

THE THREE EARS OF BUFFALO STREET.—Era No. 2.—Of from the opening of the Burying Ground in 1802, to the completion of the City Improvements in 1866—64 years.

My first communication left Buffalo-st., much of it, in the solitude that nature found it, awaiting the hand of improvement, and the occupancy of citizens, when the limits of the city should be so small as to make the street for dwellings and for business. It has been particularly unfortunate that a great portion of all the lots fronting on this avenue, early fell into the hands of speculators and non-residents. I say, without fear of contradiction, that this street, from State-st. to the Buffalo canal bridge, is the best locality for business, especially all heavy business, that the city presents. It is the best, naturally, and is the easiest to bring into shape. But almost the entire property has been held still, while other localities have borne off the business. Commence, if you please, at "Chicken Row," and run along to "Goose-pond Row," next to High street—not forgetting as you go along to look at the Leavitt property, on the corner of Sophia and Buffalo-sts., and the Thad. Spencer property opposite, and the Childs property, and the Babbit property, and the Griffith property. Cross over to the U. S. Hotel, so long in law; ——— va. Clapp—then the widow Smith property, Robb's row of shanties, with a part of the first story below the street, Guarnsey property, of Ohio, the U. S. Rendezvous, Leavitt's Corners, Brown's "long low" stone building, and the Methodist Chapel, and you are at Fitzhugh-st. Who ever saw such mighty incubuses all clustering in one street?—When a few of these are knocked off, the street will rise.

But to go farther up, let us place ourselves at the "Bull's Head," and take observation from there. Sibley and Field had purchased all that locality, further down Granger had a farm, and Perkins and Schermerhorn opened the "Ohio Basin," and bought up all the lands both sides of and about the crossing place of the Genesee Valley Canal. Speculation came up and went down, and many of them held on too long, yet there was evidently "a good time coming." The village was turned into a city. The Mayor was abroad, and the Aldermen, newly made from plain, good looking Yankees, met, and passed many laws and by-laws. At this time, when it was thought that the fine and beautiful avenue of Buffalo-st. would soon be the shady walks before an hundred costly dwellings, as well as the main opening to the highest and healthiest locality in all the place, an evil genius predated over its destiny, which, instead of turning it into a bower of shade, transformed it into a pathway of ruins. The property-holders, with all sincerity too, imagined that nature had not sloped the land aright—that her slopes and angles might, and must be improved—and that, instead of the rise and fall she had been pleased to finish it with, a regular inclined plane would better suit the genius of the times, and the spirit of the age. That was a day of great levelling and straightening. In accordance with the ideas then prevalent in the heads of a few property-holders, an ordinance was got through the Common Council for an improvement in Buffalo-st. Forthwith it was confirmed, and anon came John McConnell at the head of an hundred men to begin the work of reform. Recollect, Mr. Editor, that you and I stand at the "Bull's Head." Hark! a dozen explosions, and the ten thousand missiles in the air show that the solid rock is giving way to a nether strata, which must be the street's foundation—and see, amid the smoke and the brandishing of bright picks, the ring of iron bars, and click of descending drills, a gap is being made which will long gape, to the dishonor of those who conceived so wild and wicked an experiment to promote a temporary gain. But the thing was done, and we will dwell a moment upon its consequences.

The cost of this mis-called improvement was something over \$24,000, and the immediate and prospective damage to the 5th ward, aside from the street's ruin, could not have been less than \$200,000, and is estimated by many, far above these figures. The high banks of gravel on either side of the street, which for years have been washing down, and the rocky "bull-heads" that protrude themselves into the face of the traveler, at other points, six and seven feet above its bed, are evidences of the improvement, which need no comment. Many owners of property left it rather than pay the taxes—some traded their lots for Yankee clocks and buttons, and one old man, during the perplexity and the loss of his last relic, which was advertised and sold for taxes, departed to an eternal home. In 1845, a member of the then City Council, and an owner of lands in the 5th ward, asserted that "the taxation of that unfortunate ward was over 10 per cent upon its entire domain." The operations referred to, broke the solitude of the street that so enchanted the stranger, and figures show what it cost. Truly Buffalo-st. needed to be saved from her friends, while they marred her beauty and destroyed her prospects like this.

Yours,

E. S.