OLD OTOE.

The Ancient County of the State of Nebraska.

A Done Up by the Jaunty Young Road Agent of This Paper

A Number of Lively Towns, but the Liveliest of these is Nebraska City.

Matters and Things in the County in General.

Correspondence of The Bee

NEBRASKA CITY, Neb., January 16. —Otoe county, of which this city is the county seat, is one of the oldest and most finely improved counties in the state; it represents a great deal of taxable wealth, and a good many very comfortably circumstanced citizens.

Entering the county from the west, on the Nebraska railway, the first town we strike is Palmyra, a bright little town of about 300 inhabitants. We stop here over night and get two good meals, and are furnished with the best feather bed the house affords, the excellencies of which, however, we failed to appreciate, as feather beds, according to our idea, were only intended for the ancients, and at the present day ought to be totally abolished.

There is at this point an excellent school, and it is well attended, under the careful supervision of a principal and two assistants.

About seven miles east of Palmyra we strike Unadilla, which is very like it in physical appearance. Both are surrounded by unexceptionally fine agricultural regions and both are the centers of a good trade.

In neither town are the buildings anything to boast of, except the elevators, which in both are good; both places need sidewalks badly; in Palmyra an effort is being made to build the more necessary ones.

Five miles farther east brings us to Syracuse, whose worst need is a good hotel. This is a town of about 800 people and is really an enterprising place. You will find its business directory elsewhere. It is near the center of the county, and will, probably at some time, be the county seat.

At present the Nebraska City News and Syracuse Journal are having a red hot time and throwing a good deal of cold (not too cold) talk at each other; they seem to have forgotton that quotation from Scripture—I forget now, but think it is something about piling coals on somebody's head. It is all about the county printing, which it seems was awarded to the Journal against the expressed wish of the News, who trusts that the county commissioners will use judgment enough in this matter to compel the one-horse country print shop to give a bond, etc., to which the Journal retorts by saying that to possess the truthfulness and manly qualities which it (The Journal) possesses, and to result in average health, happiness and prosperity, The News outfit would have to be born again; and that they (The News outfit) were never intended by nature, intellect, experience, or the command of facilities to do county printing, and advises them to take medicine "to ward off impending disasters to minds and bodies, and check that insane delusion and feeling of irreverence and awe struck prejudice for country institutions."

The whole argument on both sides is blue with suppressed profanity, and is very jocularly referred to by other papers in the vicinity.

Entering Nebraska City from the west we soon find ourselves on the banks of the Missouri river, which here, as elsewhere, has a total disregard for banks, and pursues whatever course happens to suit its pleasure though it usually keeps near the city, as the inhabitants need the water to drink since the Slocumb law shut up so many of the saloons. At the depot we encounter an original character, in the person of the runner for the Grand Central Hotel, popularly called Fatty, who, in his line is a perfect success. He is indescribable, but if any one reading this should ever visit Nebraska City, we would advise them to observe him at his work, and we are certain they will agree with us in calling him a genius in his lyin' (line).

Through the kindness of some of the young gentlemen of this city, your correspondent, together with the correspondent of the Omaha Republican, were invited to "take in" a select dance, given by the club which exists here. The "Republican" man being a family man and like his paper feeling unwell on account of his circulation (or lack of it), respectfully declined, but we could not resist, so we did not try, and proceeded to trip our "light fantastic" brogans, to the great amusement of the company present, who were accomplished dancers, and who regarded our efforts in that line as the antiquated relics of fossilized ignorance on the subject. Still we had a good time and met with as pleasant a society of young people as it has been our good fortune to meet.

This city is enjoying a great deal of prosperity, much more than most towns. Business seems lively, and the merchants and others report more money in circulation than usual at this time of the year.

One man here, on whom we called, expressed it as his opinion that newspaper men were all d——n dead beats. We disagree with him of course, as the assertion was too sweeping in its nature, but he adhered to his opinion, though explaining that nothing personal was intended.

The Blind institute of the state of Nebraska is situated here. We visited it on Sunday, January 15, and were very pleasantly received by Mr. J. B. Parmelee, the energetic and efficient superintendent. We ought not to have called there on that day, but it was the only time we could spare. We were shown the practical workings of the institute in the teaching line. Everything is in first-class order. In one room are the philosophical and automatical apparatus for the more advanced classes. In this department we found various applianes for object teaching, and a library, which is constantly being enlarged.

We were shown of the manufactured articles which are for sale those made by the girls. They consist of specimens of bead work, knit fancy work, and stitching, which any lady who can see might be proud to execute, how much more so than these children whose whole lives are shrouded in darkness.

The whole number of pupils in attendance at the present time is twenty-seven, of which the majority are females. Their ages range from ten to twenty-two years, and they are, as a class, a very intelligent set of pupils. One boy of about fifteen years, read for us in a chapter of proverbs, which he rendered well and as rapidly as any ordinary reader. He was totally blind, being born without eyeballs.

The institute is well managed, and reflects great credit upon the principal and teachers, whose work is of a very trying and delicate nature; under their discipline, the people are all cheerful and happy.

We had the pleasure of examining the first number of the first paper published in the territory of Nebraska, the other day. It was called the "Nebraska Palladium," and was edited and published by Sterling Morton and Thomas Morton, Bellevue, N. T., Nov. 15th, 1854. It contains the names of all the persons present in the office on the day of publication, which included half a dozen of the leading men at that time engaged in territorial politics, also the governor of the territory. It is really a curiosity.

The people here are somewhat excited over the prospects of a bridge across the Missouri, at this point, but to my mind the chances for it in the near future seem to be decidedly slim.

SCRIBBLER.

A SAMPSON OF THE WEST.

How He Can Handle an Ox as Easily as Other Men Handle Kittens.

Boone, Iowa Standard.

Jonas Johnson, or "Big Jonas," is the Goliah of this region, and some of the stories of his strength and endurance sound fabulous. In 1858 he gained a national reputation by walking from Illinois to California, pushing his provisions before him in a wheelbarrow. He was living in Knox county, Illinois, when the gold fever swept over the country, and being in the early twenties of his life was fired with an ambition to join the Argonauts. He was imperfectly acquainted with English, and had but $10 in cash, so he walked across Illinois and Iowa to Omaha, making the distance in two weeks. There he bought a wheelbarrow and laid in a stock of provisions. With these, on the 15th day of April he pushed boldly out, and ninety days thereafter he "landed" safely at the diggings, some fifty miles northeast of Sacremento, the first successful placer mines. Here he went to work in the same independent way he made the journey—alone—and was successful. He was able to earn from $10 to $20 per day, according to the number of hours he put in. A year satisfied him, and with a bag well filled with "dust" he returned, by way of Panama and New York, to his former home in Illinois.

His feats of strength are no less remarkable. About twenty years ago he found a cow in no uncommon predicament in those days, mired in a slough. A team of horses, planted on firm ground, had proved unable to draw her from the mire, whereupon Jonas, laying down some boards to give a good footing, lifted her bodily out of the swamp, and seizing her by the horns, dragged her to firm ground. At another time his wagon loaded with hay became mired down, and the horses failed to extricate it. Jonas got impatient, and going to the rear he raised the load and pushed it forward to better ground, making a litt which is moderately estimated at not less than 1,300 pounds, and performed under unfavorable conditions. He is now a hale, ruddy faced man of fifty-eight years, located on a fine farm of 120 acres, in Boone and Hamilton counties, well stocked and improved, besides being the fortunate owner of two others, 160 and 120 acres respectively. He was born in Sweden, was twenty-two years old when he came to America, and has been a resident of this county for twenty-three years. He stands 6 feet 2 inches in his stockings, and tips the beam at 245 pounds. A No. 12 boot accomodates his foot, and his hand is that of a giant.

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Hanging Basket Plants.

Ohio Journal.

Basket plants or hanging pot plants are becoming more popular every year. The time was not many years ago when plants grown in hanging pots were a rarity. A window in a plain room now scarcely looks complete without a hanging basket filled with plants, and many who do not pretend to cultivate flowers extensively will have at least one such basket.

The important problem for the cultivator is what varieties are best to select. I have had success with the money plant, called by some bride's myrtle. I commenced with a small slip, planted it in a two quart can, and after a few branches had grown I cut them off, placing them in the earth, and again after about six branches had rooted I allowed them to grow until they had come to the bottom of the can. Then each end was nipped off and branching was commenced, and its appearance was very gratifying. Every day it was showered and watered, and this is about all the care hanging baskets need. The soil in which this plant is grown should not be stirred at all after the plant gets well started, as it breaks the running roots that shoot out on the branches.

The wandering jew or tradascantia is generally a favorite, yet some think it too common to cultivate, but those who are acquainted with its merits cannot help admitting that it is of easy culture, only requiring plenty of water. One reason it is liked is because it grows so well in the shade and is nice to plant in little wall pockets hung behind pictures. The German or ivy plant is an excellent hanging pot plant, if kept pinched off so as to grow bushy and thick. This grows well in sun or shade. For a hanging basket in a north window nothing is better than Kenilworth ivy. The reason some do not succeed in growing it is because they hang the plant where the sun shines on it, which is apt to make the plant go to seed, and it soon runs out.

The Chinese strawberry, which bears its little fruit, is a great favorite with many. The smilax has been and always will be a great favorite. The ivy geraniums are beoming quite popular now, as well they should be. Holly wreath, having light rose flowers in large clusters, the leaves of the plant being green with a broad yellow margin, is my favorite of all the ivy geraniums. Morning glories have been recommended for hanging baskets, but somehow they always seemed out of place to me in the house. Nasturtiums growing in baskets in the house with their handsome flowers, look very attractive.

Nice plants for baskets are the different kinds of oxalis. It is not always we value the rarest plant the most, but generally the one that with fair treatment bears the most flowers, and one of these is the pink oxalis. It has afforded me much pleasure. At one time it was one of the few hanging plants that were in bloom, and it continued for weeks to throw out its pretty flowers. A nice way to grow basket plants is to have one kind in a pot, and when the branches have got a few feet long tie under the pot, then divide the branches in two, and tie again in the shape of a wreath. Cobea scandens is always admired as a basket plant, and its beautiful bill shaped flowers add much to its beauty.

A novel hanging basket I once made in the following way: A wire basket was lined with moss, filled with good soil, and a board was tied on over the top of the basket to keep the soil in. It was turned upside down and rooted. Cuttings of different colored bloom of portulacca were placed here and there in the moss. After they had got well started the board was taken off and wandering jew was planted in the top, and for weeks the portulacca grew and bloomed. Some ferns and lypocodium are nice for baskets for a shaded window.

Basket plants, of all others, should grow luxuriantly, as they seem more exposed than plants which are placed on a stand or on window shelves. Plants suspended in the windows dry out faster and require more water than shelf plants. If the plants are dipped in a pail of luke warm water every other day the foliage will be kept green, and this a very easy way of watering them. If you have not a hanging basket, can you not draw hints from the above article and secure one or more?

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