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OUR CITY RAILWAYS.

The people of our municipalities recognize these roads as elements of great usefulness to the public. We have given them large corporate privileges, and we are repaid therefor in the direct advantage to their immediate customers and in the promotion, generally, of the material interests of our communities.

Our municipal policy in this respect has been wise in the main, and we hope it may continue to be as commendably guided. If we have given too large a franchise in some cases, or if we have hitherto fallen short of the promised benefits to the public in other cases, we may, on the whole, congratulate ourselves that the system has been wisely developed and faithfully adhered to by each party to the contract.

The roads now in operation are but the nucleus, of the system hereafter to radiate through every part of that city of the future which is to surround our confining rivers. The present roads will be extended, new roads will be needed and built, the modes of conveyance or traction thereon will be improved, and so the carriage of the people will be quickened and cheapened in every fashion, until the remotest verge of the city that is to be, will be brought within such convenient reach of its centres for trade and business, as practically to annihilate space for our citizens. Herein the public enjoys, and is to enjoy, the benefits of a service which has never yet been overrated, which is secured only by the enlistment of private capital, and which we are equally bound to protect from infringement, whether we consider our own material interests, or the good faith of each party to the agreements.

We cannot afford to be without these roads. The municipal authorities may not construct them, and so we invite private capital to assume the work. We should ask in vain for a dollar, unless we can give to that dollar a reasonably fair promise for an adequate return. Capital never hesitates to take its own risks according to its own judgment, upon questions of fact, but it asks for certainty in all the legal conditions. Whether a particular new route will pay, or will prove unprofitable, is the risk which capital must assume or decline, after a clear, definite understanding of the preliminary conditions of the franchise. The route should be precisely fixed between the termini; there must be no cloud upon the special concessions from the municipal authority; no exposure to an unlimited future competition along that route; there should be the most exact arrangement of all the details which might otherwise involve daily conflicts between the corporation and the public; every privilege conceded and each obligation imposed must be closely defined on each side, before capital comes in to improve a special privilege of this sort for the common good.

That special privilege is of the very essence of the mutual contract; usually it presents the main temptation to capital. Divested from the public and offered as an inducement to private citizens, it may not be recalled or abated without the joint consent. It should not be granted without sufficient consideration, for, once granted and the grant accepted, it can never be resumed as long as the contract is maturely kept.

It is of vital importance to our municipal interests that the responsibilities and rights of each party to these grants of railway-franchise in our streets, should be completely understood and adhered to with a rigid fidelity. Let us be sure that we know what we agree to in each case—the precise limits of the concessions we are to make; but let us fix the route, regulate the service, adjust the fares, regulate the taxation, provide for supervision, and nominate in the text of the contract every point of detail which foresight or experience may suggest; then we offer this to the capitalist and invite him to take his chances in the investment of his money, guaranteeing him only our good faith and against competition on that particular route. It is wise to add, also, a limitation of the period in which not only the offer must be accepted, but the work shall be completed. The municipality has then exhausted its power, and while it remains for capital to accept or reject the terms, its decision is expressly made upon the irrevocable faith of the legal conditions thus prescribed.

Our laws require the Legislative as well as the municipal sanction to these contracts, but the contract is properly made here, not at Harrisburg; when we have settled its conditions, we submit them to the approval of the Commonwealth. We are the sole judges of their local fitness, remitting the general question of public policy involved in each case to the higher authority.

We can grant to no corporation the right, upon any terms whatever, to appropriate any or all of our streets at its own pleasure. We grant no franchises whatever, except upon the most distinct conditions as to route, time, and every other detail. Granting only what we expect to abide by, we pledge our municipal faith to those whom we deal with, and expect them, in their turn, to make good the last title of the stipulations to which they are bound.

We beg our delegation at Harrisburg to assume no responsibilities which properly belong to the municipal authorities here, as well in this matter of street-railways as in all others of local concern to our people. Be good enough, gentlemen of the Legislature, to make no bargain for us; we can do that for ourselves much better than you, and shall duly submit them to your approval. It will be time enough for you to put through our railway bills when they come to you already stamped with the official approval of our city authorities. The scheme which cannot command home support, or which comes to you in advance of it, has not only no title to your favor, but it should, upon its own face, awaken your suspicions.

We take no sides in quarrels between private corporations. The more street railways we have, the better for these cities. Our authorities refuse a franchise to no meritorious project, and will keep good faith with all. Such a refusal will do good cause in every subject to a popular appeal at the ensuing charter election, and for any bad faith our courts can apply prompt and efficient remedies. But we want no "snap judgments" taken upon Councils, under bargains made at Harrisburg, such as this which is covered up in a bill now pending, which gives one of these corporations the right to lay "A single or double track, with the necessary turns out and switches, in any of the streets of the city of Pittsburgh, and to connect the same with the terminals of their road in the market square of the city of Allegheny, provided, no street in said city shall be closed or occupied by said company without the consent of the Councils of said city being first obtained."

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The report of the Department of Agriculture for January, contains an unusual amount of interesting information. It appears from the reports collected and classified that the average yield of new England wheat per acre was less last year than in 1867. The average field of New York is placed at 14.6 instead of 14.5 last year. New Jersey gives one-tenth of a bushel less than Pennsylvania; three-tenths more; Virginia four-tenths more, and the more Southern Atlantic States all make a decline in the average. Texas and Tennessee report a smaller yield than last year, while Arkansas claims an advance from 9.2 to 18.5 bushels. Kentucky and West Virginia make no material advance, and Ohio scarcely holds the previous average. A small increase is reported from Wisconsin, and Wisconsin, and a still more marked result is shown in Minnesota. An increase is made in Iowa and Kansas.

The decline in the price of wheat during the past twelve months has been very perceptible, amounting to 42 cents per bushel in New England, 50 cents in New York, 47 cents in New Jersey, 45 cents in Pennsylvania, 71 cents in Ohio, 77 cents in Illinois, and 75 cents in Wisconsin, which grow cereals only for home consumption. In the central and populous parts of the West the prices are this year about 100 cents in Iowa, 105 cents in Illinois compared with Iowa, \$1.97 to \$1.43 last year; \$1.20 to 95c now.

The course heaped on General Butler for the course he took is the most unjust that has fallen on the devoted head of that gentleman, and that is saying a good deal. He appeared merely as the champion of the House, that had been grossly insulted through the blundering of Senator Wade. Had Senator Wade made his last decision first, or had he rendered his decision in a reasonable, courteous manner, some of the trouble would have been carried by him. He would have carried it by the Legislature, and with the morning cool reflection calm, and every eye saw how absurd and childish the contest was.—Don Platt.

A correspondent of the Detroit Tribune, writing from Flint, Mich., says: "Justice Stevenson was applied to by an excited husband, on Tuesday, for a warrant for the arrest of complainant's wife and her next friend, for the crime of adultery. On examination of the injured husband, it appeared that he had 'swapped' his wife for a pony, which was warranted sound, true and good to him, but on trial the pony was found lacking, and although the accused parties had been living together in Livingston county, about five miles from Fentonville, since the 'swap' was made, the husband proposed to repudiate the bargain. This case, which is actually true as stated, surpasses anything of the kind that has been reported in the commercial world in our recollection.

The Ohio State Board of Charities has made its annual report. They discuss the condition of the various jails throughout Ohio, some of which are fitted for the purpose designed, but many are not. The Board denounce the present jail system, and speak of the jails as frightful nurseries of crime. The association of comparatively innocent inmates with the depraved and vicious, and the idleness of the prisoners are the two worst features of the system. Some county inmates are in a good condition, while others are a disgrace to the State. The Secretary of the Board reports the average number of the inmates of the penitentiaries in sixty-two counties, 6,008. The number at the end of making the report was 3,778, of whom 319 are insane, 281 idiotic, 219 epileptic—874 boys and 289 girls.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, to which the President's message communiting his Amnesty Proclamation was referred, report that they concur in the recommendation of the President to grant a reprieve or a pardon, but deny that he is invested with the power to do so. They claim a general amnesty authority to proceed with the following resolution: "Resolved, That in the opinion of the Senate the proclamation of the President of the United States, of the 23rd of December, 1868, purporting to grant general pardon and amnesty to all persons guilty of treason and acts of hostility to the United States during the late rebellion, with restoration of rights, &c., was not authorized by the Constitution or laws."

ANECDOTE OF SIDNEY SMITH.—It was at the same dinner (at the Foundling Hospital) that the great wit met, with a friend, who was never tired of referring to afterward. He had been contrasting, in the half-bantering manner in which he was inimitable, with his old-a-cis at the Court of St. James, upon the relative merits of Swiss and English soldiers, and urged the superiority of the latter, inasmuch as they fought for honor, while the Swiss fought for money. "The fact is," answered the Swiss gentleman, "we each of us fight for what we most want."

The Terre Haute Express publishes the following biographical sketch: "George Wood, of Watash, Ind., who was recently blown up on the steamer Glend, had been blown up twice before, to say nothing of the countless times by his wives, of whom he had four. His first wife was killed a week after marriage by a carriage runaway; his third fell into a well and was not found for two weeks. He is the only one living of a family of seven children."

even if my life should pay the forfeit; I shall do my duty regardless of consequences. I am armed, and will go home with you, replied the Republican. The circle of ruffians broken as the two passed without the door of the hotel. Stealthy footsteps followed them, and beneath the gas lamp at the intersection of Broadway and Twenty-first street another murderous eye-dog was encountered. The Judge and his companion were saluted with profanity, but no violence was offered. They reached the Judge's home in safety. But the band of assassins are still at his heels.

The Wheat Crop. The report of the Department of Agriculture for January, contains an unusual amount of interesting information. It appears from the reports collected and classified that the average yield of new England wheat per acre was less last year than in 1867. The average field of New York is placed at 14.6 instead of 14.5 last year. New Jersey gives one-tenth of a bushel less than Pennsylvania; three-tenths more; Virginia four-tenths more, and the more Southern Atlantic States all make a decline in the average. Texas and Tennessee report a smaller yield than last year, while Arkansas claims an advance from 9.2 to 18.5 bushels. Kentucky and West Virginia make no material advance, and Ohio scarcely holds the previous average. A small increase is reported from Wisconsin, and Wisconsin, and a still more marked result is shown in Minnesota. An increase is made in Iowa and Kansas.

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A new patented cattle car has arrived in Providence from Albany. It has made one previous trip from Chicago to Boston. It is 40 feet long, divided into 14 stalls, each 34 inches wide, intended for one head of cattle each. They thus have room to lie down at pleasure. Each stall is provided with a trough to feed and water the animal on the way. Under the center of the car is a large box for carrying feed. The inventor, James H. Aldrich, of Worcester, Mass., has two patents, both obtained in 1867.

Nearly every distillery in New York has suspended business. The receipts of revenue from whiskey, as a matter of course, have fallen off to a very large extent. More than half of the whiskey sold in this city comes from one district in Illinois. It is stated that Illinois manufacturers more whiskey than any ten States of the Union. This, it is said, is owing to the peculiar advantages enjoyed from her revenue officers.

At Memphis, Wednesday night, a blacksmith, named Ennis, was shot in the head while working in his shop. The perpetrator is not yet known. The shot was fired through a back yard and fired through a crack in the wall. Frank Ennis has been arrested, charged with firing the shot, and held in \$10,000 bail to appear at the Criminal Court.

THE COURTS.

United States District Court—Judge McCandless. FRIDAY, February 19.—The case of the United States vs. Benjamin Hartshorn, reported yesterday, was resumed and still occupies the attention of the Court.

District Court—Judge Kirkpatrick. FRIDAY, February 19.—In the case of J. H. Roush vs. J. M. Crossen. Action on book account, reported yesterday. Verdict for plaintiff in the sum of \$323.15.

The case of Miller & Co. vs. C. T. Clifton, is now being argued by the defendant's counsel. The case was postponed yesterday at the request of one of the attorneys, was resumed.

The case was argued by counsel, after which Judge Kirkpatrick charged the jury at considerable length. Jury out.

The case of McVay vs. Wilson, postponed yesterday in consequence of the absence of an important witness, was resumed, and was on trial when Court adjourned. It will be concluded to-day.

Common Pleas—Judge Sterrett. FRIDAY, Feb. 19.—The case of Rouse vs. Eckert & Lang, reported on trial, was settled by the parties.

Bridget Toner vs. Mrs. Kearney's executor. Action to recover for services rendered as a domestic. The plaintiff in this case, it appears, was a niece of Mrs. Kearney's, and when she came from Ireland to this country made her aunt's house her home. She was, it seems, subsequently employed to do the work of the house, for which, she alleges, she received no compensation. After Mrs. Kearney's death she presented a bill to the executor, who refused to allow it. The jury found for the plaintiff in the sum of \$150.

In the case of Dain and Pitcairn vs. Robison, motion for new trial and reasons filed by defendant's counsel.

W. H. Levy vs. Wm. F. Kalsner. Action on book account. Verdict for plaintiff in the sum of \$240.

C. H. Armstrong vs. Neil Doris. Action on a promissory note. Verdict for plaintiff in the sum of \$673.26.

The jury were discharged from a further attendance at Court until ten o'clock Monday morning. The argument list will be taken up Saturday.

Musical Matters in West Deer and Indiana Townships. Messrs. Editors: The manner in which your readers are interested in the community are interesting themselves and their children in the matter of musical education must be a topic of no small interest to all the remainder, considering the high estimate at present placed upon a good musical education. With the improvement of the times, and the family of readers what we are doing in the matter in Indiana and West Deer townships. During the winter Prof. G. W. Huey, of McKeesport, has been engaged in teaching a large class, partly adult, partly juvenile, in the U. P. Church of West Deer, on Thursday evening, 11th inst., the Professor and his class gave a concert in that church, which was largely attended and was a decided success. The improvement manifested by the whole class, both adult and juvenile, was certainly surprising; and this both in the knowledge of the principles of music and vocal execution. One feature of the concert was especially noteworthy—the class did the singing. It is quite a different matter to execute a piece with which the teacher leading with his own voice and to execute it without any such help. Prof. Huey has evidently taught his class to rely upon themselves and put their musical abilities in practice unassisted. Another feature was praise-worthy. The pupils are taught to enunciate the words distinctly, and the instructor has not only the melody, but the sentiment. Operating in this manner, the popular musical displays, where melody is the only thing sought after, but in the services of the sanctuary I think it out of place. As the instructor of our youth in this delightful art, it is a pleasure to know that Prof. Huey does not belong to the operative school. It is certainly encouraging to those who love the progress of the community at large, especially our youth, to see such interest manifested in musical attainments by our rural population and that they are making such advancement in its acquisition. It is encouraging, too, to know that a first class teacher can be induced to teach in rural districts, thus giving us much of the advantages of the city in the country homes. We have long known Prof. Huey as a first class singer, but his concert last Thursday evening proved him a first class teacher also. With such opportunities then, our rural population have only themselves to blame, if they are hereafter deficient in proper musical attainments.

THE GRAB GAME. J. P. Smith and E. Blairley are employed on the Oakland Passenger Railway, the former as conductor and the latter as driver. Yesterday Smith made information before Alderman Lynch against Blairley, for larceny. It seems the parties had some difficulty in regard to the payment of some wages, and according to the allegations of Smith, Blairley put an end to the controversy by snatching the money, about one dollar and a half, out of his hand. A warrant was issued for the arrest of the accused.

Real Estate Transfers.

The following deeds were filed of record before H. Salvey, Esq., Recorder, February 19, 1869: Alexander Grant to James M. Snyder, February 11, 1869; lot 10, No. 10 and 11, Snyder's plan, Twenty-first ward, Pittsburgh, on Centre street, 48 by 116 feet. \$400. James M. Snyder to Andrew Stewart, September 2, 1868; the above described lots, containing 4000 David Elm in Andrew Stewart's plan, on Centre street, Allegheny City, 20 by 50 feet. \$100. Joseph Speake to E. A. Miller, January 22, 1867; lot in Snowden township, containing 40 acres. \$100. Elizabeth M. Stewart to E. A. Miller, February 4, 1867; lot on West street, Pittsburgh, 14 by 110 feet, 20 by 50 feet. \$100. Robert 2d, 1868; lot on Myrtle street, East Pittsburgh, 18 by 120 feet. \$100. William M. Birn, February 12, 1869; lot on Myrtle street, East Pittsburgh, 18 by 120 feet. \$100. George Schaefer to George Weber, February 12, 1869; lot on Frank street, Steel ward, Allegheny, 22 by 120 feet, with buildings. \$2300.

THE SEEDS OF SICKNESS.

Baron Munchausen tells a story of a postboy's horn, which had a number of wicked tunes blown into it on froggy night, but made no response. Nevertheless, when it was rung before a hostess, the tunes, which had been frozen in, thawed out, to the amusement of all present. Just so the human system is subject to the same kind of ailments during the winter, sometimes