



THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEB., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12 1895.



ENTERED IN THE POST OFFICE AT LINCOLN
AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER
PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO.

Office 217 North Eleventh St.

Telephone 384

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Subscription Rates—In Advance.

Per annum	\$2.00
Six months	1.00
Three months	50
One month	20
Single copies	5

OBSERVATIONS

The people of Nebraska have a dreadful disease. It has been coming on since the spring of 1893. It has been fought with medicine and faith. But its progress has not been retarded. Indeed, it has taken on an accelerated movement. Of late it has become epidemic. It has taken hold of every community and fastened itself to individuals. It has become a nightmare, threatening, ominous. For years our people have been gormandizing. Prosperity held the cornucopia of plenty at our doors, and its varied fruits accustomed us to luxurious dissipation. We have stuffed and waxed ruddy-faced and round-bellied. And now, forsooth, comes a change. The cornucopia is turned bottom upwards. The fruits that came in a golden shower are no longer visible, and the gormandizing is estopped. The rich food, for the moment, is gone, and the sudden, forced dieting has given a shock to our constitutions and brought on disease. We have indigestion, and the indigestion has gone to our heads, and the result is much depression, melancholia. Without a doubt Adam and Eve, upon being cast from the garden of luxury and indolence, into a cold and barren world, were seized with indigestion. Too much fruit is apt to bring on this condition. But the first man and the first woman went to work, and the indigestion was soon gone. The Lord said unto Adam: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground." And therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden to till the ground.

Nebraska, up to 1893, was a veritable Eden. And we revelled and dissipated

in the luxuries. The people plucked the fruit with scarcely an effort. There were no New England stone-ridden fields; no old country barrenness; no necessity for such labor as the husbandmen of other parts have to perform. And wealth came easily. Then the change came. Over the garden came the blighting cloud. The ultra-favorable conditions gave place to conditions such as the people of other countries have had to face. It is no longer possible to set the table and have the good things come to us. We have got to get up and work like other people until the tide of fortune brings another period of prosperity. The prospects, together with the rude shock to our stomachs, is what is making us sick. There is really nothing to occasion alarm. Adam went out and sweat a little and got along pretty well. He tilled the ground and overcame the thorns and thistles. He ate the herbs of the field. Here in Nebraska we have a decided advantage over the lot of Adam. We can stay right in the garden, and do our tilling in the richest ground the Lord ever made. And the prospect ought to inspire us with hope and faith.

As a matter of fact, we in Nebraska have enjoyed exceptional prosperity. Of the thousand and one tales with which the beautiful and tactful *Scheherazade* beguiled the *Sultan Schahriar* there is none more wonderful than the story of the transformation of the unbroken Nebraska prairie into a populous and magnificent domain—in the space of half a man's life; the advance of the locomotive and the retreat of the antelope and the Indian; the entry of caravans and the settlement of great cities; the coming of poverty-stricken pioneers and the evolution into sturdy millionaires; the erection of a great and enduring prosperity out of the fruits of the field. Nowhere have people come to a new country with so little and, in a little more than a quarter of a century, amassed so much. There is no more wonderful story, and *Schahriar*, to have heard it would willingly have given the vizier's daughter one whole week of life. In the great prosperity which this state has enjoyed there have been but two misfortunes, the grasshopper plague, which may visit any country any time, and the lightness of crops of the last two or three years. These are purely accidents. Through all these years the wealth of the people has piled up, and the word Nebraska has been synonymous with prosperity. And now, after all that has been accomplished, is a little tribulation going to discourage us and are we going to succumb to the epidemic of depression? Are we going to forget past benefits and deride the state?

What Nebraska has done in the past it will do again. Even in the last two years, with dry weather and hot winds, Nebraska has been preferable to and

more productive than many of the New England states. This state will continue to be a great corn producing country. It will, under irrigation and improved farming, increase its general productiveness very materially. To corn will be added sugar beets, hemp and many other substantial crops that can be raised at a large profit. Nebraska has seen prosperous times, but the state is really in her infancy, so far as agricultural and commercial development is concerned. All that is needed is adjustment to the conditions that obtain here. Were the farmers of Nebraska to reduce the size of their farms to something like the size of eastern farms, and apply themselves to the task of getting the greatest possible return from the earth, with half the energy and patience of the Pennsylvania or New England farmer, the state would soon be running over with wealth, even with the dry weather we have been having.

Commercially, Nebraska is passing through the experience which every new state has passed through. Iowa and Kansas had the disease years ago and got over it. Nebraska will get over it. St. Joe, one of the most substantial cities in the west, had just such a depression as Lincoln is having now, and emerged triumphant. It is only a few years ago, less than six, I believe, when the report was circulated that Kansas City was on its last legs. The people had lost their money and were moving away by thousands. Half of the town was for rent. That was the story. Today Kansas City is cited everywhere as an example of solid, substantial prosperity. The times are hard, and there will be failures in this city among dealers who are heavy borrowers; but the trouble will be passed, just as it has been passed in all other communities, in communities where the natural resources were not comparable with those of Lincoln and Nebraska. Hold on and keep up courage. Stand up for Lincoln. Stand up for Nebraska. Remember that the people who stayed through the grasshopper plague and went to work in earnest made money, and lots of it. History repeats itself.

Just now they are digging for gold in Saline county and in Seward county. This suggests the old story of the dying farmer who told his sons of the great treasure buried on the farm. They turned over every foot and found, not a pile of stamped gold and silver, but equal riches in the fertility of the earth, the great crops produced. There is more money in the soil of Nebraska than in all the gold mines of the world. It is going to be found, not by sinking shafts and washing dirt, but by a persistent turning over of the earth, as the old farmer's sons turned it over.

General John M. Thayer has an article on "General Grant at Pilot Knob"

in *McClure's Magazine* for October. He says that "The population of the territory of Nebraska, as shown by the national census of 1860 was a trifle over twenty-eight thousand." From this population General Thayer raised a regiment of one thousand men, was appointed its colonel, and reported to General Grant at Pilot Knob, eighty miles from St. Louis. General Grant soon received his summary recall from the district of southeast Missouri and was sent into the region about Jefferson City, which was comparatively quiet. "Foreseeing that the great events of the war must inevitably take place east of the Mississippi and west of the Alleghanies and Blue Ridge, Grant knew if he went further into Missouri he might be sidetracked in that state for six months. * * * If he should remain there three months or so he would lose the important opportunity of his life. He would be taken away from the great theatre of the war." So Grant's spirit was troubled. He went to St. Louis, taking General Thayer with him. As they were walking up and down before the Planters House General Grant said he believed he would ask General Fremont to give him leave of absence to go to Galena and General Thayer advised him to ask it. He supposed Grant wished to see his family. Grant obtained the leave, went to Galena, saw Representative Washburn, and outlined his plan of campaign to him. Mr. Washburn laid the plan before Lincoln and later at a cabinet meeting President Lincoln asked for a communication from a man "by the name of Grant" laying out a plan of a campaign down the Mississippi. After he read it the president said: "Mr. Secretary, send an order to General Fremont to put Grant in command of the district of southeast Missouri." "The desire of Grant's heart was now accomplished. He was in the position to commence that series of campaigns, which, as they were unfolded, attracted the attention and admiration of the military critics of the civilized world, and meant Cairo, Paducah, Fort Henry, Fort Donaldson, Nashville, Memphis and Vicksburg."

General Thayer's account is short, only five pages. The story of his intercourse with the silent man is well told. General Thayer was a good fighter, a brave soldier and he turns out to be a good story-teller. The article contains two illustrations, one of General Thayer, taken fifteen years ago, and one of General Grant, the familiar one where he leans against a small walnut tree in front of his tent. I hope this is only one of the first of the general's stories. Tell us another please.

A Seward correspondent of THE COURIER did not altogether approve of the views in our symposium on the not very sensible query propounded by "Bible Student," of Kearney, and he proceeds to answer the inquiry to his