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WHAT PERPLEXES US.

Certain prolific philosophers have much to say in condemnation of the cultured and capable classes, because they refuse or neglect to become fathers and mothers on a larger scale.

Then they pen voluminous contributions on the follies and weakness of the poor, who are held to be entirely too reckless and extravagant in the matter of numerous offspring.

These ideas being thoroughly ventilated and duly impressed upon the public, the light of knowledge is next let in upon us to the effect that the children of the rich are usually pampered and spoiled; that they are not industrious and seldom rise to positions of honor, or become really great; that their money is their claim to distinction and their god, and that it often slips through their fingers in the second or third generation.

Then by the proof of many illustrious examples we are taught that the offspring of the poor, who are just against the rough corners of fate and learn by bitter experience the solution of the problems of life, are the ones who rise to eminence, become the heroes of their country and are the builders and saviors of the nation.

Hence our bewilderment. Whether to be rich, and, being rich, to be childless and sequestered, or to be poor, and, being poor, to be surrounded with the usual brood of poor-man's children, one of which may become a president, or to be childless, conforming to the strictures of the critics, and accused by the neighbors of apeing the snobbery of the aristocrats. These are the questions.

Other philosophers may be able to explain away the difficulties of the situation, and make clear as mud the mysteries of right and expediency involved, but the immediate effect would seem to be to leave the wealthy undecided between the alternatives of becoming poor and remaining childless, with the probability in favor of the latter, and to give the poor license to proceed with the regular annual program, while envying the exemption and affluence of the rich.

It is probably safe to assert that the wealthy are much more than content that others shall fulfill the injunction to replenish the earth to their utmost, for the larger the increase from humble parentage, the larger the ranks of the masses and the lower the cost of their services. It is to be hoped that President Roosevelt, who opened up this problem afresh, will give some answer to the columns which have been written on it since his speech was delivered.

"THE MAN FROM THE WEST."

It would be strange indeed if all the brains and the energy and the ability in this country were to be found in the east—that is, in the territory lying north and east of the Appalachian chain and including most of the Atlantic seaboard states. The middle and the far west would hardly be true to their ancestral traditions if they had not produced some really great men; and they would be still more disobedient to their ancestral instincts if they had not turned the moccasins of a few of their great men eastward—sent them back here to infuse into us effete easterners something of the breeziness and the get-there-ity of their own kind.

We note what seems to be a growing disposition in certain quarters to extol the west for what she has done and is doing for the country at large, and especially for the influence that western men are exerting in the political, commercial and religious life of the east. In the course of a year we easterners are told a good many times that Lincoln and Grant were both products of the great west; that Hayes and Garfield and Harrison and McKinley all sprang from the loins of that achieving monster—in fact, that the country might not be able to find worthy presidential timber any more, were "forest destruction" to extend to "the tall sycamores of the Wabash" and the other giants in the political woods of the west. We are not averse to that

sort of thing. Here in New York we might all outgrow our hats too often were we not reminded occasionally that we are not the "whole thing."

In a company from "all over," like that which broke bread and cracked bottles together at the newspaper publishers' dinner not long back, sentiments like those just described "took" amazingly—and it is not to be wondered at. They found happy expression in the mots of a westerner latterly come among us chiefly because he had heard that an "honest, upright, conscientious and Christian lawyer" would find little or no competition in the east! We easterners are much too good natured, as a general thing, to find any fault with these flings; especially when they come in the form of semi-serious after-dinner ebullitions.

But it may be wise to put a little check on them occasionally, lest the west take the bit in its teeth and run away with the whole United States some fine day. Let us admit that the men of the west possess a superb surcharge of arterial blood that unites them for any form of effort in which it is not possible to "do things"—by which we mean, of course, big things. They cannot live on tea and Thursday-morning lectures. But let them reflect that the great west today is an Indian-desolated wilderness today if the coarser energy of the old east had not fretted and chafed at counting-room and class-room confinement 40, 60, and 100 years back, broken loose with a whoop from the bonds of conservatism, and gone to killing and clearing and mining and blazing the way for the western civilization that all the world admires today.

The east first made the west possible with her pioneers. Then she loaned the west her money with a rather bountiful hand. The west was too energetic and too proud to let her creditor foreclose and take charge—and the east couldn't have done the latter anyway. So the thing has finally evened itself up admirably. And today the "man from the west" among us, whom it is the mode of the moment to extol, is for the most part only an eastern chicken come home to roost.

We like the west. We really couldn't get along without her. We need her in our business. Whenever we get too conservative or timorous or narrow or self-satisfied we can go to her for a mouthful of fresh air—and, if we don't inhale so much of it as to breed a bit of radicalism or populism in our systems, the draught does us a heap of good—N. Y. Commercial.

In an address before the state judicial convention at Detroit last Monday Mr. Bryan said, speaking of ex-President Grover Cleveland: "I am not ashamed of any humble part I may have had in driving out of the democratic party a man who tried to make money the master and everything else the servant. I want him in some other party. I would be glad to help organize one for his exclusive use." Such language may commend itself to some of Mr. Bryan's constituency, but, coming from a man of his aspirations, it will not be admired by a large number of American people who, having twice loyally regarded Mr. Cleveland as their chief executive, now hold him in high esteem as an honored, though private citizen.

Things are not always what they seem. At first glance it might be hard to explain just why the printing of the city of Astoria was let to Bob Gibson for a term of two years by private arrangements, without advertising for bids for a two-year contract, and at a higher figure than could have been obtained in the usual and legal way. Still, things are not always what they seem.

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