

The Central Magazine

VOL. III.

JULY, 1873.

NO. 1.

JOSEPH GARNEAU.

Por. fr. article in
Portrait File

In no way can the history of a people be so vividly portrayed, as in biographical sketches. Biographies of philosophers men of science, literature and artistic superiority, challenge the admiration and the imitation of the student seeking for renown, in that particular department of learning or art, which natural talent or inclination inspire him to labor to attain. "Thus the lives of great men, oft' remind us what the living yet can do."

But it is not to the lives of men, towering above mankind by the God-given power of genius that the great mass of our youths, will look for models of example. The stern necessities of life, dispel the illusion of impracticable aspirations for glory, in the fields of science, literature and art, which once fired the soul of the youthful student, and the young man commencing the battle of life, looks for models of commercial activity and success as incentives whereby his energies may be stimulated to aspire to like commercial successful achievements.

Hitherto, with very few exceptions, the publications of the Eastern States, have published biographies of "Our self-made men" but it will be observed that the Eastern States, have alone furnished forth models of commercial success. It would appear that Massachusetts had obtained a *patent right*, for energy, industry and busi-

ness tact, and having secured a monopoly of these qualities, retained their exclusive use for her own sons.

The CENTRAL MAGAZINE, is especially devoted to the interests of the West and South, advocating a doctrine opposed to Eastern monopolies, hence biographical sketches of Western and Southern men who have risen to distinction by their business talents and enterprise, will always form a distinctive feature of this work.

We present in this July number of the CENTRAL, a biography of one of our successful merchants, Joseph Garneau.

Joseph Garneau, son of Peter Garneau, was born in Quebec, Lower Canada. His mother, whose maiden name was Marie Anné La Fleur, was descended from one of the earliest French settlers, who emigrated from the mother country in the days of the French missions.

Peter Garneau followed the occupation of a baker, and brought up his son, Joseph, to the same calling. He early in life imparted to the subject of our sketch, principles of great integrity, and accustomed him to habits of punctuality and energy. Thus, acquiring a thorough knowledge of his business by that most potent of teachers, "practical experience." Joseph Garneau became a proficient in his calling at a very early age, and continuing the same course through life, is to-day

one of the most proficient bakers in the United States.

Emigrating to St. Louis in the year 1832, Joseph Garneau established himself in the baking business, on Vine street between second and Third sts., where in 1835 a small frame house bore the sign, Garneau's Bakery, many of our oldest citizens remember the house to this day.

The river trade was at that time, of great importance. Mr. Garneau in a short time established an extensive trade with steam-boats, supplying all the boats on the Mississippi river with bread and crackers. The superiority of his bread and crackers soon gained a wide-spread reputation, and his trade extended to New Orleans and all the principal cities of the South.

Prosperity increased with each succeeding year, and brought its rewards to the subject of our sketch. Ever attentive to his business, and possessing inventive talent, he invented a machine some years since, combining all the requirements and improvements necessary to its purpose, and which has finally placed its inventor at the head of his calling in the United States, perhaps in the world.

GARNEAU'S NEW STEAM CRACKER BAKERY, situated on the northeast corner of Seventeenth and Morgan streets, is the largest in the United States, its dimensions being 160 feet deep by 50 feet wide. The building is of brick, three stories in height, and is provided with upwards of sixty windows, which admit a good light to all parts of the building. In this mammoth establishment 104 employees are required to conduct the daily business of the bakery, each department of which is under the supervision of a foreman, a foreman in chief attending to the whole establishment.

Some idea of the extent of this new establishment may be inferred from the fact that upwards of 400 barrels of flour are baked in twenty-four hours to meet the daily orders. The cracker oven used is one of Mc Kenzies patent, it bakes the crackers in a very short time. This oven is constructed on the rotary system, the crackers are placed in receiving hopper, alight on the cylinder, revolve once round, and are thoroughly baked in sixteen minutes. When baked, they are ejected through a large funnel into a basket, prepared to receive them, a new sup-

ply immediately taking their place. Four men are constantly employed in receiving the baked crackers and supplying the new batch.

The magnitude of the business transacted by Mr. Garneau, may be inferred from the fact, that he has been supplying the United States Government with army bread for thirty years. Perhaps the largest contracts for bread, filled in a short time, in any part of the universe; have been executed by the subject of our sketch in St. Louis, Two contracts for 3,000,000 pounds of bread each, for the use of the army during the late war were filled in fifty-six days time after the reception of the order, and the bread shipped to its destination. It is doubtful that any bakery in the world has baked 6,000,000 pounds of bread and shipped it, in so short a time. By Europeans this statement would probably be regarded as an exaggeration of American enterprise and by Eastern merchants would be looked upon, as impossible outside of the Eastern States, but the fact is nevertheless true.

For a period of two years, at the commencement of the late war, Mr. Garneau retired from business, but resumed his occupation again at the end of that time, preferring an active life.

The business of the establishment increased to such an extent that two partners Messrs J. Hillard and Clemence Nanson were admitted to the firm which is now that of GARNEAU HILLARD & Co.

An incident which won for Mr. Garneau the esteem of the laboring classes, was that of his furnishing the poor with a twenty ounce loaf of bread for five cents, when the wages paid laboring men, rendered it almost impossible for the father of a family, to provide the actual necessities of life, for his wife and children, upon the small salary he received.

The subject of our sketch has been identified with the growth and prosperity of St. Louis upwards of forty years. He has witnessed its increase in population from 7000 to upwards of 400,000, and has beheld the old log cabin or pretentious frame house of former days, supplanted by the massive iron or marble palace of to-day.

In social life Joseph Garneau has won a host of friends, his hospitality and generosity (the characteristics which have earned for our citizens such general commendation), being extensively appreciated. We hope many years of usefulness, will be continued to him, and that his timely regard to the wants of the poor, will find many imitators. His charity to the orphan and the destitute, has always been bountiful and we find that Divine Providence has blessed his undertakings with success.