

THESE HARD TIMES.

SALT LAKE CITY, July 17, 1895.

In conversation with an "old-timer" recently he gave expression to an idea which he was evidently fully impressed with and yet had not obtained from any of the public prints or public utterances of our day. He bore out in all respects the designation above applied to him, his attire being as unconventional as to attract an occasional glance from a policeman, his beard giving unmistakable evidence of having been a swarting place for the breezes of many decades, and everything betokening a lack of assimilation in full spirit with the men and measures of the sunset of the present century. Perhaps had he been otherwise his expressions of opinion would not have been so apt and logical as to attract attention, opinion being about as common as house flies and usually as valuable.

The "reminiscence" expressed himself as follows, to wit:

"Every politician, of which we have more'n there's any reasonable use for, has some sort of a remedy that he wants us all to understand is the only remedy for the hard times. Some of 'em has it that it's owin' to silver being knocked out that things are so tight and we can't have no sort of improvement till we turn tail and get back to where we started when we tore up one of the rails of our financial highway and begun to slide along on a single track, and there's something in that, but not as much as we've all been thinking. Them as thinks we ought conform to the system of the European countries and steady down to what they call a solid basis are a good deal wiser than the others, because they either don't understand the kind of country we've got or else are interested in having our old-time conditions upset for good and all. Others again can see no hope outside of paper money not redeemable at all and the issue kept up to everybody's individual requirements, which is dunsy in a mild form. Some of 'em thinks the President ought to be impeached, others that he can only be reached in proper form by assassination, and here we are.

"Now the way it appears to me is simply this, and it ain't a long story at all: There is some good in every political party and more or less patriotism in every citizen. The percentage of people which does wrong just for the sake of doing it is very small indeed. The present administration may be, and I believe is, bad in many respects, but it ain't chargeable with all the ills that beset this life, by a long sight. It might have done a little more than it has for silver and not strained things very much, but if it had done different how do we know it would have been a widespread and lasting benefit such as is claimed? The fact of the matter is, we have been living so much faster than we used to that when a blackening in the pace comes, as it must sometime, we think that everything is wrong, just as if we could forever go plunging ahead like a quarter horse or one of these niggers of bicycle frauds and never get to the limit of the thing. Just look at it: I don't seem to me like as if I was much younger than I am now since all be-

tween the Missouri river and the Sierra Nevada was what was looked on as the frontier—an unknown country for the most part, filled with great possibilities most of which we have rushed to a realization with our steam engines and improved systems generally. The best part of the public lands are taken up, we have stolen from or cheated the "Indians" out of one after another of their little inheritances which we coveted, and soon they will be extinct like the buffalo, while we hold everything that we held and growl and grumble, talk politics and the rights and wrongs of laboring men, and loaf around the corners and swear because the government don't annex Canada or Mexico and give our restless, insatiable, marauding disposition another outlet.

"Look at the great Comstock lode; look also at the basty wealth which it invested a few unworthy men with; the misery and crime which it brought into existence, not only because of the flush times, and therefore unnatural times, which it produced and maintained while it lasted, but because of the false hopes held out to those who never look beyond today and thought or acted as if they thought the silver tide would never ebb. How much difference does it make to such people, and for that matter a majority of our people, whether they have plenty today or not? What they have now is all that they ever have, and when the case of supplies gives out they are as poor as if they had never had a dollar on earth, and then they curse and rave about these infernal times! Any times are bad if you don't make a proper use of them, and none are good if you treat them as you would the splash and spray of a mountain cataract. I tell you the boom times are gone to stay, and if you don't believe it just stay on the earth and keep your eyes and ears open."

Perhaps the old fellow was more than half right, certainly he was not altogether wrong. Whether or not it be the case that too many are depending upon the possessions and enterprises of others, it is undeniably the case that a state of things prevails which is gradually precipitating some sort of a social climax. Let us consider it for a moment.

Within the past two years more than 100,000 newspaper compositors—skilled laborers—have gone to join the ranks of their unskilled brethren in labor cycles by being thrown out of employment through the agency of the typesetting machinery of the day. Most of these have served an apprenticeship, and grown up in their trade, which by the bye is one of the best in existence, and have nothing else to look to, so the period within which they must acquire some other means to keep the wolf from the threshold is often not only a painful but humiliating one, sometimes fatal. They, like the Indians who once owned everything on the continent and the continent itself, have been forced back, down and finally out by rapacious and insatiable progress. What is true of them is true of many other artisans, mechanics and tradesmen. Labor-saving machinery in almost every case has meant the reverse of its name

in that it has destroyed labor and driven those who have learned by years of experience and toil how to maintain themselves out of their occupations and too frequently out of their homes. It is so in every department of industry and trade. Not only has steam set aside the labor of hands and horses to an extent which we cannot grasp by any kind of mental process, but is itself already becoming inadequate to supplying civilized mankind with the required rapidity which grows by what it feeds on, and we need not look very far ahead nor be at all possessed of the faculty of divination to see electricity in complete control where steam at present holds sway. Within the narrow span of this century all the developments named and more have been wrought, and since the capability to accomplish wonders increases in ratio as well as in advancement, the few years remaining to the nineteenth cycle of Christendom may bring about results as great and far-reaching as all of the preceding time since the century was born.

To the reflective mind, this all suggests some significant conclusions. Nature is a vast system of compensations, every unusual development being followed by something else which brings things one way or another to the normal; that is, we "get used to it." It once took as many months as it does days to cross the plains, the difference in time, labor, care, means and anxiety thus resulting being equivalent to so much added to life. When an ocean voyage was made in a month and no further back than the early part of this generation, it was considered remarkably good time, and when this was curtailed by the use of steam to one-half or a little less, it was profoundly regarded by many as a miracle plainly foreshadowing the end of all temporal things. A good many who so looked upon the situation then are still alive and look back upon the then marvelous achievements as too commonplace to speak about; indeed not a few of these are among the fault-finders of today because they have to waste so much time going from place to place with steam propulsion and long for the day when the lightning will be harnessed and made to draw our vehicles.

It would have taken Methuselah 100 days' steady traveling to go from the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific, starting from any point between Maine and Florida, a performance which we accomplish in five days or thereabout; to have visited every part of this country would have taken up at least twenty of the thousand years of his life, but we can get over the ground quite comfortably in a month or so. That is, we are able to see as much territory (and very much more of life) in the shorter time as he did in the longer, meaning that in a practical sense we actually live longer than he did. This all means something that very few people ever take the trouble to find out; nothing is given at random or by chance, but every visitation has a well defined object, whether we see it or not. When we economize it is oftener than not the case that funds or supplies are running short, and when time is economized in the manner spoken of, may it not be the case that it also is running short?—that