

THE GRASSHOPPER PLAGUE.

The Devastation of the West and the Destruction of the People.

To the Editor of the Cincinnati Commercial: I have just returned from Independence, Jackson county, Missouri, where I have been staying since May of 1874. Jackson county is one of the western counties, bordering on Kansas, and has been one of the most infested with grasshoppers. I find here that the general public have no conception of the devastations and total destruction caused by these ravagers. The reports by telegraph are thought to be highly colored and exaggerated. The truth is, no description can give an idea of that stricken country. If I had been told what I have seen, I should have received it with several grains of allowance. About the third week in April the grasshoppers began to hatch and continued hatching until the last of May. The wheat, corn and grass were eaten off to the ground; the young and tender vegetables disappeared like snow wreaths before this all-devouring army. The grapes, leaves and tendrils, the strawberries, buds, blossoms, and the plants themselves; the turf, shrubbery, and all kinds of small fruits, shared alike the same fate, until by the 1st of June the lawns, shrubbery, vegetable gardens and grain fields were as desolate and barren as in January. Imagine the month of roses without any roses. I did not see a single flower, with the exception of some in the early spring, that had blossomed outside a greenhouse before I left Missouri. This barren waste extends along the line of the Missouri Pacific road as far east as Warrensburg. This whole country would, under ordinary circumstances, be a perfect garden spot, every acre being under cultivation. In the entire distance from Kansas City to Warrensburg I failed to see a growing crop of any kind. Probably one-half the acreage had been planted in corn, but not a solitary stalk was to be seen. In the orchards the trees were stripped of their leaves, and large numbers were girdled, the bark being eaten off clean in large patches. On the roads the undergrowth was stripped of both leaves and bark, and some of the large grasshoppers were working on the foliage in the tops of the forest trees. Osage orange hedges were completely denuded of bark and leaves, the once trim and beautiful barriers presenting the appearance of only a tangled chevron of dry, thorny brush, which will never grow again. The only sign of vegetable life was an occasional, solitary stalk of milkweed, which the grasshopper will not touch. Want and suffering must follow such a state of things. Of course, people of means, and those in moderate circumstances, can get along, and, to a certain extent, relieve others, but small farmers, and all depending on the products of the soil for a support, are in a most pitiable condition. I have heard of strong men begging, with tears in their eyes for a few pounds of flour and bacon for their starving little ones. A whole family, consisting of father, mother, and three children, died for want of food to keep body and soul together. They lived on the Blue river, between Independence and Kansas City. It is but justice to say that the neighbors and citizens were not aware of the facts of the case, and were not, therefore, responsible for the terrible death which overtook these poor pilgrims on their journey to the better land. This is, we believe, the first case of the kind which has transpired in Jackson county, but, from present indications, the future twelve months will make many graves marked with the inscription, "Starved to death." Think of it, you who daily sit down to beautifully spread tables, and then, if you can, refuse to give to these poor suffering ones. If you could but see what I have seen, of the destitution of the people, you would not hesitate in this matter, but would gladly help the old and infirm, the crippled, the widows and orphans, whose cries for bread, bread, are daily ascending to heaven. I am in receipt of a letter from a friend residing about five miles from Independence, in which it is stated that the destruction in the country among the poorer classes is simply fearful; that many families have nothing but corn meal and water as a means of subsistence, and some others have nothing but bran and water, and that if assistance is not rendered soon, murder and robbery will be the order of the day. Stock of all kinds are dying off daily. One of their horses had died the night before; he had been turned out to pick up a living from what he could find. Speculators are going around the country buying up horses and cattle at about one-third their original value. One evening there was taken from the Court-house yard in Independence fifteen barrels of grasshoppers, each barrel weighing over 200 pounds. This went the rounds of the papers, and it was amusing to see the comments it occasioned. They did not hesitate to state that it was not a fish story it was a fact, to my certain knowledge, for I was there at the time. I have seen the fences, the bodies of trees, the shrubbery every spear of grass and the sides of the houses covered with them. Every fence just looked as if a swarm of bees had settled on it. They got into the wells and cisterns, and tainted the water until it was vile. Open springs were completely choked up and so polluted that stock would not drink of the water. They invaded the houses, and ate clothing and carpets. If an outside door should happen to be left open for only a few minutes a perfect stream of the disgusting, loathsome things came crawling and hopping in. The stech was almost intolerable. I have often been in the act of raising food to my lips when that small would approach me, and I would have to give it up and leave the table. I can liken the sickness it produced to nothing that I ever experienced. Disinfectants were freely used. It is almost impossible to kill them. I have seen them walk calmly through chloride of lime, slacked lime, and coal oil, which is certain death to all ordinary insects, seems to agree with them admirably, a kind of perfumed bath as it were; they will, however, succumb to a very hot blaze, or boiling water. In this manner we destroyed bushels of them at first, but it did not apparently diminish the numbers; still it was a source of gratification. I never killed anything with

as much pleasure in my life. When they first made their appearance, every one worked hard to try and save something. But it was a forlorn hope. It was the many against the few, and at last work out, discouraged, and disheartened, they sat in despair while the work of destruction went on. E. S. T.

A Strange Reunion. The following episode occurred at Massillon on Thursday last week. On a street near the spot where the tent of Barnum's show was pitched, two men approached each other, and when about ten feet apart, both stopped and stood for a moment gazing at each other in mute astonishment, when they rushed each into the other's arms, and like two maniacs hugged and kissed each other; then separating, they took another look and went through the same unrestrained operation; and while they stood hand in hand a third man approached, and on seeing them, he came up, stared at them a moment when they noticed him, and the trio went through the same frantic and loving motions, shaking hands, laying on and hugging each other in turn. At first we thought the men were drunk, but upon further observation, and on approaching the group, we learned the facts were these. The two who first met were Dr. J. R. Gardner, of Brookfield, in this county, and John Shang, boss caravanseran with the Barnum show; both had been for three years inmates of the Ohio Penitentiary, where from day to day they had marched side by side, without daring to speak a word to each other. Shang had been sent from Carrollton for killing a man in a general fight, and the people of Carrollton regarded him as innocent, but circumstantial evidence led the Judge to send him up. Gardner was remembered as having been sentenced from Canton nearly four years ago. Shang was released several months before Gardner, and they had never met to speak from the time they first saw each other in the prison until last Thursday. The third man, now traveling for some Columbus establishment, was for a long time guard in the penitentiary, and both Shang and Gardner had been under his supervision; they hung about his neck and called him their dearest friend, and said he was the kindest and best guard that ever stood in the walls of the Ohio Penitentiary. The whole transaction was very touching, and we can confidently assert that not one of the men was under the influence of liquor in the slightest degree, nor were their actions prompted by any but earnest emotions, natural under the circumstances.—Stark Co. (O.) Democrat.

Last of the Swamp Angels. A Goldsboro, N. C., dispatch to the New York Herald says: Since 1871 a stalwart mulatto, passing under the assumed name of Bill Jackson, has been living in this neighborhood following the vocation of a plasterer and brick mason. Jackson and another negro had been suitors for the hand of the same woman, and this engendered bitter hostility between them. They had hitherto been warm friends, and it was during this period of intimacy between them that Jackson divulged to his friend the secrets of his former life with the robber chief Henry Berry Lowry in Robeson county. Jackson's rival betrayed him, and, acting upon the information received from him, a letter was sent to Sheriff McMillan of Robeson county, asking for a minute description of George Applewhite. A photograph of the bandit was the response, and led to the apprehension of Bill Jackson as the escaped freebooter. While Applewhite was engaged in conversation upon one of our principal streets to-day he was approached by William Freeman and Bryant Copps, who commanded him to surrender. Upon his refusing the summons the officers cinched him, and a desperate struggle ensued. Though wholly unarmed, Applewhite did effectual execution with his fists, knocking Freeman out of time in the first round. He then ran rapidly down James street toward the market-house, but was soon overtaken by his fleet pursuers and beaten into submission. The officials here are positive as to his identity. Applewhite murdered Mr. King, a former Sheriff of Robeson county, and was sentenced to death. With the assistance of his confederates he escaped, and has been at large ever since till now. He was considered one of the most daring, brutal, and devilish of the "swamp angels."

That Saved Him. It has been generally supposed that a bald head was of no account, even to the owner, but Vicksburg stands up and remarks to the contrary. The other day a resident of this city went up to Thompson's Lake to get a shot at the big alligator, and while eating a cold bite in the shade a man jumped over the fence, presented an old army musket at his head and cried out: "Stranger, unkniver yer head!" The Vicksburger was dumfounded, but made haste to remove his hat and exhibit a pate which shone like a newly polished pipaw. "Stranger, that saves yer!" continued the man, as he shouldered his musket; "I thought ye was the red-headed peddler who charged my wife seventy-five cents for a testament which hasn't got a darned picture in it!"—Vicksburg Herald.

Dogs in the Olden Times.—From the earliest times, the more civilized of mankind have been annoyed by dogs. The Babylonians used to be kept awake and barked at and chewed up, just as Christians now are, and the sheep farmers of antiquity lifted up their voices and wept even as those of our day. Mr. Tritantechmes, a heathen who was at one time satrap of Babylon, exempted four cities from all taxes on condition that they should feed his dogs, which he had brought from India by the shipload. No city in the world so richly deserved a horrible fate as Babylon, and it is good to know that she was so thoroughly wiped out.—Courier-Journal.

The paddle-wheels of a large steamer on the St. John river, in Florida, stopped suddenly, a few nights ago, and then came crash after crash in the wood work. A panic followed, everybody rolling out of bunk and rushing for the deck, and it was soon ascertained that a big alligator had got entangled in the revolving wheel, where he was not enjoying life.

Twenty Lashes. On June 1, James Warren was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and forty lashes, to be delivered in two batches of twenty each, for the crime of rape upon a little girl. Yesterday morning the prisoner received the first twenty lashes. A little after 9 o'clock, the prisoner, James Warren, was brought from his cell. He walked into the hall with a firm step and removed his coat, waistcoat, and shirt, and stepped to the triangle to which he was being strapped, so that it was impossible for him to move a limb. The prisoners were then called in and ranged round three sides of the hall. There were present the Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff, Dr. Richardson, the jail surgeon, and the reporters of the morning papers. At 9:30 the Sheriff took the cat, which consisted of nine lashes of whip cord, each having a knot on the end, and handed it to the executioner, who was one of the prisoners of the jail. Time was given by the Sheriff, and Mr. Ewing, turnkey, was stationed as counter. The executioner showed some nervousness, but on receiving encouragement struck the first blow upon the prisoner's shoulders, high up and close to the leather collar which was placed round his neck. The second blow, which was delivered with the full strength of the executioner's arm, fell in the same place, and the executioner, who now appeared to have full command of his powers, delivered the third blow in the same locality. The Sheriff whispered to him to strike lower, and the next blow was given below the former ones. The fifth was given still lower, and the sixth was struck in the same place. Up to this the prisoner remained silent, but his heavy panting showed that he was suffering severely. On receiving the seventh stroke the prisoner moaned, and he continued moaning during the rest of the punishment, and kept moving his head from side to side with a quick mechanical motion. His sufferings were intense, his muscles were distended, and he struggled to free himself from the iron grip that held him to the triangle, as stripe after stripe of the cat descended upon his back. No cry escaped his lips, but his agonizing moan showed that he was suffering, and when the turnkey announced twenty his back, from the neck to the waist, was one livid mass, red, swollen and bleeding. Every knot on the lash had cut into the prisoner's back, producing a wound about an eighth of an inch in length. As soon as the punishment was over the prisoner was released, and trembling in every limb, he was led back to his cell.—Toronto Leader.

Extraordinary Suicide. A Rome correspondent describes a remarkable suicide of recent occurrence there, which has caused much sadness and horror among the professional and artistic Romans. The victim was the distinguished Juvara, an engraver of the highest reputation and a pupil of the celebrated Parma engraver, Toschi. He was 67 years old, easy in means, married to a good wife, and lived in a quiet, orderly, old-fashioned way. On the morning of the fatal day he shot himself up in his private studio, and proceeded in a leisurely and systematic manner to kill himself. He was over six hours in performing the horrible act, and has left a written record of his sensations during that time. At 8 o'clock he cut a vein in his foot and collected the blood in a dish; then with a brush painted with it on the wall, on a great curtain, various sentences at different hours. For instance, one of these sentences said: "8 o'clock. With a serene and cheerful conscience, I am awaiting my death." Another is: "10 o'clock. Death has not yet arrived. I now cut the vein in my arm." At 10:30 he wrote: "How strange! The blood mounts to my head. God pardon me, for I pardon my enemies." The saddest sentence is this: "2 o'clock. I have recovered my reason. My God, what have I done! What a rash act! It is too late, however, to repair the evil. I will now put an end to myself at once." Whereupon it seems that he took a revolver and shot himself in his mouth, which killed him instantly. Upon entering the studio an hour afterward they found the poor old man dead, sitting in an arm-chair, holding the revolver in one hand! The bloody writing on the wall told the sad story.

The jewels which the Khedive sent ostensibly to Minnie Sherman Fitch last winter, are to be divided between her and her two sisters; they were really designed for a family present to Gen. Sherman, but the occasion of Minnie's wedding was selected to offer them nominally to her. They are now said to be worth not quite one hundred thousand dollars.

Col. John S. Mosby, of Virginia, has been invited by a committee of Boston citizens to deliver one of a series of addresses in Tremont Temple.

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