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June 16, 1859.—1y.*

AN OVERLAND JOURNEY.

V.

Summing up on Kansas.

MANHATTAN, May 26, 1859.

I like Kansas—that is natural Kansas—better than I had expected to. The soil is richer and deeper; the timber is more generally diffused; the country more rolling—than I had supposed them. There are of course heavy drawbacks in remoteness from the seaboard, heavy charges for bulky goods, low prices for produce, Indian reserves, and the high price of good lumber. For instance, pine boards used in building at this place come from Allegheny County, N. Y., and were rafted down some mill stream to the Allegheny, thence down the Allegheny to Pittsburgh, and the Ohio to Cairo, taken up the Missouri to Kansas City, and the Kansas to this place, which has but twice or three been reached by a steamboat. When here they were dog cheap at \$100 per thousand superficial feet, or ten cents for every square foot. In the absence of steamboat navigation on the Kansas, they must here be richly worth \$125 per thousand feet. And, while there is pretty good timber here for other purposes, there is little—and that mainly black walnut—that will make good boards. The ready Cottonwood along the banks of the streams cuts easily, but warps so when seasoned that it will draw the nails out of the side of a house; Elm is of equally perverse; and I have seen few indigenous boards that were not either Black Walnut or Oak. But much of the Oak is small, short and gnarly; while the Black Walnut is likely to be exhausted. I see young ones coming up thickly in some of the river bottoms; but these have much to contend with, and will not at best be large enough to saw for many years. No doubt, the timber of Kansas increases each year, and will increase still faster as roads and improvements are multiplied, limiting the sweep of the prairie fires; but it will always cost more to build a decent house of wood in the interior of Kansas than in part of New York or New England—I think twice as much. This is a heavy tax on a new country, where not only houses but barns are a general, primary and pressing need. I rejoice to see the new timber creeping up the bluffs of the streams; I note with pleasure that much of this is Hickory and some of it White Ash; I doubt not that there will always be wood enough here for fencing and fuel; but if Pike's Peak region can send a good lot of pine lumber (even Yellow Pine) down the Plate and the Arkansas, it will be worth more to Kansas than all her gold.

I consider Kansas well watered—no Prairie State better. I do not confine this remark to the present, when everything is flooded, and likely to be more so. I mean that springs, streams, creeks, rivers, are quite universal. For my own private drinking, I should like a supply not so much impregnated with lime; but, for limestone water this is generally quite good.

And the limestone itself is among the chief blessings of Kansas. I presume it underlies every foot of her soil I have yet traversed, with nearly every square mile that will be comprised within the State of Kansas. You see it cropping out from almost every bluff; it lies thickly strewn in boulders over the surface of every headland or promontory that makes out into the bottoms, low prairies, or ravines; so that if you want to use it, it is always to be drawn (or rolled) down hill. Though not here needed as a fertilizer, it can everywhere be quarried with little labor into building-stone, or burned for use in putting up chimneys and plastering walls. Though somewhat decomposed (I presume, by the action of water upon it through thousands of years) and readily clearing into blocks of suitable size for house-walls, it is said to harden by exposure to the atmosphere, and make a very durable wall. It is the constant though unobserved decomposition of this stone that has contributed so largely to the fertility of this soil, and now counteracts the enormous waste through the rivers. I presume all the guano imported into our country does not equal in fertilizing value the annual outflow from the Kansas River alone.

I judge that Indian Corn can be grown here as cheaply as anywhere on earth.—Thousands of acres last year produced their hundred bushels of shelled grain per acre, at a very moderate cost for labor and none at all for manure. An ex-

tensive farmer, who grew many thousands of bushels near Leavenworth, assured me that the cost of his Corn, cribbed in the ear was just six cents per bushel of ears, equal to nine cents per bushel of grain—three half bushels of ears of the great Ohio kind here cultivated making a bushel of grain. Of course, this estimate excludes the cost of land, breaking and fencing; but, making a fair allowance for these, the net cost of that Corn cannot have exceeded twenty cents per bushel. I presume it would now sell in his crib for forty cents, while here in the interior it is worth from 25 to 35 cents per bushel.

I met at Osawatimie an old Whig and now Republican friend who left New York City (where he had been an industrious mechanic) and settled between Lawrence and Topeka two years ago. He had last year eighty acres in corn, which yielded 4,000 bushels, worth to him 35 or 40 cents per bushel. His clear profit on this corn, above the immediate cost of growing it, can hardly have been less than \$1,000. He will grow more this year, with Wheat, Potatoes, &c.; yet he is one of a class who are popularly supposed incapable of making money by farming. I suspect a few life-long farmers of similar means will have good buildings over their heads and fruit trees and other elements of material comfort around them sooner than my friend.

Wheat and Oats did badly last year, owing to the heavy Summer rains which blighted and rusted them. Too little of either have been sown for this year's harvest, yet I find both Winter and Spring Wheat looking remarkably well almost everywhere. Oats are scarcely more than out of the ground; yet they, too promise well, so far as can now be foreseen.

But an unpleasant truth must be stated: There are too many idle, shiftless people in Kansas. I speak not here of lawyers, gentlemen speculators and other non-producers, who are in excess here as elsewhere; I allude directly to those who call themselves settlers, and who would be farmers if they were anything. To see a man squatted on a quarter-section in a cabin which would make a fair hog pen, but is unfit for a human habitation, and there living from hand to mouth by a little of this and a little of that, with hardly an acre of prairie broken (sometimes without a fence up), with no garden, no fruit trees, "no nothing"—waiting for some one to come along and buy out his "claim" and let him move on to repeat the operation somewhere else—this is enough to give a cheerful man the horrors. Ask the squatter what he means and he can give you a hundred good excuses for his miserable condition; he has no breaking team; he has little or no good rail-timber; he has had "the shakes"; his family have been sick; he lost two years and some stock by the Border Ruffians; &c. &c. But all this don't overbear the facts that, if he has no good timber, some of his neighbors have it in abundance, and would be very glad to have him work part of into rails on shares at a fair rate; and if he has no breaking team, he can hire out or quite 2 acres broken next month for every faithful week's work he chooses to give at that busy season. The poorest man ought thus to be able to get ten acres broken and fenced and into crop, each year. For poor men gradually new farms out of heavy timber, where every fenced acre cost twice to thrice the work it does here.

And it is sad to note that hardly half the settlers make any sort of provision for wintering their cattle, even by cutting a stack of prairie hay, when every good day's work will put up a ton of it. If he has a cornfield, the squatter's cattle are welcome to pick at that all Winter; if he has none, they must go into the bottoms and browse through as best they can. Of course, his calves are miserable affairs; his cows unfit to make butter from till the best of the season is over; his oxen, should he have a pair, must be recruited from their Winter's famine just when he most urgently needs their work. And this exposing cattle all Winter to these fierce prairie winds is alike inhuman and wasteful. I asked a settler the other day how he could do it. "I had no time to make a shelter for them." "But had you no Sundays?—did you not have them at your disposal?" "O, yes! I don't work Sundays." "Well, you should have worked every one of them, rather than let your cattle shiver in the cold blasts all Winter—it would have been a work of humanity and mercy to cut and haul logs, get up a cattle-stall, and cover it with prairie-hay, which I will warrant to be more religious than anything you did on those Sundays." But the squatter was of a different opinion.

How a man located in a little squalid cabin on one of these rich "claims" can sleep moonlit nights under the average circumstances of this class, passes my comprehension. I should want to work moderately but resolutely at least fourteen hours of each secular day until I had made myself comfortable with a fence around at least eighty acres, a quarter of that partitioned off for my working cattle, a decent warm shelter to cover them in cold or stormy weather, a tolerable habitation for my family, at least forty acres in crop, and a young orchard growing.—For one commencing with next to nothing I estimate this as the work of five years, after which, he might take things more easily, awaiting the fruit from his

orchard and the coming up of his boys to help him. But for the first four or five years, the poor pioneer should work every hour that he does not absolutely need for rest. Every hour's work then will save him many hours in after life.

For the farmer who comes in with liberal means, the task is of course much easier. Let us suppose one to be worth \$5,000 the day he lands on the Kansas shore of the Missouri, and see how quickly he can make a farm and a home. He arrives, we will say, in August, when he can see just what the country produces, whether in a state of nature or under cultivation. He buys a quarter section (which is land enough for any man) in a choice locality, including thirty or forty acres of timbered river or creek bottom, say for \$10 per acre, charges \$1,000 of the \$1,600 thus called for to the account of the Pro-Slavery Democracy for defeating the Free Land bill, and sets to work, with two good hired men. He buys five yoke of oxen for a breaking team, a span of good wagon horses, a cow in fresh milk, and three heifers which will be cows next Spring, puts up a cabin that will just do, and is ready to commence breaking by the 1st of September. As his men break, he follows with the horses sowing and harrowing in wheat so long as that will answer, but does not stop breaking till the ground is frozen. Now he begins to cut and draw timber for a fitter habitation to which to welcome his family in the Spring. Having done this he gets good mechanics to finish it, while he and his men go to work at fencing by cutting sawlogs for light, narrow boards, if there be a sawmill convenient; if not, then by cutting for and splitting rails.—So soon as the dryest land will answer for it, he begins to put in Spring Wheat; then Oats; then Corn; and putting up fence whenever the soil is too wet for plowing; let him not forget to have a few acres seasonably set in fruit trees, some of them dwarfs, for early bearing. Thus his money will not have been exhausted by the ensuing Fall, when he will have crops coming in and more than a hundred acres of his land broken and subdued for future cultivation. I see no reason, why a resolute, good manager should not be comfortable after his year or two, and thenceforth take the world as easily as need be. He who comes in with but \$2,000, \$1,000, or \$500 must of course be much longer in working his way to a position of comfort and independence; but if he will work right ahead, wasting neither days nor dollars, and keeping clear of speculation and office-seeking, he can hardly fail to succeed.

As to the infernal spirit of Land Speculation and monopoly, I think no State ever suffered from it more severely than this. The speculators in broadcloth are not one whit more rapacious or pernicious than the speculators in rags, while the latter are forty times more numerous. Land speculation here is about the only business in which a man can embark with no other capital than an easy conscience. For example: I rode up the bluffs back of Atlatinson, and out three or four miles on the high rolling prairie, so as to have some fifteen to twenty square miles in view at one glance. On all this inviting area here were perhaps half a dozen poor or middling habitations, while not one acre in each one hundred was fenced or broken. My friend informed me that every rod I saw was a "pre-empted," and held at thirty up to a hundred dollars or more per acre. "Pre-empted?" I exclaimed; "how pre-empted? by living or lying?" "Well," he responded, "they live a little 'and lie a little.' I could see abundant evidence of the lying, none at all of the living. To obtain a pre-emption, the squatter must swear that he actually resides on the quarter section he applies for, has built a habitation and made other improvements there, and wants the land for his own use and that of his family. The squatters who took possession of these lands must every one have committed gross perjury in obtaining pre-emption—and so it is all over the Territory, wherever a lot is supposed likely to sell for more than the minimum price. "I heard of one case in which a squatter carried a martin-box on to a quarter section, and on the strength of that martin-box, swore that he had a house there "eighteen by twenty"—he left the officer to presume the fact. So it was all over: the wretched little slab shanty which has sufficed to swear by on a "claim," is now moved off and serves to swear by, on another when the first swearing is done. I am confident there is not at this hour any kind of a house or other sign of improvement on one fourth of the quarter-sections throughout Kansas which have been secured by pre-emption. The squatter who thus establishes a "claim" sells it out so soon as practicable to some speculator, who follows in his wake, getting from \$50 to \$300 for that which the future bona fide settlers will be required to pay \$250 to \$1,500 for. Such, in practical operation, the system designed and ostensibly calculated to shield the poor and industrious settlers from rapacity and extortion, but which, in fact operates to oppress and extort from the real settler—to pay a premium on perjury—to foster and extend speculation—to demoralize the people, paralyze industry and impoverish the country.

But the fierce, chilly gale has blown away the tempest of last night—the clouds fly scattered and brassy—it is time to look for the Leavenworth Express, where-

of two stages west from this point will bear me beyond the bounds of settlement and civilized life. Adieu to friendly greetings and speaking! Adieu for a time to pen and paper! Adieu to bedrooms and wash-bowls! Adieu (let me hope) to cold rains and flooded rivers!—Hurrah for Pike's Peak!

VI.

Station 9, Pike's Peak Express Co. }
Pipe Creek, May 28, 1859. }

I was detained at Manhattan nearly a day longer than I had intended to be by high water. Wildcat, five miles west, and Rock Creek, seventeen miles east, were both impassable on Thursday, so that an express wagon from Pike's Peak was stopped behind the former, while five mail coaches and express wagons faced each other through part of Thursday and all of Thursday night, across the latter. Next morning, however, each had run out so they could be forded, and at 1, p. m., I took my seat in the Pike's Peak express, and again moved westward.

Our way was still along the U. S. Military Road, crossing Wildcat, now a reasonable stream, and winding for some miles over rugged, thin-soiled limestone hills, then striking down south-westward into the prairie bottom of the Kansas, which is as rich as land need be. A few miles of this brought us to Ogden, a land-office city of thirty or forty houses, some of them well built of stone. Just beyond this begins the Fort Riley reservation, a beautiful tract of prairie and timber, stretching for four or five miles along the northern bank of the Kansas, and including the sad remains of Pawnee City, at which Gov. Reider summoned the first (bogus) Legislature of Kansas to meet—then 50 to 100 miles westward of anywhere. They obeyed the summons, but forthwith adjourned to Shawnee Mission, a Pro-Slavery stronghold on the Missouri border. Pawnee city is now of the things that were.

Fort Riley is a position which does credit to the taste of whoever selected it. It is on high, rolling prairie, with the Kansas on the south, the Republican on the west, heavy limestone bluffs on the north, and the best timber in middle or western Kansas all around. The barracks are comfortable, the hospital large and well placed, the officers' quarters spacious and elegant, and the stables extensive and admirable. I hear that two millions of Uncle Sam's money have been expended in making these snug arrangements, and that the oats largely consumed here have cost \$3 per bushel. I have of course seen nothing else at all comparable to this in the way of preparations for passing life agreeably, since I left Missouri.

We here crossed by a rope ferry the Republican or northern fork of the Kansas, which, like the Big Blue, twenty-five miles back, seems nearly as large as the Kansas at its mouth, though the Smoky Hill, or southern fork at this point is said to be the largest of the three. We met at the ferry a number of families, with a large herd of cattle, migrating from south-western Missouri to California, and crossing here to take the road up the right bank of the Republican to Fort Kearney and so to Laramie. They had exhausted their patience in trying to swim their cattle, and would hardly be able to get them all ferried over till next day. All day, as on preceding days, we had been meeting ox-wagons loaded with disheartened Pike's Peakers, returning to their homes, but some of them going down into southern Kansas in search of "claims." Most of those we interrogated said they had been out as far as Fort Kearney (some 200 miles further, I believe), before they were turned back by assurances that Pike's Peak is a humbug.

Across the Republican, between it and the Smoky Hill, is Junction City, as yet the most western village in Kansas, save that another has been started some fifty miles up the Smoky Hill. We stopped here for the night, and I talked Republicanism in the church for an hour or so. Junction has a store, two hotels, and some thirty or forty dwellings, one of which is distinguished for its age, having been erected so long ago as 1858. A patriotic Junctioner excused his city for not possessing something which I inquired for, but which its rival, Manhattan, was supposed to have; "for," said he, "Manhattan is three years old." As Junction is hardly a year old yet, the relative antiquity of Manhattan, and the responsibilities therein involved were indisputable Junction is the center of a fine agricultural region, though timber is not so abundant here as I wish it was.—This region is being rapidly shingled with "claims." I hope it is to be likewise filled with settlers—though that does not always follow. Our landlord (a German) had tried California; then Texas, and now he is trying Kansas, which seems to agree with him.

We started again at 6 this morning, making a little north of west, and keeping the narrow belts of timber along the Republican and the Smoky Hill respectively in full view for several miles, until the streams diverged so far that we lost them in the boundless sea of grass. A mile or two of progress carried us beyond any road but that traced only this spring for the Pike's Peak express, and ten miles onward, no house, no field, no sign of human agency, this road and a few United States surveyors' stakes excepted,

was visible. At length we came to where a wretched cabin and an acre or so of broken and fenced prairie showed what a pioneer had been doing in the last two or three years, and beside it was a tavern—the last, I presume, this side of Pike's Peak. It consisted of a crooked stake, which, with the squatter's fence aforesaid, supported a ridge-pole, across which some old sail cloth was drawn, hanging down on either side, and forming a cabin some six by eight feet, and perhaps from three to five and a half feet high—large enough to contain two whiskey barrels, two de-canters, two glasses, three or four cans of pickled oysters and two or three boxes of sardines, but nothing of the bread kind whatever. The man probably understood his business better than we did, and had declined to dissipate his evidently moderate capital by investing any part of it in articles not of prime necessity. Our wants being peculiar, we could not trade with him, but after an interchange of courtesies, passed on.

Two miles further we crossed, by a bad and difficult ford, "Chapman's Creek," running south to the Smoky Hill, bordered by a thin streak of timber, and meandering through a liberal valley of gloriously rich prairie. Here we passed the last settler on our road to Pike's Peak. He has been here two or three years, has seventy-five acres fenced and broken, grew 3,000 bushels of corn last year, has a fine stock of horses and cattle around him, with at least eight tow headed children under ten years old. His house judged superficially, would be dear at fifty dollars, but I think he neither needs nor wishes to be pitted.

Our road bore hence north of west, up the left bank of Chapman's Creek, on which, 23 miles from Junction, we halted at "Station 8," at 11, a. m., to change mules and dine. This station should be five miles further on, and three or four miles further south, but cannot be, for want of wood and water. There is, of course, no house here, but two small tents and a brush arbor furnish accommodations for from six to fifteen persons, as the case may be. A score of mules are picketed about on the rich grass; there is a rail pen for the two cows. Of our landlady's two sun-browned children, (girls of ten and six respectively) one was born in Missouri, the other at Laramie. I was told that their father was killed by Indians, and that the station keeper is her second husband. She gave us an excellent dinner of bacon and greens, good bread, applesauce and pie, and would have given us butter had we passed a few days later; but her cows had been over-driven, and needed a few days' quiet and generous feeding. The water was too muddy—the prejudices of education would not permit me to drink it—the spring being submerged by the high water of the high brook, which was the only remaining resource. She apologized for making us eat in her brush arbor, rather than under her brush arbor, saying that the last time she set the table there, the high prairie wind made a clean sweep of table-cloth and all upon it, breaking several of her not very abundant dishes. I have rarely made a better dinner, though the violent rain of the second previous night high drowning out the whole concern.

—We were in the wagon again a few minutes before noon (the hours kept on the plains are good), for we had 35 miles yet to make to-day, which, with a mule team, requires a long afternoon. True, the roads are harder here, less cut up and less muddy than in eastern Kansas; but few men think how much up and down is saved them in traveling over a civilized region by bridges and causeways over water-courses. We still kept north of west for several miles, so as to cling to the high divide between Chapman's Creek and Solomon's Fork, (another tributary of the Smoky Hill), so far as possible.—Soon we saw our first antelope, and, in the course of the afternoon, five others, but not one of them seemed to place a proper estimate on the value of our society. Two of them started up so near as to be for a moment within possible rifle-shot; but they widened the gap between us directly. We crossed many old buffalo trails and buffalo heads nearly reduced to a skeleton, but no signs that buffalo have been so far east this season. Two or three of the water courses we crossed had here and there a cottonwood or a stunted elm on its banks, but the general dearth of timber is fearful, and in a dry season there can be little or no water on this long 35 miles. But it must be considered that our route avoids the streams, and of course the timber to the utmost. The creek on which we are encamped (a branch of Solomon's) is now a fair mill stream, but in a dry time might doubtless be run through a nine inch ring. It has considerable wood on its banks—say a belt averaging ten rods width.

Twenty miles back the rock suddenly changed entirely from the universal limestone of Kansas east of Chapman's Creek, to a decaying red sandstone; the soil of course becomes sandy and much thinner; the grass is also less luxuriant, though in some places still good. For acres, especially on the higher ridges, there is little or no soil, rock in place or slightly disturbed nearly covering the surface.—Through all this region the furious rains rushing off in torrents without obstruction, have worn wide and devious water courses, but they are neither deep enough

nor permanently wet enough to shelter timber. I reckon "claims" will not be greedily hunted nor bought at exorbitant prices hereabouts for some years to come.

—Our hostess for the night has two small tents, as at No. 8, and gave us a capital supper, butter included, but she and her two children alike testify that in one of the drenching thunder storms, so frequent of late, they might nearly as well be out on the prairie; and that sleeping under such a visitation, is an art only to be acquired by degrees. They have a log cabin going up, I am happy to say. Their tents were first located on the narrow bottom of the creek, but a rapidly rising flood compelled them, a few nights since, to scramble out and move them to a higher shelf of prairie.—It would have been pitiful to have been turned out so, only the shelter they had been enjoying was good for nothing.

—I believe I have now descended the ladder of artificial life nearly to its lowest round. If the Cheyennes—thirty of whom stopped the last express down on the route we must traverse, and tried to beg or steal from it—should see fit to capture and strip us, we should of course have further experience in the same line; but, for the present, the present the progress I have made during the last fortnight toward the primitive simplicity of human existence may be roughly noted thus:

May 12th—Chicago.—Chocolate and morning newspapers last seen on the breakfast table.

23d—Leavenworth.—Room bells and baths make their last appearance.

24th—Topeka.—Beefsteak and wash-bowls (other than tin) last visible. Barber ditto.

25th—Manhattan.—Potatoes and eggs last recognized among the blessings that "brighten as they take their flight."—Chairs ditto.

27th—Junction City.—Last visitation of a bootblack, with dissolving views of a board bed-room. Chairs bid us goodbye.

28th—Pike Creek.—Benches for seats at meals have disappeared, giving place to bags and boxes. We (two passengers of a scribbling turn) write our letters in the express wagon which has borne us by day and must supply us lodgings for the night. Thunder and lightning from both south and west give strong promise of a shower before morning. Dubious looks at several hotels in the canvass covering of the wagon. Our trust is in buoyant hearts and an India-rubber blankets.—Good night.

HORACE GREELEY.

Greeley on a Railroad.

The Buffalo Courier in an article alluding to Greeley on a Rail, requests its readers to imagine the philosopher in a night car, occupying a section in company with a nervous invalid—a timid old gentleman who dreads the wind of heaven as a sensitive plant. The "night is chill and damp," for the rain is pouring.—"Conductor," exclaims Mr. Greeley, "open that ventilator or I shall die." The conductor promptly obeys. The current of water-laden air rushes in penetrating to the very marrow of the sick man. He bears it for a few moments, shivering and shaking like a man racked by ague.—"Conductor," at last he squeaks out, "shut that ventilator or I shall die."—Conductor stands at nonplus. Presently a third party calls out in a gruff voice—"Conductor, open the window, and kill one of them fellows, and then shut it and finish off 'tother."

The Dear Girls.

Miss Annie B. Herring of Baltimore, has sued James Baughen, for breach of promise, and recovered \$3,500. In one of Baughen's letters, he sent a daguerreotype, with this affecting comment:—"The daguerreotype has but one defect in it, caused by a tear coming into my eye from thinking of you."

We are of the opinion that Mr. B. will shed rather more than one tear, in future, when he thinks of her and those \$3,500. In another letter, he "wished soon to be able to clasp her in his arms, never to separate, until death, with its relentless grasp, shall lay them in the narrow tomb." The only grasping to be done now, however, will be by the Sheriff, in case he don't pay that \$3,500.

The Albany Statesman says they thieve by wholesale at Syracuse. First a canal boat is stolen—then a two story frame house—now a flock of sheep is missing, and last Sunday a Sabbath School was taken! Some years ago the Salt Pointers threatened to steal the State Capitol. It looks as though they were practicing for that exploit.

There are four million scholars and one hundred and fifty thousand teachers in the public schools of this country. There is one scholar to every five free persons. In Great Britain there is one scholar to every eight persons; in France one to every ten persons.

There is a negro in Philadelphia who is distinguished for the size of his feet.—They measure 21 inches in length.

In Schuylkill County, Pa., there are four hundred and twenty steam engines employed in raising coal, draining mines, manufacturing, and other purposes.