

A VOICE FROM TENNESSEE.

THERE are times when, unless one move abroad, he is in danger of suspecting the progress at home. If I were to make any comparisons since I left Washington Territory and Oregon, especially with this Southern country, just now their most prominent rival in the line of immigration, they could not be to the disadvantage of the Northwest. Take this place, for instance, save Atlanta, the most conspicuous of Southern towns. One is painfully impressed everywhere with the want of enterprise. There is nothing of that push and elasticity with which one is so familiar among us. Talk with the business men, and they will tell you that they have trade enough to live on. What would we say in our community, if we had a town like Nashville, boasting sixty thousand people, and no Merchants' Exchange, Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade! The State of Tennessee has a population of one million five hundred thousand, and yet the combined circulation of the three largest dailies in the State, the *Appeal* and *Avalanche*, of Memphis, and the *American*, of this city, does not amount to twenty-five thousand copies, while Oregon has two dailies that have a combined circulation greater than that, and the California dailies have, probably, a circulation of one hundred and forty thousand.

I have just returned from a visit to the famous "Hermitage." If there is one place which this country ought to revere, it is that. And yet, it is a ruin! Mrs. Jackson's flower-garden, which must have been a marvel in her day, is nothing but a waste of weeds. Jackson's paintings, pictures, etc., are strewn about promiscuously on the floor. The house is in decay. The graves about it are dilapidated. The fence is partly down. The whole aspect of the historic home only raises regrets in the American heart. The State of Tennessee owns the place, so there is no excuse for such a condition of things. I have mentioned it to about forty citizens here, and not one of them has been near the place for ten years. Such hardihood of neglect I believe we are incapable of at home.

I think one of the most noticeable features of society here is its castes and cliques. What Mrs. Browning called "The pale spectrum of the salt" is a very substantial ghost here. People do not mix. The rich and prosperous exact from the laboring men of both colors a habitual respect. Those who are neither rich nor prosperous, men of family or of temporary official importance, emphasize strongly in their demeanor that the employee or subordinate belongs to a different social order. Of course these assumptions are amusing to us. The unexpected change of fortune in our country is an element forbidding such a state of things. The spirit of independence fostered by our agricultural, mining and their related industries, is hostile to any such underbred displays. Aristocracies follow monopolies. This spirit of caste is what DeTocqueville, years ago, prophesied would ruin this Republic. I believe there

is self-preservation enough in this Commonwealth to avert any such danger. And yet, I must say it is much more agreeable to live in a locality where every man of fortune meets every man of misfortune as if his clothes were invisible. That is democratic and manly.

Yet, as a result of these same fissures and canyons in society, fencing it apart into isolated classes, there are here the most perfect servants I have seen anywhere. Such service is not in Oregon or Washington Territory. I call to mind now the companions with whom I have so many times driven all day through the Alkali dust of the Palouse and Powder rivers, or "prospected" among the long swales of bush, so matted together one had to struggle to get through them, companions with whom I have waded morasses and climbed moraines, and all this unflinchingly and good-humoredly, only at last to succumb, and, amid circumstances that should have been comfortable, but were not, lose temper before an insolent servant or boorish hotel-keeper. How we have imprecated in the last stress of lost patience for some interposition between us and the causeless, but inevitable, bruise. One can not journey from Portland to Walla Walla without experiencing many petty and reasonless annoyances at hotels from waiters and porters, annoyances that would not be tolerated here, for here it does not seem to be the anxiety of servants to advertise and demonstrate that their social position and full equality have been in no wise compromised by their present pursuit. They are willing to do their work well, and to imagine and supply wants before they are expressed, and are incapable of harrassing a tired traveler with causeless delays, careless stupidities and neglect, and a hundred irritating, because unnecessary, inflictions. Why, I remember on the way here, and before leaving Montana, at the hotel in Bozeman (that lovely town, more like a town of New England than any other out of it), that at breakfast, after the serving-man had stood at my side, seemingly dumb, for two long minutes, I ventured to make an excursion toward his possible bill of fare, by the half-apologetic remark: "Well, I would like some breakfast, sir." "Well, by —, sir, so would I," was the response, "I haven't eaten anything since five o'clock this morning." It was in Miles City, further on my journey, that, as I was endeavoring to bargain with one porter to transfer my baggage, I heard the following colloquy between a fellow-passenger and the other porter: "Will you black my boots?" "Well, I guess not, to-day; come around to-morrow when I'm blackin', an' most probably I'll blacken 'em." The price for blacking boots was twenty-five cents.

Of course, these are fleeting phenomena among us. The Northwest is in its earlier adolescence, and changes are rapid.

The negroes are leaving here in numbers, but many of them are coming back. They must live in the land of the pine knob. They eagerly devour our immigration pamphlets, which are rainbows rather than landscapes.

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