

Correspondence.

Omaha and the Platte Valley.

OMAHA, Nov. 20, 1874.

Editor Deseret News:

Before the advent of the iron horse the weary pilgrim westward bound had to foot it steadily for several months to reach either the Utah Basin or the Pacific slope from this place. At that time provisions of all kinds were very cheap, trade was dull and every enterprise was languishing for a change.

During the spring months the towns of Council Bluffs, Omaha, and Florence were lively, the passing mule and ox trains left their quota of support to the little colonies of land sharks that infest the banks of the "great Muddy" from Sioux city north to Atchison, Kansas. The emigration season over, the cities of three or four houses in many cases relapsed into their woodchuck activity, only relieved by the shelling of corn or the killing of hogs.

To one who had not seen the change wrought by the railroad, the life and activity manifested at the present day in the large and populous cities that have grown up within the last ten years on the site of the dead-alive burghs of yore, would seem almost a miracle.

Omaha is to-day one of the most promising cities between Chicago and San Francisco, possessing as it does many of the conveniences of larger cities and more push and vim than older ones of the same population.

With a smaller population than Salt Lake City, Omaha has a postal delivery, a very fine edifice in course of erection for a post office and nearly finished, built of brick and cut stone and quite imposing in appearance, 66 by 122 feet, three stories high, and mansard roof. To finish it will not cost less than \$350,000.

For the most prominent hotel Omaha has the Grand Central, 132 feet square and six stories high which must have cost nearly \$250,000. It is very stylish and metropolitan in its equipments, and is a great addition by its prominence and architectural finish. Crowning the whole city on the old capitol hill stands the finest building in America used as a free high school, beautiful and harmonious in proportion, and I think the highest spire pointing into thin air I have seen in the west. It is 185 feet high, 176 feet long, 80 feet wide, three stories high above the basement. Internally it is warmed scientifically by heaters in the basement and is divided into some fifteen rooms with lofty ceilings and perfect ventilation.

The scholars are all graded as to capacity and the advantages to be derived from the German Kindergarten method of giving instruction are made available in the tuition of the younger scholars. I was informed that the average attendance was from 800 to 900 pupils daily. By the courtesy of Mr. Howard Kennedy, one of the trustees, I was invited, in company with Mr. James Cobb, of Salt Lake, to spend a morning in going through the building.

We enter the basement where fourteen furnaces are warming the separate rooms. Everything is neat and trim. Incidental expenses for warming, &c., amount to nearly \$3,000 per annum, and the salaries of teachers for one year amount to over \$8,000. I saw nine or ten ladies in the different rooms. What exact salary they got I did not learn.

Nearly all the nations, Christian and heathen, were represented, including some born in Utah. Negro children were sitting side by side with white children. From the lowest to the highest class I saw the irrepressible darkey. In the last named class a young gent in spectacles was doing English literature, just as much *au fait* as the others, and his thick lips and receding forehead did not look like miscegenation. I think he was the genuine article of African descent.

Around each room a coating of some slate composition had been painted on which the routine for the day was plainly written, some lady of fine artistic ability had drawn figures of birds, flowers, and animals, and other subjects under discussion, in a very creditable manner. These objects were dwelt upon in all their details very cleverly by the lady teachers.

The children all seemed to feel perfectly at home. Corporal punishment is forbidden, and in my

judgment unnecessary, as the subdivision of the classes into grades of similar age and capacity keeps down the sense of inferiority felt by those who know less than their fellows. I was particularly struck in visiting the little toddlers of five years old, the first class, as to age. It seemed as though they were engaged in a kind of intellectual play, such was the variety of methods used to impart instruction, and no possible sense of fatigue could be felt by the scholars. The same rule seemed to hold good in all the classes. Both sexes were engaged in the same studies, and this is the only weak point I noticed in the system. I do not think that the ladies need study much in algebra, unless they are preparing themselves for the high vocation of teacher, otherwise a perfect knowledge of the mystery of making a good loaf of bread, coupled with other practical lessons, would prove more essential to the future advantage of a lady than a knowledge of navigation and the higher mathematics. Botany, drawing, music and other domestic accomplishments should enter into the studies at school and not be left to the overtaxed mother too much to be learned at home.

Some travellers who have done Utah in two days, from the front of some hotel, say that our children are *scrubs*, mentally deficient, emaciated, etc. Recollecting the oft repeated remark, I did not forget to compare the children I saw in the school at Omaha with our own. There was just the same proportion of *scrubs* as we have here, and no more mental prodigies than we can boast. One thing I can say, and that is, there was more order and quiet than we have in most of our schools, but this is due to the perfect division of the classes, and when the same method is adopted in our schools, the same results will follow; but we must not forget that the children of a prairie country are much changed by being removed to a mountain climate like our own. Such a climate as Utah possesses will make rowdies of the good children who die young in other lands, if they could be brought here.

The male and female teachers were very courteous, and seemed in every way competent. The nine ladies were of the type called the mental-motive temperament, and possessed an admirable method. They were deficient in *embonpoint*, and looked like hard workers. Success to their efforts.

The school system of Nebraska is the pride of the State. The cost of sustaining expenses is derived from the following sources:

Liberal land grants from government.

State apportionments.

Proceeds of fines and licenses.

Taxes levied in the State.

Compared with other places Utah not behind, when we consider that no aid is rendered us from outside sources to help educate the heathen of Utah. The lands given Utah for school purposes would not raise a peck of potatoes, and the schools of non-Mormons in Utah have to be sustained by outside help. So cheer up, ye plodding teachers, who work through thick and thin for squash, cloth and other luxuries, whose hearts are raised above the kind and amount of pay, and who feel that the duty they perform under such disadvantages will make a people great and powerful some day.

The present time in Nebraska is developing the good traits of the people. As the grasshopper scourge has impoverished the people in the western part of the State, immense sums are being raised to help them. I was delighted to see one method of "raising the wind." It seems that the ladies had furnished and raised by donation the materials for a New England dinner. At 12 o'clock all set, pay your 50 cents and get the best meal you ever tasted. Proceeds devoted to the poor. The leading ladies of Omaha officiated. Give us a New England dinner in Utah.

The next object in order is the great railroad bridge over the Missouri river, uniting Iowa and Nebraska. It deserves more than a passing notice, and shows what pluck, energy and brains will accomplish, backed by the needful. If I remember right, the general plan of its construction was suggested by T. E. Sickles, Esq., engineer of the Union Pacific railroad. Viewed from a distance it looks very imposing, being nearly ninety feet high and over half a mile long. The spans are over 250 feet, built of

iron, on the Howe truss principle. The spans rest upon pairs of iron tubes some eight feet in diameter sunk to the bed rock; the iron forming the tubes is two inches thick, and the interior filled in with concrete. Steamers can pass under the spans without difficulty, and thus the necessity for a drawbridge is done away with.

The bridge must have cost \$2,000,000. Naturally its construction was attended with many serious drawbacks, as the tubes had to be sunk in some places 80 or 90 feet below the bed of the river. The workmen engaged in the tubes were seriously tested in their powers of endurance and in some instances the results were fatal to the men.

The bridge is carefully guarded night and day, no one is allowed to cross it only on the regular trains. I stood upon the centre span while a heavy train was passing and perceived no result other than a trembling motion. Over this bridge pour the thousands moving east and west.

The foundation for the great depot at Omaha is nearly ready for the spans. Six railroads converge here and pour in their daily contributions to aid the growth of Omaha.

I was much struck at the efforts used to protect the interests of emigrants. I found in the officers a class of gentlemanly baggage men. When a batch of emigrants arrive they are furnished meals at a cheap rate, and a very efficient police officer looks after their interests. Card sharps do not stand much of a chance with Cap'n Payne.

The U. P. workshops cover thirty acres of ground and nearly everything is turned out, from a hand car to a first class passenger car. These shops and the sources of labor furnished may be considered the chief support of Omaha.

Great efforts are made to start other sources of labor. Smelters, pork-packing-houses, distilleries, breweries, oil mills, flour mills, and other manufactories give a business look to the city. Certainly the future of Omaha is great, or I am no prophet.

As the traveller comes west, after leaving the Elkhorn, as far as Platte Bridge the picture is one of desolation, from the ravages of the "hoppers." Many of the settlers are leaving, and some of them are dreadfully scared. Those who are determined to have a home are going to stick it out. It is surprising that some people expect no drawbacks; perfect success rarely comes; when any of the settlers get the blues, I can point them with pride to the settlers in the Great Basin, who have manfully held on for five successive summers against the scourge. I rather think there is some faith and pluck exhibited in the last case.

Many fine towns have sprung into existence in the Platte Valley—Fremont, Columbus, Grand Island, and Kearney Junction are all thriving places.

A properly owner in Kearney Junction claims that the future capital of the U. S. will be there. This man has some real estate for sale in the town; it is well laid out, and for a town two years old is a splendid specimen of western grit. This is the terminus of the Burlington & Missouri River R. R., in Nebraska, and the St. Joe & Denver line. Not a tree can be seen, it is just one unbroken expanse of prairie. While there, I learned that great destitution prevailed on the Republican River, at the same time the relief committee had \$63,000 in the bank at Omaha for the benefit of the sufferers by the grasshopper visitation.

The State of Nebraska has offered premiums for tree planting, and many enterprising farmers have nice groves of trees. They can be seen at points all along the road from Omaha to Platte Bridge.

The Elkhorn is the limit of oak trees in the west, on the 40th parallel, and the neighborhood of Kearney is the line of alkali and cactus growth. Near North Platte commence the sage brush forests of the west and once having got scent of the same, I must leave for home.

C. R. SAVAGE.

The Arrest of Col. Dame—Co-operative Store and Stock Herd.

PAROWAN, Nov. 23rd, 1874.

Editor Deseret News—

Doubtless you and your readers will know, ere this will reach you, of the arrest of our beloved Presi-

dent, W. H. Dame. He was arrested on the morning of the 18th inst., by U. S. deputy marshal Stokes, charged with murder in the Mountain Meadow affair, seventeen or eighteen years ago. Prest, Dame said to the marshal when arrested, "I am innocent, but I will go with you." Every one who knows Pres. Dame believes him incapable of such a crime or of countenancing such a thing. He is kind, gentle, long-suffering and forbearing in his very nature. He is approachable to every one. There is not a child in the place but loves him. Since he left I have heard little children from four to six years old inquire, with sorrow pictured in their little countenances, "Where have they taken Brother Dame? Have they taken him to prison? Will he come back soon?" And many more such questions. I simply name the above to show the true character of the man. He is also one of our best business men, and his absence will be a great detriment to the place.

I am often led to enquire of myself, how long will this course be carried on, that is new being pursued towards our leading men, men to whom the nation is indebted for the peace, good order, wealth and comfort that we see in the settlements through these valleys. "O," say our enemies, "you are an industrious people, you are a sober people, you have made the desert blossom like the rose, but your leaders are wicked men." Even the Rev. Dr. Fowler, at Lyford's matinee in Chicago lately, accorded honesty and great worth to the "Mormon" masses, but said that Brigham Young, and every one of his bishops, should be hung as soon as captured. Now it seems strange that well filled houses of respectable people could be found to listen to and even applaud such barefaced inconsistency. Can a people long continue good while their leaders are wicked and corrupt? Can an impure fountain send forth a pure stream? Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit? Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? No, verily; it is inconsistent with the nature of things in our little world. Many, I am satisfied, catch the popular prejudice and array themselves against us without ever having examined our principles or knowing what they are fighting against. This I believe of many men who profess to know a good deal, but this is a kind of ignorance that is not excusable. To all such I would say, stop and consider, take the admonition you often give to the "Mormons," and think for yourselves. Before you get through investigating, you may find that the "Mormons" have thought deep and well, while you have been the only ones that would not think for yourselves.

On the second of the present month our co-operative store declared a dividend for the past year of ten per cent. The following named brethren were elected for the next two years—

President, W. H. Dame; Vice-President, Silas S. Smith; Directors, Jesse N. Smith, Wm. Adams, and John Topham.

On the 18th inst. the Stock Herd declared a dividend for the past year of thirty-six per cent. Officers for the next two years—

President, S. H. Rogers; Vice-President, Stephen S. Barton; Directors, D. P. Clark, John Topham, and Wm. Dalley.

W. C. MCGREGOR.

United Order—Productions and Wants.

MOUNT CARMEL,
Nov. 19th, 1874.

Editor Deseret News—

We are located in what is known as Long Valley, on the head waters of the Rio Virgen, distant about seventy-five miles from St. George, and about eighteen miles from Kanab. About thirty-six families reside here, two-thirds of which number have been working in the United Order since the organization last March, and with two or three exceptions express their willingness to continue.

Our wheat crop is light in consequence of the rust. We have, however, a surplus of corn and potatoes, with some oats and barley to spare, which we are desirous to exchange for clothing, an article much needed here. We have lately established a sheep herd in the Order, and are adding to it as fast as possible by purchase, wishing to shear suffi-

cient wool next spring to make our clothing.

We are much in need of a good blacksmith, also a school teacher, a shoemaker, and a carpenter, provided they are willing to work in the Order, and fare alike with us. We have room for a number of families more than are here at present. Our facilities for farming, grazing, and building are excellent.

We are endeavoring, as fast as possible, with the help of the Almighty, to become self-sustaining, and as we are far away from Babylon and her influences, we are sanguine of success. Any person wishing to make any enquiries, with a view of settling with us, will receive an answer promptly by addressing H. O. Spencer, our bishop.

ALLEN FROST.

The Work in Denmark.

AALBORG, October 29, 1874.

Editor Deseret News:

Since I left Utah, a year ago last May, I have sent two letters to the editor of the News and two to the President of the Deseret A. and M. Society, and I have good reasons to believe that they have not reached their places of destination, yet I will try again.

Many of the readers of the News are well acquainted with me and know that I am here on a mission. At first it fell to my lot to fill the place of a travelling elder in the Copenhagen Conference, which comprises the largest and several other of the Danish isles. I enjoyed my calling, preached a good deal during Winter, and time passed off very fast. My health was good and, as the winter was very mild, and both summers cool, I stood my traveling well.

At the Spring Conference I was released to return home with the August emigration, but, when the time for that was approaching, some of the presiding elders had to be released on account of ill health, and I was then appointed to preside over the Aalborg Conference. This comprises the northernmost part of Jutland. It is a region which has yielded many a flock of the lost sheep of Israel, even from the commencement of this mission, when President Snow sent Elder Dykes over here, who labored faithfully among the Baptists and laid a good foundation. Now it is just like gleaning. But as gleaned wheat makes just as good bread as any, so it is with our gleaning here. I find the Saints here just as good as any I ever met with. They rejoice in the light of truth which they have received. They endeavor to live up to the requirements of the Gospel, and are anxious to get away from their evil surroundings.

The country south of here, which belongs to another conference, was not visited much by our missionaries at first, consequently those who are there now have the pleasure of seeing larger congregations and of baptizing more. The same might be said of the Norwegian conferences, where many are being baptized.

Our Fall conference came off on the 17th and 18th of this month, when we had President Larsen in our midst, pouring out the contents of his kind heart, to the joy and edifying of the Saints. We had a lot of young brethren set apart as missionaries for the coming winter, and I would be thankful if the climate should be moderate so that I could stand to be about with them wherever there may be opportunities for holding meetings.

I have a first-rate help in brother Andrew Jensen from Pleasant Grove. A more willing and zealous young missionary I could not wish for. The mission is in a sound condition, and has a good man to preside over it. As to myself, I believe I have come here because it was so to be. I think it will prove a blessing to me, and I am willing to stay as long as I shall be wanted to stay. It is surely gratifying to me to behold the labor of the Lord still going on with firm steps and fair prospects, considering that I actually had the privilege of being the first one who left this part of the world in obedience to the gospel, and also the still greater privilege of coming back bearing the holy priesthood and to labor in close connection with him, who by virtue of his authority and the blessings of the Almighty did establish this great mission. I believe there are a great many yet to come out. I am inclined to the opinion that Odin and his people were Israelites and filled this country and Germany