

What Kansans are Learning.

The recent political upheaval in this state has done more to set the mind of the average Kansan at work considering his condition and surroundings than anything else save the danger of imminent destruction could possibly have done. He has begun to study for himself the circumstances which have conduced to his present condition. And it is well that it is so; for while as yet we have no positive assurance that all of the provoking evils have been or will be found, yet it is morally certain that the Kansan in his search will unearth facts, the disregard of which has done much to retard the development of the state and the prosperity of her people.

The first thing that comes prominently before the view of the searcher is the

dreary and disheartening array of collapsed booms with which the state has ever been afflicted, - booms, not only in city lots but in farming property as well, whose only foundation is in the audacity of the real estate agents who have them in charge.

Kansas, to us the most beautiful, the most beneficent, the fairest and the grandest state of our beloved commonwealth has been the subject of songs of praise and flights of oratory ever since she has been known to the civilized world. Her climate has been extolled, the virtues of her bountiful soil have been lauded to the skies, and her people have been declared to be perfection personified. Her educational system has been conceded to be second to none; her political views have been, until quite recently, endorsed

by a majority of the American People; while her prohibitory law has been universally recognized as a proper and fitting cap-stone to the monument of righteous statutes reared by her sagacious statesmen for the guidance and direction of her people.

Nor have these laudatory statements all been flattery. No one can deny that Kansas has been richly and bountifully blessed with much that goes to make up a happy and prosperous community; - that her people are intelligent, energetic, self-reliant and thoroughly patriotic, and that her institutions rank with those of states of thrice her age.

But aside from, and yet in close connection with this merited and justifiable commendation, there has ever been a tendency to overestimate and

overstate the capacities of our section, - in many cases to an extent bordering almost on criminality. In order to induce immigration, sixty bushel corn has been told off as one hundred and sixty bushel corn; thirty bushel wheat as sixty bushel wheat; ninety pound pumpkins have been raised to twice their real weight; Kansas toil and poverty has been portrayed as Kansas ease and affluence and existence within her borders pictured as perfect bliss.

These misrepresentations have been the most potent factor in bringing to the state a class of citizens who have been a hindrance and a drawback to the state since its first settlement. Men who are always on the lookout for a place where they may live without labor, - where they may

gather what they have not
strewed, - these are of no bene-
fit to any community. The
better class of farmers, who
expect to earn their bread by
the sweat of their brows and
who waste no time in looking
for returns not warranted by
the effort put forth to obtain
them, are not deceived by the
overdrawn pictures presented
to their view by real estate agents
and railway corporations; and,
moreover, they have a strong
disinclination to uniting their
fortunes with those of a com-
munity which depends upon such
questionable methods of advertis-
ing.

Kansas needs no more ad-
vertising. Her merits are known
to all the world. Her demerits
will never grow less by burying
them under high priced lithographs
and smoothing them over with
printer's ink. Let us then, while

always keeping open doors and extending a hearty welcome to all who may wish to join their fortunes with us, yet cease to lure people into our midst by advertising our particular section as heaven's ante-room.

Another thing which Kansas farmers should learn, and which many, by bitter experience have already learned, is that the country does not exist that can afford to pay two per cent per month on the capital required to develop it. They are beginning to realize that fine houses and picket fences can never be made to pay the interest on their cost. They are thinking the matter over and are gradually coming to the conclusion that corn and Kansas sunflowers do not thrive together any better than corn and Pennsylvania

gimpson-weed. They are learning that the treasure buried on their farms lies about as deep as the treasure buried on New York farms, and four inch plowing will not reach it. They are learning that cattle cannot live on north wind and stagnant water any better in Kansas than they can in Michigan. They are learning that the laws of nature are as much in force here as elsewhere, and that Providence makes no exception in executing them, because, forsooth, this is Kansas.

But above all, in addition to this other knowledge, the Kansan must learn to cultivate individuality along with his corn and his potatoes. He must not allow his neighbors or his neighbors' neighbors to do his thinking and his planning for him. He must

not sow a hundred acres of oats because others are doing it, nor risk his little capital in broom corn because his friend risks his.

This individuality, too, should extend to other than strictly farm matters. It should be the controlling spirit in his politics. The extremes for which Kansas is noted are a direct and legitimate result of the well-known tendency of Kansans to do as others do, - to follow each other blindly, like a flock of sheep, with out reason or limit. When one howls hard times, all howl hard times. When one denounces the existing state of affairs, all denounce it, until, finally, the whole of Kansas unites in one stupendous clamor for relief from burdens which but few have

ever felt, and from discomforts which their agitation but serves to increase. It may sometimes be right and proper for people to object, or, as the Westerners have it, to kick, but they should not kick blindly, nor merely to be in harmony with their fellows. When they feel a desire to stir up strife over unproved evils, let them think of what a well-known statesman once said of them, that "Kansas will never prosper until her people learn to raise more cattle and more corn and less racket, - more four-legged hogs and fewer two-legged Jones."

This, and more, Kansans are learning. They are beginning to find that they must work out their own salvation, and with hopeful

hearts and high ambitions are setting out to win the competence or the fortune that is surely in store for them. When all have done their part, - when the people fully realize that Kansas is not such an exceptional locality; that the same laws rule, and that common sense and hard work are as essential here as elsewhere, - then many of the evils which now oppress the people will be done away with, and Kansas will be, in truth, exceptional.

Phil S. Creager.