



GEORGE Q. CANNON.....EDITOR

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AGRICULTURE VS. MINING.

In an editorial article, which recently appeared in the *Sacramento Union*, headed "Our wheat vs. Our Gold," the writer sets forth the advantages of agriculture in California, and proves by statistics that agriculture is the solid interest of the State, and mining merely a secondary one. "Statistics (not very closely gathered either) show," he says, "that the wheat production for the year 1866 was fourteen millions of bushels." The aggregate value of that cereal alone in California last year, at the rate at which it was generally sold, was \$12,600,000. Ross Browne's estimate of the gold product of the State for the year 1866 was \$25,000,000. But the writer of the article in question asserts that this year's wheat crop will reach \$25,920,000 in value—a heavy advance on last year's crop. The production of gold decreases yearly, he estimates, about 40 per cent.

In view of this rapid increase in the production of wheat, the writer indulges in glowing visions respecting the future of California as a grain producing State. He thinks that if proper encouragement be given to agriculture, it is not extravagant to assume that within five years the wheat production of that State may be raised to thirty millions of bushels annually, or one-eighth of the entire estimated yield of the United States for the year 1867.

There may be many more persons in California who have reflected upon this subject, besides the writer of the above article. But a few years ago such views were unpopular. Then mining interests were deemed of paramount importance. Every encouragement was given to this branch, and California's prosperity was thought to be entirely dependent upon her mineral wealth.

The digging of gold does not enrich a State. A man who raises a pound of wool, or cotton, or flax, or hemp, and converts it into an article of clothing, confers a benefit on the world. So also with the man who produces an article of food. The world is enriched by his labor. But the man who digs a pound of gold, confers no benefit on his kind, only so far as that gold is converted into some article of use or ornament. Yet individuals, communities and nations, in our day, have almost gone crazy in their anxiety to dig gold. They have abandoned every useful pursuit in their eagerness to clutch gold. Because a different policy has been urged upon the people here by their leaders, the latter have been derided and denounced in unmeasured terms. Mining for the precious metals has not been encouraged here. Yet there are reputed statesmen who think we are unwise in neglecting this pursuit. One of this class visited this city in the summer of 1865. The ignorance he displayed on this subject was most astonishing. He thought our citizens were neglecting their interests in not prospecting the mountains, cañons and valleys for gold!

If such men were to have the leadership of a people, it can readily be imagined what their fate would be. In a country like ours, they could not hold together beyond a single season. Our Territory has steadily increased in wealth from the first days of its settlement until the present; but if mining had been encouraged, we could not have maintained our footing. Mining is not a pursuit that can be counted upon to bring wealth and prosperity to a State. Under the interest of mining, California, with all its wonderful advantages, has been depleted and gradually depopulated. But for the farming interest—the writer from whom we quote says—the people of California would, to-day, be among the least prosperous and possibly the most wretched communities in the world. His closing remarks on the subject are worth reading. He says:

"The miner's labor profited all the world more than that part of it in which he obtained his

wages. His improvements were temporary and insignificant. When the gulch or bar was exhausted the town of his creation went rapidly to decay, and he himself, in nine cases out of ten, departed with his gold dust to other regions. A million dollars dug out by the miner has not been worth as much to the State, as a general rule, as a thousand earned by the farmer, because the miner's million has gone abroad to improve other States or be wasted in dissipation, while the farmer's thousand is almost invariably laid out in solid improvements here, which increase in value with time and furnish the sinews of Government and public prosperity."

TIGHT TIMES—PAYMENT OF DEBTS.

The almost universal complaint now heard on every hand is the tightness of the times. There are but few of our citizens who do not feel, more or less, the effect of this stringency. This condition of affairs is a very natural one under the circumstances. Every observant man must have looked for just such results as we are now experiencing. They are the consequences of the excessive inflation which characterized business operations, and which made times so flush here, two or three years ago. The business world was then laboring under feverish excitement, the effect of extraordinary stimulus. Such a condition in physical nature is followed by a corresponding depression. So also in the business world, the reaction had to come, and we are feeling its force at the present time. We probably feel it less than any other community, as our people have only comparatively few cash debts to meet. The necessities of life are not in the hands of capitalists or speculators; but are generally distributed among the masses. Food, therefore, is easily procured, and the want of it, by the poor, is unknown. The men who most feel the pressure now are those who, deceived by the good times which they enjoyed and the abundance of cash, incurred obligations which the subsequent scarcity of money prevents them from meeting. They did not contract their business soon enough to meet the altered times.

The tendency of the present stringency is to make almost every one tight-fisted and fearful of the future. The depredations of the grasshoppers, which injured the crops in many places and made the yield of grain a very light one, with the prospect of a recurrence of their attacks through the hatching of their eggs next Spring, increase these fears. Many, professing to entertain these fears, are loth to part with their means to meet their honest debts. Their creditors are put off with excuses. This course, instead of lessening the difficulties of the times, increase them. Our business men have given credits in good faith, expecting that the promises which were made to them would be promptly fulfilled. The failure of their debtors to meet these engagements embarrasses them, and is often a cause of serious loss. It is stated by those who have excellent means of knowing, that when a debt is contracted with an outside merchant, he is always more sure of his pay than if he were a member of the Church. People will take particular pains to promptly meet their engagements with them according to promise; but, with their brethren, they feel that they can take liberties; they look for leniency and accommodation from them that they would not expect from others. Merchants who do not have bad debts to enter in their profit and loss account can sell goods at lower figures than those who have to leave a margin for such debts. If men who are accommodating, and give credits, do not receive their pay when it is promised, they cannot live and sell goods as low as others who refuse to extend such favors.

If men contract debts, they should pay them promptly and according to agreement, and they should be as willing, at least, to pay their brethren in this manner as to pay outsiders. If any men are to be sustained, we think it but common justice to sustain those whose entire interest is here, and whose means is spent in the community and for its benefit. We have heard of individuals who have received credit at one house, and when they had money to spend pass by that and go to another to make their purchases. Because they could not meet their engagements at the house where they had received accommodation, they shunned it. This is certainly unfair, and scarcely such a return as a man would expect from a person to whom he had extended kindness. How much better and more honorable it would be for the debtor to go to his creditor, and state his case frankly and tell him that he could not then pay what he owed;

and ask for an extension, and then purchase what he wanted and pay his money for it. This course would preserve confidence and be an encouragement for a man to accommodate his friends. But the course taken by many inspires suspicion and distrust, and is directly calculated to destroy all confidence.

Because there is a prospect of close times is not a sufficient reason for Latter-day Saints not meeting their engagements. If a man have the means, he should pay his debts promptly and honorably. By all doing so hard times will be more likely to be averted than by pursuing a close-fisted policy. Then, if there is to be a scarcity, we will all partake of it alike, and there will be no room for crimination or recrimination. We can ask the Lord in faith for that assistance which we may need, and which He has never failed to grant when asked for aright.

IMMIGRATION OF THE POOR—DONATIONS OF STOCK, ETC. RECEIVED.

The plan proposed at last Conference for the immigration of the poor from Europe has been heartily endorsed by the people. Especially do those who have some portion of their family there feel interested in this subject; they make frequent appeals to one and another of those who, they think, are able to counsel them to know what steps they had better take to raise the means. The scarcity of money at the present time is a serious, and in some cases almost insurmountable, obstacle in the way of the people's rendering the aid their liberality would otherwise prompt them to do. If the Saints should not all be brought out this coming season from England, we do not think it will be from a lack of disposition on the part of the people here to assist them; but from the difficulty in obtaining money to send. Yet when Saints are determined to accomplish any labor that may be assigned them, it is surprising, to those unacquainted with this work, to see what they can accomplish in raising the means to perform it. Means springs up on every hand and from unexpected sources, and difficulties vanish before them. Under such circumstances five dollars will seem to go as far as double the amount at other times. This is the experience of individuals among us, and it has been repeatedly illustrated in the history of the people.

There are many persons in the country settlements who are willing and anxious to contribute to the immigration of their co-religionists from Europe; but the difficulty in obtaining money discourages them. They have cattle; but they can not find a ready market for them in any quantities. Where there are so many who wish to realize cash for stock, as there are in the present instance, they soon glut the market, and buyers hold off hoping to get the cattle on their own terms.

Numerous inquiries have been made of President Young to know whether, as President of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund, he would not take grain and stock on donations for the immigration of the poor. The general response made to these inquiries has been that it would save expense and trouble for each individual, who wished to make donations, to convert his own stock and grain into money and send it. It seemed to be a very heavy task to impose upon the President of the Perpetual Emigrating Fund Company, to dispose of all the stock and grain that might be given as donations, when if the labor were divided among the individuals themselves, it could be done with such comparative ease.

But, in view of the difficulty there is in selling stock for cash, the President has finally concluded to take cattle on donations. Young, thrifty neat-cattle, from one to six years old, and good work oxen, not over eight years old, will be taken on this account, if delivered to Briant Stringam in this city, or to A. P. Harmon, Cedar Fort, Millard Co. Grain—wheat, oats and barley—will also be received at cash rates on the same account. But in receiving cattle, the President of the P. E. Fund Company will not be willing to bind himself to send for any particular individuals, as he would if money were deposited; but will use his discretion, and, if possible, bring the individuals whose names may be presented by those making the donations.

New York has fairly out-Bostoned Boston in the Dickens excitement.

SPELLING BY SOUND—A SYSTEM ADOPTED.

A plan was suggested, in a bill and memorial submitted to Congress at the last session, for a commission to be formed of eminent American and English scholars and authors to consider whether a reform in our language would be attended with good or not. It is universally admitted that the simplification of English orthography would be a great desideratum. As now written, it is the study of a life-time for any one to learn to spell and pronounce our mother tongue properly; and, in fact, even after spending that length of time in its study, an infallible knowledge of it is not acquired.

Professor De Vere, the author of a late book, entitled *Studies in English*, says: "The difficulty is insuperable as long as we have forty-two distinct sounds in our language, and our defective alphabet provides us only with twenty-three letters. The sounds are obtained from the various sources which have contributed to form modern English; the signs we derive directly from classical sources only, without all the help that these sources might give us."

He says twenty-three letters, probably, because he thinks all the sounds made with y, c and x can be made without them. It is readily perceived that spelling and pronunciation become difficult in proportion as there are letters that have several sounds, and sounds that have several letters. But if each letter had only one sound, and each sound only one letter, no one, who understood the alphabet thoroughly, could mispronounce a word which he saw; or misspell one which he heard.

The language of the Sandwich Islands is written upon this principle—in other words, it is phonetically written. The Islanders are an indolent people, but they acquire reading and writing with great ease, and for a people who have so recently obtained a knowledge of these arts, have made remarkable progress. Their success is attributable to the fact, that every sound in their language is represented by a letter, and each letter by a distinct sound. In their written communications an error in spelling is rarely, if ever, met with, even among the most illiterate. What has been accomplished there, among a barbarous people, by the adoption of a phonetic alphabet, speaks more conclusively in favor of a reform in our language than a thousand theories. If the Hawaiian youth can learn to spell and pronounce their language correctly by the aid of a complete alphabet, certainly the American youth, with such aid can achieve similar results.

It is proposed, if the Commission, referred to above, report favorably, that the United States and Great Britain should agree by treaty that in five years from its date all public documents and all copyright books, in English, in both countries, shall be printed in the phonetic alphabet. This is a subject worthy the attention of both nations, and to consummate such a result would be an incalculable benefit to the entire English-speaking population of the world. But will it be done? However much we might desire that the legislators of both nations, animated by a wish to benefit their posterity and the world, would take this matter in hand and carry it through, we do not perceive any grounds on which to base a hope that they will do so. There are too many conflicting interests to be reconciled. Hoary-headed tradition would cry out in thunder tones against it, and Parliament and Congress could not resist the pressure that would be brought to bear against them.

But we, the people of this Territory, can accomplish this reform. We can do so much more easily than any other people. Our population is diverse in its origin and free from blinding traditions. They would eagerly adopt any alphabet that had authoritative sanction, and that would come recommended to them by its simplicity and the ease with which it could be learned. For years this subject has been under consideration. It has rested with great weight upon the mind of President Young, and his interest in it has never flagged. Under his direction, years ago, characters were adopted, matrices for them were imported and a quantity of type was cast. But, whether from ignorance or design, the matrices were very rudely made, and did the characters great injustice. The difficulty in obtaining a beautifully formed type of these characters kept the proposed reform in abeyance. Until, finally, it has been decided by the Chancellor and the Board of Regents of the University of the State of Deseret—President Young meeting with them, and taking great interest in the discussion—to adopt the Pitman Phonetic al-