

HISTORICAL

a good thing for the state, for, while the new line will not bring a war of rates—the greatest of evils to trade and industry—it will mean genuine competition between the two great rivals to secure and retain traffic by good service, fair treatment and attention to the needs of the public. The Southern Pacific will lose some of the through business which it had built up by its pioneer risks and labors, but it will share in the increased traffic that increased transportation facilities in a good field always bring, and each line will profit by the development of its local traffic. The presence of a competing line in Central California will stop the false cry of the chronic complainers that the state is crushed by a gigantic monopoly, and will show the grumblers that the fault is in themselves and not in the lack of ample transportation facilities and reasonable rates if they do not prosper.

BAD BLOOD.

When a tree begins to decay at the heart, it is best, on all accounts, to cut it down at once and be done with it; its case is hopeless.

There are human families in which a similar diseased condition exists, and for which there is no more hope than for a rotting tree. This is not a mere assertion of opinion; it is a fact, easily proved by data in the possession of every student of such matters, and up-borne by instances within the knowledge of each of us, when once our attention is called to their significance.

This taint is hereditary; it may have arisen from weakness or old age in some ancestor, from alcoholism, or from any one of a great many causes. And it appears moreover to be certain and unavoidable. That is, when the condition of weakness, or degeneracy, as it is called, is once present in a family, the weakness will appear, in one form or another, in every future recipient of the impaired blood. In one family there may be a tendency to deaf-mutism or blindness, in another to tubercular troubles; feeble-minded or epileptic children will begin to appear; the sons are likely to become drunkards and law-breakers, and the daughters to misbehave after their kind.

Nature has provided, as may be seen everywhere else in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, that a stock thus blighted shall speedily become extinct; not only because crowded out by the strong and healthy breeds, but by a failure in the reproductive powers of the family itself. A degenerate blood seems, if left to itself, to work out its own destruction in about five generations. This desirable end we seem to be trying, with our present well-meaning but most ignorant system of public charity, to defeat entirely, or at least to postpone as many generations as possible.

Probably nature will have her way,

and extinguish every such corrupt line soon or late; but how about the many sound and hopeful sons and daughters of healthy families, who have been sacrificed in the mean time by inter-marriage with these infected stocks?

Where are our eyes, and where our sense of responsibility to posterity, that instead of smoothing the way to merciful extinction for such a breed, when once detected, we lay upon ourselves instead the burden of maintaining their useless lives beyond their natural term; making existence easy and comfortable to them, encouraging them to continue their doomed race, and receiving their offspring as a sacred trust, to be fostered and passed on as a burden to our children?

Visitors to the Omaha exposition of 1898 know what a baby-incubator is; sundry kind-hearted individuals have attempted to secure one of these devices for every reformatory institution, that the prematurely-born children of the criminal female inmates may be preserved to fulfill their useful careers in the world. What does the reader think of this; taxing still further the thrifty and law-abiding members of the community, many of whom already sacrifice their own ambition for parentage, lest they may be unable to provide as they should for their children; and all that the unlimited reproduction of tainted and accursed lives by the reckless and vicious, who have to bear none of the consequences, may be still further encouraged?

MONEY VALUE OF GOOD ROADS.

The report of the Maryland geological survey of 1899 announces that the people of that state have expended over \$6,000,000 in the last ten years on their common roads; most of the money has been wasted in continual repairing. Many of the roads have no natural drainage. They are bad roads a part or all of the time. The survey has made a careful estimate showing that it costs the people of Maryland \$3,000,000 a year more to do their hauling over poor highways than it would cost if they were turned into first-rate roads.

This estimate supplements the information collected by the department of agriculture in 1895, when it received data from over twelve hundred counties from all over the country and found that the average cost of hauling a ton load one mile was 25 cents, while the average cost in six European countries that possess improved highways was almost exactly one-third as much. More than one factor enters into the cost of hauling, but the main reason why our farmers pay three times as much per mile as European farmers pay is that they can haul, on the average, only one ton over poor dirt roads, while the European farmer hauls from three to four tons at a load over fine highways.

No one knows the total mileage of our common roads, but their length in New York state is estimated at 123,000 miles. The more important highways of Massachusetts have a mileage of 20,500 miles. All students of highway improvement agree that the condition of most of the common roads in America is about that of the English roads, early in this century, when they were so bad and toll rates so high that the question of improvement was forced upon the British public. England had no railroads then and if it had not been for the wonderful development of our railroads the question of highway improvement would have come to the front long ago in this country. The people, however, are more and more impressed every year with the fact that road improvement is necessary to reduce the cost of hauling, to make roads fit for pleasure driving and to save the enormous waste of labor now expended on bad roads. When we fully understand that there is no economical way to obtain good roads except by building the best, our practical education will have made a long step.

This lesson has not yet been learned thoroughly. Many of our so-called good roads are not the best, and, therefore, are not economical. The men who built them would have done better work and spent no more money if they had profited by the experience of England and France.

Maryland has gone about the work of road improvement in a way that promises excellent results. The state has recognized the fact that geological considerations are a most important factor in good road-making. In 1898 the general assembly passed a bill for the annual expenditure of \$10,000 by the geological survey in the investigation of road construction in the state. The first published result is this comprehensive report on the distribution of the rock material required for good road-making, on the failure of the "improved" roads to meet the needs of modern traffic, chiefly owing to the fact that they were built without competent engineering supervision and without care as to grades and drainage, and on many other practical matters. The report will help to place road improvement in Maryland on an intelligent basis. It should likewise promote the cause of good roads throughout the country.—New York Sun.

Charles A. Towne says that he thinks he can carry Minnesota and Michigan. Mr. Towne was once elected to Congress from Minnesota as a republican. He afterwards ran as a silver republican in the same district against the regular republican. In one fight he was beaten by 2,000 and in the other by 1,000. He might as well say he can carry Vermont.—Chicago Chronicle (dem.)