

PITTSBURG, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1890.

THE LAND RESCUED

From the Ruthless Grasp of the Father of Waters Will More Than PAY FOR IMPROVEMENTS.

Maps Which Show the Exact Situation in a Striking Manner.

THE CHANGES IN THE CHANNEL.

One Short Cut Which Exerted a Great Influence on the Torrent.

AREA OF THE SOIL TO BE RECLAIMED

PAPER NO. 5.

Very few of our people conceive the importance of the Mississippi river. To most of them, especially to those who live removed from it, the Mississippi is a geographical expression, hazy in a mist of old tales of adventure, glistening now and again with a humorous story, a background for certain statistics occasionally reprinted, the occasion for a few lead lines summing up in ten syllables the misfortunes and miseries of a people far away, whom, which, though vitally affecting the lives and property of millions of our fellow men, are never brought home to the realizing senses of the whole people. They must be made to know and feel.

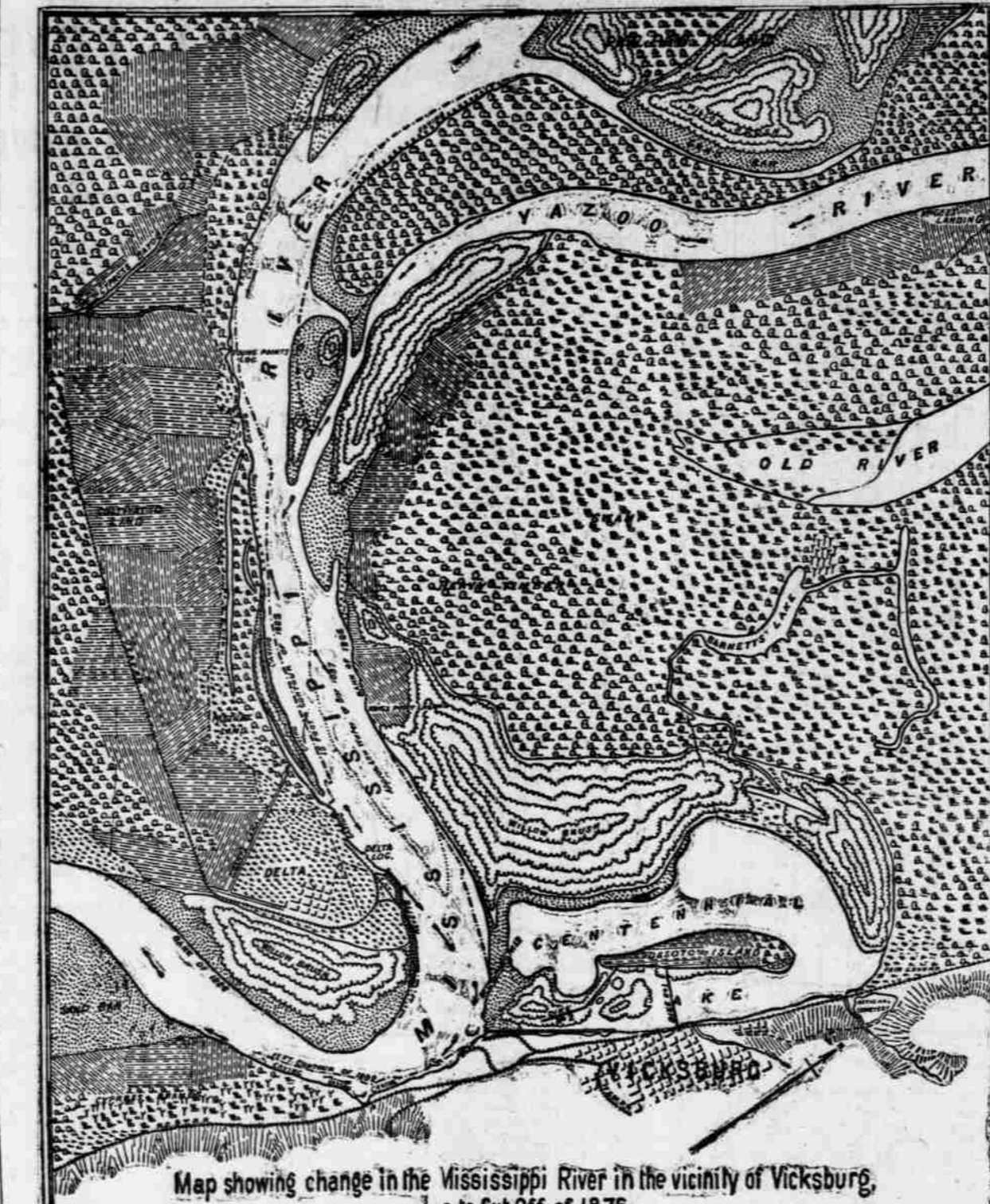
The monstrous wrong and sorrow and loss of the yearly overflows are not real to our people, or they would as one man demand

In a few hours, and that, too, on a rapidly swelling stream. It drained Golden Lake and the bottom between it and Frenchman's Bayou, and lowered the level of Young's and Carson's Lakes and Tyrone from four to six feet. The deep bottom between Frenchman's Village and Frenchman's Bayou was drained almost completely, and where there were formerly impassable sloughs is now dry land. The drainage of Golden's Lake was more thorough than that of any other portion of the county. Where formerly there was a sheet of water nearly 4,000 acres in area, and of a depth of 8 to 10 feet, there are now only a few isolated water holes in limited areas, the balance of what was once the bed of the lake being now a prairie-like opening, covered with rank grasses and vegetation of all sorts. A portion, if not all, of this old lake bed has been homesteaded, and it will soon be in cultivation.

This isolated instance shows how greatly the adjacent country would be benefited by lowering the river bed. In this case lowering the river bed four to six feet drained ponds, sloughs and marshes thousands of acres, and permanently improved the natural capabilities of the immediate region. What was done on a small scale by accident in this instance it is proposed to extend by design through the Mississippi Valley, and thereby to reclaim millions of acres of the richest imaginable soil and add to our wealth a value several times greater than the sum spent to permanently improve the river, make navigation safe thereon, protect the land from overflow and greatly benefit the health of the inhabitants. Any person who has sufficient means to make levees necessary to a location adjacent to or but little removed from ill-drained or marshy lands is too familiar with chills and fevers, dengue and other malarial diseases to need argument to convince him that good drainage of the surrounding lands would more than double his efficiency as a producer of wealth. Multiply the inhabitants of the bottom lands by five, multiply the value of the annual productions of each man by five, and we will possibly reach an approximate estimate of the annual increase of wealth which would flow from the good drainage to be obtained from lowering the bed of the river. This good drainage it is possible to obtain so long as the river bed is high enough to make levees necessary to restrain the flood waters. To obtain good drainage the river must be lowered so that no levees will be needed.

The stupendous proportions of this measure preclude its accomplishment by an agency less mighty than the river itself. If it were possible to apply the hydraulic

Map to show the Alluvial Basin of the Mississippi and the area it would cover, if placed in the State of Pennsylvania.



Map showing change in the Mississippi River in the vicinity of Vicksburg, a Cut Off of 1876. From Map of the N. T. Roswell, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

[NOTE.—A critical inspection of the above map shows that the river, probably within 200 years, flowed in nearly a straight line from the northeast to the southwest, its east or left bank lying about where the N. O. & T. Railroad now is; and that within recent times it has washed over and destroyed all the land shown on the right hand side of the map, an area exceeding 125 square miles, or 80,000 acres, which, if well drained and safe from destruction and overflow, would cut up into 2,000 farms of 40 acres each, support 50,000 people and have a money value of \$8,000,000 to \$12,000,000. This is only one locality. Every reach of the river in the present similar features

as the old one. From this results the building up of a long sand wave commencing at Lake's Landing, averaging 200 feet in width by one-half mile in length, and from the mouth of Four-Mile Bayou, upstream there has been an average cutting of 150 feet for a distance of a mile.

Between Reeve's and Harris' landing for a distance of 4,000 feet there has been an average cutting of 300 feet; below Fleece's plantation there has been a cutting of 200 feet to 400 feet a distance of 3,650 feet, and



Map showing changes in the channel of the Mississippi River and destruction of lands since 1810. Adapted from the report of the Mississippi River Commission.

crest nearer to the bend below and increasing the slope of the descent into it. Down the sharp declivity the water rushes, and there, with a great and ever increasing velocity, becoming a power of terrible destruction and breaking it most mercilessly. The amount of sediment in the water is that which it could sustain at its minimum velocity when flowing slowly over the shoals; the river here acquires a maximum velocity, and, therefore, takes up a quantity of sediment sufficient to saturate the water at the augmented velocity. This sediment is suspended and carried along until the water reduces its velocity in passing over the next shoal, where this added sediment is again deposited, building up that shoal. This matters go on from year to year. Each year the shoals become shallower; each year the bends become deeper; each year large tracts of agricultural lands are washed away by the widening of the channel along the reaches; each year the banks in the deep bends are cut farther and farther back.

PREACHING REFORMS

Local Ministers Object to Giving Out Free Advertising BY ANNOUNCING ENTERTAINMENTS It Requires Too Much Time and Diverts the Mind From the Sermon.

PLANS ADOPTED IN OTHER CITIES

The pastors of some of the largest churches in Pittsburg have recently abolished the custom of making announcements from the pulpit on Sunday of entertainments, festivals etc.

Other ministers who preside over congregations equally large, continue to read nearly all announcements that come to them from either secular or church sources. Among the laity of the religious people of Pittsburg and Allegheny this has aroused a controversy as to what is church etiquette on the subject.

On last Sunday Rev. W. H. Pearce, D. D., of the Butler Street M. E. Church, Lawrenceville, in a little statement before the congregation, discouraged the practice. For his flock he prints a miniature newspaper called the Church Tidings, into this he crowds all the announcements possible. It is only monthly, however, and he told the congregation it would be an excellent thing to print a slip of paper, or card, for every Sunday, bearing all acceptable announcements. He said that all the principal churches in the country are ceasing to be the means of free advertising.

Rev. Dr. Pearce, when interviewed, gave his views more in detail. Said he: "I am a preacher in Baltimore not long since told his congregation that if there was any time left after making the usual pulpit announcements he would preach a sermon. I think he struck the keynote of the objection to this once popular church custom. To ask a pastor to make a long string of announcements, many of which he is expected to amplify with the way and manner of the societies connected with our own church, or to some other cause in which the public generally is interested, such as the Y. M. C. A. work, what is the result? It is to leave the pastor free to devote himself exclusively to making the devotional exercises and the sermon a success, some other plan should be adopted for the announcement of social events. This matter of announcements has grown to large proportions. The number of our church societies has multiplied of late years, and their gatherings for social and religious purposes are numerous. But, in addition to these, a minister receives all sorts of secular announcements. They are about lectures, and the like.

"The neighboring churches send in requests to announce their fairs, festivals and bazaars. If you announce one you must open wide the way for another. They are usually pay entertainments, so that an announcement is equivalent to a free advertisement. I reject a great many of these, and I try to limit all announcements to the societies connected with our own church, or to some other cause in which the public generally is interested, such as the Y. M. C. A. work, what is the result? It is to leave the pastor free to devote himself exclusively to making the devotional exercises and the sermon a success, some other plan should be adopted for the announcement of social events. This matter of announcements has grown to large proportions. The number of our church societies has multiplied of late years, and their gatherings for social and religious purposes are numerous. But, in addition to these, a minister receives all sorts of secular announcements. They are about lectures, and the like.

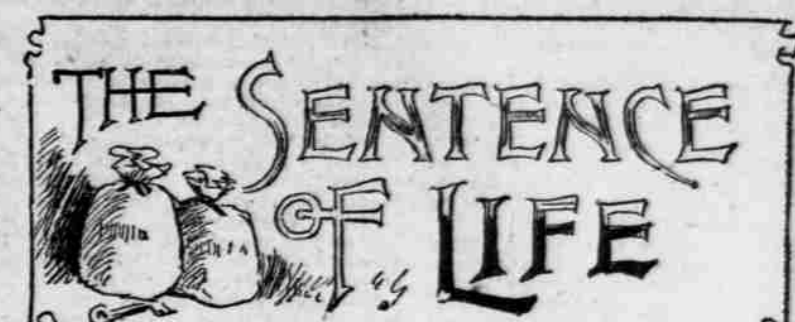
THE WEEKLY BULLETIN PLAN. "A couple of years ago I tried the weekly bulletin plan, and its eminently successful where some provision is made for the cost of printing it. When that plan is adopted all notices should be in by Saturday morning so they may be printed. This reminds me of another evil of the present system. Probably two-thirds of the announcements in every church are carried on the pulpit Sabbath morning, or placed to him by the ushers during service. He has no time to determine their merit, and thus thousands of acres of cultivated lands, destroys farms, buildings and implements, and drowns the stock and

Rev. Dr. Purvis, of the First Presbyterian Church, said: "Oh, I announce pretty much all that comes in. True, it is annoying sometimes to hear a lot of announcements heaped up on the pulpit Sabbath morning, but usually they all pertain to events out of which some good may come. It does not take me very long to read them. Those I know nothing about, I simply read. Those I am familiar with or which are connected with our own church I often emphasize with some remarks. You see there is a way of boiling down announcements so that they will not take up much time. You can't expect entertainments by refusing to announce them any more than you can muzzle the press. The age for that has gone by. The free circulation of news is a better man. They are usually sent as a compliment to the pastor and not believing that he actually will care to use them; I prefer my church to be silent, and for that reason I announce nearly the entertainments of neighboring churches when they are sent me. It encourages friendship."

Rev. T. J. Leak, D. D., of North Avenue M. E. Church, said: "I make announcements freely, though I try to discriminate between them. Although I have sometimes been embarrassed in the pulpit by the large number of notices which come their way there, and the worthy recommendation some of them ask at my lips, I always try to read them all."

IT TAKES UP TIME. "I prefer to err on the generous side. It is true the other does take up considerable time, but audiences are for the time interested in hearing them. If there are many they can't remember all, so no harm is done. I do reject announcements which conflict with the dates of religious meetings in my own church. On this score I have rejected Y. M. C. A. announcements sometimes."

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In the magnificent dining-room of the wealthy banker's residence sat the host and a large number of guests, feasting. The dishes were excellent, the wine delicious, and conversation was naturally brisk and animated. Discussion was on the topic of capital punishment—whether it was more befitting humanity to inflict the sentence of death or imprisonment for life. As there were lawyers, physicians, bankers, journalists, in fact, representatives of most of the classes of society present, the respective opinions were widely different.

"I cannot agree with him," said the host to one of his guests, who declared the death-sentence as cruel, and wholly unfit for our cultivated age and Christian government. "I certainly have no experience in either, but if a man may judge by opinion, I should call death more desirable, morally and sensibly preferable to the slow killing of life-long imprisonment."

"I think both are equally cruel. In both cases the law takes something that, once taken, can never be restored again—the life of a human being; and, whether it is literal

or moral death, in both cases the same result and the same cruelty." "I don't know," said the host, "but the law should let criminals go free? How will you protect the innocent if you do not remove the guilty, and how will you prevent crime if you do not punish it when it occurs?" "The question was on the cruelty and not on the necessity, which is quite a different point. I think the question has to remain an open one, because of the inevitable individual feeling. There are men who had rather die at once than give up their liberty for ever, and there are some who could live in chains and yet cling to life."

"I, for one," said a young lawyer, not yet 25 years of age, "prefer life to death in any circumstances. If I should be compelled to choose between the two punishments, I would assuredly try the imprisonment. Life, however dreary, is better than death."

"You speak as youth and inexperience generally do, and will, no doubt, speak differently soon," said the banker. "I would willingly lay a wager of two millions that, after only five years of solitary imprisonment, you would come to look on death as a kind liberator and be sorry for not having chosen him in time."

"And I am quite certain I would not," said the young man, "because there is life there is hope also, and if your proposition was meant in earnest, I shall take your wager, that I shall stand not off my feet, but on my feet, perhaps for a year or two, perhaps a little longer, and then will be glad to escape and forfeit the wager. You must remember, also, that voluntary imprisonment is harder than that which is compulsory, and the knowledge that you are free to go at will must be an eternal torment."

"Well, I think differently, and I stick to the bet. If you are afraid to do so, but in rain, and in this wild water was concluded and made into a contract, witnessed by all present."

On the following day, according to this contract, the young lawyer took up his abode in a side wing of the banker's palace. In this side wing he was to remain for 15 years, but he was to be allowed to see his family and receive his mail. He would receive no visitors, no letters. He would see no human being, hear no human voice, speak to no one, never read a newspaper. He would be allowed to play on any instrument, should get books to read, write letters, and receive visits, cigars—in fact, everything that was necessary to his personal comfort. He should not see his attendants, but he could, when necessary, communicate his wishes to them by writing and putting the paper out through a little window in the door, through which he would also get his meals. The stipulations were minutely clear, and as this was noon of November 14, 1870, he must stay in his prison until November 14, 1885, at 12 o'clock. If he should leave two minutes before his time expired, he should forfeit the wager and have no claim whatever. The door was locked at ten on the outside, and the imprisonment began.

During the first year, the prisoner was incessantly writing letters, and the sound of the piano was heard night and day. He seemed to suffer very much from loneliness and tedium, and gave up wine and cigars, because, as he wrote, the former created desire, and desire is the prisoner's heaviest burden, while the latter spoiled the atmosphere of the room. He wanted only lively books, such as comedies, fantastical love stories and such works.