

## Illinois In 1837 ; A Sketch

*Illinois in 1837 : a sketch descriptive of the situation, boundaries, face of the country, prominent districts, prairies, rivers, minerals, animals, agricultural productions, public lands, plans of internal improvement, manufactures, &c., of the state of Illinois*

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—————It is a goodly sight to see  
What Heaven hath done for this delicious land !  
What fruits of fragrance blush on every tree !  
What goodly prospects o'er the hills expand !  
The vine on high, the willow branch below,  
Mixed in one mighty scene, with varied beauty glow  
*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

### SUGGESTIONS TO EMIGRANTS.

Extracted from Mr. Pecks " Emigrant's Guide."

*Canal, Steam-Boat and Stage Routes.—Other Modes of Travel—Expenses—Roads, Distances, &c.. &c.*

Persons in moderate circumstances, or who would save time and expense, need not make a visit to the West, to ascertain particulars previous to removal. A few general facts, easily collected from a hundred sources, will enable persons to decide the great question, whether they will emigrate to the Valley. By the same means, emigrants may determine to what state, and to what part of that state, their course shall be directed. There are many things that a person of plain common sense will take for granted without inquiry,—such as facilities for obtaining all the necessaries of life, the readiness with which property of any description may be obtained for a fair value, and especially farms and wild land, that they can live where hundreds of thousands of others of similar habits and feelings live ; and above all, they should take it for granted, that there are difficulties to be encountered in every country, and in all business ;—that these difficulties can be surmounted with reasonable effort, patience, and perseverance ; and that, in every country, people sicken and die.

Having decided to what state, and part of the state, an emigrant will remove, let him then conclude to take as little furniture and other luggage as he can do with, especially if he comes by public conveyances. Those who reside within convenient distance of a sea-port, would find it both safe and economical to ship by New-Orleans, in boxes, such articles as are not wanted on the road, especially if they steer for the navigable waters of the Mississippi. Bed and other clothing, books, &c. packed in boxes, like merchants' goods, will go much safer and cheaper by New-Orleans, than by any of the inland routes. I have received more than 100 packages and boxes from eastern ports, by that route, within 20 years, and never lost one. Boxes should be marked to the owner or his agent at the river port where destined, and to the charge of some forwarding house in New-Orleans. The freight and charges may be paid when the boxes are received.

If a person designs to remove to the north part of Ohio and Indiana, to Chicago and vicinity, or to Michigan or Green Bay, his course should be by the New-York canal, and the lakes.

Farmers who remove to the west from the northern and middle states, will find it advantageous, in many instances, to remove with their own teams and wagons. These they will need upon their arrival. Autumn, or from September till November, is the favourable season for this mode of emigration. The roads are then in good order, the weather usually favourable, and feed plenty. People of all classes, from the states south of the Ohio river, remove with large wagons, carry and cook their own provisions, purchase their feed by the bushel, and invariably *encamp out at night*.

Individuals who wish to travel through the interior of Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, &c., will find that the most convenient, sure, economical, and independent mode, is on horseback. Their expenses will be from seventy-five cents to one dollar fifty cents per day, and they can always consult their own convenience and pleasure, as to time and place.

*Steamboat fare including meals*

From Pittsburg to Cincinnati, -----	\$10
" Cincinnati to Louisville, -----	4
" Louisville to St. Louis, -----	12

A *deck* passage, as it is called, may be rated as follows :—

From Pittsburg to Cincinnati, -----	\$ 3
" Cincinnati to Louisville, -----	1
" Louisville to St. Louis, -----	4

The deck for such passengers is usually in the midship, forward of the engine, and is protected from the weather. Passengers furnish their own provisions and bedding. They often take their meals at the cabin-table, with the boat hands, and pay twenty-five cents a meal. Thousands pass up and down the rivers as deck passengers, especially emigrating families, who have their bedding, provisions, and cooking utensils, on board.

The whole expense of a single person from New-York to St. Louis, by the way of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, with cabin passage on the river, will range between \$40 and \$45 ;—time, from twelve to fifteen days. Taking the transportation lines on the Pennsylvania canal, and a deck passage in the steamboat, and the expenses will range between \$20 and \$25, supposing the person buys his meals at twenty-five cents, and eats twice a day. If he carry his own provisions, the passage, &c. will be from \$15 to \$18.

The immense resources of the Western Country, the vast increase of wealth, population and influence in the New States, have long been, but are more particularly at the present time, topics of great and increasing interest throughout the whole of our vast Republic, and are arresting the attention not only of our own citizens, but of the inhabitants of foreign countries. Such are the admirable facilities of the West for trade, such the variety and fertility of its soil, the number and excellence of its natural products, the genial nature of its climate, and the rapidity with which its population is increasing, that it has become an object of the deepest interest to every American patriot. To this region the speculator is attracted by the increasing value of property ; the politician anticipates the time when, through the ballot-box, the West shall rule ; the young and enterprising, turning from the eager competition of industry and talent in the older states, see here a less occupied field of action ; the philanthropist feels a benevolent anxiety for the intellectual, moral, and religious condition of a population thus collecting and increasing, and destined to fill the measure of our national glory. The greatness and importance of this region is bursting into vision in a manner scarcely

less wonderful to the present generation than was American prosperity to the slowly progressing European.

A single glance at the Map of the United States will show, that the direction of our government will shortly be in the hands of the people of the West. The thirteen old states have an area of about 390,000 square miles ; while only eight of the new number about the same, and the whole region, stretching westward to the Pacific Ocean, contains not less than 1,700,000 square miles of territory.

#### Letters From A Rambler In The West.

The six following letters from the pen of a talented young Philadelphian, a correspondent of the editor of the Pennsylvania Inquirer and Daily Courier, appeared in the columns of that gazette during the spring of the present year, under the title of "A Rambler in the West." They are beautifully written, and possess more than ordinary interest for those anxious to acquire information relative to the Western County, more particularly the state of Illinois.

#### No. I

*The Journey—The Far West—A Prairie on Fire—Alton—Chicago.*

Vandalia (Ill.), Jan. 20, 1837.

I promised you, my dear P——, when I left our good Quaker city, that I would give you some account of my wanderings. I had intended long ere this to have complied with my promise, but circumstances which we cannot control have hitherto prevented me from discharging that pleasing duty. I design now, however, to present you with a short account of my rambles.

The morning was cold and lowering, and the rain was descending in torrents, when the carriage arrived which was to convey me on my journey. It was truly a cheerless morn, and the streets through which we passed were almost deserted, save where here and there a single pedestrian, wrapping himself in his cloak, defied the "peltings of the pitiless storm." I need not say that the lowering appearance of the heavens tended in any degree to elevate the spirits of the youthful adventurer, who was leaving the scenes of his early days—the home of his youth—the thousand sweet associations of friends and "fatherland," on a tour of experiment to a new and almost unsettled country. But I had determined that the feelings of regret and despondency, so natural to the occasion, should not have a lodgement in my bosom—for experience had fully convinced me that they produce no beneficial results, but were oft-times productive of serious injury. Brushing away a hasty tear, which, in spite of all my philosophy, lingered in my eye, I bounded into the car with, apparently, a light and joyful heart. The door closed, and soon the last glimpse of my much-loved city faded from my view. After bestowing my hearty benedictions on it and the many kind friends its walls contained, I applied myself to the accomplishment of my purposes. I was anxious to obtain a knowledge of the country through which I passed, the character of its population, the nature of its soil and climate, and that mass of valuable information which travel alone can furnish.

My course lay through the line of internal improvements of the State of Pennsylvania, which are truly creditable to her citizens, and without much delay I arrived at Pittsburgh, whose business and activity indeed surprised me. I entered one of the noble steamers which crowded her wharves, and was soon proceeding at a rapid rate over the calm and tranquil waters of the "Beautiful River." Away we flew over its glad waters, and soon the spires and

steeple of St. Louis peeped over the distant hills. I thought, upon my arrival there, that I was approaching the “ far west ;” but when I mentioned *west*, I was laughed at, and was pointed to that immense region which stretched far beyond the Mississippi, and was told, that when I travelled week after week, and thousands upon thousands of miles in that direction, I would then be approaching the confines of the “ Great West.” I was inclined to be discouraged ; but being determined to visit the Illinois country, before attempting that arduous journey, I was soon on another boat, and ploughing the dark and troubled waters of the rapid Mississippi. The day I left St. Louis was peculiarly fine—one of those days in autumn when summer seems to linger on earth, as if unwilling to yield to Boreas’ chill and nipping blast.

The scenery on the banks of the river was truly grand and sublime. Large jets of rock obtruded far into the stream, and reared their mighty heads almost to the clouds. So regular were they in their proportions, and so nicely chiselled, it seemed as if dame Nature had built for herself, in this western world, a huge and mighty castle, with lofty columns and frowning battlements, defying the skill of man to rival its majestic grandeur. Whilst enjoying the sublimity of the scene, night threw her mantle o’er the earth, and the “ sentinel stars set their watch in the skies”—when suddenly the scene was lighted by a blaze of light illuminating every object around. Lo, it was the prairie on fire. Language cannot convey, words cannot express to you the faintest idea of the grandeur and splendour of that mighty conflagration. Methought that the pale queen of night, disdainful to take her accustomed place in the heavens, had despatched ten thousand messengers to light their torches at the altar of the setting sun, and that now they were speeding on the wings of the wind to their appointed stations. As I gazed on that mighty conflagration, my thoughts recurred to you, immured in the walls of a city, and I exclaimed, in the fullness of my heart,

“ Oh fly to the prairie, in wonder, and gaze  
As o’er the grass sweeps the magnificent blaze  
The world cannot boast so romantic a sight—  
A continent flaming ’mid oceans of light.”

I arrived early on the following morning at Alton, which is a flourishing and thriving place, and presents a busy appearance. With its situation I was much pleased, but more gratified with the enterprise of its citizens. Every one here was active and industrious—there were no loungers—no idlers—no “ loafers” to be seen. Every one seemed engaged in some occupation, and was pursuing it with industry and zeal. Large stores—as large as those which adorn our eastern cities—were building on the water’s edge ; dwelling houses of all sizes were springing up, and the hum of busy industry was sounding through the streets. I left this city with regret, being compelled to pursue my journey. After a very pleasant ride through a most delightful country, I arrived at Chicago.

Chicago is, without doubt, the greatest wonder in this wonderful country. Four years ago the savage Indian there built his little wigwam—the noble stag there saw undismayed his own image reflected from the polished mirror of the glassy lake—the adventurous settler then cultivated a small portion of those fertile prairies, and was living far, far away from the comforts of civilization. Four years have rolled by, and how changed that scene ! That Indian is now driven far west of the Mississippi ; he has left his native hills—his hunting grounds—the grave of his father—and now is building his home in the far west, again to be driven away by the mighty tide of emigration. That gallant stag no longer bounds secure o’er those mighty plains, but startles at the rustling of every leaf or sighing of every wind, fearing the rifles of the numerous Nimrods who now pursue the daring chase. That adventurous settler is now surrounded by luxury and refinement ; a city with a population of over six thousand souls has

now arisen ; its spires glitter in the morning sun ; its wharves are crowded by the vessels of trade ; its streets are alive with the busy hum of commerce.

The wand of the magician or the spell of a talisman ne'er effected changes like these ; nay, even Aladdin's lamp, in all its glory, never performed greater wonders. But the growth of the town, extraordinary as it is, bears no comparison with that of its commerce. In 1833, there were but four arrivals—or about 700 tons. In 1836, there were four hundred and fifty-six arrivals, or about 60,000 tons. Point me if you can to any place in this land whose trade has been increased in the like proportion. What has produced this great prosperity ? I answer, its great natural advantages, and the untiring enterprize of its citizens. Its situation is unsurpassed by any in our land.

Lake Michigan opens to it the trade of the north and east, and the Illinois and Michigan canal, when completed, will open the trade of the south and south-west. But the great share of its prosperity is to be attributed to the enterprize of its citizens : most of them are young—many there are upon whose temple the golden lock of youth is not darkened ; many who a short time since bade adieu to the fascinations of gay society, and immured themselves in the western wilderness, determining to acquire both fame and fortune. And what has been the result !—While many of their companions and former associates are now toiling and struggling in the lowly vale of life, with scarcely enough of the world's gear to drive away the cravings of actual want—the enterprising adventurer has amassed a splendid fortune—has contributed to build up a noble city, the pride of his adopted state, and has truly caused the wilderness to bloom and blossom like the rose. Such are always the rewards of ever daring minds.

No. II  
*Peru.*

Peru, (Ill.) Feb. 4. 1837.

I resume my narrative.

The next point to which my attention was directed was Peru. This place will unquestionably become one of the greatest inland towns in the West, and second only to Chicago. A traveller riding through would smile if you were to tell him that this place was destined to become a city. One humble tenement is all it boasts, and a stranger would be apt to imagine, when you told him that a town was laid out there, and that lots were commanding from \$1000 to \$2500 apiece, that the speculating fever was raging with all-pervading influence. But upon careful examination and mature reflection, I have arrived at the conclusion above stated.

Peru is situated on the Illinois river, at the head of river navigation, and is the point of termination of the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

This canal, when completed, will be the most splendid project of internal improvement in the Union. Its dimensions are sixty feet wide at the top water line—36 feet wide at the bottom, and six feet deep—the estimated cost of which is nine millions. This is a great link in the grandest chain of internal improvements known in the world—“ it unites the Mississippi with our inland seas, the Gulf of St. Lawrence with the Gulf of Mexico, and the Rocky mountains with the Atlantic coast.” Where can be found a work of internal improvement more important than this ?

Besides, the great central rail-road from the mouth of the Ohio terminates here. It is situated in the midst of a most fertile region, abounding in grain, in coal, in iron, and in hydraulic power. These things being considered, is it wrong to suppose that a large inland city will here arise ! For myself I have no doubt of the fact, and would stake my reputation on the result. And but a few short months ago, the land there was entered by an enterprising Pennsylvanian, (one who, by his business talents, enterprize, and unspotted reputation, has amassed a munificent fortune, and who can be pointed to as a distinguished example of the success which attends well-directed efforts) for a dollar and a quarter per acre—now it will readily command from 5000 to 10,000 dollars per acre.

I assure you, my dear ——, I have often wished as I was roaming over this beautiful country, that you were with me, to view this scene in all its glory, to cast your eyes over a boundless tract of land, on which stern Winter has cast his fleece-white mantle, to feel the west wind blowing on your cheek, and to experience that thrill of pleasure which the sight of those grand and mighty prairies alone can bestow. But perhaps you will see them at a more propitious period. Come, when Flora casts her garlands o'er the land,—Come,

“ When universal Pan  
Knit with the graces and the hours in dance,  
Leads on the gentle Spring.”

Come, when the prairie flower is in blossom—come when “ the rank grass is waving in billowy pride.” Come when the chain that now binds these sluggish streams is loosed, and hear them laugh and merrily sing as they journey on to the ocean. Come then and view this rich, this growing, this flourishing country—examine its resources. See the field that is opened for enterprize and talent—look at the laurels which can be gained by exertion here, reflect on its increasing greatness, and the influence it is destined to exert upon our common country ; and my word for it, a city life will lose its charms, and you will, without a sigh, bid it farewell, take up your staff, and come and pitch your tent in the great—the growing—the mighty—the boundless West.

No. III.

*A Snow-Storm on the Prairie.*

Peoria, (Ill.) Feb. 8, 1837.

“ Now sharp Boreas blows abroad, and brings  
The dreary winter on his frozen wings ;  
Beneath the low-hung clouds, the sheets of snow  
Descend, and whiten all the fields below.”

Such was the burden of my song when I awoke from a most refreshing slumber, and saw large white flakes descending, and the whole country covered with the snowy garb of winter. It is oft-times a very pleasant employment to watch the progress of a snow-storm, but then you must be sheltered from its violence, for I assure you, you cannot at all sentimentalize when you are breasting its fury, and have along and dreary journey before you. However, this morning I was in a peculiarly good humour, and disregarding the solicitations of my friends, who begged me to remain until the storm had abated, I determined to resume my journey. Soon the merry jingle of the sleigh-bell announced to me that my vehicle was at the door of my friend's hospitable mansion—into it I sprung with joyous gaiety, and away we flew over

the broad and boundless prairie. My noble steed seemed to feel a new excitement as he inhaled the fresh morning breeze, which lent life and vigour to every nerve.

A prairie is most beautiful in “ the spring time of year,” for then it is a garden formed and cultivated by nature’s hand, where spring the clustering flowers which bloom in rich luxuriance, and “ shed their fragrance on the desert air.” But when stern winter casts her mantle over the earth, and binds the streams in icy fetters, then a prairie is a spectacle, grand and sublime, and will well repay for the hardships and privations of Western travelling. I was compelled, however, to ride against the wind, which whistled around and blew directly in my face. So violent was the storm that I was almost blinded by the thick flakes that were dashed directly in my eyes. Had I acted with prudence, I should have discontinued my journey, and made myself comfortable for the remainder of the day at the log hut where I dined—but I determined, in spite of wind and weather, to reach Peoria by night. Whilst progressing quietly on my way, gray twilight extended her evening shades on earth. Still I drove on, anxious to reach my point of destination. Not a single star peeped out from the heavens to shed its light on a benighted traveller. The storm increased in violence, and the cold winds whistled a wintry tune. I now found I had strayed from the road, and here was I on a broad prairie, without mark or mound, and had lost the trace, which was ere now covered by the falling snow.

Unfortunately I had left my compass behind, and now I was on a broad sea without a chart or compass, and without one stray light in the heavens whereby to direct my course. The mariner, when tossed upon the billows of the stormy ocean, has at least the satisfaction of knowing where he is, for the needle will always point to the pole, and his chart will tell him of the dangers in his path—but the weary traveller, who has lost his way on a Prairie, is on a boundless sea, where he cannot even tell the direction he is pursuing, for oft-times he will travel hour after hour, and still remain at nearly the same point from which he started. Had even one accommodating star beamed in the heavens, I should not have been the least disconcerted, for then I could have some object whereby to guide my steps. But all the elements combined against me, and I assure you my feelings were by no means comfortable. Memory ran over the sad history of the numerous travellers, who had been overtaken by night, and been buried in the falling snow ; many who had started in the morning full of gay hopes and buoyant anticipations, who, ere another sun had risen, had found a cold and solitary grave—arrested in their course by the chill and icy hand of death. Alas, thought I, how true it is,

“ For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn—  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care ;  
No children run to lisp their sire’s return—  
Or climb his knee, the envied kiss to share.”

Insensibly I felt a strong inclination to sleep—I had always heard that this was a dangerous symptom, and if I yielded to its influence, my life would certainly be lost. I endeavoured to shake off the drowsy feeling. Never before have I experienced such a strong inclination to sleep. Never before did I exert myself more to keep awake. I halloed—I shouted—I beat my breast to preserve animation, and tried every method to prevent my yielding to the drowsy influence. My noble horse was almost exhausted, and I myself began to despair of reaching a place of shelter—when suddenly a ray of light beamed upon the snow, and shed a shadow around me. Encouraged by this favourable token, I urged on. My jaded steed also seemed to know that he was approaching a place of shelter, for he quickened his pace, and shortly afterwards I discovered at a distance, a small log-hut, from whose window beamed a broad blaze of light. Soon was I at the door, and warmly welcomed by the kind owner, who shook the snow from my garments, and gave me a seat before a blazing fire.

Oh, how delightful was the sense of security as I sat sheltered from the wintry blast, and listened to the tales of the inmates, many of whom had, like me, been overtaken by the storm, and now were relating the events of their journey. I have passed many delightful evenings in the course of a short but eventful life—I have been at the festive board, where the wine-cup was pushed merrily around, and song, and laughter, and merriment abounded—I have mingled in the society of the gay—I have been

“ Where youth and pleasure meet  
To chase the glowing hours with flying feet.”

But never have I passed a more happy evening than in the small and narrow cabin of that Illinois farmer.

No. IV.

*Peoria—Illinois—The West.*

Peoria, Feb. 8, 1837.

Early on the ensuing morning I arrived at Peoria. Peoria is situated on the Illinois river, and is in very truth a most beautiful site for a town. A few miles above, the river expands in a lake, upon the banks of which it is situated. The approach to the town is through alternate wood-land and prairie. It is the county-town of Peoria county, and has a bright prospect of rapidly increasing. It now has a population of fifteen hundred, and boasts of a large and commodious courthouse and several fine mansions. It commands at all seasons an unbroken water communication with St. Louis, and is situated in a most delightful country. Its trade now is brisk, but it will increase in a ten-fold degree upon the completion of the Illinois and Michigan canal.

The highly respectable and talented author of “ A Winter in the West,” in one of his letters in 1834, expresses the following sentiments in reference to this work : “ The State of Illinois, judging from the progress already made, will not complete the canal for half a century. The want of capital is here so great, as almost to seal up every outlet for enterprize, though they present themselves on every side, and our eastern capitalists are so completely ignorant of the prodigious resources of this region, that it will be long ere this defect will be supplied.” To a part of this assertion we are obliged to enter our dissent, while to a part we will most cordially assent.

There exists no doubt on my mind, that this great and important work will be completed in five years ; which, considering the immense magnitude of the undertaking, is certainly a short time. Every effort is now making to hasten its completion. A large part of it is under contract, and labourers are at work upon a considerable portion of the line. The Commissioners are men of acknowledged talent and integrity, and there is every reason to believe that the state, feeling a just and praiseworthy pride in the construction of this grand link in the chain of internal improvements, will urge its immediate completion. But we do agree with the author referred to, that our eastern capitalists are completely ignorant of the resources of this region.

Eastern capitalists cannot realize the great opportunities that every day present themselves for safe and profitable investment, and the great returns received for capital invested. With many the opinion is prevalent, that the accounts received through the medium of the press, are but the “ puffs” of adventurous speculators, who by this method “ crack up” their property, with the design of defrauding innocent purchasers. That this system has been most



extensively pursued, cannot be denied ; but that this country is destined to advance most rapidly in the scale of importance, and that investments judiciously made now, will insure a great profit, can be shown to the satisfaction of any reasoning mind.

Take out your map, and look at this noble state ; look at its geographical situation, between 37 and 42 deg., N. lat. ; see the mighty Mississippi rolling its swift and turbid current along the western borders ; look at the Wabash pursuing its silent way along the eastern side ; see the “ Beautiful River ” washing the southern boundary ; and look at that calm and placid stream, so properly denominated “ a natural canal through a natural meadow, ” dividing the state and extending far and wide its fertilizing influence. What portion of our country is better watered or more capable of commanding a great hydraulic power ? Reflect upon the face of the country and the nature of its soil. Here are no high and barren hills, or thick and dense woodlands, but broad and rolling prairies.

The state of Ohio will, at the next census, rank the third state in the confederacy ; I mean as regards wealth and population—and yet what immense labour was required “ to clear ” a large portion of her territory, and then, at her early settlement, we had but a capital stock of six millions of souls. And if Ohio in thirty years rank as the third state in this Union, I ask what time will it require for a state to stand beside her—where the ground is already prepared by nature’s hand for the farmer—when we have a capital stock of over thirteen millions, and when the facilities for emigration are ten-fold increased. Besides, Illinois contains a larger quantity of rich land than any other state, and therefore can maintain a large agricultural population, which is the great basis of national wealth. These things being considered, can we doubt that ere long these beautiful prairies will be adorned by the home of the settler—will re-echo the shrill whistle of the ploughman, as he “ homeward plods his weary way, ” or the glad and joyous song of the reaper, as he gathers in the golden harvest ?

Can we doubt that, ere long, Illinois will stand among her sister states—“ her brow blooming with the wreath of science, her path strewn with the offerings of art, her temples rich in unrestricted piety, ” her prairies waving with the fruits of agriculture, her noble streams bearing upon their bosoms the produce of every clime, her borders filled with a rich and thriving population, attached to the institutions of our fathers ; lovers of rational and enlightened liberty, and reflecting honour and glory upon our common country. But I must pause ; my eyes grow heavy—my candle has almost burnt to its socket—and I must bid you good night. For now,

“ The lamp of day is quenched beneath the deep.  
And soft approach the balmy hours of sleep. ”

No. V.

*The East—The West—Enterprise—Agriculture.*

Springfield, (Ill.) Feb. 27. 1837.

Here am I at the neat and pretty town of Springfield, a place of considerable trade, and containing a truly kind and hospitable population. The journey from Peoria to Springfield was most delightful. The air was pure and balmy—the heavens were blue—the roads were in fine order, and the “ tout ensemble ” was (to use a western term) “ gorgeous. ” I am now snugly ensconced in a comfortable room, and intend to entertain you with a few detached and unconnected thoughts—and I will commence by saying, that the period of the year is fast approaching, when the tide of emigration rolls to the western world. As soon as the streams

that now are bound by winter's chain, are loosed—as soon as the noble steamers, that “ walk the waters like a thing of life,” are plying up and down our rivers, the numbers of emigrants who will come to this land of promise, will far exceed that of any previous year. It is not merely the oppressed and afflicted of foreign climes, who have left their native hills for this land of peace and plenty ; but many of our most enterprising citizens, actuated, *some*, by a desire to improve their fortunes, and others by that truly American spirit—the love of rambling (for we are truly a migratory people,) will forsake their own comfortable homes, to examine the prospects of this much talked of, much written of, and far-famed country.

That those who possess sufficient intelligence, to appreciate and understand the advantages of this country, and a spirit of enterprise that will support them under the privations they must necessarily encounter, will be charmed and gratified with their western tour, I have no doubt ; nor do I question that Illinois, in the progress of another year, will rank among her citizens, many of the most intelligent and enterprising of our sister states. That this country possesses advantages of a most important character, and offers many attractions to the youthful adventurer—to him who would acquire both fame and fortune, can, I think, easily be shown, and I would present a few considerations tending to illustrate the subject.

And I will premise by saying, that there is no truth more evident to the reflecting mind, than that in this transatlantic world, every one must be the architect of his own fortune—no matter what course of life is adopted, be it professional or mechanical, the basis upon which every hope of future eminence must rest is, diligent, untiring, persevering application. Assuming this fact as granted, I would refer to the superiority of the western portion of our continent over the eastern, as regards *the acquisition of wealth—professional eminence—political distinction*, and the opportunity offered of *exercising influence on society and the destinies of our common country*.

As respects the acquisition of wealth—the great basis of all wealth is the agricultural interest, and that country must be the richest, which is the most capable of supporting the largest agricultural population. Land, rich and fertile soil, is the foundation of a nation's glory. It is true, that commerce tends much to enrich a people, and *large*, nay, *immense* fortunes, have been made in the pursuit of trade. But who does not know the mutations of trade !—who is not cognizant of the fluctuations of commerce ? who is ignorant of the fact, that he who is engaged in commercial transactions may to-day be master of thousands, and roll in splendour and luxury, and to-morrow be a bankrupt, and know not where to lay his head ? Do you seek for the evidence of this fact ? Go to any of our large cities and inquire, and you will find the sad truth written in indelible characters, so plain that he who runs may read.

Now none of these mutations and fluctuations afflict the agricultural or producing class of society—no panics or pressures occur among them—a stormy sea cannot swallow up their earnings, nor a raging fire destroy the toil of years. The seed is dropped into the ground, and, “ He who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,” sends the genial sunshine and refreshing showers, and the ripe and yellow harvest awaits the labourer's gathering.

Now, land in the western world is rich and fertile, and I will venture to say, that the soil of one of the prairies is more productive than any soil in your much loved state, not even excepting the far-famed Lancaster county, where the toil and labour of many years has been expended in improving it. This rich and fertile soil can be entered at \$1.25 per acre, or bought “ second-hand” for from \$2.50 to \$3.50 per acre. And it has been proved by actual experiment, that an enterprising settler can break and sow 80 acres, and from the profits of his crop can realize a sufficient sum to enter and pay for his land ; thus in one year, by the toil

and labour of his hand, acquiring a fee-simple title to a fine and improving farm. In what portion of the eastern states can this be done ? “ I pause for a reply.” Again—wealth will be acquired by *the natural increase* of the country.

This whole region (particularly the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin Territory,) is filling up with great and unexampled rapidity. The increase of the country is truly wonderful, and one who has not witnessed it can scarcely believe it. The growth and prosperity of Chicago may be taken as a fair example of the unprecedented increase and advancement of the country. Cities and towns spring up in every quarter, and a mighty tide of emigration is rolling far and wide its fertilizing influence.

A small sum of money now judiciously invested, will increase in a ratio not even dreamed of by an eastern capitalist. Speak to them of the advantages of this region, and they smile, and tell you, you are exercising the powers of a fertile imagination. They manifest the same incredulity as was exhibited by the eastern monarch, when told by the philosopher, that he came from a country where water became congealed, and bore upon its bosom, men, and horses, and chariots. The monarch was indignant, that any one should attempt (as he supposed) to impose upon his good sense and experience ; for he had been sunned in a burning clime, and there the streams were never bound by winter’s chain, but were ever rolling their turbid waters, and yet the philosopher’s tale was no less true than strange—and so it is with our eastern capitalists—they can form no idea of the increase and unexampled advancement of this country, for it is unparalleled in the annals of the world ; and although they sometimes think they are very wise in discrediting our statements, they are only acting from a principle of human nature, (which is truly illiberal and narrow,) to disbelieve any thing that is contrary to their preconceived opinions, and has never occurred under the observation of their senses.

But judging of the future by the past, and can we have a better lamp to our steps than that of experience ! what may we not anticipate from the increase of this country ? It seems but yesterday that the whole valley of the Mississippi was a wilderness, untrodden, save by the moccasin of the red man, where the silence and solitude of nature was unbroken save by the shriek of the wolf, or the cry of the majestic eagle,

“ As he gracefully wheel’d in the cloud-speckled sky.”

Now, as if by work of enchantment, mighty states have there arisen, powerful in wealth and population—sisters of a common confederacy, and reflecting honour on our common country—cities and towns have sprung up like stars above the horizon, and the whole scene is alive with the industry and enterprize of man. Why, I ask, will not land in Illinois be as valuable as in any portion of the Atlantic states ? Why will not land along the borders of the Illinois and Michigan canal command as high a price as that upon the Erie canal ! The soil is far more productive, requires less toil to prepare for the hand of the farmer, and the market for produce is far superior to any in the east. Does any one pretend to say that lands in any portion of the west will ten years hence be sold for \$1.25 per acre ! if so, he arrives at that conclusion by a process of reasoning which I cannot understand. To the mechanic—to the labourer—to the working classes of society, this fact offers great encouragement ; for here they can earn large wages, and the small sums which they invest will increase most rapidly.

Again, wealth depends upon *economy*. It is the prudent, saving man, and not the prodigal, who acquires a fortune ;—a penny saved is a penny earned, was the maxim of a wise philosopher, and its truth has been fully tested. Now, in a new country, fewer temptations are in your path—fewer opportunities for wasting and squandering the wealth earned by your

labour—fewer inducements are presented for the exhibition of extravagances and prodigality, than in our large eastern cities, where luxury is the reigning vice—where man strives as the object of his highest ambition, to outrival his fellow man in the magnificence of his equipage, the extravagance of his table, and the brilliancy of his entertainments.

These considerations, then, the low price of rich and fertile soil, the certain and great increase of the country, and the want of opportunities for the display of extravagance and prodigality, exhibit, in a faint degree, the superiority of the western country—the young and rising west—over the over-populated and already exhausted east. If then wealth be the object of pursuit—if the acquirement of a fortune be the “ultima thule” of your wishes, here is the field upon which to commence your efforts—a field already ripe with the golden harvest, and only waiting the labourer’s gathering.

No VI.

*The Acquisition of Wealth—Young Men and Old—Advantages of the West.*

Jacksonville, March 3, 1837.

In my last, I endeavoured to exhibit the superiority of the Western Country over the eastern, as regards the acquisition of wealth. Unfortunately for us, the desire for wealth is the ruling passion of our nation—a passion developed in early life, sanctioned by parental admonition, and strengthened by each advancing year—almost the first principle instilled into the youthful mind, is the importance of wealth, and almost the first object to which the youthful energies are directed, is the acquisition of a fortune. We will not stop to show the pernicious influence which this universal worship at the shrine of Mammon has upon the morals, the literary taste, and the intellectual greatness of our people. We will not stop to exhibit the dangerous tendency of this money-making spirit, to destroy those nice distinctions between right and wrong—to vitiate the public taste—to impair the force of native intellect, and to delay the glorious triumphs of the mind.

This fact we will leave to an abler pen, confident that our feeble efforts would be of little avail in checking that ardent and earnest desire for wealth so prevalent through the land. But there are those to whom, in speaking of the advantages of a new country, we can point to higher and nobler inducements than the mere acquisition of worldly goods—many who are engaged in the noble employment of cultivating and improving the human intellect, and desire a broad and ample, field upon which to exert the energies of that immortal mind with which Providence has blessed them.

To those we would speak in the language of affectionate regard, and would endeavour to convince them that, if they desire distinction in that branch of science to which their attention has been directed—if eminence in their profession is the object of their wishes, that they have only to summon up moral courage to enter boldly on a scene of action which will inevitably lead to happy and glorious results. But they must be endued with the spirit of lofty determination and noble resolution—a determination that will brave all obstacles—a resolution that will support them under all privations—not that weak and sickly resolution that every difficulty discourages, and every obstacle disheartens ; but that bold and manly resolution which, fixing its eagle eye upon the topmost height, determines to reach the destined mark, and, like the thunder-bearer of Jove, when storms and tempests beat around, soar higher and loftier, and sustains itself by the force and sublimity of its own elevation.

Among the number of advantages which the West has over the East, may be enumerated the following :—

1. In the East, the professions are monopolized by the older members—in the West, the responsible duties of the professions are confided to the young men.

2. In the West, greater inducements for the acquisition of a fortune being held out by the farming or agricultural interest, and great privations having necessarily to be encountered, the number of professional men is fewer than at the East, and consequently the field is more ample.

3. In a new country, every thing being to build up and construct, greater opportunity is offered for the exercise of professional talent.

4. The tendency of a new country being to develop and bring forward youthful talent, exerts a highly favourable influence upon boldness, force, and originality of intellect.

In illustration of the first proposition, we need but appeal to the experience of every young professional man. How few, how very few, even of our most active and intelligent young men can, in our large eastern cities, earn a respectable livelihood ! One or two of the most eminent and experienced monopolize the most important and lucrative portions of the business. The community look up to them with confidence, for they believe their minds are matured by wisdom and ripened by experience, and the young men are permitted to remain in almost total inactivity.

Here and there an instance may occur of a young man of high and noble endowments entering boldly into the arena, and, by the force of his intellect and the brilliancy of his talents, commanding a large share of public patronage ; but for one who thus happily has burst the fetters which confine and restrain the youthful intellect, how many have toiled and struggled in the lowly vale of life, then “ dropped into the tomb, unhonoured and unknown !” —The aged and experienced will not confide their business to youthful heads, for they cannot realize that those whom a few short years ago they dandled on the knee, or saw engaged in the simple and artless amusements of early childhood, are prepared to discharge the high and responsible duties appertaining to a profession.

Now, in the West the population is mostly young, consisting chiefly of youthful adventurers, who have left their peaceful homes with the determination to reap the advantages of a new country. A young professional man has enlisted in his behalf, not the cold and sordid influence of those whose feelings have been chilled by a contact with a selfish world, but the warm and glowing feelings of early youth. He is there surrounded not by the aged fathers of the profession—those whose brows are silvered o’er by the frosts of time—not the experienced soldiers who have conquered o’er and o’er again in the fight, and advance to the contest confident of success ; but he beholds himself surrounded by his equals—his companions and associates, each striving to gain the prize of public approbation—each struggling to win the pure and spotless laurels which will crown the victor’s brow.

In illustration of the second proposition, we can only add, that there can be no doubt that if the acquisition of wealth be the object of pursuit, greater inducements are held out by the farming and agricultural interest. A professional life is at all times a life of toil, and he who aspires to its highest honours must remember that they are only to be attained by untiring unremitting effort. The pecuniary emoluments are small compared with other occupations of life, and he who desires professional eminence must not expect to reap the same amount of this world’s good as he whose soul is engaged in the pursuit of trade.

Now an enterprising emigrant, when he leaves his native village, as he turns to take the last lingering look of the home of his affections—as he beholds the spire of the village church, where so oft he has worshipped the God of his fathers, glittering in the morning sun, the last wish which animates his bosom, is the hope of some not far distant day, returning to the scenes of his childhood, where every object brings some sweet association, laden with the fruits of his toil. In fine, it is wealth that he hopes to attain, and it is the prospect of reaping golden fruits which enables him manfully to endure the privations to which he is subjected. He arrives at the land of promise, and examines the prospect of improving his fortune which the country affords. He finds that the tiller of the soil is the one who reaps the most productive harvest, and no matter what profession he may have adopted,—no matter what branch of science may have hitherto occupied his attention—he relinquishes its pursuit— forgets the obligations his profession imposes on him, and forsakes his calling to assume the manly and independent, but at the same time more profitable employment of the farmer.

But few, few alas ! of professional men of the proper stamp and character emigrate to a new country. It is the hardy yeoman and independent mechanic who has the moral courage to emigrate to a new but growing country. The young professional man is unfortunately too attached to the comforts of a city life. He loves his ease too much to think of forsaking the attractions and fascinations which have thrown their spells around him, and he will content himself with wasting and squandering the precious hours of youth, (which are truly the wealth of future remembrance,) in the pursuit of the phantom pleasure, which will forever, like Creusa's ghost, fly from his embrace. In the East the professions are over-stocked, and it is indeed distressing in our large eastern cities to see the large number of professional young men, without any employment to occupy their time—frittering away the powers of their intellect, and acquiring habits that will inevitably tend to prevent attaining either standing or eminence in their profession—when if they would only listen to the voice of reason, and obey its dictates, they might have the certain prospect of advancing the character of their profession—being useful to society—exercising influence on our country, and building up a name

“ That long shall hallow every space,  
And be each purer soul's high resting place.”

But I find if I continue the subject now, I shall be obliged to trespass on your limits.  
Adieu.

RAMBLER.

Illinois in 1837 : a sketch descriptive of the situation, boundaries, face of the country, prominent districts, prairies, rivers, minerals, animals, agricultural productions, public lands, plans of internal improvement, manufactures, &c., of the state of Illinois .. (1838)

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