

**PROSPERITY IN NEBRASKA.**

W. E. Curtis of the Chicago Record is now in Nebraska and, through the columns of his paper, is telling the truth about our state. He is doing Nebraska more good than the combined efforts of populist papers and politicians. This is what Curtis says about Nebraska:

The manufacturing industries and the agricultural products will doubtless show greater gains in volume and in value since the last census was taken than in any previous period in our history, but I have heard it asserted by experts that the number of cattle in the country is much smaller today than in 1890, although their value is larger. This fact was disputed, however, by one of the best-informed men in the cattle business, who has lately made an extended journey among the ranches of the southwest and Wyoming, Idaho and Montana. He declared that there were more cattle on the ranges today than there had ever been, but the ranchmen would return a smaller number to escape assessment in the states where populist legislatures had imposed heavy taxes upon live stock.

Nevertheless, it is the prevailing opinion that horned cattle, sheep and horses, are scarcer today than for twenty years previous, which accounts for the high prices. Five years ago well-broken horses were selling through this country for \$25 to \$50, while ranch horses, unbroken, could be bought singly or by the carload anywhere from \$10 to \$25. At Boise City in 1896 I saw a carload of ranch horses sold at auction for \$2 each, which did not pay for their transportation. Today the liveryman who drove us about Aurora said that ordinary carriage and draft horses cost from \$100 to \$150 each, and that ranch horses were selling at the feeding yards all the way from \$40 to \$60.

Very little wild land in Nebraska has been taken up since 1890 as compared with the previous ten years. From 1880 to 1890 a large area of the most inviting soil in the state, which the extension of the railways made accessible, was open to settlement. During that period 50,221 new farms were opened, a number far in excess of any other state except Texas and they were mostly homesteads of 160 acres each. This increase made the total number of farms in Nebraska 113,608 of an average of 190 acres each. During that decade 11,648,618 acres were added to the cultivated area, bringing the total to 21,593,444—more than that of all the New England states combined, and only a little less than that of New York.

During the last ten years there have been hard trials. The failures have been numerous, and most of the victims have gone elsewhere. Those who survived the droughts and other causes of depression are rich, contented and happy, and have bought the land that

belonged to their less fortunate neighbors, for it is the undying ambition of a Nebraska farmer to add the next farm to his own. We were told this morning of a resident of this town who ten or twelve years ago loaned a lot of money to farmers in this neighborhood. When the hard times came and the crops failed and prices were low, the latter were unable to pay interest, not to mention the principal. Most of them pulled up stakes and went in search of a better country. He was compelled to buy in the land at a nominal price, and was fortunate enough to be able to do it. He is now selling the same farms for several times their original value, and has made an independent fortune.

It will doubtless be found that the population in the western part of the state has not increased at all. It is more likely to have fallen off. It has been demonstrated by the sad experience of many people that dry land is not good for farming, and they left it for better watered regions. Some of these abandoned farms are now producing extraordinary crops under irrigation. Ditches are being built northward and southward from all the rivers in the western fourth of the state, and the yield per acre under this system is much greater than in the more favored regions in the east. But most of the old abandoned farms are used as ranges.

The towns and villages throughout the state have nearly all grown rapidly, particularly during the last three years. There has been no boom, but a solid gradual growth, which has been necessary to accommodate an increasing population and the demands of business.

There is very little speculative building in Nebraska since 1893. People build their own homes and put up business blocks and factories where they are needed, but take no chances in getting a return for their investment. The man who drove us around today said that more new buildings had been erected in Aurora during the last year than in the previous ten.

The same conditions prevail among the farmers as among the business men. Both farming and business have been concentrated and consolidated in the hands of the successful operators, while the incompetents in all lines of activity have fallen out of the procession. There are fewer farms and fewer stores in Nebraska than there were four years ago, but both are larger and more profitable. Farming is no longer carried on in a desultory way. It has become an exact science. Business methods have been introduced by use of which men of industry and intelligence win and the other kind of farmers lose in the competition. This is true not only here but all over the west. The agricultural colleges are largely responsible for these conditions. Nowadays, it is as necessary for a farmer to be educated for his oc-

cupation as for a lawyer or a doctor, and the degree of bachelor of agriculture is conferred by the universities as well as arts and medicine.

The State University of Nebraska, for example, is a typical institution and illustrates the demand as well as the appreciation of the people for learning. It is situated at Lincoln, was founded in 1869, and the bricks for the first building were hauled sixty miles from Nebraska City before a railway was opened. A class of two was graduated in 1873 and a class of nearly 200 this summer. There are eighty instructors in the faculty, 2,000 students on the rolls, and an alumni of several thousand, who are the solid men of the state. It ranks with the great institutions of the country, and is especially important because it gives a practical education applicable to the climate and the soil and other conditions of the country that cannot be controlled. It turns out every year botanists and husbandmen, agriculturists, irrigation engineers, veterinarians, horticulturists, geologists, chemists and all other classes of culture, who are needed and scatter over the state devoting their talents and industry to securing the largest returns for the least labor.

You find these men everywhere in Nebraska and many of them upon the farms, where they are engaged in what may be called concentrated and systematic farming. Nebraska is divided by longitudinal lines into different zones. The eastern half of the state has a heavy and sufficient rainfall. The western half is too dry to make agriculture safe without irrigation. The easternmost counties are devoted entirely to farming, the next strip to farming and fattening cattle for the market, the next to farming and ranching, placing the most important industry first, the next to ranching with a little farming on the side, and the western counties to ranching, with imported vegetables and butter.

**SENSIBLE TEMPERANCE.**

The Outlook welcomes as indications of a return to sane methods of dealing with the temperance question two recent significant events. At a session of the Young People's union of the Universalist church a prohibition resolution was voted down on the ground that it violated the legitimate liberty of the individual. Hitherto in ecclesiastical conventions those who have not believed in such resolutions have been too apt to keep silence, allow the resolution to be carried without objection and then disregard it as quietly as they acquiesced in it. We are glad to see this indication that men who believe in temperance, and do not believe that prohibition is the best method of promoting temperance, are beginning to get the