

as being possessed of quite a large amount of money hidden away in his house. While sitting in front of his fire-place, he was struck from behind with an ax. The body fell into the fire, which partly consumed it. Neither of these murderers was ever discovered or brought to punishment.

Some funny cases were occasionally brought up before the justices of the peace, who were not always the proper persons to administer the law. One curious decision, however, created a good deal of merriment at the time. A farmer living a few miles out of town discovered one morning that somebody had been robbing his oat stacks during the night, hauling the grain off in a wagon. He traced the wagon into town, to the house of the thief, and immediately lodged a complaint with the justice of the peace, who had the man arrested. The justice was an honest old miner, named, I think, Nikey Uren, who as soon as the culprit appeared before him, and without giving him time to plead or make any explanation, said to him: "Carter (that was the name of the accused), you stole the oats, and my judgment is that you immediately return the oats to the place whence you took them, and pay a fine of \$5." The thief uttered no protest, but paid his fine and immediately returned the oats. The thief was ever afterwards known as "Sheaf Oats Carter," and shortly after left the country. The justice saved him lawyer's fees and trouble, and saved great costs to the county, by this summary, though informal, proceeding, which might in many cases be profitably imitated.

During all this time Mineral Point, though it had lost the cherished location as state capital, was steadily growing in population and importance. Milwaukee, on the other hand, was advancing with marvelous rapidity, foreshadowing its future greatness. It had already become the commercial metropolis of Wisconsin, and was rapidly accumulating wealth. Eastern people flocked to it, and Eastern capital was freely invested, while the prosperity of the mining country, which depended greatly on its luck in striking new leads, was spasmodic.