

CITY ITEMS.

TIMES IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Editorial Correspondence of The N. Y. Tribune.

PHILADELPHIA, Wis., Jan. 22, '60.

I do not quite understand the stereotyped assertion of Presidents and Governors in their Annual Messages that "Providence has blessed us with a bountiful harvest, &c. &c. Do they suppose that moderate, or even ungenerous, harvests are not as fully proofs of God's benignity as are the more bounteous? It does seem to me that it were better either to tell the truth or say nothing.

The simple fact is that the harvest of 1859 was below an average throughout the Free States. There are local exceptions, but only local. Grass is by far the most important and valuable staple of these States, and the yield of 1859 was not two-thirds of a full crop, as the general sacrifice of lean cattle, especially in our own State, ought of itself to prove. I estimate that there is not to-day throughout the Free States two-thirds the quantity of Hay there was in those States one year ago, and that their stock of Cattle will have been reduced fully twenty-five per cent. on the 1st of May next below the number one year before. This serious reduction will tell sadly on our exhibit of Wealth in the Census of 1860. And, unless I am sorely mistaken, the Corn crop of the Free States in 1859 was at least twenty per cent. below an average yield; while Wheat produced moderately, and Buckwheat suffered badly by the early frosts of Autumn. Oats and Potatoes yielded generously; so, I presume, did most Vegetables, though considerably dwarfed by a severe drought in Midsummer. But the total product of the Agriculture of the Free States in 1859 was worth certainly One Hundred Millions less than an average crop would have been, and yet the prices that rule are but middling. Those who have been confidently looking for a speedy liquidation of Western indebtedness, and a revival in Railroad earnings and values, will judge how far this fact should modify their expectations.

The Wheat crop of Wisconsin was a full average; so was that of Northern Indiana and Ohio. Northern Indiana had also a good Corn crop, which Wisconsin had not; while Northern Illinois had a very poor Wheat crop, while her Corn was badly injured by early frosts. Lean Cattle would not be forced on a disorganized market at the prices now ruling, and Pork would not be selling all over the West at such high prices as \$5 50 to \$6 25 per hundred, if there were an average Corn crop in the country.

Of course, the West is poor. The collapse of the Railroad bubble, whereby many people have been divested of their property, and perhaps still more of their reputation for honesty, has spread desolation over the land. There are City Lots enough duly surveyed and staked out in the Western Free States to furnish house-room for all the people of the United States; and seven-eighths of them are not to-day really worth the cost of surveying. Of course, the owners who have lost millions at two or three per cent. per month, and taken mortgages on these lots as security, will have a nice time in getting the pay, and it will be perfectly good money when they get it. Those who have invested their means in Land Warrants, and located whole Counties in this and adjoining States, will get their money back if they have wit enough to advertise their land, and sell it soon to the highest cash bidder, if they undertake to hold on for five, ten, or twenty dollars per acre, the land will generally outstep them. The art of taxation—especially the taxation of non-residents—seems to be pretty well understood by the settlers of the West; and what they don't already know they are fast learning. They will have good read and school-houses within a few years if the speculators hold on to their land.

Of course, the times are hard here. They ought to be hard—couldn't be otherwise. If people won't leave the most obvious truths otherwise than through suffering, they must suffer. When a farmer, who hasn't the requisite capital wherewith to subdue and cultivate a quarter-section of wild land, insists on buying two or three quarter-sections, and mortgaging all he has in order to secure them, pushing the school-house from his children and the mill and store away from his neighborhood, in the hope of making a big profit out of the future purchasers and occupants of his extra quarter-sections, he must buy his experience; and, if he is borrowing a due time write me for counsel and aid in shoulding a few hundreds or thousands to extricate him from his embarrassments, I shall have time even to write him an answer.

But "this sickness is not unto death." On every side, men are turning from Speculation to Industry. Those who are over head in debt are giving up their property to their creditors, and preparing to begin anew. The bankrupt merchants and correct-let operators of 1856 are being gradually transformed into frugal, thrifty farmers and (in a moderate way) manufacturers. There will be more acres broken, more grain sowed or planted, more calves reared, and (if the season be fair) more pork made, in the Free West in 1860 than in any former year. I am assured that more Lead is being dug this Winter hereabout than for many years past. Those who have put money into Western Railroads must lose a good part of it; but the Country profits by their mistakes; and even the city lot, now so dead a drug, will in good part be wanted about the year 1860, and it is an excellent thing for all but the lot-owners to have our future cities so well laid out and mapped that they can never grow up mere huddles of dwellings, like Boston, some of the older portions of New-York, and (more emphatically) the smaller cities of Europe.

One of the latest and most recently built of the New-York "baracks" has apartments for 126 families. It was built especially for this use. It stands on a lot 200 feet in extent, is entered at the street from an alley eight feet wide, and, by reason of the vicinity of another barack of equal height, the rooms are so darkened that, as a rule, it is impossible to read or see in them by the light of day. It has not one room which can in any way be tolerably ventilated. The vaults and sewers which are in the rear of the building have no other outlet than into the streets and courtyards in the cellar, through which the noxious and deadly miasma penetrate and poison the dank air of the house and the courts. The water-closets for the whole building are in the rear of the building, and are accessible not only from the building but even from the street. Confined in the rear of the building, the breezes of the passage stop a day after day repeated, but on a larger scale. And yet, this is a fair specimen of the kind of accommodations necessary for the housing of the poor family and the rich hotelier together—twenty-five per cent. annually on the cost of the apartment.

We have here the type of the system that is now more and more obtaining throughout the country. One financial convulsion follows another, each in its turn closing mills, mines, and furnaces, and thus destroying internal commerce. With every step in that direction, our people are more compelled to seek the relief—thereby augmenting the power of the rich to demand enormous rents, usurious interest, and enormous prices for lots—their fortunes growing rapidly, while reducing thousands and tens of thousands, to a state of pauperism and destitution.

It is, however, among the occupants of tenement houses alone, that we are to find the facts which indicate the decline to which I have referred—a decline which never be arrested, if we desire not to find the end of our great republic in anarchy and despotism? Look around you, and you will see that while our population is growing at the rate of a million a year, there is a daily diminution in the demand for skilled labor to be applied to the conversion of raw materials into finished goods. No reasonable man ought to wish them lower. As to those who can bring out arms only, I do not think the chances are now so good as they once were. Wages are not so high as they have been. There is much less digging, brick-making, building, &c. &c. than there recently was; and there ought to be far less lumbering, but I suspect there is not; for lumbering is like gambling; whoever once gives himself up to either can never afterward resist the fascinations of its chances, but plays away so long as he can get anything to play with. I could not advise a poor man to come West in quest of employment by which to earn his living and that of his family as a bachelorette; for I believe he can do quite as well and find quite as steady work at the East. And yet if a poor man who has any clear idea of the requirements and privations of pioneer life can raise the wherewithal to take his family clear into the wilderness, beyond the desolating sweep of land speculation, where he can squat upon a quarter-section of public land, I shall not discourage him from doing so. Let him file his claim to preemption, which secures him two years peaceable possession of any quarter-section already exposed for sale; and before the two years are expired, we shall have the Homestead bill through Congress in some form, and he will therefore be his own landlord for life, and his children may live and die in rugged independence on the soil which his courage has made theirs. I would advise no man who can pay for land thus to struggle out of sight and hearing of churches, schools, mills, &c.—away even from roads and bridges—for I think any one who has \$1,000 can do better, and keep almost within sound of a railroad whistle; but better plunge into the unbroken wild-ness for a while than to live and die other men's tenants and hirelings.

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FINANCIAL CRISIS. THEIR CAUSE AND EFFECTS.

MR. CAREY TO MR. BRYANT.

LETTER FIFTH.

DEAR SIR: A fortnight since, you stated, on the authority of Dr. Wythe, that pauperism in the State of New-York had assumed proportions relatively greater than those of England or Scotland, and "in general" of even the down-trodden and unhappy Island—your percentage being as high as 7.40, or more than double that of all the British Islands. When these facts were first presented to your sanitary society, they appeared to the managers "so startling as to lead them to doubt their accuracy, but," as you now have told your readers, "after the most careful scrutiny, they have not only adopted them, but given "them in currency as authority in their report." This "condition of facts" is one that, as you think, "calls for investigation by the proper authorities"—the alarming facts being presented for their consideration, not less than forty-one per cent of the paupers are native born, and that the terrible disease of pauperism appears, "like the Canaanite thistle, to have settled on "our soil, and to have germinated with vigor so," in your opinion, "to defy all half measures to eradicate it."

The paper is necessarily a slave to those who feed and clothe him, and a slave, too, more abject, as a general rule, than are even the negroes of the South. White slavery thus grows steadily—furnishing good reason for the fears that you have here expressed. Equal cause for such alarm may be found, however, in the fact that the growth in the number and power of your mill-masters keeps even pace therewith—growing inequality of condition here furnishing conclusive proof of decline in civilization and in freedom. How is it that such effects are being produced? Here is a great question, the solution of which may, as I think you will agree with me, be found in the following frightful facts, which have just now been given to the world, and which reveal a state of things well calculated to carry the alarm of which you speak, into the breast of every man who takes an interest in our future.

In your city there are 560 tenement houses, containing, by actual enumeration, 10,933 families, or about 65 persons each; 153 with 111 each; 71 others, with 140 each; and, finally, 29, that, as we are told, are the most profitable, and that have a total population of no less than 5,449 souls, or 187 to each. What are the accommodations therein provided for the wretched occupants, as shown in the following picture:

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
HENRY C. CAREY,
Philadelphia, January 31, 1860.

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THE TRIBUNE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

Extract from one of Our Business Letters.

SAINT CLAIR, Schuylkill Co., Jan. 26, 1860.

It has been my desire for some time to have about 100 copies of THE WEEKLY TRIBUNE coming to this place, by mail. Last week I sent for 85 copies, which came to hand, and this week, with some exertion, I have succeeded in raising another club of 22, which will now make the number 107. The subscribers are nearly all working men, and many never took a newspaper of any kind before. This will have a beneficial influence politically, as well as morally for it will arouse them to a sense of duty which we owe to our country. If someone would exert himself a little in writing to have THE TRIBUNE circulated, it would tell favorably for the Republic next Fall. If I had the

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The regular monthly meeting of the Chamber was held yesterday, PELATIAH PERIT, esq., in the chair.

A very large attendance was present. After the reading of the minutes, the following gentlemen were elected to membership: Messrs. Albert H. Almy, George W. Benson, W. J. Lamb, Aug. E. Mackay, and Samuel R. Stone. Mr. Smart Howard was elected a member of the Committee of Arbitration to fill a vacancy. Mr. Geo. O'DYKE, in behalf of the Committee appointed to prepare the Annual Report of the Chamber to the Legislature, so as to include full commercial statistics, and a report on the removal of the State of the Chamber, presented a memorial to the Chamber, in which he had corresponded with the Hon. John Cochrane in relation to the matter, and had received the approval of the proposed change, and his promise to exert himself towards its adoption. As approving letter from Mr. Cochrane, signed by the Hon. Geo. S. Messersmith, and read by the Hon. John Cochrane, was adopted, and ordered to be presented to the Congress of the United States.

As Chairman of the Committee appointed to prepare a remonstrance addressed to the New-York Legislature, against the passage of the bill for the removal of the State of the Chamber, and in relation to the removal of the State of the Chamber, the remonstrance forwarded at once to the two Houses of the Legislature.

The Chamber received from Mr. William Appleton, a Boston merchant, proposing an attempt at arbitration by our Government between the Chinese and the Allied Powers, in their present hostile posture. The resolutions of the Boston Board of Trade, in support of a memorial to this end, were also read. Mr. Love moved that a Select Committee be appointed to consider this matter, and if advisable prepare a similar memorial for the adoption of the Chamber. He gave a narrative of the troubles in China, and argued that the expense of any war of the Celestial Empire with foreign powers was and ought to be a national calamity, and that the evils resulting to China from the opium trade and oppression of England were strongly criticised. Mr. L. considered the opium trade, also, one of the most inhuman and unprofitable features of the age. It was in vain to send missionaries to a country that had such reasons to doubt our religion. [Applause.]

Resolved, That we are opposed to any interference by the citizens of any one or more States with the institutions of another, such as it is a duty which each owes to every other to defend his public rights and laws. Resolved, That we are decidedly in favor of the immediate passage of the Homestead law giving a moderate quantity of the Public land to every citizen who will accept of it. Resolved, That it is the duty of Congress to make appropriations for the improvement where they now exist, and construction where they do not exist, but are imperatively required by the public safety and highways will facilitate internal commerce. Resolved, That we decline to furnish in the letter of the Secretary of State to the Hon. Secretary of State, and in the duty of this Government to protect naturalized citizens upon foreign soil, is a disgrace to this Republic.

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