

THE HEMP REGION.

Extent and Characteristics of the Hemp-growing Region of the United States.

INDEPENDENCE, Saturday, Aug. 6, 1857.

There is a region of Missouri of rapidly rising fame and importance, gaining for itself a State and a National reputation, which we will define as the "Region of the hemp culture." Especially favored by nature in its geographical locality, climate, navigation, and superrative fertility, this region has become the seat of a hemp culture which has a strong, organized and National foundation. The hemp culture receives special attention in twenty counties bisected by the Missouri River, and all adjacent to its two shores. They form a belt of land east and west, inclosed between the thirty-eighth and fortieth degrees of latitude. Here is the production of these counties in hemp, flax and tobacco, in order as they lie along the river—census of 1850:

| | Hemp, tons. | Flax, lbs. | Tobacco, lbs. |
|-----------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| Jackson | 301 | 1,443 | 28,020 |
| Lafayette | 2,462 | 6,807 | 75,033 |
| Saline | 1,550 | 160 | 27,533 |
| Cooper | 39 | 9,835 | 137,800 |
| Montealeu | 11 | 7,021 | 30,550 |
| Cole | 11 | 5,129 | 43,150 |
| Cass | 1 | 2,048 | 5,353 |
| Johnson | 65 | 7,070 | 900 |
| Pettie | 52 | 2,784 | 1,300 |
| Miller | 3 | 5,600 | 12,000 |
| Platte | 4,345 | 420 | 60,000 |
| Clay | 1,288 | 88,197 | 20,050 |
| Ray | 431 | 6,802 | 516,006 |
| Carroll | 300 | 1,779 | 289,809 |
| Charlton | 170 | 3,213 | 2,067,908 |
| Howard | 904 | 16,948 | 3,188,122 |
| Boone | 51 | 20,695 | 584,949 |
| Cilanton | 193 | 5,376 | 6,850 |
| Randolph | 23 | 17,308 | 2,202,796 |
| Buchanan | 1,894 | 620 | 7,850 |

Since 1850, the hemp culture has doubled in vigor, both in the land assigned to its culture and in the application of machinery to its production and manufacture. The production of that year, within the above region, was 28,346,000 pounds, estimating the ton at 2,000 pounds; and that of the whole State 16,119 tons, or 32,238,000 pounds.

The course of the Missouri River through this region of superrative fertility may be compared to the Nile flowing through lower Egypt to the Mediterranean. It is in the ability of an abundant and bounteous production that this comparison holds, but not in temperature, climate or physical features. In Egypt the arable and inhabitable district is limited to the ravine of the Nile, which is overflowed and irrigated by its waters; beyond this the primeval desert reigns everywhere supreme. With us the same fertility characterizes the borders of the stream, which has the same abundance of fertilizing waters, the same splendid navigation, the same solemnity in its ever-flowing channel and the same redundancy of benignant attributes which have defied the Nile. But, on every side, from the gently elevated crest that bounds the ravine of the Missouri, expands, with a radius of one thousand miles, that variegated, calcareous plain, which we define as the "Basin of the Mississippi." This undulating plain has an area equal in capacity to all the other river basins of the world, and combines all their varieties. So much does the mind revert to the ocean to explain by comparison its exquisite romantic beauty, at once immense and regular, that this hymn to the sea may with propriety describe it:

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempest, in all time
Calm or convulsed,—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Dark heaving,—boundless, endless and sublime—
The image of eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible,—each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone!

The current course of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers is from north to south. The latter is so through its whole length. The Missouri, after a southern course of 3,090 miles, receives the Kansas River in latitude 39°, turns abruptly to the east, penetrates the State of Missouri and bisects it from west to east, with a channel four hundred miles in length. Into the eastern mouth of this channel all the great natural lines of travel coming from the Atlantic by the St. Lawrence, Ohio and South Mississippi Rivers concentrate as rays to a focal point. They are altogether carried forward to the central west at the mouth of the Kansas, where the unbroken prairie formation meets the river, and to which the radiant land routes over their expanse, coming from the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean, similarly concentrate. This channel is, then, now, and is destined prospectively to remain, the most thronged and wonderful in the world. It is central, east and west, to the American Continent, to the Basin of the Mississippi and to the American Union; it lies along the axis of that isothermal, temperate zone within which is the zodiac of nations, and is also the axis of the population, progress, travel, production, consumption, commerce, transportation and habitation of the human race. It is the highway from Western Europe to Oriental Asia. It is under that line of latitude where all things northern and southern meet and blend together—where the day and night, the seasons of the year, labor, the growth of nature, and all the elements of human society and of the vegetable and animal world, have the widest range, the greatest variety and the highest development. This channel has a double shore, or 600 miles of coast. It has the familiar accommodation and safety of a canal, a railroad, or a street. Its depth of water and capacity for commerce will receive and carry forward the freightage of all the oceans and all the continents. Similar channels both antiquity and modern times have seen and used—such are the Lower Nile, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, the Strait of Hercules, the English Channel, the Baltic's mouth, the Hudson from New-York to Albany—only this has greater length, divides more fertile shores and connects more numerous hosts of nations.

Such is the Hemp Region. It has an altitude one thousand feet above the sea, a salubrity equal to the Table Lands, a fertility superior to the Delta of Louisiana, an unlimited area, a navigation better than the sea, a climate exactly congenial to the white man, a rural beauty forever graceful, fresh and fascinating. It is, on a vastly magnified scale, the counterpart of that delicious and classic Italy, traversed by the Po, dotted with cities, Venice, Verona, Mantua, Milan, of which SHAKESPEARE has written, and where VIRGIL and TASSO sung. If an ellipse be described extending from the Osage mouth to Fort Elley, some five hundred miles, and in breadth three hundred, it will contain that district of fat, lustrous soil, exuberant vegetation, graceful beauty and abundant streams, where nature has bountifully blended all her choicest gifts to locate the rural quintessence of America and of the world!

Stimulated by the inspiring splendor of their natural position, the vigorous population of this region have pursued agriculture, commerce and manufactures with an ambition and success which indicate a growing empire in nothing unworthy of their prospective destiny. Every department of production and industry has been tried, and all thrive. Hemp, tobacco, flax, the grape and wine, silk, sugar, the cereals and grasses; cattle of the first breeds; agricultural machinery, flowers, steam and mining. Society exalts its tone by a taste for religious edifices and eloquence; education receives great and universal care; music and refinement are zealously cultivated.

Apart from these fascinating gifts of nature and the promise which germinates beneath their warpath, a prestige entwines itself with and illuminates the history of this region. This runs back to the golden time of the patriarchal founders of our continental empire; it stretches over the dark chasm of seaboard monarchy, and has its fountain in the luminous Aurora and among the immortal patriots who limned out the profile of our continental empire and inaugurated the march of our destinies. We have here amongst us the graves of DANIEL BOON, GEORGE ROGERS CLARKE,

LACLEDE, and the names of JOHN JACOB ASTOR, LOUIS XVI. of France, LABALLE and DE SOTO, great and intrepid men who led or befriended the pioneers, those stars which shone in the first twilight of empire. To JEFFERSON and JACKSON we were known, and they have been known to us as our friends.

To understand this prestige and its strength, it is necessary briefly to select out and set apart to themselves a few facts in the history of progress which stand along its path, and like pyramids in the solitude fix its remarkable epochs.

This system of civilized society, of which we Americans form a part, is very ancient and is inherited. History is the journal of its geographical progress, its vicissitudes, its struggles, and its energies. Where society has assumed its largest form and attained the highest level of civilization and longest endurance, it is defined to be an empire. History chiefly occupies itself with the biography of these empires, their rise, culmination and decadence. They have appeared, lived and departed, like generations of men. They lie along a serpentine zone of the north hemisphere of the globe, within an isothermal belt, and form a zodiac 35 degrees in width. The axis of this zodiac alternates above and below the 40th degree of latitude as the neighborhood or remoteness of the oceans modify the climates of the continents. These empires are the Chinese, the Indian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman, the Spanish, the British, and last; the Republican Empire of North America. These are the essential ones in the regular order of time and upon the hereditary line of progress. It is here that the mass of land is the greatest and where the continents most nearly approach one another. This zodiac of nations contains nine-tenths of the white population of the globe, and all its civilization. The territory of the American people, extending across this continent, exactly fills this isothermal zone from edge to edge, occupying the whole connecting space between Western Europe and Oriental Asia. It is on these two fronts of the old continents that the two halves of the human race are separately congregated, both fronting America and fronting one another, face to face, across America. The straight line of intercourse between them, only 10,000 miles in length, pursues the axis of the isothermal zone, out of which it never deflects either into the torrid heats or the frozen north. Here then is the tonic, the divine instinct of progress and liberty which fired the soul of COLUMBUS, of WASHINGTON, of JEFFERSON and of JACKSON. In this faith they lived; this faith they vindicated and never betrayed; and in this faith they died, to inherit among posterity a supreme, untainted immortality. This faith forms the inspiration of the declaration of 1776, animated the patriarchal generation, and was renewed and codified in the Constitution of '87. It selected JEFFERSON in 1798 and JACKSON in 1828. Its eagles are now erected among the pioneers out in the wilderness, in Kansas, in Utah and in Oregon. Upon them are embossed the ancient rights of man, the continental union, the continental railroad, the continental cause!

During the administration of JEFFERSON, central extension, pursuing the isothermal line through the continent, was prosecuted with great vigor as the favorite policy of the Government. LEWIS and CLARKE reconnoitered and made known the character of the rivers, the mountains and the connections of the basins of the Mississippi and Columbia by direct passes. JOHN JACOB ASTOR planted trading colonies and paths through the wilderness, and upon the bank of the other sea opposite to China. The rapid creation of the States of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri carried forward the Union in a salient column, embracing the water line of the great rivers and reaching here to the geographical centre in 1820! Up to that date the flanks had remained stationary in New-York and Georgia. The design then was to go through with the parallelogram of central States from sea to sea, and from this base to advance outward, planting States simultaneously towards the South and towards the North. This policy was crippled during the time of Mr. MADISON by the vicissitudes of foreign war. It was abandoned and reversed by Messrs. MONROE and ADAMS. In their time grew up the political divisions of North and South, and a maritime policy inaugurated itself. Since that date, central progress has abruptly stopped and great activity upon the flanks has brought them up to an even front in Iowa and a greatly advanced position in Texas. The central force has, however, jumped the continent straight to the front, occupied the sea-coasts of Oregon and California, and founded the new maritime power upon the Pacific and opposite to Asia.

Since the selection of this site of the City of Independence in 1824 to 1854, a chasm in time of thirty years, central extension has rested as stagnant as though our great river had been frozen at this point into solid and perpetual ice. It has been stopped by an artificial cordon of Indian tribes and federal law as effectually as by a continuous wall of brass extending from Louisiana to the 49th degree, and rising in altitude from the prairie foundation to the clouds. Hence is seen the unique and novel sight of a great continental empire formed of a circular shell of States traced round the circumferent seaboard, and surrounding a hollow and vacant disk of desert continent. Such is at present the theoretical principles upon which maritime policy legislates for the great region of our country connecting the States of Missouri and California straight across. The antagonistic struggle is between the instinct of progress flowing out its highway through the continent, along the isothermal axis by land, on the one hand, and on the other hand, the external shell of maritime power to hold the continent in a maritime hoop, and subject its industrial greatness to a permanent supremacy.

In the great City of New-York the active instinct of progress has always had a working vitality. Like Rome, she has pursued an elastic policy, and has planted her commercial colonies at the right time, and in the right spots. These colonies, of the first class, are New-Orleans, Chicago and San Francisco. With all of these she maintains or needs direct connections by steamers, railroads and telegraphs, as also with Europe in the rear. The time is ripe for another selection, which offers itself in the centre of the Mississippi Basin! A key point of centrality and radiance, and of unrivaled excellence. This is Independence, the metropolis of the Hemp Region.

This young and vigorous city, crowning the southern bank of the Missouri River at the point of the angle where it deflects to the North, beetles over the avenues to the prairies of the South and West, like Gibraltar at the Strait of Hercules. It covers the rear of St. Louis, and confines her to the narrow field of the State of Arkansas. By the through railroad, coming by way of Chicago and Keokuk, crossing the Missouri River at Brunswick, and ascending the south bank, an air-line road exists of only fifty hours time, hence to New-York City. The river line of the Missouri, Illinois and St. Lawrence deflects but little from an equal straightness and a similar distance in miles. Railroads passing onwards to Galveston into Texas and New-Mexico, to San Francisco, Utah and Astoria will be the shortest lines from New-York City to all these extremities and various regions of our continent. Here will be found the shortest diagonal line wherewith to bisect the productive territory and population of the Union towards the Southwest, through the grain, hemp and pastoral regions, to the sugar of Texas and the gold and silver of Mexico. It is shorter to Galveston than any route traversing the maritime Atlantic States and bending with the sea-coast. It traverses a line of the greatest variety of production and

largest distribution of groceries, dry goods and manufactured metals. This hemp region is not more celebrated for hemp than it is for tobacco, grain, blooded cattle and wool, only this former production is not shared with surrounding regions, where the latter engross exclusive attention. The present population of the hemp region is 242,413; the assessed property, \$105,449,655.

Here, then, is an immense foundation wherefrom to grasp and control the expanding developments in front, consequent upon the obliteration of the Indian barrier, and the bursting forth of the pent-up flood of central progress, out over the prairies which undulate to Texas, Mexico and the Mountains. The front wave of this flood-tide is already in motion; its sprays sprinkles the plains almost to the mountain foot. The achievements of the coming decade of years will differ from its predecessor. It will exhibit a greater mass of energy, concentrated in one direction, occupied by a single object, and moving with immense means over a very short line, which is perfectly straight and open. Heretofore the active force of progress has been operating round the rim of our territory, on Lake Superior, in California, in Texas, in Florida, in detached squadrons separated from the base of old society, by the diameter of the continent, or keeping up its communication round the circumference by sea. The opening decade beholds a concentric movement, flooding into the centre and reducing all movements to the shortest radii! Its career opens with a general force of 30,000,000 of population, having gold in hand, railroads, steamers, rivers and prairies on their banks. The difficulties of the wilderness are overcome, the temptation every way increased, the means of motion enormously accumulated.

Such is the prosperous future which shines over the central west, and fills the atmosphere to the remotest horizon. This prospective view is not too sanguine, it is not exaggerated, it is only in moderate and appropriate proportion to the material long accumulating and now beginning to stir with activity through its whole reanimated bulk. Sound health, complete preparation, fresh and mature vigor, judgment and a defined and finite object all blend themselves with the immense and successful movement which closes in to occupy the centre of our country, to reunite its flanks, and to adjust its true and geographical balances forever.

Respectfully,
W. GILPIN.