GOVERNOR LEEDY'S MESSAGE

FIRST DOCUMENT OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE.

DEFENDS STATE'S CREDIT.

Legislature Urged to Pass a Maximum Freight Rate Bill—No Mention of Prohibition—Conditions of All Branches of the Government Reviewed—Strict Economy Urged.

"To the Legislature: With profound regret for the misfortunes of our more pretentious sisters of the East, I congratulate the state of Kansas upon the many simple blessings that have fallen to us in these adverse times. While those who clamor for alms in the streets of the crowded cities are many, those who seek assistance from our ready public bounty are few. While the failure of great commercial institutions brings sad calamity to the chief capitals where fortunes accumulate, the less imposing but quite as useful depositories of Kansas savings are giving gratifying evidences of stability. While, according to the press of the nation's most populous metropolis, her children linger in the streets untaught, except in the lore of the pavement, unfed except at the hands of charity, unhoused, except in the kennels they dispute with creatures scarcely less miserable, the commonwealth of Kansas, rejoicing in a public school system which is the most grateful heritage we receive from our fathers, and the best legacy we can leave to our children, finds ample house room and school room for every Kansas child and for such struggling waifs as come to us from where penury and parsimony stalk side by side. There are no tramps in Kansas, except those birds of passage that flit by us, grim reminders of conditions in older communities.

"With cheerful audacity that almost challenges admiration, Grub street scribblers on a venal press, which panders to the most vicious instincts of semi-civilized foreign colonies like New York city and Chicago, with semi-barbaric splendor at the apex, and semi-barbaric squalor at the base of their social life, have offered their puny and presumptuous criticism of those whose shoestrings they are not worthy to unloose. The dogs of Egypt have barked at the Pyramids unanswered for fifty centuries. When the accused doge stood before the Venetian council, he said: 'My defense is your accusation.' Let Grub street rail on. They well know that Kansas was a 'pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night,' before an oppressed people in the nation's darkest hour. We shall keep those fires alight in our camps and that smoke ascending from our hilltops till this is indeed a government of the people and for the people and by the people.

"For she failed you not in the early day, and she failed you not in the late.

"Nor forgot you how the balance was poised on our youngest state.

"And how with the fate of Kansas was linked the nation's fate.

Financial Conditions.

"In a full and exhaustive report the state treasurer sets forth our financial condition, which shows that at the beginning of the fiscal year, July 1, 1894, there were $842,826.23 on hand, and that the receipts during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1895, and 1896, were $4,898,091.83, making a total of $5,740,410.06. The disbursements for the two years named above were $5,135,889.96, leaving a balance in the treasury June 30, 1896, of $604,529.10. The report for the year ending December 31, 1896, shows that the balance on hand was $363,338.38, and that the permanent school fund amounts to $7,016,993.10.

"January 1, 1895, our state bonded indebtedness was $788,500. On March 15, 1895 $36,500 was paid and on July 1, 1895, $70,000, which leaves at present a bonded indebtedness of $682,000; $449,000 of these bonds are owned by the permanent school fund, $9,000 by the permanent university fund and the balance, $224,000, by individuals and corporations. On July 1, 1897, and July 1, 1898, $420,000 in 7 per cent bonds become due.

"The state treasurer in his report recommends that the whole amount be refunded in 4 per cent bonds and sold to the permanent school fund. The suggestion meets my approval for the reason that any increase of our state levy at this time to meet these bonds would work a hardship on our taxpayers, and the further fact that, in these days when many unsafe and unquestionable bonds are being hawked around, an investment of this kind will protect this fund that has been set aside for the educational purposes of our state.

Charitable Institutions.

"No class of people should receive the pity of their fellow men more than the inmates of our charitable institutions. Many of them have been reared in luxury, some of them are waifs of the street and the harvest of our present economic conditions, yet all of them are human and born in the likeness of their Maker. Their care and comfort are a sacred duty imposed upon us by humanity and all the better elements of our nature. Some of these institutions are filled with those to whom the sunlight of noonday and the darkness of midnight are the same. Others are unable to enjoy conversation with their fellow beings, and nothing takes the place of the senses, which are most gratifying to humanity. Some of them are bereft of reason and struggle through hallucinations against imaginary evils. Some are born into the world bereft of reason or sense and are thrown upon our pity and charity from the beginning. I consider it one of the most essential duties of the executive and the co-ordinate branches of the legislature to see that the best of treatment be accorded them, that those who care for them should be kind, attentive and take an interest in their work, that their food should be clean, wholesome and plentiful, that the sanitary conditions of the buildings where they are confined are conducive to their health, that the professional duties be administered by as good talent as the state possesses; in short, that the gravest duty that we have to discharge is in the care of those who are unable to care for themselves and are placed in the institutions of our state as wards of the state.

"A visiting board for all the charitable, educational and penal institutions of the state, with power to come and go and report abuses to the governor would be a good thing.

The Asylum at Osawatomie.

"At the last session of the legislature, appropriations were made for the rebuilding of the central building at this institution, erection of boiler house, electric light plant and several minor improvements. These improvements have all been made, yet, from the reports of the superintendent of this institution I find that there are several matters that need your consideration. The principal one is, that the property has sustained serious damage which demands repairs, and unless these are accomplished at the earliest possible moment great injury will be done the institution. Not having had an opportunity to visit and make a personal examination of this matter, I would call the attention of your committees who visit the different institutions to this report.

Insane Asylum at Topeka.

One of the largest appropriations that will have to be made by the present legislature is for the care of the destitute insane over the state, who could not be accommodated at the Topeka and Osawatomie asylums.

For the present, I believe that the asylums at Topeka and Osawatomie should be completed in accordance with the specifications of the architect who formulated the plans for their building, but it is evident that in the near future another institution will have to be established. However, I am of the opinion that if the two asylums we now have were completed, we can tide over until the next session of the legislature. It might be well to make arrangements for the future looking to the building of another institution of this kind, so that if the occasion demands it at the next session of the legislature, appropriations could be made and the buildings completed as quickly as the circumstances and conditions demand.

For Idiotic and Imbecile Youth.

"According to the report of the superintendent, there are 117 pupils at present in this institution. There are a few recommendations made by the superintendent which will need your consideration, and I would ask for the inmates of this institution, which appeals so much to our humanity, the same considerate treatment as is accorded those who have brighter futures and are possessed of faculties that make life worth living.

Soldiers, Orphans and Veterans.

"This institution (the soldiers' orphans' home at Atchison) was founded and endowed for the purpose of caring for the orphan children of the veterans of our civil war, but years have rolled by since that event, and the orphans of the soldiers have in most instances become citizens and capable of caring for themselves. Since that time, however, the doors have been opened to the orphan children of the State who are needy and who were looked upon by society as waifs. Any reasonable demands made by this institution should receive attention, to the end that throughout the borders of our great state no child be allowed to suffer from hunger or the need of raiment.

"The Soldiers' home at Dodge City has been established and maintained for years for the care and enjoyment of the indigent soldiers of our civil war. Its board has been established and kept separate from that of all of the other institutions of this state. I would recommend that this policy be continued, in order that those who risked their lives in their country's defense may have the advantage of the best treatment possible from our people. Kansas is known as the great soldier state of the union, and, while we have within our borders the national home, the state home at Dodge City is a matter of pride to the citizens of our state. Any reasonable request that may be made for this institution should be granted.

Educational Institutions.

"The public school system of Kansas is the best evidence of the character of our people and the best promise of our future. That the percentage of illiteracy is lower and the average of general intelligence is higher in Kansas than in New York and the New England states, where great wealth commanded admirable educational facilities before our state was founded, is most gratifying to our people. Some of the chief educational institutions, notable the State University and the State Normal School, which are reported crowded, will ask for certain improvements and additional buildings. Several localities will ask that normal schools be established. Should you conclude that another normal school is necessary I would suggest that it be located in some portion of the state of the largest population and in some central city of that section.

The Schools of the State.

"The report of the superintendent of public instruction indicates that there are 9,284 schools in the state, with a school population of 495,771. Of these, 378,339 were enrolled in the schools, while there was an average attendance of 252,727. Eleven thousand seven hundred teachers were employed, with an average salary, for male teachers, of $42.82 per month, and for females teachers, of $35.58 per month. The average number of mills levied for all school purposes was 11.19. The school property of Kansas, including buildings and grounds, is valued at $10,145,631. The bonded indebtedness of the school districts was $44,545,708. Sixteen thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven persons were examined for teachers' certificates, of whom 11,468, with an average age of 20 years, received certificates. Only 356 districts have failed to maintain public schools three months. One hundred and five counties hold teachers' institutes, each of which has an attendance of over fifty members. These institutes cost $38,776.60.

The Permanent School Fund.

"The state permanent school funds have reached the munificent sum of $6,853,987.79 the greater part of which has been invested in bonds. The intent and purpose of the law governing the purchase of bonds, with this fund was to buy none but the best and those on which the interest and principal would be promptly paid. I would suggest that the attorney general, if necessary, be empowered to collect the interest and principal on these delinquent bonds, if possible, and if not possible, to collect in full, by and with the consent of the executive council to compromise on the best terms possible for the interests of this fund, the proceeds to be turned into the permonent school fund, as provided by law.

The University of Kansas.

"The rapid increase in attendance during recent years has made it difficult for the university to keep pace with the demands of the students. The board of regents makes a very earnest petition for the building of a chemistry hall. If the legislature decides to erect this building, it is the intention to devote the present diminutive chemistry building to the school of pharmacy, which at present appears to be in a rather unsettled condition as to house room.

"Again it appears from reports at hand that the museum, which ranks among the first possessed by any American colleges, and in some respects ranks as the first, has become so large that it is simply stored like baled hay in its present quarters. The property, although accumulated at slight expense, seems to have a great value, and in its present quarters the state might lose by fire or other accident, five times the value that would be required to erect a building suitable for the purposes of the museum.

"The time has evidently been reached when larger quarters for the department of chemistry, at least, and probably for the workshop of the school of electrical engineering have become absolute necessities. I commend the requests of the regents for more room to the serious and thoughtful consideration of the legislature. Only intelligent citizens of Kansas can maintain a republic, and I believe it is a settled principle of the commonwealth of Kansas that her people shall be as well prepared for the duties of citizenship as those of any state in the Union.

The State Agricultural College.

"This institution has a faculty of twenty-four members and an attendance of 647 students, two-thirds of whom are young men. The students come from seventy-two counties in Kansas and most of them are from farms. The average age is a little less than 21. The incomes last year was $73,656.37. The agricultural college has an endowment fund of $500,000, which is invested in bonds bearing interest at from 5 to 10 per cent. Three-fifths of this money are invested in municipal bonds which bear 6 per cent interest. The properties of the institution are valued at $401,000, of which $238,000 is the value of the grounds and buildings.

"The report of the regents of this institution makes the statement that the chemical laboratory, which has been there for twenty years, is outgrown and offers no such facilities as are needed. The regents suggest that more room is needed for an experiment station and for laboratory work in physics, and that a building could be erected for about $40,000 which would serve the purpose. The regents also suggest the need of greater funds for various purposes, which are detailed in their report.

The State Normal School.

"The State Normal school has a corps of twenty-seven instructors and attendance of 1,550 students, and a library of 13,000 books. This institution has an income of $38,200, of which, for the year ending June 30, 1896, $4,146.89 was received as fees from the model department, special classes and irregular students. One hundred and eighty-five children are instructed in the model department, which is utilized for training purposes. Ninety counties are represented at the institution. During the last ten years 11,018 pupils have attended the State Normal school, coming from ninety-four counties. Last year there were students from twelve other states and territories. Two-thirds of the present attendants are ladies.

"The board of regents urge that the law providing for the recognition of State Normal school diplomas for cities of the first and second classes be made so specific that there could be no question in the minds of anyone as to their legality as teachers' certificates. It occurs to me that the state owes it to itself to see that this is done. If, after all the money expended, the graduates of this institution are not fitted to teach any of our common schools, the institution is a failure. We know that our state normal ranks high among similar institutions, that its students are as efficient, curriculum as liberal, its instructors as proficient as any of its rivals; therefore, its diplomas should be as good, at least, as the certificates issued by the county board of examination.

"The board of regents ask that certain improvements and additional room be furnished. Under the head of educational institutions I recommend that it would better serve the interests of the people to establish an auxiliary normal school in some other portion of the state, rather than to erect more extensive buildings at Emporia.

The State Penitentiary.

"The penitentiary contained 891 prisoners June 30, 1896. Of these seventeen were women. For the fiscal year ending June 30 1896, the expenditures of the institution were $151,600.29, the earnings $148,916.50. The report of the warden, board of directors and officials contains an exhaustive treaties on the expenditures and necessities of the institution. But few realize the magnitude of this institution or the careful attention which it should receive from the legislature in order to keep it abreast of institutions of the same kind in sister states. At times in our history this has been a self-supporting institution. At other times it has been considerable of a burden to the taxpayers of the state. Like all other institutions where manual labor is performed, the state prison at Lansing makes the best showing when times are good, money plenty, and the worst during hard times.

"The output of coal from the penitentiary has been its principal source of revenue, yet there is a sentiment in portions of the State against utilizing this coal except for state institutions. In another portion of this message certain recommendations are made in regard to the surplus after the state institutions are supplied. This, in my judgment, at this time, is as far as we can go on the line of correcting the placing of coal mined by convict labor in competition with free labor. If it could be so arranged that instead of producing so much coal, other manufactories could be established which would not compete with the free labor of the state, it would be better than our present system. There are certain recommendations made by the board to which your attention is directed. The principal necessities seem to be the completion of more cells for the use of prisoners and additional clothing for convicts.

Reform School Criticisms.

"If there is any institution in the state which is open to criticism, in my judgment the Reform School for Boys, situated in our capital city, is that one. Not that I would charge incompetence upon its management or employes, but from the fact that it is impossible to reform boys in idleness. The miniature man is so constituted that he must have something to employ his mind and hands, or else he will invent something for himself. An old proverb, of doubtful origin, says: 'Satan always finds work for idle hands to do,' and if this be true, and I accept it as as true, I think his satanic majesty is quite likely a visitor at the Reform School.

"I am informed that when this school was established the object sought was to take the erring boys and lead them to a better and higher life. In order to do this they should be taught trades and made useful citizens. For some reason unknown to me, the legislature has failed to make appropriations for buildings and mechanical apparatus for carrying out this idea. True, a drill master has been employed and the boys are being trained in the manual of arms for the life of a soldier. I cannot agree with the superintendent's report that this is proper and right. My experience is that nine out of ten boys who go astray do so through the influence of dime novels and cheap literature, wherein bandits, highwaymen, blood and thunder and gunpowder are promiscuously mixed. Any training which they might receive in the line of creating bloodshed and gory war inculcates the same idea in the inside that brought them there from the outside. In my humble judgment they should be taught and instructed in the line of a peaceful citizenship, rather than that of a soldier and war.

"I recommend to the Legislature that if it is thought impracticable to furnish apparatus suitable for teaching them trades, that additional appropriations be made for the Hutchinson reformatory, and that the boys be removed there, where they can have the influence brought upon them that will lead them in the right line. A continuation of Dick Turpin and Jesse James ideas inside the walls of this institution will not reform the boys, and, while it may hold them in restraint for the time being and relieve society of their presence and influence, yet when they are turned loose their moral judgment will not be improved to any great extent.

The Hutchinson Reformatory.

"To reform the erring and make good citizens of young men and boys who have been led astray is one of the noblest works in which men engage. With the view of doing this the reformatory at Hutchinson was established by the legislature in 1885, was made ready for occupancy in 1895, and opened with thirty of the least hardened criminals from our state penitentiary. The report of the board and my knowledge of the institution lead me to believe that it has proven a success and is solving the problem of what to do with the young criminals who are started on a career of crime. The rooms now completed are crowded to their full capacity, and the board of directors are asking for an appropriation to complete certain portions of the building so that it can be used to accommodate other inmates. This will necessitate more help, and, in my judgment, the requests should be granted.

The Board of Agriculture.

"In its past in our history the board of agriculture has been a matter of public derision, but in later years, in the hands of competent men and men who have taken a deep interest in the matter, it has become a matter of state pride and much benefit to the agricultural portions of our state. The reports of this office have not only received commendations from the press of the state, but have been accepted as good authority on certain matters in our sister states. As a large portion of our citizens are interested in agriculture, I deem it right and proper that this board should receive due consideration at your hands, to the end that Kansas may have the advantage of the experience of others and along the different lines which bring success to the men engaged in this calling.

The Board of Public Works.

"My predecessor, in his message to the legislature two years ago, recommended the abolishment of the board of public works. The senate, of which I had the honor to be a member at that time, upon this recommendation made no appropriation for its maintenance. The law, however, governing the board and its appointments, was not repealed. Hence you, no doubt, will be asked to make an appropriation for the board which was appointed by my predecessor after the adjournment of the legislature. This is a matter which I will leave entirely to your judgment. I cannot refrain, however, from saying that I heartily agree with the recommendation made by Governor Morrill that the board should be abolished. We have a state architect, whose duty it is to make the plans and specifications for our state buildings.

Sharp Irrigation Criticism.

"A few years ago the people of the Western part of the state became interested in the subject of irrigation, and the cry of 'irrigate or emigrate' was used by those who believed that the salvation of that portion of the state depended upon the success or failure of irrigation. Two years ago a board of irrigation was established by the legislature and an appropriation was made for the purpose of experimenting along the line of irrigation from wells.

"I have been unable to procure a copy of the board's report, but I am informed that in several places wells have been put down, wind mills erected and allowed to go to rack and ruin. If there have been any results obtained that would justify the outlay of the appropriation, I have not been informed as to what they were. People from the western part of the state, in interviews and conversation, are divided upon the question of whether irrigation from this source can be made a success or not. Some go so far as to say that it is a failure and a delusion; others say that a continuation of the experiments ought to be made in order to give it a fair trial. I would recommend to the Legislature that this receive careful investigation at your hands. If, from the experience of the board and its results obtained so far, together with that of individuals who have tried it to their own satisfaction, it is found that irrigation of this kind cannot be made a success, I would recommend that the board be abolished. I do not make this recommendation to discourage the people of the western part of the state. The admirable advantages offered stockmen are probably superior to those engaged in agriculture at times. An adaptation of means to ends will enable the people to avail themselves of all the resources of that quarter of Kansas.

Forestry and Silk Stations.

"The state forestry stations, established in the Western portion of the state for the purpose of testing whether trees of certain kinds could be successfully raised, have been in existence for several years. In my judgment, the question, if it ever can be solved, has been solved, and I would recommend that unless the provisions of establishment make its continuance for a specified number of years obligatory and the contract has not been filled on the part of the state so that its abolishment would lose the state the title to the land, that it be abolished." The same recommendation is made with regard to the silk station at Peabody.

Live Stock Sanitary Commission.

"In my judgment one of the most important, if not the most important industry of our state, is our cattle interests. The annual report of the sanitary commission has received my careful attention, and I believe that it has done efficient work during the last two years. I would ask of the legislature that the needs of this important board be attended to, to the end that we may have a feeling of security amongst those who are interested in this great industry. The statistics show that Kansas is forging ahead as a cattle raising state. In western Kansas, especially, the finest cattle and beef are produced at a nominal cost, and I predict that in a few years the western part of the state will enjoy an extensive development of this business. I would recommend the careful study of the board's report, and that all necessary appropriations be made to carry on the work of protecting this great industry.

Consolidation of Boards.

"I would recommend that the law governing the appointment of the penitentiary board be so amended that it can also supervise and control, in addition to the penitentiary at Lansing, the Hutchinson reformatory and, if not abolished, the reform school for boys at Topeka. At present this institution is under the supervision of the state board of charities. The Hutchinson reformatory is under a separate board. To make the matter plain, I would have all of the penal institutions under the charge of the board of directors for penal institutions and all of the charitable institutions under the supervision of the state board of charities.

Railroads Criticized.

"The question of the regulation of transportation companies has been one that has commanded the attention of the legislatures of the various states since railroads were first introduced. These corporations have received their charter rights from the various states, and these states naturally concluded that they had the right to regulate and control the corporations that they thus had created. This view of the case was constantly combatted by the corporations, who claimed, as they were private corporations, they were not subject to state legislation so far as their charges were concerned—a view that they have not yet abandoned. When, however, the courts of the states began to hold that they were public corporations, and therefore amendable to the legislature of the states, they appealed to the federal courts, claiming, first, that they were private corporations, and, secondly, that if they were quasi-public corporations, the regulation of them could only be had through the federal Congress. The courts having sustained this view, the people of the various states then demanded that the federal Congress should pass such legislation and create such boards of control as were necessary to secure to the people their just rights in the matter. In obedience to this demand, Congress, eleven years ago, created that subterfuge for justice called the interstate commerce commission, and enacted legislation that was supposed by the people to be for the purpose of securing their rights and controlling these corporations. After eleven years of weary waiting, the people are now told by this commission, in its tenth annual report, just issued, that the law under which they were acting was defective and had been held by the court of last resort as inoperative and unconstitutional.

"Thus, after fifty years of effort in this direction, we find that practically nothing has been done toward the control of corporations; that the question has been avoided and delayed as much as possible through the courts, and finally, at the end, we find the will of the people thwarted and the corporations resting upon the bosom of the supreme court with the same feeling of confidence and security that an infant reposes upon the bosom of a wet nurse.

The Supreme Court Criticised.

"If the Congress of the United States pass an amended law the torpid snake of litigation will again begin to crawl slowly through the mazes of the law towards the court of final jurisdiction, and if the leaden heel of justice is as slow and if the meditations of the court are as great, and if they shall ponder as long over the constitutionality of the law in the future as they have done in the past, posterity will have arrived in time to hear their next decision, and the existing generation will have ceased to take interest in transportation matters on this earth, because they will, by that time, have been transported beyond the jurisdiction of the court. Therefore, it seems to me that if relief is desired by this generation they cannot wait upon the slow evolution of the federal Congress and federal courts, but must seek for relief without resorting thereto.

"I therefore recommend that the legislature pass a maximum freight law that will be fair to corporations and just to the people. I believe, also, that the board of railroad commissioners should be clearly vested with the powers of a court and given the power to adjust fares and freight within the state of Kansas as they may deem just, and not exceeding the maximum rate, and that their powers shall be made definite and certain, but subject to appeal to the supreme court of the state. In doing this I think the legislature should not proceed in any spirit of retaliation or revenge for the misdeeds of the corporations in the past, but they should make their purpose clear to these corporations, that, in the future, the interests of the citizens of this state are to be taken into account, as well as the welfare of the corporations, and that profits in good times and losses in bad ones are to be equally shared between them.

Various Recommendations.

Liberal support of the live stock sanitary commission is urged.

A change in the grain inspection laws is recommended, to the end that inspectors and weighers be appointed by the state.

A consolidation of boards is recommended so as to "have all the penal institutions under charge of the board of directors for penal institutions, and all of the charitable institutions under the supervision of the state board of charities."

Reform of the insurance laws for the protection of insurers is urged.

District ownership of textbooks, while not urged upon the legislature, is strongly recommended.

As to the Kansas City stock yards, Governor Leedy suggests "that 100 per cent profit above the price in the Kansas City market is sufficient on the sales of grain and hay, and I recommend an enactment to that effect. The statutes should provide that the live stock sanitary commission should have such control of the stock yards owned by the above named company as shall be necessary to the enforcement of the laws you make, if this recommendation commends itself to your judgment."

Mortgage Legislation.

Governor Leedy's recommendation as to mortgage legislation is as follows:

"A great deal of complaint comes from over the state in regard to mortgages made and executed in this state, which have been made, as a rule, to companies organized under the laws of our state for the purpose of loaning money. These mortgages are sold in the East and in many cases the party who struggles through and pays his loan finds that he has been swindled, and in order to clear his title he must again pay the amount or lose his home. Section 3889 should be so amended as to require every assignment of mortgage, or note secured by mortgage, to be placed on the records in the county where the real estate is located. This, in great measure, will guard against any recurrence of these swindles, which are unjust and work great hardship to the people of the state. Such an enactment will enable the debtor to deal directly with his creditors, without the intervention of somebody who preys upon the necessities of both."

Commissioner Breidenthal's recommendations as to the changes in the banking laws are commended to the attention of the legislature, and strict state supervision of building and loan associations and of loan, trust and investment companies urged.

A State Railroad Proposed.

"If the corporations will accept such just and fair regulation, subject to review by the supreme court of the state, well and good, but, in the future, as in the past, they flock under the protecting wing of the federal courts, where justice to the people seems not only blind as it should be, but deof and dumb also, then I advise the people of the state of Kansas to seek for justice out of court. In doing so I can only point to one route by which it can be obtained, and that is for the states west of the Mississippi river to build a road of their own to tidewater by the shortest and most direct route, which will put them in a position to command the situation without getting into any complication with the railroad companies or with the federal courts. We have at Galveston now a harbor that can be entered safely by the largest ships. The federal government has expended $6,000,000 in creating an outlet in Galveston bay and providing a safe harbor for a terminal point. In order to get to this harbor there are no mountains to tunnel and no large rivers to cross and no engineering difficulties in the way. It is practically a plain upon which a road cannot only be built, but can be operated as cheaply as anywhere in the world. At the present value of labor and material a road can be built for from $6,000 to $10,000 a mile, and it would be as unjust to the people of this generation to ask them to support a railroad bonded at $50,000 a mile as it would have been to the people of a preceding generation to haul their grain and merchandise on the turnpike of that time, after they had been parallelled by railroads. No doubt the owners of stock in the turnpikes of that day claimed that they had a vested right to fair interest upon their investment, but the railroads did not consider the interests of the turnpike owner in any way. They simply superseded the turnpike, and if the railroad company of the present time do not reduce their capital to a basis upon which railroads can be built now, then the people will be forced, as a last resort, to parallel these roads as they did the turnpike.

Arguments for a State Road.

"If the states of Texas and Nebraska would join us in the building of a line to Galveston the expense of building such a road would be merely nominal, when compared with the vast sums of money that would be saved to the citizens of these states through the lowering of freight rates; in fact, the over charge above what is reasonable and fair charge on grain upon the crop now existing in the state of Kansas would pay all the charges of completing such a road, were the state of Kansas to undertake it herself. Such a road, when completed, would place the people of this state in a position of independence in the matter of transportation so far as the railroad companies and the federal courts were concerned, and I do not believe that such a move would be injurious to the railroad companies in the long run.

"The lowered rates of freight would attract a great and constantly increasing business by drawing traffic in that direction, and the decreased rate at which the railroads would be compelled to carry freight would be made up in the volume of business. The state of New York, by completing the Erie canal and keeping the tolls at a low rate, has caused the commerce of the country to flow in that direction, so as to make it the great commercial metropolis of the country, but this did not retard the building of railroads, which do business in competition with it; in fact, the finest railroad in the world, with four tracks, was built for the purpose of competing with this canal for business. The total amount of money expended by the state of New York upon the Erie canal, according to recent publications, has been $116,000,000, and the receipts therefrom have been $132,000,000. If the state of New York has profited so vastly by pursuing this course, I think it would be policy for the West to quit taking their advice on commercial affairs and begin to follow their example. And elsewhere, where it has been necessary to compete with water transportation in the carrying of freight, railroads have never hesitated to enter into that competition. The haul from Chicago east to the Erie canal is greatly reduced, because water transportation makes it necessary. The haul from St. Louis to New Orleans is also made at a low rate in order to compete with water transportation. These railroads that do business at a very low rate and in competition with water transportation are in as good condition financially as railroads which do not have to compete in such a way. Therefore, it seems to me that it would be wise for this legislature to ask the legislatures of Texas and Nebraska, whose state laws have been set aside and annulled as ours have been, to consider the feasibility of such a plan, in case the laws that I hope will be passed by this legislature should fail of success.

Following John Brown's Lead.

"Gentlemen of the legislature, we cannot hope, in the short space of fifty days, to correct all the mistakes, to remedy all the evils that have been made and have arisen along with our magnificent civilization, but we should endeavor to accomplish such results as will demonstrate to those who follow us that our intentions were good, our actions determined and our counsels judicious. We are mere hands on the dial plate of Kansas. The works are beneath and behind us, where a million and a half of God's poor people toil and struggle. A generation has passed away since John Brown, of Osawatomie, struck one. Let us so live and so move while dressed in our little brief authority that those who look may hope that we have struck two.

"John Brown of Osawatomie,—he made our soil so free,
Advanced the Kansas thought so high, for all the world to see,
His names calls such a paean forth, by Kansas name and song,
Men know the trail to freedom runs, away from every wrong."

JOHN W. LEEDY.

THE JOKER'S CORNER.

WIT, HUMOR AND SATIRE ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

"My Lady Fair"—Transmigration Among the Lower Order of Animals—A Post Xmas Conversation—Preparing for the Worst—A Small Boy's Wish—Victim of Slang.

HERE she comes—
my lady—so fair
and so fine
From the gold of
her hair to the
glitter and shine
Of her Pompadour
silk with its ruf-
fles of lace—
A wonderful vision
of fashion and
grace.

Here she comes—my lady—drawing on
the pink gloves
Which I know, even here, have the
scent that she loves;
And soft, as she moves her fingers of
snow,
I catch in the movement the sparkle
and glow.

Of the ring that I gave her—the diamond solitaire
That marks her "my lady," in Vanity Fair;
My lady—my jewel—to have and to hold
As her diamond is held—in a setting of gold.

My lady—my jewel—would she sparkle and glow
If into the light I should suddenly go,
And stand where her beautiful eyes would discover
In the flash of a moment, the eyes of her lover?

Would she turn to my glance as the diamond turns
To light all its rays, till it blushes and burns?
Should I, standing thus, in that moment—her lover,
Be the light, all the light of her soul to discover?

Ah, my lady—my jewel—so fair and so fine,
Of your soul I have had little token or sign;
When I put on your finger that diamond solitaire,
I knew I was buying in Vanity Fair.

Transmigration.

Webfoot—Didn't Elder Swipes say there is probably a bird heaven?

Von Gobblekins—Yes, why?

Webfoot—I was just thinking that Christmas morning you and I would be birds of Paradise.

Victim of Slang.

Mr. Skemer—Mrs. Sapmind, I am going to bring a visitor around this evening to introduce to your daughter. I think he will be a good catch for her.

Mrs. Sapmind—What sort of a person is he, Mr. Skemer?

Mr. Skemer—He is a wealthy planter.

Mrs. Sapmind—I don't care how wealthy he is, I'll never let my daughter marry an undertaker.—Boston Courier.

Preparing for the Worst.

"Vy, Hans, how it vos dot you again vos so mooch getrunken?"

"It like dis is. I vas heared dot dere vos some talk like dey vos going to increase dot beer tax soon yet. So I git me pooty full vile dere is yet blenty time."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Wanted to Work Him.

First Tramp—Couldn't you work the old dame for a meal?

Second Tramp—No; she wanted me to saw wood for it.

"I see; she wanted to work you for it."—Yonkers Statesman.

His Fond Hope.

Mrs. G. (as her husband departs for a club meeting)—If you're later than midnight I sha'n't speak to you.

G.—I hope you won't, dear.—London Figaro.

A Post Xmas Chat.

Smith—Why, hello, Brown, did you hang up your stocking last Christmas?

Brown—No. My overcoat.

Small Boy's Wish.

First Small Boy—I wish I had that 5 cents back that I spent for candy.

Second Small Boy—What would you do with it?

First Small Boy—Buy more candy.—Boston Courier.