

THE JEFFERSONIAN

Devoted to Politics, Literature, Agriculture, Science, Morality, and General Intelligence.

VOL 18.

STROUDSBURG, MONROE COUNTY, PA. JUNE 23, 1859.

NO. 26.

Published by Theodore Schoch

TERMS.—Two dollars per annum in advance—Two dollars and a quarter, half yearly—and if not paid for the end of the year, Two dollars and a half. No papers discontinued until all arrearages are paid, except at the option of the Editor.
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AN OVERLAND JOURNEY.

II.

Notes on Kansas.

LAWRENCE, KANSAS, May 20, 1859.

It resumed raining in Kansas, after a few dry days, on Thursday the 12th inst., and rained "off and on" till Saturday night. Sunday the 15th was cloudy and chilly, but without rain, until evening when thunder-showers came up from every side, and kept flashing and rumbling and pouring nearly throughout the night. Kansas brags on its thunder and lightning; and the boast is well founded. I never before observed a display of celestial pyrotechny so protracted, incessant and vivid as that of last Sunday night. The country, already saturated with water, was fairly drenched by this deluge which rendered many streams ordinarily insignificant either dangerous or for a season impassable.

At 6 a. m. on Monday morning, four of us left Atchinson in a two horse wagon, intent on reaching Osawatamie (some eighty miles rather east of south—one hundred by any practicable route) next evening. The sky was still threatening; we knew that the streams were swelled beyond reason; but our pilot was a most experienced pioneer, who had forded, been ferried over or swam, every stream in Eastern Kansas, and was confident of his ability to go through by some route or other. So we went ahead in a southerly direction, across swells of prairie rather steep-sided for Kansas, and through ravines in which what were usually rills were swelled into torrents. From the high level of the prairies little but a broad sweep of grass on every side was visible; but soon we were descending into a new ravine, and now belts and spurs of timber were seen, generally widening as they descended. I noted that these woody spurs, composed mainly of Black Oak and Cottonwood (the latter a very poor but quick growing timber, ranging somewhere between Poplar and Basswood), began to extend on every side wherever the annual fires were repelled from the adjacent prairie, whether by the interposition of a road or otherwise, and that the young trees that thus spring up along the sides of the ravines and run out into the level prairie, are quite often Hickory, White Ash, &c., even where none such are visible among the adjacent timber. I was fully convinced that wood grows more abundant with the progress of settlement and cultivation. Of course there is timber enough to-day in the Territory; but the better portion of it is too generally confined to the intervals of the larger streams, too far for their comfort from most settlers on the prairies. Could prairie fires be wholly arrested, the increase of timber would be a tenfold the annual rise and waste; and the quality improves even faster than the quantity. This is a real progress. For, though there is quite enough in the Territory, and a pretty good variety of all species except the evergreens, which are lamentably deficient, there are points at which none is within two or three miles—the little that formerly ran up the small ravines which cut in upon the great high prairies being soon exhausted by use for building, fuel and fencing, and requiring years for its reproduction.

Twelve or fifteen miles south of Atchinson, we struck the great California trail from Leavenworth, and thence followed it east by south into that city, some fifteen to eighteen miles. I should have liked Gerrit Smith as one of our party, that I might show him the practical working of his theory that Government has no other legitimate business than to keep one man's fingers off another man's throat and out of any pocket but his own. The great California trail, like the Sante Fe and all other primitive roads through this prairie country, keeps along the highest "divides" or prairie swells, avoiding the miry "bottoms" of the streams and (so far as possible) the ravines which the water falling on the high prairie has cut down to them, of course winding considerably, but making the best and most serviceable natural road that can be, and one that in dry weather is excellent and in wet as good as is possible. But each settler along this trail, in the absence of any legal establishment of the trail as a highway, is at liberty to run his fences right across it as the line of his land runs and so crowd it off the high "divides" into all manner of angles and zigzags, across this ravine and into that slough, until the trail is fast becoming the very worst road in all Kansas. I have had a pretty full experience of bad roads during

this week; but the very worst and miriest was that portion of the California trail (and United States military road from Fort Leavenworth west to other Forts) which works its sinuous way through the region generally settled by thrifty farmers, lying directly west of Leavenworth. And the worst hill for teams I have seen in Kansas is traversed by this road within five miles of Leavenworth, between the Fort and the rich but miry valley of Salt Creek on the west. This road, unless it can be restored, will soon have to be abandoned, and thence Leavenworth must suffer.

As we neared the California trail, the white coverings of the many emigrant and transport wagons dotted the landscape, giving the trail the appearance of a river running through great meadows, with many ships sailing on its bosom. Most of the independent wagoners were still encamped by the wayside, unable or unwilling to brave the deep mud; their cattle feeding on the broad prairie; the emigrants cooking or sitting beside the wagons; women sometimes washing, and all trying to dry their clothing, drenched and soaked by the pouring rain of the past night. One great wagon-train was still in camp, with its cattle feeding and men lounging about; the others might better have been, as it was clearly impossible to make their lean, wild-looking oxen (mainly of the long-horned stripe, which indicates Texas as their native land, and which had probably first felt the yoke within the past week) draw them up the slightest ascent though that steep, slippery mire. A great deal of yelling, beating, swearing, was being expended to little purpose, as I presume each train corralled for the ensuing night within a mile of the point it left in the morning. These contractors' wagons are very large and strong, each carrying a couple of good extra axles lashed under its body to be used in case an old one gave way under a heavy jerk; the drivers are as rough, wild-looking as their teams, though not so awkward at their business; but to keep six yoke of such oxen in line in the road, and all pulling on the load, is beyond human skill. It is a sore trial to patience, that first start of these trains on their long journey—to Utah, Fort Hall, Green River, and some of these to New Mexico, though this is not the Santa Fe trail. The loads are generally fifty hundred weight; the wagons must weigh at least fifteen hundred each; and, though this would seem moderate for twelve oxen, it must be remembered that they are at this season poor and at first broken, and that the road is in spots a very bad one. A train consists of ten to twenty wagons; each train has its reliable and experienced master or director; and, when a team is stalled, another is unhitched from its own wagon and sent to the aid of the one in trouble. The rate of progress is of course snail-like; these trains will do well if they make twenty miles the first week, considering the weather. But then the feed of the teams (like the lodgings of the men) costs nothing, as they live on the broad prairie, and though they will be often fearfully hungry or dry in traversing grassless tracks on their route, they are said generally to gain in flesh (for which there is ample room) during a journey of three or four months. Of course they improve in docility and effectiveness, being at first so wild that, in order to be yoked, they have to be driven into the corral, (formed, as I may have explained, by the wagons closely ranged in hollow square, the tongue of each being run under its next neighbor, for defence against Indians or other prowlers.) Very few wagons or cattle ever come back; the freighting is all one way, and both wagons and cattle are usually sold at or near their point of destination for whatever they will fetch—to be taken to California or disposed of as they best may.

—We drove into Leavenworth City about 11 a. m., and found that the delegates from this county had generally given up the idea of reaching Osawatamie, judging that the Convention would have to be adjourned or postponed on account of the swollen streams being impassable. Stranger Creek barred all egress by way of Lawrence, which we had intended to make our resting place for the night; a creek 9 miles south of Leavenworth had turned back the stage running in that direction; in fact, no stage made its way out of Leavenworth that day in any direction which was not forced to return baffled by the high water. So at 3 p. m. we shipped our horses and wagons on board the steamboat D. A. January, and dropped down the Missouri some 50 miles, past the bleaching bones of several dead cities (not including Quindaro, which insists that it is still alive) to Wyandot, in the lower corner of Kansas, with Kansas City, Missouri, three miles off, in plain sight across the mouth of the Kansas or Kaw River. Wyandot, though hemmed in and impeded, like Quindaro, by an Indian reserve back of it, is alive, and is becoming, what it ought fully to be, the outlet and inlet between Southern Kansas and the Missouri River. It has a beautiful location, and decided natural advantages over Kansas City, which, with other Border Ruffian strongholds south of it, has hitherto engrossed too much of the travel and trade of Kansas. We halted at Wyandot over night, had an impromptu Republican gathering and some off-hand talk in the evening, and set forth at 6 next morning for Osawatamie (46 miles a little west of south by a bee line, but over

50 by any practicable route), which we were desirous of reaching before night, as the Convention was to be held next day.

Our route led southwest over rolling woodland through the Wyandot Reserve, descending into the bottom of the Kansas or Kaw River—said bottom being from one to two miles wide, and very heavily timbered with Elm, Yellow Oak, Black Walnut, Hickory, Cottonwood, Sycamore, Basswood, &c. Nearly all of the rivers and larger creeks of Kansas run through similar bottoms or intervals, from half a mile to three miles wide, and timbered much like this. These intervals are composed of a dark, rich mold, often over than under three feet in depth, but they are so level that they could hardly be cultivated without drainage even were it advisable to strip them by wholesale of timber, as it decidedly is not.—The houses and barns that shall yet thickly dot the adjacent prairies are now mainly growing in these bottoms, and should stand there as trees till they are wanted. When cleared and drained—and in some places the rotting out of the stumps and thorough plowing thereafter will go far toward effecting the drainage required—they will yield bounteous crops of almost anything that does not dread frost.—Though it seems hardly possible that their soil should be richer than that of the prairies, it is deeper, and probably contains a more varied and choice admixture of the elements of vegetation. But the Kansas or Kaw bottom was not only soaked but covered with water—for it had rained here smartly only the preceding morning after it had ceased at Atchinson, and the bottom was for the time an all but impassable morass. I trust the citizens of Wyandot will not long leave it thus.

We crossed the Kaw on a fair wooden toll bridge, 1,200 feet long, just erected—or, rather, not quite completed. In default of a toll-house or gate-keeper, a man at work on the bridge took the toll in his shirt-sleeves. I believe no other bridge across the Kaw is now standing, though there has been one at Topeka 50 miles up, and perhaps at other points.—Bridges are sorely needed throughout Kansas, not only because the streams are addicted to rapid and vast augmentations from thaws or rains, but because their banks are almost perpendicular, and often miry toward the bottom, while the streams are nearly as deep at either shore as in the middle, making the attempt to ford difficult, even when it is not dangerous.

The Kaw was, of course, nearly full (all the rivers of Kansas have low banks), and was running very swiftly; still, it seems of moderate size for over 300 miles long; but all the rivers of this region, the Missouri included, seem small, considering the area drained by them. The facts that they run rapidly, are apt to be deep, and that their depth is nearly uniform from side to side, account for this appearance.

Half an hour after crossing the river, we emerged from the road and the Reserve upon the high prairie, the clouds of the morning broke away, and the day was henceforth perfect. The young grass of the prairie, refreshed by the heavy rains, appeared in its freshest, tenderest green; the delicate early flowers were abundant, yet not so numerous as to satiate the pleasure of looking at them, and the panorama presented was magnificent. Passing Shawnee, a prairie village of twenty or thirty houses with a large hotel, our road bore more directly south, and soon brought us in sight of the great Santa Fe trail, with its white-topped emigrant wagons, and three great trains of contractor's wagons, one of them still in the corral, the others with six pair of mules to each wagon, attempting to make progress toward New-Mexico—attempts for the most part in vain. The mules were small, and new to work—to this work, at all events—and drew badly; while the wheels cut so deeply into the yielding paste beneath them that little or no advance was made. I presume they all corralled for the night within two miles of the places where we saw them.

Crossing the trail almost at right angles, we left the smart village of Olathe (county seat of Johnson County) a mile or so to the west, and struck off nearly due south, over high prairies sloped as gently and grassed as richly as could be desired, with timber visible along the water-courses on either hand. Yet there was little or no settlement below Olathe—for the next twenty miles that we traveled there was hardly an improvement to each four square miles of the country in sight. And yet if the Garden of Eden exceeded this land in beauty or fertility, I pity Adam for having to leave it. The earth was thoroughly sodden with rain, so that temporary springs were bursting out on almost every acre, while the water-courses, including those usually dry, ran heavy streams, each of them requiring skill in the charioteer and good conduct on the part of the horses to pass them without balk or break. We must have crossed over a hundred of these "runs" in the course of this day's travel, each of them with a trying jerk on the carriage, and generally with a spring on the part of the horses. These water-ways have generally a limestone bottom not far below the surface of their bed; but their banks are apt to be steep, and are continually growing more so by reason of the water washing away the earth which has been denuded of grass and worked loose by hoofs

and wheels. Traveling by jerks like this is not so pleasant as over a macadamized road, yet our day was a bright and pleasant one.

Thirty miles of progress, twenty of them over prairie, brought us to Spring Hill, a hamlet of five or six dwellings, including a store, but no tavern. Our horses needed to feed and rest—for the wagon with its four inmates was a heavy drag over such going—so we stopped and tried to find refreshment, but with limited success. There was no grain to sell, save a homeopathic dose sold us for a quarter by a passing wagoner, and thankfully received; we gave this to our steeds, regaled ourselves on crackers and herring, and pushed on.

Our direct route led south to Paoli, county seat of Lykins; but persons we met here assured us that there was no crossing Bull Creek on this road, and that we must bear away to the west through Marysville (a village of perhaps a dozen houses, including a store and a tavern), so as to cross at Rock Ford, three miles beyond, which opened the only chance of getting over. We did so, and crossed in safety, with the usual jokes when we were fairly over; but I confess that the wide impetuous stream, so impetuous to the eye and so far above its average level, wore a vicious look to me when we approached and plunged into it. Its bottom is here hardly half a mile wide, but is capitolly wooded with Hickory, Oak, Black Walnut, &c. Emerging from it, we rode twelve miles more of high, gently rolling prairie, with wood in the ravines on either side, which brought us to the village of Stanton (of twenty or thirty houses, including two stores and a tavern) which we reached before sunset, having travelled at least fifty miles since we started in the morning. Night and the Marais des Cygnes—here brought us to a halt—the creek being at this time impassable—and we had to forego our determination to reach Osawatamie before sleeping. So we halted at the little tavern, where we found five or six others bound to Osawatamie like ourselves, at least one of whom had swam three creeks since the morning. Fifteen or twenty others drove up during the evening; we had supper, a neighborhood meeting and a Republican talk at the school house, and adjourned to fill all the beds and floors of the tavern as full as they could hold. The kind, active, efficient landlady did her best, which was good enough; and all were snugly bestowed except another editor and myself, who accepted the kindly proffered hospitality of a Republican farmer, and were capitally entertained at his house, half a mile distant.

As night fell, the lightning had begun to gleam and flash nearly around the horizon; by 10 o'clock, the thunder rolled; at 12, a high gale could be heard sweeping over the prairie some moments before it struck us. The lightning blazed almost incessantly for hours; yet the rainfall at Stanton was very slight. But there were heavy showers at Marysville, at Paoli, and almost everywhere else around us, still further raising the streams so that many who had come part way were unable to reach Osawatamie next day.

We were early on the bank (a mile from Stanton) of the Marais des Cygnes, which was running heavy driftwood and otherwise misbehaving itself. It had buried up the ferry rope, without whose aid the boat could not be propelled across its sweeping current; one of the trees to which that rope was attached was now nearly in the middle of the stream; and there had been no crossing for a day or two. But a new rope had been procured and somehow stretched across the stream; whereby we were taken across in our turn after waiting somewhat over an hour. A mile or so of well timbered and too well watered bottom brought us again to prairie, over which we drove rapidly into Osawatamie, which we reached before 10 A. M.

Osawatamie is a village of at most 150 houses, situated in the forks of the Marais des Cygnes and Potawatamie, a somewhat smaller creek, which comes in from the south-west. The location is a pleasant and favorable but not a commanding one; the surrounding country is more considerably cultivated than any I had passed south of the Kaw. The two creeks supply abundant and good timber; an excellent steam sawmill has taken the place of that which the Border Ruffians burned; a flouring mill, tannery, brewery and a large hotel, are being erected or completed. I presume there is a larger town somewhere in what is known as Southern Kansas, though I do not know which it is.

But Osawatamie has a higher interest than any other spot in Kansas, except possibly Lawrence, because of her honorable eminence in the struggle which has secured Kansas to Free Labor. She was long the only settlement near the Missouri border which was avowedly, decidedly, Free State; the only Free State village that could be reached by a night's march from Missouri. To be known as a Free State man at Topeka, Waubensee, Emporia, or any other post well inland, involved struggles and sacrifices; to be one at Osawatamie, was to live in nightly and well-grounded apprehension of robbery, arson and murder. The Pro-Slavery settlements in the neighborhood were strong and malignant; and they had only to draw upon Missouri at night for any a-

mount of force, and the draft would be honored. Yet to surrender this outpost was virtually to give up all Kansas south of the Marais des Cygnes; and though its maintenance was sure to cost property and blood, it was not surrendered, for Old John Brown was among its early settlers. Twice was it sacked and laid in ashes, once after a desperate fight of two hours, in which Old Brown with forty of his neighbors held at bay four hundred well-armed Missourians; who had the advantage of a cannon. So fearfully outnumbered, Old Brown, after seeing his son and several of his neighbors shot dead by his side, and after killing at least as many Missourians as there were of his own party altogether, was gradually driven back through the open timber north of the village and across the Marais des Cygnes, the Ruffians not venturing to pursue their victory, though they had attacked from the west, and so were driving the Free-State men toward Missouri.

The women and children had meantime fled to the woods on the south; the village was burned after being robbed, the only iron safe therein having been blown open by firing a cannon into its side, and so plundered of some silverware and a considerable sum in money. Osawatamie was thus a second time "wiped out." But it has risen again from its ashes, and is once more the home of an undaunted, freedom-loving people, who are striving to forget their bereavements and sacrifices in view of the rich fruits they have borne to Liberty and Human Good. They have gathered the dust of their martyred dead into a common grave on a prairie knoll just west of their village, and propose to erect there a monument which shall teach their children and grandchildren to love and cherish the cause for which those heroes joyfully laid down their lives. I beg leave to suggest an enlargement of the scope of this enterprise—that this monument be reared to all the martyrs of Freedom in Kansas, and that the name of each be inscribed upon it, and his mortal remains, if his relatives make no objection, be placed beneath the column which shall here be reared as a memorial of the struggle which secured Kansas to Free Labor, and is destined finally to hasten the expulsion of Slavery from Missouri. Should a monument be proposed on this basis, I feel confident that subscriptions in aid of its erection might reasonably be asked of all who prefer Freedom to Slavery, and would not be asked in vain.

HORACE GREELY.

From the New York Tribune.

The Frost and its Effects.

We have printed a great mass of information about the June frost, and have now lying before us a vast number of letters upon the same subject which we have no room for, but from all of which we propose to sum up and condense the information received.

As a matter of course, almost the first information of such a great calamity is always the worst. One says: "The wheat is entirely ruined." But this is true to a very limited extent, as we believe, because the wheat must be in a certain condition of growth to be affected disadvantageously by frost; and in the whole vast region overspread by the late visitation, we do not suppose that one field in fifty is in that particular state.—Upon the whole we doubt whether the general average of the wheat crop will be materially diminished. When the berry in one field is killed, it is an even chance that the yield of the next field will be improved. Frost is as destructive to insect enemies of wheat, as to the grain. Moreover, owing to the very warm weather in May, the straw had attained such a rank growth that there was serious reason to fear a loss of the crop by rust, and in all cases where it was not forward enough to be injured by frost, we have no doubt that the check given to the growth will prove beneficial.

It is also true that the southern part of the belt of the frost-stricken country has a great portion of its wheat so far advanced that frost would not injure it, while on the northern limit it was still too backward to be endangered. In looking over our reports of the frost, we do not find that the writers of letters think the wheat killed, even where corn, potatoes, tomatoes, melons, grapes, and sometimes apples were "all turned black." Besides, we must remember that even before the news of the frost had reached and frightened some of the people of this city almost to the starvation point, we had samples of wheat in hand from Georgia and Tennessee, where a good crop had been reaped and was ready to be thrashed and sent hither should a panic advance the price to any considerable extent.

One man writes: "The frost was so severe that oak leaves are killed, and the trees look as though they had been burned. Of course the wheat is all killed." No, friend; it is by no means a matter of course.

About ten years ago, on the 15th of April, the snow fell nearly all day at Augusta, Ga., and it was freezing cold at night. Oak trees were so affected that the leaves not only turned black, but the bark of young trees peeled off as though it had been exposed to a scorching fire. The wheat then was as forward as it was in the region affected by the great June frost. A few fields were undoubtedly injured, but the crop was not destroyed.

Neither is it now destroyed in the North. Without some other and greater calamity befalling the farmer, we shall still hope for a good wheat crop in New-York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, &c.

As injury to wheat is nearly irreparable, we quote opinions from some of our latest letters for what they may be worth.

Jaca, Wyoming Co., N. Y.—"Winter wheat, we fear, is all spoiled."

Pleasant Plains, Dutchess Co., N. Y.—"The frost did very little damage here—to wheat and rye none."

Hamburg, Lawrence Co., Pa.—"It is presumed that nine-tenths of the winter grain in this county is killed. The fields show unmistakable signs of being killed, and they are changing from green to white."

Staryucca, Wayne Co.—"The corn, beans, potatoes, &c., are all killed, but I don't know that winter grain is."

Mercer, Pa.—"The Thermometer was at 28 deg. It will take a few days to determine whether wheat and rye are injured."

Jackson C. H., O.—"Fears are entertained that wheat is nearly or quite ruined."

Near Lexington, Perry County, Ohio.—"All vegetation except wheat is killed. That, except in low lands, it is thought will not be injured."

Cantfield, Mahoning County, Ohio.—"Wheat, it is feared, is seriously injured, though it is impossible to say now to what extent."

Lodi, Medina County, Ohio.—"Every stalk of corn is killed, but we still hope the wheat is uninjured. I have examined several fields, and think that, except upon low lands, the crop is safe. We here intend to look the calamity square in the face, and, if energy and perseverance are rewarded, you will yet chronicle a good corn and wheat crop in Ohio, this year."

Pittsburg, Pa.—"The wheat we believe to be but slightly injured, and rye not at all."

Champaign County, Ill.—"The Winter wheat in bloom must be more or less injured."

Indianapolis, Ind.—"The wheat crop will not be very great, but better than last year."

Toronto, C. W.—"The frost was so severe that all half hardy plants were killed, yet wheat promises a magnificent crop."

Bourbon County, Ky.—"Wheat is reported some what injured, but upon the whole we do not think there is any reason for serious alarm."

Ford County, Ill.—"The corn will be retarded—not killed. Wheat is not injured."

Caledonia, N. Y.—"An old farmer of Caledonia says that the recent frost has not injured the wheat, and he does not believe that a May or June frost can injure that plant. He states that in 1816 there was a late Spring frost in his section, by which the stalks of wheat were actually frozen, and the yield from the same fields was forty bushels to the acre of prime Genesee."

So do we remember the cold and frosts of 1816, and of several other years when there was as great a panic, if not as great, an injury as now, and yet fair crops were made in spite of cold and killing frosts.

The late frost has undoubtedly done a great deal of damage, but the loss is greater in labor than in the yield of grain. A vast amount of labor to get in Spring crops has been done—more than ever before, and some of this must now be done over. The wheat, rye and oats, though injured, are not destroyed. The loss is but partial—falling here and there upon individuals rather than upon States or whole counties. Where the wheat is actually killed, plow at once and sow buckwheat, rutabagas, turnips, peas or beans. Don't let the ground lie idle and run to weeds.

Corn in Central and Northern New-York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois and Iowa, is cut down, but unless it was very forward, it will come up again. Don't plow it up till you are sure it is past recovery, and then put in some other crop in its place, or in place of the portion that is killed.

Potato vines are killed, and in some cases past redemption, while in others they will start up again, and who can tell that the frost will not prove a blessing, and give us a crop free from blight and rot? As for the loss of garden vegetables and fruit, that is more vexatious to individuals than it is serious to the whole community.

What is wanted now is "energy and perseverance" to put in substitutes for crops injured, and a determination to "look the calamity square in the face" and the country will soon recover from the staggering blow of the great June frost.

A man named Dowry, for entering a smoke house with a false key, and stealing a pint of whiskey, was sentenced by the Circuit Court of Calhoun county, Ga., to the penitentiary for six years. Liquor is sacred there.

As two country lads were passing a druggist's establishment where a sign was exhibited which had on it the words: "Congress water," one asked the other what sort of water that was. "Why, your fool replied his companion, "that's what they spout at Congress."