

*The following hilarious poem illustrates the enterprising spirit of new German settlers moving in to tame the West. Many of the ill-fated passengers on board the "Erie" were from Germany and the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The geography of the poem is correct: Cairo is indeed "the wery southern point / Of thrivin' Illinois" at the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. The poem deliberately pokes fun at the difficulty of many German speakers in pronouncing the English consonants "V" and "W." The dubious practices of trying to "take in" gullible immigrants are maliciously rendered with poetic perfection. The intentionally flawed English adds additional color.*

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### **POETRY.**

From the N. O. Picayune.  
[The New Orleans Picayune]

#### **THE MEETIN' OF THE VATERS.**

*Which is all about Future Greatness.*

Ve're just enterin' the mouth  
of the 'pleasant O hi-o,'  
Vere the vaters of the east and vest  
Mingle their floods you know,  
As if the Alleghanies and  
The Rocky Mountains grand,  
Vere stretchin' forth their mighty arms  
To shake each others hand!

Vell, here's the wery southern point  
Of thrivin' Illinois;  
So famous for 'improvements,' and  
For 'sucker' gals and boys;  
And that 'ere is the chosen site  
Of the future mighty 'Cairo!'  
And a mighty *sight* at present 'tis

For the vater's every where O!

The flood is half way up the trees,  
'made fast' is all the houses;  
The folks has 'cleared themselves,' and  
drowned

The chickens, pigs, and cows is;  
Things doesn't look agreeable  
At present, ve'll allow—  
But ve're talkin' of vot *is* to be,  
Not talkin' about *now*.

Vell, they're to build a city, but  
They vont have any streets;  
Instead of vich, they'll have *canals*  
Vhich them of Wenice beats.  
By diggin' down, they'll bank it up,  
The build'n' vill be higher;  
They then vont mind the vater, and  
Vill be prepared for fire.  
They've got the plans—they'll borrow  
cash

For carryin' of it forward—  
They've got their rail road, east and  
vest,  
And ever so far nor'ward;  
All's ready, and a hundred domes  
Vill spring up ven they bids,  
And by the fall they thinks they shall  
Contract for *pyramids!*

'You see the point?' 'Vich point?'  
'Oh, no

You cant, for now it is *under*  
'Bout twenty feet—you'll vonder!  
I'll sell you, cheap as dirt if you've  
Got money out to put—  
I'll let you have it as it stands  
For ten dollars a foot!

Vell George, I means to go right in,  
Get all my chance invested;  
I'll build a grand Egyptian hall  
Before I've ever rested;  
You need'nt say I oughtn't to  
Becos' I knows I *oughter*—  
It aint a 'castle in the air,'  
It's only in the *vater!*  
*Mississippi River.*

STRAWS.

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***A Pleasant Place to Reside in—***

The condition of Cairo, Illinois, which a few years since was set down, in a speculator's map, as a large, flourishing, and pleasantly situated town, was thus described during the late flood:

“The water is about 5 feet deep all around the houses, and the frogs are so busy trying to find logs to sit upon, that they have stopped croaking entirely. The boat on which the writer was, hailed one of the houses in the evening, thinking it was a steamboat; the pilot took the windows for “stern lights.” On finding that he was right *in town* with his steamboat, and that this house was a tavern, the captain pulled up and every body “liquored.” Cairo would make a good temperance town, as there is plenty of water.”