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Lights and Shadows of Western Life: A Faithful Picture, by a Resident "Sucker"

Charles Lowell

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Lights and Shadows

..... OF

.. Western Life ..

A Faithful Picture, by a
Resident "Sucker."

Reprinted by Chief Justice Peters



Lights and Shadows of Western Life---A

Faithful Picture, by a Resident "Sucker."

The following curious and highly amusing document, was handed to us by a friend, who desired to see it in print. We are informed that the questions were copied verbatim from a printed circular, signed by CHARLES LOWELL, Esq., of Ellsworth, which was sent to several of the Postmasters in Illinois, in 1839, for the purpose of obtaining information in regard to that country. A copy of this circular falling, by chance, into the hands of a wag at Jacksonville, he returned it to Mr. Lowell with answers annexed, as given below. Mr. L. being, we presume, little pleased with the character of the answers, refused to take the document out of the Post Office, and it subsequently passed into other hands. We have been much amused with the replies of the Jacksonville wag. They contain the most admirable burlesque upon Western life that we have ever seen.

ELLSWORTH, Me., Dec. 1839.

DEAR SIR:—A number of individuals in this vicinity think of emigrating to the West, in 1840—and we have Northern Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin in view, particularly Illinois. Having never been there, and wishing more accurate information respecting the country, its advantages and disadvantages,—its present condition and future prospects,—and having no personal acquaintance in your vicinity, I take the liberty to address this communication to you, and respectfully request as early and full a reply to the following interrogatories as your knowledge, time, and circumstances will permit.

[Here followed thirty-two long interrogatories.]

REPLY.

JACKSONVILLE, Illinois, January, 1840.

DEAR SIR:—Your letter dated Ellsworth, December, 1839, addressed to our worthy Postmaster, has been received, and, as he is otherwise engaged, he has requested me to reply to the interrogatories contained in your letter—which I will endeavor to do to the best of my abilities, and, in doing so I shall confine myself to this country, as my knowledge of other places referred to in your letter is not extensive enough to give you any positive information respecting them, and I suppose you will receive from persons living in those places the requisite information. In answer to your first question as to our internal improvements:

1. Question.—What progress has been made in your internal improvements—what canals, or railroads are now completed, or nearly so—are they progressing, have funds been secured to prosecute them; or will the system be abandoned; what will be the final legislative action on the subject?

Answer. As to our canal, which is the Illinois and Michigan canal,—it is in a state of progress and will be finished at all events, and as this is the only canal we shall ever want in the State, we are determined to have this. From the manner of its construction and the state of money matters connected with it, it is certain that it will (with the aid of Providence and the Irish) be finished in the course of ten years, without costing the State anything, except a trifle, say ten millions.—Our other internal improvements are railroads which were to be constructed by the State, and for that purpose we borrowed eleven millions of dollars and expended about four, and in all probability the works of most of them will be abandoned. Although about one-fourth of the whole 1300 miles is under contract, and it would not cost more to finish them than to pay the contract, yet with the usual wisdom of legislators we now think it policy to abandon the improvements. It depends a good deal, however, on the success of the exploring expedition sent out by Congress under the command of Lieut. Wilkes.

2. Q. What has been done to remove the obstructions to navigation at the several rapids of the Mississippi and Rock rivers; do

steamboats ply regularly, or occasionally upon the latter; and if so of what size, and to what point do they usually ascend; what is the width and depth up at Rockford?

A. To question two, I will state, that all that has been done to remove the obstructions in the Mississippi river, is that a great deal of money has been spent by the United States to the great profit of the contractors, and for the benefit of the aforesaid Irish; and as for Rock river, it is not, nor can it be a navigable stream for but two or three months in a year, and as for Rock Port, I do not know where it is.

3. Q. What is the present population, business, and prospects of Jacksonville; how is Springfield, Naples, Rushville, Beardstown, Lewiston, Macomb, Albany, Decatur, &c., &c.

A. To question three. Jacksonville contains about three thousand inhabitants and is getting pretty well, I thank you. Springfield has, since the seat of Government was located there, become decidedly immoral; and my opinion is, that it is going to the devil, as fast as possible, being greatly puffed up with pride, and overrun with strangers; however Sportswood lives here, and this no doubt operates as a check on its Babylonish destiny. As to Naples, from all accounts its inhabitants are all dead or drunk, as no one has been seen from there since the Christmas sprees commenced.

Rushville, is completely used up since the Legislature refused to let them have a branch of the Rail Road, and it is thought that it will die a natural death. However, it is doubtful. Beardstown is in the same condition that Naples is. I may here observe, that the inhabitants of river towns are to a certain extent amphibious, and it is probable that they are now in a liquid state. Lewiston and Macomb are little dried up towns, and not worth your attention; Albany is like Rock Port, it has just stepped out. I would advise you not to go to Decatur, as I once came near being steamed to death there, and I am also credibly informed that there is nothing to drink in the place.

4. Q. What is the character of the soil; its value per acre, when held by private individuals generally; produce to the acre;

the value of that produce at home and at market; what can good lands generally be purchased for within from 1-2 a mile to 1 1-2 or 2 miles from considerable villages; are opportunities to purchase improved farms frequent? These things of course depend upon a variety of circumstances.

Ans. Land in this country is all held by private individuals, and can be bought from \$3 to \$30 an acre. We can grow about 50 bushels of corn, (which is worth 20 to 28 cents,) although 80 bushels are frequently raised, or about ten hogs. We also raise a great deal of beef, the exact quantity to the acre I do not know. Twenty bushels of wheat, 60 of oats, a large quantity of weeds, (quantity not exactly known). In some places we raise about ten cords of snakes, and on low lands any quantity of frogs and mosquitoes. Of the latter articles, there is no established price, sale dull and market somewhat glutted. The soil is black loam, about eighteen inches or two feet deep, and in a wet time the mud is knee deep. Opportunities are frequent to purchase land or farms, as there is no man in this country but would sell his soul or anything else that he has, if he could get price enough for it.

5. Q. Is the climate wild or rugged; sultry and debilitating, or cool and invigorating; is the country well watered and healthy; or otherwise; how would it compare with Pennsylvania and Virginia in respect to climate and temperature, or with New York and Connecticut?

Ans. As to the fifth question, the climate is mild in mild weather; rugged in rugged weather, sultry and debilitating in hot weather, and will not compare with Virginia or Pennsylvania, or New York, or Connecticut at all, it being entirely a different stripe. In some places it is healthy and in others, 'otherwise.'

6. Q. What constitutes a 'claim;' how is one taken up and secured; is there any danger of one losing his improvements by another obtaining the Patent? Are not considerable villages built upon land the fee of which is still in the United States? Is not a large portion of the ranks in Northern Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, still in the hands of the Government, but the best sites for commercial towns are probably taken up by speculators? Is not

much of the land yet unsurveyed into sections; and if so, are they notwithstanding claimed and occupied; could one who has a claim enter it at the land office and pay for it at Government price any time he chooses before public sale? Is there no difficulty in ascertaining and fixing the boundaries of sections between adverse claimants?

Ans. We have no claims in this country except claims on persons who have eloped to Iowa and Texas, which cannot be collected.

7. Q. What is the social, intellectual and moral condition of society generally, for a new country; are a love of order, respect for the laws, for the right of others, education, temperance and morality pretty general, or otherwise? What proportion of the inhabitants are from New England; and what proportion are foreigners? Are they generally temperate and industrious, or intemperate and idle? Are they peaceable or litigious in their feelings and habits? Is there any existing prejudice against any particular profession or class of citizens; and if so what class? Is a man generally respected according to his intrinsic merits, or for his zeal in the cause of a sect or party?

A. As to the seventh question the moral and intellectual condition of the people is bad, decidedly bad; being too lazy to work and too indolent to study, they therefore remain in a profound state of ignorance of all things except their own business, and of raising hogs and high ways which combined with theirs, keeps them constantly at home, so that they are most unsocial beings. They have a great respect for the laws of their own country, inasmuch as they are constantly engaged in laws and more especially the successful party in a law suit. In this place we have the Illinois College, a female seminary, a lunatic asylum, a jail and five or six common schools. There are, it is supposed, drunk here, in the summer, about 10,000 mint juleps, besides gin-cocktails tom and-jerrys and a great deal of good new whiskey with out sugar; and it is a general custom of all the inhabitants to have a spree and get tight on the 4th of July, 8th of January, Christmas and New-year's although the Temperance Societies, are in full operation.

And were it not that the people will get drunk, they would certainly be sober. A smart sprinkling of the inhabitants are from New England, a heap from Kentucky, and the balance are John Bulls, Paddys, Pukes, Wolverines, Snags, Hoosiers, Griddle-greasers, Buck-eyes, Corn-crackers, Pot-soppers, Hard-heads, Hawk-eyes, Rackensacks, Linsey-woolseys, Green-horns, Whigs, Loco Focos, Conservatives, Canada Patriots, Loafers, Masons, Anti-Masons, and some few from the Jarseys. The loafers are perfectly peaceable, the Mormons and politicians, wrathful and fond of hunting, cock-fighting and getting into trouble in order to get out again. There is a strange prejudice against abolitionists and all dishonest persons. A man is respected on account of his zeal for his party, for his intrinsic merits and for the amount of his funds.

8. Q. What class of citizens are most needed; Farmers, Merchants, Professors, Mechanics? Are male and female teachers of common and high schools in demand, and would capable and worthy individuals of this profession, be likely to find ready employment; and if so, at what compensation? I presume that most kinds of mechanics, especially building mechanics, are needed and would be encouraged. Do not individual proprietors of village sites sometimes give lots and some other privileges to tradesmen and other useful citizens as inducements to them to come and settle among them?

A. All of you come, rag-tag, and bobtail, without money and without price. Individual proprietors do sometimes give lots to individuals, though generally the lots are not worth anything.

9. Q. What compensation do carpenters, Masons, Stone Cutters and common laborers, usually receive per day? and can they find ready employment and get cash payment promptly?

A. In answer to question ninth, I will just say that those who are not in the penitentiary get about enough to keep soul and body together; and as for cash, we do not know what it is, except what we read in the newspapers, coonskins being our principal currency.

10. Q. What kind of lumber is generally used in the erection of Wooden Buildings—both in town and country? What are the most usual style and size of Houses in Villages for persons of

ordinary means and circumstances—what would be the probable cost of a house 26 by 36, or thereabouts, all finished and painted inside and out, in a plain ordinary style—what kind of clapboards and shingles are used, and what their dimensions and cost, both in river and back towns? Are stone, brick, and earthen, or mud houses, much in use and if so, what is their relative cost.

A. We usually build houses of oak clapboards with a puncheon floor, and the kind most in use is log cabins without windows or doors; and such a house as you mention would probably cost all a man is worth or more. As for fuel we never use any. There are but two stone houses in the State. One is the Penitentiary at Alton, and the other the Distillery at Kilmarnock, both of great service to the country. Tom January's is the only brick house in town, except the College, and that is not in the corporation (see revised laws 1833, Mr. Van Buren's late message, and the report of the Committee to investigate the Florida Lottery.) January says his house cost \$8000 but I do not believe him; and the Trustees of the College will not tell the cost of the College, so that I am unable to give you any information on this point.

11th. Q. What are the dimensions of your lime casks, and what the price of lime; what the cost of fuel with which it is burned; what the price of the stone both before and after being quarried; what the price of the empty cask; are experienced lime burners needed, and what compensation would their services command?

A. In reply to question eleventh, I will say, and I know it to be a fact from personal experience, that our lime casks are about the size of an ordinary piece of chalk, sometimes larger; and what little lime is used is sold for about two bits a bushels. We do not use fuel to burn it; but pour water on it and let it burn itself. They will give you the stone, and as for the price of a cask, it is about one dollar and a half, for a new one will give you an old barrel that will do to hold lime.

12. Q. Are teams in demand—what would a man generally earn per day, with a good team of four oxen or two or three horses; add which are most used? Does Prarie grass make hay suitable

for such teams; and if not, what have you that does? Is it not easy to get Prairie lands into Herd's Grass, Red Top, and Clover?

A. Teams are in demand and much used and a man could probably earn all he could make, deducting his board; and if you had both oxen and horses, it would be well to work one and let the other rest, and wise versa. Prairie grass does make good hay, and in this respect our cattle are perfect Nebuchadnezzars.

13. Q. What is the usual cost of rail fence per rod; what of ditch or sod fence; and are these much in use? Could not hedge fence, from prickly thorn, be easily raised for inside or cross fences; and how many years would probably be required to raise one sufficient to resist ordinary beasts?

A. If you hook the timber (which is common) it does not cost much; but if you buy it, it will cost you a good deal; nothing of sod fences. Hedge fences of prickly pears could be raised, and would probably take a good many years to raise them.

14. Q. As timber is said to be scarce, what is used as its substitute for fuel; and what part of the year is a fire necessary for the sitting room? Is coal much used; what is the cost of fuel, whether of wood or coal? In how many years could timber locusts, walnuts, or other wood, be raised sufficiently large for fences, &c.? Are the spontaneous and cultivated berries and fruits of New England, common and easily raised or not? Could the seeds of fruit, shrubbery, berries and grasses, be ready obtained in your commercial villages?

A. As to question fourteenth, coal is much used as a substitute for wood, and the part of the year necessary for the fire is winter. Coal costs about a bit a bushel delivered. Governor Duncan will let you dig what you want at one cent a bushel from his coal banks, if you will dig it yourself, which is cheap 'for a new country.' There are a great many gooseberries and mullen stalks in this country, also dog-fennel, gempsen, weeds and polkberries. The seeds of fruit, shrubbery, berries, could easily be got by bringing them out with you.

15. Q. I am told that the farmers in the West seldom or never manure their lands, and often leave their cattle unhoused

throughout the winter. Are these things true? And if so, would not a different course promote the value of both land and cattle? Could one readily procure stock for a small farm at reasonable rates in most parts of that country, which is, I learn, adapted to all kinds of grains?

A. It is true that we never manure our land in this country; and it is also true that our cattle are not unhoused in the winter, they being reasonable beings and not asking to be housed when their owners are not. It is probable that a different course would procure a different result. (To be continued.)

16. Q. What are the common prices of rent, board, grain, hay, potatoes, groceries, clothing, glass, nails, salt; also of houses, cows, oxen, sheep, hogs, alive and dead. Also, of household furniture, such as sofas, tables, bureaus, bedsteads, &c.,—are common articles of this kind much higher than at the East.

A. In answer to question sixteenth, I would say, that from the best information I can get, the prices are, about \$2.00, \$82, 25c, \$2.00, \$6.00, 37 1-2c, from 6 1-4 to \$1.50c, about \$50, 8c, 12 1-2c, \$75, 1.12c, \$12, 2 1-2 to \$3.00. Porter Clay asks \$10 for the Irish, so does Pat Henderson, \$12, \$8, \$12, \$7.—Common articles of this kind are not higher than in the East.

17. Q. I suppose that many of your common traders purchase their stocks in Chicago, Alton, St. Louis, and other towns on the Western waters; but that those who deal more extensively purchase in the Atlantic cities. If in the latter, by what route, at what expense of time and money do they transport their goods home, and send off their produce? What time is usually occupied in a Steam Boat passage from New Orleans to St. Louis; to Peoria, or Rock Island? Does the same boat proceed to the latter places—or are boats of a lighter draft required; what is the price of freight per ton, or 100 lbs. in ordinary stages of water?

A. Some of our merchants do buy their goods in the East, and they usually bring them here by the lakes and New Orleans, though Levi brought his this way last summer by the Ohio river, and was three months on the road. However, this is not, I think, a proper test, as he was sick, and had a heap of bad luck, and it

must have cost him a heap of money. Steamboats are about ten days coming from New Orleans to St. Louis, when they are not snagged on the way. The 'E. T. Miller' left the same day Taggart did, and had not yet got home, although Taggart has been at home two weeks. So that you see, that it is somewhat uncertain.

18. Q. Are the Lead, Coal, Lime and general manufacturing commercial business of the Mississippi, Illinois and Rock River regions generally in a healthy and progressing condition, or has the general depression in the Atlantic States reached you and retarded and reduced their operations? The Pork, Grain, and Stock, business, I take to be pretty extensive and successful in the old and more populous parts of the country. Does the West, more particularly Illinois, afford ample facilities for trade, both on a large and a small scale; and are the exchanges and payments principally in cash or the productions of the country; and if the latter is there a *cash* and also a barter price? Is there much credit given in the ordinary transactions of business, and if so, what is the usual credit, and can confidence safely be confided in the fidelity and promises of the debtor? In case of abused credit, what are the legal and usual means coercing payments—is the body liable to arrest for debt?

A. The lead, coal, lime, and manufacturing parts of the country are healthy, except where it is sickly. 'The pork, grain, and other stock business is pretty extensively carried on in the most populous parts of the country.' This State does afford ample facilities for trade both on large and small scales, more especially on a small scale; and as I said before, we have no cash in the country, and never pretend to pay for anything we buy on tick, it being a violation of the contract to pay our debts, besides being inconvenient. The usual credit given is twelve months, then take a note due in twelve months more, and in the meantime, the debtor elopes to Iowa, Texas, or Oregon; so you see that this is a *promising* country, and 'confidence can safely be confided' in the debtor, being confident that you will never collect what you once trust out. For means of collecting and the liability of the body see revised laws of 1833. History of Baron Trenck, and also of Jack the Giant Killer.

19. Q. Would a Millinery, Dress-making and Fancy Goods Shop, or a Clothing, Hat and Shoe Store, in which a gentleman could purchase nearly every article of a man's dress, from a hat to a pair of boots, be likely to succeed in your town, or any other pleasant village within your knowledge; or do you traders mingle all kinds of goods in one store, so as to render his success doubtful?

A. I think a milliner would do a fine business here, as most of the milliners in this country find it more profitable to be profuse of their smiles and favors to the young men, and our ladies (God bless them) are sadly in want of the little fixings made by milliners. The same thing may be said of the dress-making business. As for the clothing, boot, hat, shoe, and variety store it would be glorious. I myself would fit out with one or two gent's suits, (provided I could get them on credit,) and have no doubt but what every loafer in town would do the same thing, if they thought they would never have to pay for them. And I know many places in this country where you could operate in the same manner, provided you did business, as you would have to do in this place. I am sorry to say that it is true our traders do mix and mingle all kinds of goods in one store, from soft soap to Queen Victoria's blond veils.

20. Q. By reference to the map I see that Carolton is 35 miles from Jacksonville and is the county seat of Green county. What is the character of the inhabitants, &c.?

A. As to the twentieth question I *do* know that Carolton is 35 miles from this place, and that it is the county seat of Green county; and that its inhabitants are a most woful set of sinners, toppers, and lovers of buckwheat cakes and honey, and also partidges, milk punch, and grog in any shape. And as for Hamburg, Gilford, and Milton, there is but one house in three places, and that is in Hamburg, and inhabited by ghosts and witches. Milton has been entirely washed away by the Mississippi, and the population has been washed away by whiskey. And as for Gilford, it is that class of towns now extinct, which makes a great show in the history and on the maps of their country, but, like Babylon the great of old, the precise spot where it once stood is now unknown,

but it is thought they are a very moral people, as they are of that genus and species called ducks, geese, sand-hills, cranes, and tadpoles. All I know of Alton is that the Penitentiary is located there, and also four meeting houses, and that it will tire a large man exceedingly to walk over the town, it being on a hill, very muddy and picturesque.

21. Q. Where do publishers of newspapers in Illinois and Iowa purchase their printing establishments, and their stocks of paper, and what wages do they generally give their journeyman? Are the ramage or wooden presses much used? Is there not great difficulty in collecting newspaper bills? What number of subscribers do village papers generally obtain?

A. Publishers of newspapers do not purchase their printing materials—they are carried on entirely by subscription. They give their journeymen their board, and furnish them with liquor. All sorts of presses are used here, but the most common kind are cider presses. There is a great difficulty in collecting newspaper bills, inasmuch as the thing is never attempted, it being morally impossible so to do. Some papers have a large and others a smaller subscription list. For further particulars and information on this subject I must respectfully refer you to Mr. J. G. Edwards, of the Hawkeye, at Burlington, Iowa. I will, however, here add that the most powerful and common presses that are used here are the constables and sheriffs who understand both the wooden Ramage and all other kinds of presses, in the course of their operations.

22. Q. What newspapers are published in Illinois, north of Peoria, except those in Ottawa, Chicago and Galena—what their character and location; and are they well supported—and if not what is the reason? What town in northern Illinois or Iowa, so far as your knowledge extends, presents the best opening for a neutral, interesting family newspaper, which would be conducted with industry and ability, particularly devoted to the advancement of that section of country, and to the great and prominent interests of society in general? Is there any paper published on Rock River; or upon the Mississippi, between Quincy and Galena, excepting at Stephenson, and at Burlington and Davenport, in Iowa—is or not one wanted in that region?

A. As to question 22d, I am as profoundly ignorant as yourself; but think you could ascertain more fully by personal examination.

23. Q. What number of traders, and professional men, such as lawyers, physicians, and editors, does Jacksonville or any other of the towns named in the 3d and 20th interrogatories, contain so far as you know—and what is their general reputation for *talents, uprightness and efficiency of character?* and would another lawyer or editor of correct principles and habits, who had both the power and disposition to do honor to his profession and to be useful to the community, be well received, and be likely to succeed; and what town within your knowledge presents the best opening for one of either profession?

A. Every man in this country is a trader. I have known two men to make ten thousand dollars each by swapping lots; the lots in both places being not more than 20 feet, nor less than 10 feet under water. We have 97 doctors, 38 lawyers, one and a half of an editor, in this place, and their characters are very much diversified: Lamborn is the best, will not study. McConnel is a politician. Billy Brown does not stay at home. McClure is the most attentive. John Harding stutters, and is also a politician. Houghton and Billy Warren do not practice, and McDougal, Tates, Smith, Sargent and Dusenburg, have just come here, are young, and do not practice much. Dorewess and Douglass have left here. Seymour has not yet procured his license, and Thomas is appointed Judge; and I do sincerely and candidly think that there is an opening for a smart, upright and talented lawyer, and do not know of a place in all creation except the city of —, in Central Africa, that now presents so great an opening as this place, for such an individual as yourself.

24. Q. Do not the soil, climate, progress of settlement, and the other facilities for business, in Iowa and Wisconsin present quite as many inducements to immigrants, as those of the State of Illinois?

A. In answer to question 24th, I can say, emphatically, that they do not. Wisconsin and Iowa, are both filled up with the

scum of creation, and no decent man would attempt to live in either territory, all the inhabitants of both places having run away from their former homes, and are now or ought to be, looked on as outlaws, not having the fear of God and the Sheriff, before their eyes. There is no doubt but that they are a most hardened set of wretches. I will further state that in Wisconsin, they are generally froze up about eleven months in the year, the inhabitants being all this time in a torpid state, and perfectly docile. And, as for Iowa, the last news we had from there fully confirms our worst fears. The news that a horrible battle is now raging, and there is no knowing how many will be killed. It appears that the army of the Missourians, consisting of six privates and a captain, have been attacked by the Iowaan army near the boundary line, and that on meeting, one of the most unparalleled fights took place between them with snow balls; and when the express left it was doubtful which party would conquer. There was a suspension of hostilities in order that the belligerents might take a horn and warm their fingers. Bets ran two to one on the Missourians on account of their having moccasins on, while the Iowaans are bare-foot. The probability is that both parties will uphold the standard and honor of their country as long as the liquor lasts, consisting of a fifteen gallon keg of whiskey on the Iowaan's side, and the same quantity on the Missourian's together one gallon of number six.

25. Q. In fine, what are the advantages and disadvantages of a location in the West—and what part of the country do you candidly think presents at this time, the best opening for a New Englander, whether professional, mercantile, mechanical, or agricultural, as to health, prosperity and general happiness—and would it be safe for one of general good health, to migrate thither in July or August, provided he could not get ready earlier? I am aware that autumn is deemed most auspicious.

A. This is important, all important. The greatest advantage in this country is plenty of cash, and the greatest disadvantage is a want of it. And I candidly think that the best place for you is somewhere between the Rocky Mountains and the coast of the Pacific Ocean. The precise spot I will leave for you to select;

and it would be perfectly safe to migrate there in August, or any other time of the year, provided you went in large bodies, and went well armed, and gave the Indians plenty of tobacco and whiskey.

26. Q. I saw, during the last summer a somewhat ambiguous account of a strange kind of vehicle, in which some 20 or 25 persons removed from Massachusetts to Rock River—it was call 'Noah's Ark,' and the 'Great Western,'—it was propelled by horse power on your rivers, but it did not appear how it was propelled on land, or how it got from Boston in the month of March, into the Western waters. What do you know of the character, dimensions and cost of this strange craft?

A. As to the twenty-sixth question, am at a loss how to answer it; but refer you to the aforesaid James G. Edwards for further information respecting this and the abolition of slavery. My own opinion is that it is one of the long and much talked of mammoths which have created so much talk. It is a singular fact in the history of this animal, that they are now very much reduced in size and are more commonly known in this country by the name of gophers.

27. Q. What portion of the year is the navigation of your Western rivers severely affected by drought, sand-bars and ice? Are there any small water craft on them which are propelled by sails and wind—Do considerable vessels, such as are common to the Atlantic States, and moved by sails, ever ascend the Mississippi as far as St. Louis?

A. About twelve months in the year, or at least that is the case with Skunk river which is by law, (see laws of 1839) made navigable as far as Oxville, though it is not so far navigable by nature. We intend to make it navigable as far as Israel's mills by law, notwithstanding it is perfectly dry in the summer, and froze up in the winter; and as a law-loving people, it will no doubt be navigable when the law is made, as far as Kilmarnock, farther than that I think it impossible to go. Considerable vessels do much by sales, inasmuch as our largest steamboats are frequently sold at Sheriff's sale. There are also many private sales, both of steamboats, keel and flat-boats, and also rafts about St. Louis and lower down.

28. What mode of traveling in the West would be most convenient and economical, and also afford sufficient time for inquiries and observation to one in making a selection of a location near some of the great water courses, where he could witness the operations of navigation and commerce as at the East? The steamboat stoppages would not, I presume, admit of time and opportunity. Would a small boat, a single horse wagon, or a saddle horse, be the best? Are the roads good?

A. As to the twenty-eight question, the best mode of traveling is 'on foot and alone,' it being the cheapest, most convenient, and affording ample opportunity to examine the country. I would recommend St. Peters as a proper place to make inquiry respecting our commerce and navigation, it being the head of navigation and it being best, I think, always to commence at the beginning, and if that did not satisfy you, you could build a craft and proceed down the river to 'Diggins.' At St. Peters there is a deal of commerce carried on between the whites and red-skins, for beads and whiskey, in exchange for skins and gumbo. You could travel by water in a single horse wagon, or on the lakes or rivers with a jackass or horse, if he could swim well. And if you come by land, by all means come in a boat. The roads are horrible, there being no roads at all except the one in the hymn-book, which leads to death, and that's not traveled any here.

29. Q. Suppose a genteel family of 3 or 4 persons, with baggage weighing from 700 to 1000 lbs. well boxed up intending to settle in the neighborhood of Rock Island, or some of the larger villages upon Rock River, should leave Maine and take the Lake route, after the Western rivers had got low, by what means, and at what expense of time and money, could they get from Chicago or Milwaukee to their intended region of settlement?

A. I would advise you by all means not to box yourself and family up, in the manner proposed, as it might severely affect your health; and as to expense, it would be owing to circumstances. If you had plenty of money, and the landlords knew it, it would cost you all you had with you. If you were poor and had not the

money, it would not cost so much, and you would have to do as others do, run, hook, beg and steal.

30. Q. If you know or think of any other matter that would be interesting to immigrants, please to state in your answer. As it may be natural to inquire on the perusal of such a letter, 'who is this fellow?' it may not be amiss to state here, that the writer was formally a merchant, several years an editor, and is now engaged in the profession of law. He has a wife and one daughter, a young woman and desirous, so far as he is personally concerned in these enquiries, of selecting an elevated, level, healthy and thrifty town, possessing an extensive view, with a moral, enlightened and liberal community, good taverns, lyceums, schools, &c., &c., where he could practice law or conduct a paper, or both; but has no wish to participate in party politics. Or where he could unite with his professional business that of a small farm if necessary.

Do you know a Mrs. Adams? I have no personal acquaintance with her myself, but believe she lives in Jacksonville.

A. There are many other matters and things which would be interesting to you. There is a great want of wives in this country, inasmuch as no man is satisfied with one, and those who have none at all are in a condition truly pitiable, and if you can by any possible device relieve us, for God's sake do.

I would also like to state for the benefit of those interested that there are many in this country who are broken merchants, ex-editors, lawyers, statue quo, and also runaways of all descriptions, who are too proud and lazy to work and ashamed to beg, who are compelled to cheat, lie and steal in order to keep soul and body together, and that a large portion of the community are comprised of that honorable class of citizens (which seemed to have entirely escaped your notice,) called Loafers, of which as St. Paul says of sinners, 'I am Chief,' though I say it myself. And I am authorized and instructed by the Loafer Club in this place to say that should you conclude to come here, we will receive you with open arms and try to fleece you out of every picayune you have in the world in less than 24 hours; and most effectually too, initiate you

into the mystery of living without money and labor. And should you at any time hereafter want any more information about this country, I will most cheerfully give it to you. And in order to show the good feelings and warmheartedness of the citizens of this country, I most respectfully invite your attention to the mob at Alton, and the death of Lovejoy; also to the mob at St. Louis and the burning of the niggers; the war with the Black Hawk, which you can readily obtain of the aforesaid James G. Edwards or the man in the moon; to the reading of Fox's book of Martyrs; also to the Sub-Treasury bill, more particularly the specie clause, and also the bull-law, as it now stands; the last new novel and also the treatise on the *Morus Multicaulis* speculations. I think by examining the authorities attentively you must certainly come to some conclusion on the matter.

You could I think find such a place as you desire in the middle of the great prairie, the country being healthy, level and elevated, possessing as extensive a view as desirable. And it is probable if ever you have any neighbors they would be moral &c.; and you might open a tavern which you could endeavor to keep well and in good order. You might also keep a school and have a Lyceum, in which you could discuss both sides of any subject which might be brought up; and as for practising law, I have been at this ten years, that is, I have been sued in every court for that time. You could also carry on a farm; so that I think the very place for you is in the very middle of the Grand Prairie.

As respects Mrs. Adams, I am in the same predicament with yourself. I have no personal acquaintance with her; but she probably knows me by reputation; and if you want to know who I am, I refer you to her.

31. Q. What number of people, who went from Maine, so far as you can judge, do you suppose reside within 200 miles of Rock Island?

Now, sir, I am fully sensible that it is much easier to ask than to answer queries—that no man has a right to expect minute answers to such a long string of interrogatories, many of which

admit of only general and qualified answers, and even such could not be given without considerable reflection and inquiry. But presuming that you are a gentleman, who feels an interest in the State in which you reside, and a disposition to accommodate any one making inquiries of this nature, I trust that you will excuse the liberty here taken and favor me with as early a reply as circumstances will permit. Should your personal engagements be such as to prevent an answer, please hand this letter to some intelligent friend who will perform the service.

I am, dear sir, very respectfully yours,

CHARLES LOWELL.

A. As to question thirty-first, I do not know what it would cost to transport hay and potatoes to New Orleans (the Irish eating all the latter and the cattle all the former;) but I do know that Parkinson took down 400 hogs and lost money on them.

A. I do not know of but one man from Maine living within 200 miles of here on Rock river, and he doesn't live here.

This is a great country for children, more especially without heads; some men being perfect John Roger's and the women being more prolific than a silk worm.

And now, my dear sir, I have endeavored to answer your inquiries respecting our happy country; and I hope my efforts have been successful. But if you should want any more information respecting it, I will be most happy to give it to you if it is in my power. In conclusion allow me to give you some advice or at least make a suggestion. Your life would be in less danger fighting Indians in Florida, than in this country if you were here and asked half as many questions as you have in your letter. We have a moral antipathy to greenhorns, abolitionists, mormons, yankees and men without money; and if you want to know anything more of this country, I would advise you to come and examine for yourself. And I do hope, my dear sir, that you will arrive here in the course of next summer and allow me to say to you that we will receive you with open arms and should you choose some other place for your future home and abiding place, I have no doubt but what the

citizens will welcome you in the same manner and cheat you out of all you have and that you will not have the fever and ague more than 364 days out of 365, and that so long as your money lasts you will be of great advantage to the country.

I wish to ask some few questions of you which I will thank you to answer as soon as convenient. What would be the probable cost of a tunnel under the Atlantic from Ellsworth to Bristol, England, and how long would it take to construct one?

How many pine trees do you think there are in the State of Maine including the Disputed Territory, and how many feet of lumber would they make, and what would it be worth both at home and abroad?

How many potatoes are there in Maine, more especially in Ellsworth at this time and how many do you candidly think there will be five years hence?

I have on hand about five millions shares in the grape-vine system, a new system of gymnastics, and it consists of a new mode of swinging on grapevines without spitting on the hands, which we would like to dispose of. Can you recommend any one in Ellsworth whom I could make an agent in this matter? The price per share is two fifty dollar dogs, or four pups at \$25 each, or the same proportion in coon skins.

How far do you think it is from Ellsworth to Jacksonville or Rock Island to Ellsworth?

How far is it from Ellsworth to Bangor and Augusta, and how far is it back again?

Also how far is it from Ellsworth to the nearest part of the Disputed Territory, on a straight line, and how far on a crooked one.

What is the size and breed of ticks about Ellsworth? and is it true or not that the land is so poor that they sometimes starve to death?

What is the average density of the fogs in Maine, and more especially in Ellsworth?

Does the sun ever shine off the banks of Newfoundland? if so at what season of the year, and what effect does it have?

Is the mackerel and cod fishery profitable, and what is the price per barrel both at Ellsworth and other parts of the world?

What kind of bait do you use, and can it be easily procured, or do you use seins or nets? Is the business profitable and what part of the coast of the Atlantic do you sincerely think the best place to fish?

How will the question of the Disputed Territory be settled? Where will the line be run? How many acres are there in the Disputed Territory, and what is its value?

What is your opinion of Bonaparte, and matters and things in general?

How many barrels of pork and molasses are used in Ellsworth in the course of a year, and what is their value?

What number of unmarried ladies do you think there is within 200 miles of Ellsworth between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one; and what commission would you charge on each to send out one or two thousand to this country?

What do you think would be the increase in the course of two years of both boys and girls (provided they were married)?

Do the ladies of Ellsworth get married or otherwise?

What is the moral, social and intellectual condition of Bangor, Eastport, Augusta, Bristol, and Ellsworth, also of Quebec, Halifax and Portsmouth and the New England States generally?

What is your opinion of the sea serpent,—is it a hoax or not, if it is not do you think it would be policy for our government to tame a number of them in order to guard harbors?

What is the price of pepper,—and how much pepper do you candidly think Owl's Head Lighthouse would hold?

What is the price of ax-handles in Ellsworth, and what would it cost to get them from Jacksonville to Ellsworth?

What would a picayune's worth of gingerbread sell for in Maine, and how much in Ellsworth?

These things of course depend on a variety of circumstances.

And now Mr. Charles Lowell, let us liquorize.

And, Sir, I have the honor to be your humble, cometumble down nine pair of stairs into an empty barrel of peas,—concluding emphatically, F for figs, J for jigs, N for knuckle-bones, and I S for ‘Epluribus numbskull’ in which Jack Stone means ‘root hog or die.’