

in time impairing the property and impairing the service. They can be so high as to check the movement of business. I believe in an interstate commerce commission, or some similar body of men appointed by the federal government, with power to supervise rates, where there are pooled contracts in existence, and believe that the law should be more comprehensive than it is now."—Railway World of December 21st, 1901.

THE OLD TOWN.

Nebraska City is not the metropolis of Nebraska, nor the site where the most business is done, but it is one of the oldest towns of the state, situated on the Missouri, that slow-creeping, shallow river that capriciously drops out of sight and reappears again, that occupies a wider bed than it can fill most of the year so that in the spring it can have room to stretch when the melting snows broaden and deepen it to more than four times its usual volume. Around Nebraska City the land that is rolling swales in other parts of the state is roughened into hills gullied by the little streams that hurry to the river and shaded by bird-planted and hand-planted trees. Nebraska City and Brownville are the only towns in the state with a visible, brooding past that a noisy, bustling present does not interrupt, overshadow and dispute. Nebraska City has atmosphere. Miss Bullock's prose poem celebrating the beauty and charm of the Old Town has just been republished by the Morton press of Nebraska City. It is finely illustrated with views of the town and country, printed on heavily enameled paper and bound in green and white, with the sign-post pointing the way to the Old Town and the jeering crows perched upon it. This book with Miss Morton's volume of poetry and William Reed Dunroy's Corn-Tassels and Tumble Weeds are the most picturesque and soil-fragrant volumes yet published of Nebraska. Two of these books have been published in and celebrate Nebraska City, showing that the atmosphere is favorable to poetry and fertile reflection. People living in the west are just now looking about for something distinctively western to send their friends in the east. These three volumes, by three Nebraska poets, are breezy as the plains; they have the wide horizons of Nebraska and the unfettered spirit of those who settled here from old time. They are fitting souvenirs of the land of shallow water.—Sarah B. Harris, in Lincoln Courier, Dec. 28th.

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HOW PROTECTION FOOLS THE FARMERS.

[By T. W. DAVENPORT, of Oregon.]

Probably a majority of farmers, especially in the Northern, Eastern, and Western States, believe firmly in the protective system, which is the parent and support of monopolies and their aggregate trusts; and they do so in spite of the patent fact that only in this way can the prices of commodities they buy be unduly raised against them. On account of the tariff-protected trusts, prices of all the trust goods have been advanced more than 50 per cent., and there is no avoidance, except by knocking out the trust underpinning, the protective tariff, which the especially victimized farmers regard as sacred. Can they never learn that advance in price of things they buy is the same in effect as a decree by the trusts that wheat shall be, say, 25 cents a bushel; oats, 15 cents; potatoes, 10 cents; hops, 5 cents per pound; and wool, 6 cents per pound? If the farmers do not keep accounts, Fate keeps a ledger for them, with debit and credit columns; and the trusts have charge of the debit side. The often plucked farmer has little to do with either side. He must take what he can get for his productions in a free trade market, and suffer any trust-extortion imposed upon him. Need he express any surprise that at the close of his fiscal year he cannot make ends meet?

There is an easy and peaceful way out of the difficulties which beset us, and it is found by conforming to the Jeffersonian maxim, "Exact justice to all, special privileges to none." Let us practise upon that self-evident proposition by abolishing privileges in the United States. In the first place, as an experiment, and for the pleasure of seeing how beautifully it works, let us vote only for members of Congress who will stand firmly for the repeal of all tariffs that interfere with free competition or prevent us from receiving the full benefits of labor saving machinery and processes, the fruitage of progress to which all should have free access.

And then see how nicely the trusts would glide from their ornamental perches to become as one of us!

Besides, the purpose for which combinations and trusts are formed and tariffs laid, that of raising the price of industrial products, is at variance with the normal trend of human endeavor. The unfailing result of spontaneous co-operation, where human beings are unrestricted by partial laws, is to make everything cheap. Machinery is improved, processes simplified, co-operation of laborers adjusted, approximating more and more to perfection, and all in accordance with the great fundamental and irrevocable law of our being, "that men always seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion."

And what does this mean to the hu-

man family—farmers, mechanics, manufacturers, operatives, professional men, wage men, and all—if it is not that more of the things that human beings need—the necessities, comforts, and luxuries of life—can be purchased with a day's labor?

Conforming to this normal tendency of human nature, and clearing away all laws and regulations that interfere with it, is to raise the wages of all those who are not drones in the great human hive.

This is the only way to general prosperity.

EXPORT AND DOMESTIC PRICES.

A recent number of the Iron Age had a letter complaining that some manufacturers are still continuing "export prices" in the Hawaiian Islands, although they are now part and parcel of the United States, and hence ought to be charged the higher "domestic prices." It appears from this letter that the difference between the two scales of prices is so great that goods sold in the islands at the "export price" have been re-entered in the United States and sold, notwithstanding the freight charges paid on them, for less than the "domestic price." This practice the correspondent of the Iron Age considers a demoralizing one, and the editor of that paper hopes it will cease.

A dozen years ago, when the charge was made that protected American manufacturers were selling their goods abroad for less than they asked for them at home, there was an immediate and indignant denial. The manufacturers put their hands on their hearts and swore that they never had been, and never would be, guilty of such ungrateful conduct. Today there are manufacturers who do not hesitate to admit that they are doing better by foreigners than by their own countrymen, and find fault with other manufacturers who do not do likewise.

The Hawaiians are fortunate in that their territory has been made part and parcel of the United States. They would be still more fortunate if the manufacturers would deal with them as if congress had not acted in the premises, and let them have "export prices." Then they would, indeed, be in clover.

As far as is known the manufacturers have not yet determined the status of the Philippines or of Porto Rico. It would be interesting to know what their conclusions are. Perhaps the Filipinos who have been paying "export prices" in the past are worrying over the possibility of having to pay "domestic prices" in the future. If so the manufacturers should reassure them.—Chicago Tribune, Dec. 30.