CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTES OF A TRIP TO AND UPON THE LARGE SUPERIOR AND MISSISSIPPI RAILROAD.

[Special Correspondence of the Phila. Evening Bulletin.]

CLARK HOUSE, Duluth, Minnesota, Friday, August 19th, 1870.—After one week's pilgrimage, our flock of fifty is safely folded in the retreat known as the Clark House, in this city. There can hardly be found a fitter illustration of the rapid growth of a frontier town when rightly seated than the need for this commodious hostelry of one hundred and thirty rooms, capable of one hundred and fifty guests, and measuring one hundred and sixty by one hundred and fifty feet, in a spot which, fourteen months ago, was a wharfless bank, dotted with a few clapboard shells, and visited by savages.

Our party are all well, and individually delighted with their excursion. The latter, as many of my readers know, was organized by the firm of Jay Cooke & Co., and a few other Eastern capitalists, for the purpose of exploring the noble highway of trade opened through their intelligent energy to direct the commerce of the West, linking the Northern Overland route, the Mississippi river, and the chain of the Great Lakes, to the East. This is effected by connecting the Mississippi river, at St. Paul's, with the head of Lake Superior at this point, by means of a railroad, just built, and measuring only one hundred and fifty-four miles. The North Pacific Railroad, now vigorously pushing westward, is directed from hither to Puget Sound, and the trade emptied into the Lakes by these sources may be carried without lifting from the water to Europe and to Asia and Africa.

I have written of our arrival at Williamsport on August 13th.

On Saturday, August 13th, after a coquettish little breakfast at the hotel, we left Williamsport. The elegant little town was preparing to run with abundant water-life for the fleeting summer life as a watering-place. The dancers who had spun until morning were coming down with rather dissipated-looking faces to the breakfast-room; and the carriages were rolling up through the lawn to meet them, and the domesticated trout were thronging through the pools hotel has been built, and finished for a year, but the accession of summer travel to Kane has not yet warranted its opening.

In this lofty region our route curiously curved amidst streams dyed brown with hemlock, foaming amongst the roots of trees that retained in their bark the arrowheads of races that had never heard of guns, and, what was far more strange, shed their currents alternately east and west into the Ohio and Susquehanna rivers. Yes, the same cloud dropping upon us on the wind sent some of its water southeastwardly into the Chesapeake, and some into the Gulf of Mexico along the Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi, while a fraction drained northward into Lake Erie, and found the leap of Niagara and the gaping lips of the Saint Lawrence.

The landmarks bereaved of Oil City and Titusville, and the lofty wooden frames over the useless wells were rotting away to nothingness on every side.

The beauty of this as

A Tourist's Route

struck me with constant amazement and delight. Little known to the fashionable explorers, who think nothing of throwing themselves across to the White Mountains, and scarcely more of going to the Alps, it has seemed "too far" for that class who derive their cue from the guide-books merely. Yet, for noble beauty and unspoiled grandeur, the highlands penetrated by the upper reach of the Erie road can hardly be equalled in any part of the world. "Gaps" far more striking and piquant than the famous Lehigh Gap, opened for nearly all of the many turns of the river. The sharp spurs of the mountains, pushing into the water, showed their sharpest outlines as we successively sighted up their edges, and would often collect at a given water-shed in a focal grouping that showed the horizon, peaked all around with giddy pyramidal mountain-tops. It is a country fit for the romances of Arthur and the enchantments of Merlin. We for our part, saw it under great tragic curtains of gray storm, fringing out amongst the sharper prominences of the hills, now hiding and now enhancing their relief. At a station, called St. Mary's, 125 miles below Erie, the grade begin to rise with considerable rapidity, and about here our route parted company with the West Branch of the Susquehanna. Thirty-five miles further on we approached the romantic mountain-station of

Kane,

on a severe 106-foot grade. The magnificent hemlock and bird's-eye forests sunk gradually below us as the engine fiercely and laboriously climbed, licking up the continuous mouthfuls of fuel fed to it by the fireman, and shooting backward flames of almost white fire across his figure to the supply in the coal-box.

We reached this lofty station of Kane at half-past one, disembarked into a huge shingle dining-room, and partook of venison and brook-trout at a long shedding board. The chill, the fare, the general rudeness and the rough but willing service at the table strongly reminded me of a dinner at the Tycoon House on Mount Washington, as such a dinner used to be twelve years ago, when last I had the enterprise to place that summit beneath me. So, lifted far above the general area of our native State, we fed on the wild flesh of the mountains, and lagged waiters, of both sexes, every age, and various nationalities, clashed pleasantly amongst each other in their rustical efforts to make us comfortable.

Kane is but a small place, but it is high: it sits two thousand feet above Erie. It is named from Gen. Kane, who raised the gallant Bucktail Regiment, and who lived on a wild perch among the forests just by. A very large 90-room hotel has been built, and finished for a

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Erie Road

proper. Our miniature train, like all specials, was "cock of the walk." The special train, in the railway code, has absolute right to the track against all trains regular and irregular. All trains and engines had to be clear of the main track twenty minutes before we were due, and supervisors must have the track cleared of all obstructions half an hour before our time as tabled at the various way-stations. The only concession made was to the Empire Freight line east, which met us at Lock Haven; that train was only obliged to make ten minutes extra, and wait for us. Our own engineer, for his part, was furnished with full notes of the time at which every eastward train would meet us, and we met and passed, courteously waiting on sidings, the Erie Express, the Fast Freight, the Local Freight from Lock Haven, and seven or eight others, successively, before arriving at Erie.

Our engine was a beauty, built at the shops of the line, bought the valves and fixtures here the name of William Sellers, Philadelphia. The accommodations were ample for our party of fifty. Little family tiers-de-lits of ladies and gentlemen, grouped by reversing the backs of the seats, wrapped themselves in their bonnouns and contemplated the landscape, now monument-jutting, now gorge-gaping. At intervals, from the recesses of the freight-car, issued rations of sandwiches, claret-punch—which a man of Augustus—who had a cunning recipe of his own, was mixing there—and other commissariat superfluities; they were borne along by little Ben, of the large, thoughtful and very "good" house, whose patronage we have entertained us. Less our heartfelt thanks for the most-careful and watchful hospitality that ever conducted should be paid to Mr. Stanton, not get to the right address, I would like to present them here to Ben.

Forty-two miles from Williamsport, at a little station called

Renovo.

we observed a fine hotel, whose grounds were decorated with a chain of ponds and fountains fed from the cold hill-streams, and most abundantly stocked with artifically-bred trout, some individuals of which were a foot long. The ladies, willing by this time to change their positions, all left the carriages to see this handsome display.

We were now entering the lofty recesses and sanctuaries of the grand Allegheny ridge. The garden-culture of the rich farms we had observed on the previous day's travel gave place to the swelling eminences of forest-clothed hills, patched here and there with fields whose discouraged crops were in marked contrast with the wealthy effloresence of those in Eastern Pennsylvania. The Susquehanna was encumbered with a great wealth of felled timber. The mountains, shaggy with timber, seamed with coal, opened around us in rich panoramic development. From the locomotive, upon which I was riding, I could see the great lumber-slides, tearing a precipitate path down the mountain-side, as at Cameron, or contributing, from grimy-black apertures in the slopes, their crumbling masses of ultiminous coal. The region, during the oil excitement, was probed for petroleum likewise, but unsuccessfully, and the lofty wooden

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