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Our Western Letter.

HUTCHINSON, Reno Co., Kans., November 11th, 1874.

Mr. Editor:—My business is taking me through Kansas to Colorado, and I am making the jaunt leisurely, giving myself opportunity to see the country, and learn something of the people. I am spending a few days in this delightful, thriving, enterprising, three-year-old city of Hutchinson, and I find I have a little time for letter-writing. I had heard so much of the utter ruin caused by the grasshoppers, that I had expected to see a land quite stripped of all vegetation; "a dried up, desolate country," as the descriptions read, "and a discouraged, disheartened population."—What I actually have found in Kansas, may be of interest to your readers, and perhaps allay some needless fears.

In Eastern Kansas I found the damage inflicted by the grasshoppers to be comparatively light. My route of travel over the Kansas Midland Railroad, from Kansas city, took me through the Kaw (or Kansas) Valley, as far as Topeka. Vegetation appeared to be about as luxuriant as ever, and, but for the corn-fields, one would not have discovered that he was in the "grasshopper region." From Topeka I have traveled westward, on the line of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, through the Cottonwood Valley and into the Arkansas Valley. Here the grasshoppers were in an overwhelming numbers and proved as destructive, perhaps, as anywhere. By the time they appeared in Eastern Kansas, (some two or three weeks later than here) the corn had so far matured, that while they had cut off the leaves and tassels, they left the ears of corn hanging upon the stalks. Further westward, the ears being in the "milky state," were also destroyed, leaving the bare stalks standing in the fields like so many walking-canes, stuck in the ground. Here, in this portion of Middle Kansas, the grasshoppers came early enough to find the corn in a still tenderer state, and they destroyed not only leaf and tassel and the incipient ear, but ate even the stalks down to within a foot or two of the ground, leaving a field not of bare canes, but of bare pegs. I have made it a point to ascertain the damages actually caused, by the grasshoppers in this region, and have come in contact with, and received direct information from hundreds of farmers residing in the counties of Lyon, Chase, Marion, Harvey, Sedgwick and Reno. As the result of their statements, I think the following may be relied upon, as a tolerable accurate summary of what was lost, and what was saved in these counties.

Corn—almost a total failure, in general. When planted very early, a partial crop was secured. In a few special instances in Lyon and Chase counties, fair crops—45 to 60 bushels per acre.

Winter wheat—not affected by grasshoppers. Crop considered very fair, ranging from 15 to 35 bushels per acre. Many farmers harvested from 1,000 to 2,000 bushels.

Spring wheat—raised in considerable quantities; yielded all the way from 6 to 25 bushels per acre.

Rye—sown only in limited quantities; a good crop everywhere, and averaging 20 bushels per acre—some fields yielded 50 bushels.

Fruit—not badly damaged by the grasshoppers. The small fruits, strawberries, blackberries, &c., yielded well wherever grown, and were out of the way of the destroying army. The leaves of the apple tree were taken, but the apple left untouched. One farmer harvested 800 bushels from 200 trees. Peach trees lost their leaves and occasionally the peach was bitten; but the crop was a large one, and in several towns peaches could be had at 25 cents per bushel. Cherries were abundant. Grapes were very plenty, suffering comparatively slight injury.

Vegetables—a good crop of early sort.—Late vegetables, in the main, were food for the grasshoppers. Some people succeeded in saving their gardens, by liberal use of fire and smoke, or by driving the grasshoppers away with a whip; but Mr. Bernard of Chase county, who lost a field of 3,000 cabbages, tells me he tried all these means without success. There was a tolerable crop of sweet potatoes, late beets and turnips.

Grass—a crop of prime importance, though often quite overlooked, which was but slightly injured. Pasturage has been comparatively good all through the season, and the hay harvest is unprecedentedly large. Some farmers have put up from 50 to 100 tons.

A prominent clergyman of Lawrence, sums up the matter as to Eastern Kansas thus: "In this Eastern portion, I really believe there will be more realized from the soil this year than last, and I doubt, if on the whole, it will be so bad a year." Several farmers in these Middle counties have said to me almost the same thing: "We have lost our corn crop," said they "but we shall get through this winter better than we did last." Many people say to me, "You visit Kansas at a very unfavorable time." But I cannot agree with them. The beautiful fields of wheat which I see in all this region, could not possibly look more promising, and I learn that new

er before were they half so extensive. At no former time could I have seen such innumerable ricks of hay, scattered over the prairies. The trees which were robbed of their foliage, have put forth fresh leaves, and show no sign of desolation. I have seen numerous herds of cattle fattening upon the rich and unlimited pasturage of the prairies. This Indian summer is the very perfection of pleasant weather, and the people whom I meet seem to be cheerful, contented, full of hope and energy—who are able and willing to bear their own burdens.

The grasshopper plague, however, after all is said that can be said in mitigation, and in correction of exaggerated reports, did fall with almost crushing weight upon some individuals, and to them it was a very great calamity. The old settlers and those who had been here two or three seasons, and had put in wheat as well as corn, will weather through; but the emigrants of a year ago who came in quest of a home-stead claim, with barely enough to carry them through one season, and also others who ventured everything upon the one crop of corn, have lost all. In the new settlements of Western Kansas, there were a number of such cases. A large portion of them have left the country, wending their way back to the older states in their emigrant wagons, and to all inquiries as to their destination, giving the one answer, "Going back to wife's folks." Many of them intend to find employment during the winter, and will return in the Spring to begin anew with fresh courage, and here they will soon establish themselves in comfortable homes, where, in time, "Wife's folks" will receive a generous and ample return for the hospitality extended this winter to the young Kansas settler.—But others who drifted into Kansas with the current, and have now drifted back, will find refuge with "Wife's folks" until some other current carries them off again; and so they will drift back and forth, shuffling their shiftless way through life, until they "shuffle off this mortal coil."—I know not how many people have assured me that the grasshoppers are to be credited with one blessing—ridding the State of this class of inhabitants. A Home Missionary in one of our Western counties said to me, "The grasshoppers have cleaned Kansas."

Some of the recent emigrants, who remained here, will need and will receive help from their neighbors. Some were left without the means to procure seed-wheat, but in some way or other this want has been supplied. A large portion of the latest comers had purchased land of the A. T. & S. F. Railroad. In such cases, and indeed, in the case of many homesteaders, the Railroad company furnished wheat for seed, when necessary.

I have asked the farmers whom I have met what is their present opinion of Kansas—its prospects, &c. To hear their replies, one might suppose they were all real estate agents, for their praises of the country are very positive and emphatic. In two or three things they all agree: That they never lived in so healthful a country as this; that a new country never had such schools (this is true without a doubt); nor was ever so well supplied with churches, mills, roads, bridges and railroads; and that this is the best country they have seen for winter wheat. I find some difference among them as to the industry in which it is most profitable to engage. Some prefer stock-raising, because the pasturage is so plentiful; the winters, general, so mild; the labor so light, and the profits so sure. Others, and the majority, think that farming and stock-raising combined, will give the greatest profit. Still others are devoting all their attention to sheep, claiming that this country is the "Sheep's paradise." These Kansas folks not only like the country, but also the people who live in it. A gentleman in Marion county, said to me, "This is the civillest community I ever was in." A clergyman, well out towards the frontier, tells me his congregation is of a higher average grade of intelligence and culture, than that he ministered to in the East.

The people here have fully recovered from their panic, and are a little ashamed of their fright. In the midst of the grasshopper raid, the panic among them was almost universal. A Harvey county farmer tells me that, at that time, he and his neighbors were anxious to sell out very cheaply; but now no one would sell, except at a large price. I find that valuations have gone back to their former standard. They will remain there for a season without any attempt to advance them; for the grasshoppers have affected one good thing, in checking the tendency to a too rapid rise in prices. I presume, therefore, that next spring one will be able to get nearly as good bargains in farming land, as in the spring of 1874. During the panic, great bargains were offered, and some property changed hands, at about its value. That time is past. There are no such chances at present. I now and then meet with "bargain-hunters," who come here expecting to buy at "grasshopper prices." Some of them seem to be in very ill humor, because the people refuse to sell, except at the old rates, and so they return as they came. Others finding they cannot get the bargains they anticipated, do the next best thing, and purchase Railroad

lands. One of the land agents of the Railroad company informs me that his sales this autumn have been double those of the same season last year.

After what I have seen of this particular portion of the "grasshopper stricken country, my bowels refuse to "yearn" with sympathy for it. The people here, as a body, are in pretty good circumstances, and can take care of themselves and their needy neighbors. They ask for neither sympathy nor help, and they indignantly protest against the course of two or three adventurers—self-appointed agents of "suffering Kansas," who have gone to other States begging for aid. It is but just and right that your readers, and the public generally, be cautioned in this matter, lest their charities be bestowed where they are not needed, and placed in the hands of persons not authorized to receive them.

It is true, however, according to trustworthy reports, that in a few of the newest counties there is a destitution, which is not found in the Eastern or Middle Kansas, and which may justly appeal to the sympathy of the general public. If it shall become necessary to go outside of the State to make that appeal, it will be made through such authorized and responsible channels, as will give the fullest assurance that the charitable offerings of the public will not be wasted nor misapplied.

G. H.

Smiggins' Pants.

Last October, young Smiggins went with some young ladies chestnutting. Now Smiggins is polite and bashful and a great admirer of the ladies and his own personal appearance, and even on such an expedition as chestnutting he could not forbear dressing as though he was going to attend a wedding or ball. With his three female companions he wandered through the woods for an hour or two. They met with indifferent success in finding chestnuts. There were plenty of them on the trees, but none on the ground. Finally one of the fair ones, who is to Smiggins as the "apple of his eye," suggested he could climb a tree which was loaded with burrs, and knock some of them off. This was an ordeal which our friend had not anticipated, he would do anything to please her. He accordingly divested himself of his coat, and hugging the trunk of the tree, he began to work his way up. It was a tough job. His pants were not made for such work, and their close fit brought an awful strain upon that part which was most prominent during the ascent. But Smiggins must go up, and he got along very well for about fifteen feet, and then he heard a rip, and felt a relaxation of the strain upon his pants. That sound nearly caused him to lose his balance. He knew that three pairs of eyes were centered on him and he worked his way around on the opposite side of the tree, but they followed. Here was a dilemma. He didn't like to come down, and he feared to go up. His arms ached, and perspiration broke out all over him. He could not long remain in his then position, so he gave a determined push, and r-r-rip went those pants, separating in an awful manner. The ladies immediately diverted their gaze and stuffed their handkerchiefs in their mouths, and had our hero given them time they would have been out of the way, but he was so startled by the situation, that he lost his strength and slid down the tree at a fearful speed, so fast that the already rent pants were almost torn from his body. As soon as he struck the ground he darted off into the woods with flying tatters of intermingled hues. The ladies came home alone, and if any one finds a coat in the woods in this vicinity, that coat belongs to Smiggins.

An Unfortunate Man.

A N. Y. paper gives a biography of an inventor, who has done more for the world than the world has for him. After making half a dozen scientific improvements in mechanics, any one of which would have made another man's fortune, he has gradually fallen to the position of tender of the stage door in a New York theatre. His name is Freligh. When twenty years old he invented a diving dress for which he got \$600—about the only reward he ever obtained. He served his apprenticeship at the Novelty Iron Works and afterward obtained a position as engineer of the Jersey City ferry company at \$800 a year. For inventing the revolving grate for ferry boats, the superintendent gave him a pair of patent leather boots; for inventing an apparatus to heat water by waste steam and save ten per cent. in fuel, he received a double barrel shot gun. When he built a model for a Spaniard, who wanted a boat of light draught and immense carrying capacity to navigate the shallows of the Amazon, and was about to sign a contract to construct a flotilla of such vessels, the Spaniard was murdered in a cigar store; when, four years later, he invented a "combination pump" to indicate the action of the force-pump, the temperature of the water in the "hot well," and the density of that in the boiler, a Scotchman stole his discovery, and patented it in his own name; when he compounded a lubricator for locomotives, the general supply agent of the Erie Railroad refused to accept it unless he was paid a bonus of \$8,000. And lastly,

after a day had been appointed by James Fiak, jr., in which Freligh was to receive \$30,000 in stock and money for the secret of the compound, Stokes interfered and murdered the only man who had ever promised him fair treatment. To such a man the Fates have done their worst. After such a series of disappointments, no wonder that the poor man takes his stand at the door of a theatre, satisfied that the shame of the stage are more substantial than the gratitude and honesty of the world.

An Item for you to Read.

We have probably all of us met with instances in which a word heedlessly spoken against the reputation of a female has been magnified by malicious minds until the cloud has been dark enough to overshadow her whole existence. To those who are accustomed, not necessarily from bad motives, but from thoughtlessness, to speak lightly of women, we recommend these hints as worthy of consideration:

Never use a lady's name in improper places at an improper time, or in mixed company. Never make assertions about her that you think untrue or allusions that you think she herself would blush to hear.

When you meet with men who do not scruple to make use of a woman's name in a reckless and unprincipled manner, shun them—they are the very worst members of the community—men lost to every sense of honor, every feeling of humanity. Many a good and worthy woman's character has been forever ruined and her heart broken by a lie manufactured by some villain, and in the presence of those whose little judgment could not deter them from circulating the foul and damaging report.

A slander is soon propagated, and the smallest thing derogatory to a woman's character will fly on the wind, and magnify as it circulates until its monstrous weight crushes the poor unconscious victim. Respect the name of woman; your mother and sisters are women, and as you would have their fair names untarnished, and their lives unimpaired by the slanderer's bitter tongue, heed the ill your words may bring upon the mother, and sisters or the wife of some of your fellow creatures.

A Japanese Street Scene.

A writer on Japan says: "I shall never forget the sport that a Parisian fellow-passenger and I had the first trip we made in a girickasha through the Japanese quarter of Yokohama. The most sedate judge could not help laughing to be dragged about like a big baby in a fancily-painted baby wagon. Down narrow streets we went, through crowds of men, women, and numberless children, the coolies shouting out to clear the way, and never seeming to tire of their work. Married women, with shaved eyebrows and blackened teeth, carried their babies strapped to their back, and went chattering along gayly as can be imagined; young Japanese maidens smiled flirtatiously at the French count, as well they might; men and women displayed their wares for sale on the street and in the shops, and everybody seemed happy. The tea houses were crowded, and the silk stores and lacquerware shops were bright with beautiful goods. Here a crowd would be gathered to listen to the singing of professional musicians (and such heathenish singing, too!) and in another place some eloquent stump-speakers would be making up faces and telling lies, just as stump-speakers do elsewhere. Such a gay, happy, simple people I never saw before. Everybody smiles, everybody bows pleasantly and acknowledges the courtesy with a most gracious manner."

A Monkey in a Bad Fix.

Sam Wilcoxep, of Virginia, Nev., has a small menagerie of monkeys, foxes, coyotes and the like. He also has a large Newfoundland dog. On whose back he sometimes places one of his pet monkeys when he is going for a walk about town, the monkey fastened to the collar of the dog by a string. As a general thing, the monkey enjoys his ride; but a day or two since he would willingly have traded himself off for some less privileged specimen of his species. His canine steed being allowed to roam the streets at will, saw another dog that he thought he could whip, and forthwith went for him like a hairy hurricane.—In a moment both dogs were on their hind legs and going for each other like two sausage machines. This made times very lively for the monkey, as the stranger dog evidently considered him as part and parcel of his strange antagonist. Such walls of despair as that monkey uttered, and such hideous faces as he made!

He would climb down the side of the dog he bestrode opposite where the war was going on, and thence peep over occasionally, his jaws quivering, visage distorted, and his eyes starting from their sockets with terror. As the dogs were constantly changing sides, it made times awfully lively for that monkey. When he jumped to the ground the string held him, and he found himself trampled under the foot of both friend and foe, and he was glad to get again upon his steed and face the battle.—The poor monkey did not get over examining the end of his tail for wounds for four hours after the battle had terminated.