

BROOKE'S RESOURCES.

The Smallest, But One of the Richest Counties in West Virginia.

A VERY ENTERTAINING LETTER

From Mr. A. W. Campbell—Old and New Times—The Wool Industry and the Tariff—Editor Medill's Queer Logic Discussed—The State Line Railroad Project—Bethany's Semi-Centennial.

Special Correspondence of the Intelligencer.

BETHANY, W. VA., May 23.—Brooke county is the Rhode Island of West Virginia, the smallest of all her 54 counties, having a less number of acres than the late Judge Camden, of Clarksburg, is reported to have left his widow. According to the newspapers the judge left her 61,000 acres, and if he did she possesses about 3,500 more acres than all the land owners of Brooke county together, for they only aggregate 67,413 acres.

The judge was only one of the great "robber barons" of the State (to borrow a Democratic phrase) who gobbled whole counties of land and kept back its development. There was Allen G. Caperton, of Monroe county, who sold a tract about twice as large as this county to Henry G. Davis and associates, and beside him there were Judge Hoffman, J. M. Bennet, and others who had thus conspired with him, as it were, to keep West Virginia a wilderness all its days. These men had great influence in West Virginia legislation and some of them actually moulded it, and they used their influence to keep down taxation on their immense speculative holdings, by having their assessed as wild lands, and thus throw the burden of taxation on such counties as this one. As a producer and taxpayer the county of Brooke has been worth more to the State than all their holdings put together. During the twenty odd years from 1860 to 1882 when real estate values in West Virginia made their greatest advance, the wild lands of Camden and Company were held back and were never assessed at their proper value, and hence it happened that right here in the four Panhandle counties, in a very small area (600 of the 24,000 square miles of the State) nearly 50 per cent of the whole advance of the State took place. In other words, about one-fourth of the land and one-ninth of the population sustained this unusual advance in taxation.

THE STATE LINE RAILROAD. But enough on this subject of wool and the tariff. Like the Confession of Faith, and many other topics of late, it has been done to death. I did not come up here for a visit to write about it. I would prefer, if I had not so nearly exhausted my space, to talk about the railroad that is always coming from the east through Brooke county, and never comes. Mr. Myron, of Cannonsburg, who some months ago visited Wheeling and stirred up the Chamber of Commerce, and for whose project (minus the coke attachment) the chamber felt so small an interest, and the Board of Commissioners still less, is making at this time very little sign of life, albeit his agents are renewing for a year or two more their options on coal lands in this region.

THE PEOPLE HEREBOUT WANT THE ROAD and they want it bad. They have voted a large subscription and given options very freely on surface and mineral rights. It is time they had the road, but the promoters, like those of railroads generally, are speculators and they want to build this road with as little money of their own in it as possible. Their programme seems to be to get public and private subscriptions enough (with a free right of way) to grade it and bridge it, and then bond it for enough to iron and equip it, and then as a speculation pocket the proceeds of their options on land and coal. The gold flurry in Europe and the consequent financial apprehensions in this country have held their programme in check thus far, but there is every reason to believe that at an early day they will again give it their active attention.

THE ROUTE LAID OUT IS AN EXCELLENT ONE for a railroad, the best unoccupied territory in this region no doubt, for the country through which it will pass is exceptionally rich and populous. The coal measures alone are a great inducement for natural gas has run its course and coal will again be king. Hence coal options at \$40 per acre are a valuable consideration to these speculators, not to speak of town and depot sites and other plums, and they will make a great effort to secure them by building this road at an early day.

BETHANY'S ANNIVERSARY. No place that I know of would rejoice more in a railroad than this village of Bethany, for it (or rather the college) has stood here for fifty years without one, although as far back as 1850 a survey (the old Hempfield) was run through here. The original idea here was that a college should be as far away from a thoroughfare and from a city as possible, but that idea has thoroughly played out in the experience of the people. The disadvantages are real and the advantages theoretical. Like everything else these days, colleges to be numerously patronized must be easily accessible.

THE COMING COMMENCEMENT WEEK here (the middle of next month), is to be the Jubilee or fiftieth anniversary of the college and an unusually large attendance and a very interesting occasion are anticipated. What a happy circumstance it would have been if the railroad whistle could have at the same time waked the echo in this secluded vale. The signs of the times are that the Freshmen now here will hear it before they complete the course and receive their diplomas. So may it be.

MR. MEDILL'S MISTAKE. I am just indebted to Mr. Medill for an article from his pen calling my attention to the recent large importations of Australian wool under the McKinley tariff, using this fact as an argument against the tariff, the sophistical deduction from which would be that if the duties had been less the importations would have been less. Does any logical man believe they would have been less? Mr. Medill does not say so, but he does argue that they have been increased under the bill, and therefore, as it were, by the bill. Here is an extract from his article:

During the last fiscal year, before the McKinley bill went into effect, the total importations of wool of all grades were about 100,000,000 pounds. During this calendar year they will be about 200,000,000. The wool-growers of the Mississippi are taking their market by the stupid folly of that bill. There is no demand for their fleeces. They offer them for three or four cents less a pound than they did a year ago, and yet they find it difficult to sell them. They must either lower their prices, which are already below the cost of production, or they must go out of the wool-growing business, except as a mere incident of nation production, and leave the growing of wool in this country to the ranchmen of the arid regions beyond the Missouri.

THE ABOVE EXTRACT ILLUSTRATES THE LOGIC of Mr. Medill's reasoning on the wool question—the higher the duty the larger the importations. Wool does not pay east of the Mississippi river, and is now 3 or 4 cents less per pound than it was a year ago (he says) in consequence (as it would appear from his words) of the McKinley bill. Does not Mr. Medill know that the price of wool has always been mercenary—always eccentric—without any reference whatever to the McKinley bill? I could show him that in this wool growing county of Brooke that, years and years ago it bobbed up, and down like a dancing gigo, as indeed did all other farm products. For instance, in 1872, the price here was 60 cents, while the next year it was 45, and the year after 45 and 50. I could also show him that hay up here was worth as high as \$20 to \$25 in the year 1873, and that that (not any tariff) was the reason why wool fell 28 cents in price that year.

In this college here at Bethany they used to teach in my school days, but

there were two kinds of argument—the one logical and correct, and the other sophistical and misleading—known respectively as the *post hoc* and the *propter hoc*, which were intended to show the wide difference between a certain circumstance happening after another certain preceding circumstance, or happening on account of said preceding circumstance. Any sensible man knows how world-wide is the difference.

TARIFF HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH IT.

The tariff has never, except incidentally, determined the domestic price of wool. It is the question of feed for the sheep, more than any and all other influences. That determines it. For instance, only a few days ago, right here in this county, the price of sheep and cattle went down, because the fear was that we were not to have timely or adequate rains, and feed would be scarce and high, but since this the rains have fallen, the scare is over, and prices have at once reacted. Was there any McKinleyism in this circumstance? As well might you say that Buffalo creek here gets on a rampage or dries up on account of that bill.

Those who argue the wool question argue it as if it were a separate and independent question. Why not take up wheat and tell us how near, even in late years, we have come to importing it but for the tariff, and how here in Brooke county they have had big crops and big prices in one and the same year, and a short crop and low price in another year. In the year 1879, for instance, they raised 35 to 40 bushels of Fultz wheat to the acre and got \$1.30 per bushel at Weilsburg for it, and in 1881 they got even as high as \$1.50, and all the time they had the same tariff on it. Last year they had poor crops and yet poorer prices. The tariff on wool or on wheat, or any other farm product, is only a regulator throughout an average of years and never determines the price of itself. It is simply part of the protective bulwark of the country as a whole.

THE NEWEST USE OF RIBBON IS ITS COMBINATION with lace insertion in alternate perpendicular rows for summer wraps. These ribbon wraps are demi-long capes, sometimes plaited in the back, but often in circle shape, either with or without high shoulders. Watered and faller ribbons are used, either black or a color with black lace, and plaited or gathered ruffles of lace form the trimming.

Extremely high shoulder-effects are on the wane, both for dresses and wraps. There is an almost endless variety in the styles of full sleeves' but the fullness falls in soft folds instead of being arranged high above the shoulders, although, if becoming, a moderately high arrangement is retained. Sleeves made a different material from that in the waist are more frequently seen than those matching. Sleeves of plain satin are used with almost every seasonable fabric—silk, light woollens and lace—and lace sleeves are used in the same apparently indiscriminate way, even in cloth costumes, almost invariably, however, over a lining of the waist material.

The combination of lace with cloth is always inartistic, and can never be more than a passing fancy. Sleeves of the new "chameleon" (changeable) silk are used in silk, woollen and lace dresses, even when the material does not appear elsewhere in the dress.

Silk gloves come in colors to match gowns, and some have embroidered tops. Black silk gloves are worn with all kinds of costumes, stitching in color relieving their sombreness and matching them with the costume. The popular fancy for finish at the throat, especially if the neck be trimmed with lace, is two stick-pins, from two to three inches in length, with jeweled heads, crossed diagonally.

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A man who gets the mitten is apt to be guilty of contempt of court.

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The revival of quaint, old-fashioned muslins, sheer lawns, delicate organdies, pretty batistes and the corded dimities of our grandmother's time affords ample material for fashioning charming dresses of that dainty freshness which should be the distinctive characteristic of summer toilets. Floral patterns in natural tints, usually of small size, on a white or cream ground, are preferred for the thinner fabrics, though there are some with large, sandy-colored blossoms on back and colored grounds, which, while showy and often very becoming, lack the effect of lightness and appropriateness that constitutes the beauty of the more dainty varieties. The dimities are light in quality, with corded stripes, and have colored figures on white or light-tinted grounds; and the fancy for stripes in various widths of delicate colors alternating with white.

Velvet is not so frequent a garniture and combination as lace and beaded passementerie for silks and light woollens, such as challies and crepons, which make charming summer traveling dresses. The black lace dresses so popular two years ago are having a revival this season, and it is predicted that they will be even more worn than the drapery nets, of which so many becoming and dainty dresses are composed.

The newest use of ribbon is its combination with lace insertion in alternate perpendicular rows for summer wraps. These ribbon wraps are demi-long capes, sometimes plaited in the back, but often in circle shape, either with or without high shoulders. Watered and faller ribbons are used, either black or a color with black lace, and plaited or gathered ruffles of lace form the trimming.

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