphal. His own statement of his first real success in the States is as follows: He was a young man on Staten Island. He was a master of rowing—athletic, strong and daring. One night a stranger came to the landing and wanted to be rowed across to Gowanus. The night was dark and stormy, and the wind blew a gale. Not a boatman could be found who would leave. The landlord said, "There is nobody can row you over but Corn Vanderbilt"—for he was so called. He was doubtful, he said, whether he would do it. Vanderbilt was found, and in answer to the request replied: "It's pretty rough, but if you'll give me ten dollars, lay down in my boat and not stir, and do just what I bid you, I'll try it." He rowed the man over and back in safety. As soon as he landed on Staten Island, the stranger said: "Young man, how would you like to run an opposition steamboat?" "Nothing would suit me better," was the reply. "Have you any money?" "I have," was the response. "Suppose I should tell you to run into a steamboat, what would you do?" "Run into her, by—!" The bargain was made, and the storm that night, on the island, and Vanderbilt entered on his well known career as a steamboat man.

To Nebraska. It will be noticed that the BURLINGTON & MISSOURI RAILROAD is like a tree with three forks or branches, for it has three termini in the State of Nebraska. 1st. At COUNCIL BLUFFS AND OMAHA, at which latter place its trains make close connections with those of the Union Pacific Rail Road for all points on the Pacific Coast and the Pacific Ocean. 2d. At PLATTSMOUTH, where its trains make close connection with the trains of the Burlington & Missouri River Rail Road in Nebraska, which latter Rail Road runs for fifty-five miles through the country lying SOUTH OF THE PLATTE RIVER, to Ashland and LINCOLN, the Capital of the State of Nebraska. A glance at a correct map of the United States will demonstrate the fact to travelers bound to all that section of country South of the Platte River that the Burlington Route is the only direct line through, and that they should not be persuaded to go to Omaha, or any other point, in order to reach that country, for they will find that in doing so they lose from 24 to 36 hours, and have an additional expense of more than six dollars. In short, the Shortest, Cheapest and Only Direct Route to that country is via Burlington and Plattsmouth.

At Hamburg and Nebraska City —to which point it runs by means of its Branch Road from Red Oak Junction to Nebraska City—through trains running from Chicago to Nebraska City. This is the only Railroad running Direct from the East to Nebraska City and the country adjacent thereto, and passengers by taking the Burlington Route will save delay at junction points, and the expense consequent thereon.—Lantz's Intelligence.

ALMOST A FIRE.

SOME VILLANOUS INCENDIARY AT WORK. From Nebraska City Chronicle, 14th. The building on the corner of 8th and Main streets, occupied by Geo. Clinch, narrowly escaped burning last night. The occupants did not retire until after two o'clock this morning and the work must have been done after that time. The effort to burn the building is well understood from the signs still apparent. A cask was found near the corner of the building, which evidently came from a vessel containing coal oil, and there is no doubt but the oil was thrown upon the corner of the house and then set on fire. The lumber is charred for about six feet up, and a number of matches, half-burned lie on the ground. The quantity of coal oil was not sufficient to overcome the dampness of the wood, and after burning a short time on the surface the fire went out.

The object for setting out such a fire cannot be conjectured. Several families reside in the row of buildings, and many human lives would be endangered from such a conflagration as was evidently contemplated. It seems to have been a desperate maniac or a villain whose heart is already black with murder. Let some villain be shot in the act and the work will stop—not until.

A Southern paper spoke of "Turkey showing her teeth," whereupon Mr. Greeley wrote to the editor that none but hen turkeys have teeth. The hen turkey gathers the food and chews it, and the gobbler is called to gobble it.

Estray Notice. Taken up by the subscriber, four miles west of Plattsmouth, Cass county, Nebraska, five head of cattle. One bay mare, supposed to be one year old, and the second, a bay mare colt, with a small white spot on the forehead, supposed to be two years old, and also one bay horse colt with a large white spot on the forehead, both hind legs half-way to the gambled joints, supposed to be one year old, and one bay horse with small white spots on forehead, snow white on both hind feet, supposed to be two years old, and one bay horse with white on the forehead, extending down to the nose, supposed to be two years old. E. H. SAGE, February 21, 1871—w34.

Estray Notice. Taken up by the subscriber, a Heifer, that came within my enclosure in the city of Plattsmouth, Cass county, Nebraska, on the third day of January, 1871, said Heifer is between one and two years old, dark red ears, light red sides, balance white, no other marks perceptible. The owner is requested to come prove the property and I will return her to him for the same. J. H. BUTTERY, January 12th—w5.

WITH many thanks for past patronage, invite all to call and examine my large stock of Furniture and Coffins. Dan287

THE HERALD

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