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PORTLAND, WEDNESDAY, OCT. 13, 1909.

WATER COMPETITION IN PRACTICE

Every inland city, which has been contending for terminal rates since the present agitation began, has played a part in the water transportation of the United States. Spokane, Salt Lake, Reno and all other inland cities, inaccessible to water carriers, have professed to believe that the importance of this great regulator of railroad rates had been overestimated. For this reason, a report issued by the Bureau of Statistics of the Department of Commerce and Labor is of exceptional interest. This report shows that there was transported by the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in 1908 nearly \$50,000,000 worth of merchandise bound for the coast of the Atlantic and Pacific ports. The remarkable growth of the business is shown in the Tehuantepec figures, which increased from about \$25,000,000 in 1907 to \$38,000,000 in 1908.

As the business for 1909 is taxing the facilities of the steamships that handle it, the showing this year will undoubtedly be much more favorable than that of last year. Sugar, bound from Honolulu to the Atlantic seaboard, was the most important cargo, handled on the Tehuantepec route, but the importations of merchandise by that route at San Francisco, Portland and Puget Sound, reached the enormous total of \$9,000,000. While the merchandise imports at these ports by way of the Panama route brought the grand total up to \$16,500,000. These imports, averaging nearly \$1,400,000 per month, through the entire year, were all distributed from the central ports. For this reason, it has been impossible had they been obliged to stand the burden of high rail rates across the continent.

On account of the great activity of the Government in constructing the Panama Canal, the rail line across the Isthmus of Panama, was unable to handle as much commercial business as it has handled at times in the past, but everything that was carried by that line took a rate from the Atlantic ports of origin to the Pacific distributing centers of exactly 60 per cent of the rail toll for the same period. The Panama business on the Tehuantepec line has been phenomenal, for it is but little over two years since the present service was inaugurated, and at times during that period, through rates from the Atlantic seaboard have been less than half the rates charged by the railroads.

Not only has the Tehuantepec route given the Pacific Coast tremendous reductions in rates, but the time made from the Atlantic Coast to the Pacific ports by this new route, has been shortened to but little more than three weeks. These time and rate reductions of business, as reflected in the Government figures is enormous, it will seem small indeed by comparison with the immense traffic that will pass from ocean to ocean, as soon as the Panama Canal is completed. Water competition is already the predominant factor in rate making on transcontinental business, and a few years hence its importance will be still more forcibly felt.

MISTAKEN ZEAL

Mr. Frederick W. Peabody is a beautiful specimen of the type of men who are impermeable to the lessons of experience. If he were capable of learning from the mistakes of other men, he would understand that no belief was ever shaken by proving it false. Of course, Mr. Peabody did not prove that Christian Science was false. Far from it. Vituperation is not evidence. But even if he had demonstrated that Mrs. Eddy's followers were mistaken in their belief, he would not have effected the slightest result.

Religious beliefs are not overthrown by direct assault. Creeds have sometimes been undermined by the general progress of intelligence. The discoveries of natural science have made it impossible for an informed person to believe today a number of tenets which our fathers held sacred. Literature has also made some impression upon the great fortress of credulity, not by direct assault, but by circuitous appeal to reason. Byron says of Gibbon that he sapped "a solemn creed with solemn success."

It is probably true that Gibbon did appreciably impair the solidity of certain bulwarks of belief, but he did not do it by ranting and raving. His advances upon the citadel were made by the slow and perhaps more Jesuitical in his step than the Jesuits themselves have ever been in their defense. If the great historian had descended to calumniate the bishops of the early church as Mr. Peabody calumniate Mrs. Eddy, he would only have earned the name of faithless heretic, and his modern converts. It is quite likely that Mr. Peabody's ungenerous rage has made every Christian Scientist in Portland more zealous than ever before. The leaders of that thriving new cult ought to thank him for his efforts.

Knowing what we do of the history of persecution, it is amusing to read of the language which Mr. Peabody permits himself to use on the polemical platform. When, foaming at the mouth, he calls Mrs. Eddy an "impetuous," a "liar," a "maniac," and so on, one cannot help remembering that the same epithets were applied to Jesus and His Apostles. When he calls Christian Science "a skin graft," worked for an inner circle of grafters," we are reminded of the gross

slanders circulated about the early Christians. They were accused of murdering babies to drink their blood. It was reported that they often blew out the lights at their agapes, or lovefeasts, and indulged in promiscuous obscenity, it would be easy to give a dozen similar examples if it were worth while. Certainly it would have entertained a satirist to see the complacent group of ministers on Mrs. Peabody's platform, applauding her slanderous tales about Mrs. Eddy, regardless of the much worse stories that were told about the founders of their own faith.

Another apt parallel occurs in this connection. The Campbellites, or Disciples, who are just now celebrating their first centennial, went through very much such a struggle for existence as the Christian Scientists are experiencing. When they began to preach in a new town, all the ministers assailed them with ferocious blood. The bitter calumnies were heaped upon them which Mr. Peabody applies to the Christian Scientists. If envy and hatred could have killed them, the followers of Campbell would have been dead long ago, but as a matter of fact, their sect is perhaps the most flourishing in the country. This is as it should be. There should be complete liberty for every body of believers to worship as they like and to propagate their faith in peace. Two much verity in the religious world would bode ill to the sects that are also entitled to full liberty. The simple fact is that we must learn to tolerate one another's creeds or lack of creeds. Most people have mastered the lesson already, but occasionally a man like Mr. Peabody shows by his conduct that his education in this respect is a very poor one. It not only causes this able lawyer to express himself like a barbarian, but it makes him ridiculous.

MR. BRYAN'S LECTURE

It would not be easy to estimate just how much of the charm of Mr. Bryan's oratory arises from its shallowness. No doubt the charm exists and, of course, the shallowness is a necessary result of the only source of the former? Probably not. Very likely Mr. Bryan is not admired because he talks nonsense, but in spite of it. Those witless platitudes he utters so profusely, those sloppy appeals to sentimental religiosity, those little repetitions of bald axioms, would irritate the ears of a sane audience without the powerful attraction of his mellifluous voice and graceful gestures. It is not what he says that fascinates, but the way he says it. Probably his hearers would have gone home in raptures if he had merely recited "Mary had a little lamb," he would have done it so superbly.

What he did recite at Taylor-street Church was about on the moral level with that lovely poem and logically far inferior to it. Read the following sentences carefully and a good taste of Mr. Bryan's reasoning will be enhanced. "The school board is a man righteously earned from society? Not more than he honestly earns. When he takes more he is receiving more than he actually earns and is stealing." The infantile tone of this is infinitely pathetic. When a man takes more than he honestly earns, he takes some of it dishonestly. Amazing conclusion. Admirable originality. But it seems to be Mr. Bryan's aptness for this sort of thing which makes him popular. He never had an original thought in his head. He never carried out an independent train of reasoning. He is a man who can only repeat the words of others. A voice, a fine presence, in a little while it will be the same as if Mr. Bryan had never lived. He will run for oblivion much better than he ever did for President.

UNCOMPLETED POLE CONQUEST

The North Pole controversy continues to rage with a degree of heat entirely out of keeping with the subject under discussion. Dr. Cook, by emulating the example of Brer Rabbit, who, according to the fable, "is kept on saying nothin'," has added to the ranks of those who have faith in his achievement. Meanwhile friends of Peary still rally around the banner of their chieftain. Between the two camps of intense partisans are many persons who are not entirely satisfied with the reports of either of the men. The New York Evening Post, for example, questions the accuracy of Dr. Cook's observations as he neared the Pole, and with the subject under discussion. Dr. Cook, by emulating the example of Brer Rabbit, who, according to the fable, "is kept on saying nothin'," has added to the ranks of those who have faith in his achievement. Meanwhile friends of Peary still rally around the banner of their chieftain. 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