

Drift of Population to Cities.

There are 350 cities in the United States, great and small, and by the estimate about 16,000,000 people are living in these cities, or something more than one-fourth the population of the entire country. The proportion of urban population is constantly increasing. There are various causes for this centralization in cities. In the first place, the number of occupations has greatly increased of late years. Half a century ago nearly all the manufacturing was done in the country. Water-power was thought to be an indispensable condition for economical work. The cotton-mill was on the banks of a river or brook. The paper-mill sought the same advantages. Villages and even flourishing towns were built up because there was an available water-power. Lowell established its great cotton-mills on the banks of the Merrimack river. Hundreds of small manufacturing were on the banks of small streams. They are there to-day. But the water-power for nearly all the great mills has been superseded by steam. The new mills in many instances are not at all dependent upon water as a motor. The cotton-mill, for instance, must be warmed by steam in order to get the best results. These great mills will maintain their sites on the banks of streams where water was once the main dependence for power. But small manufacturing interests drift to the city, because steam and water are comparatively cheap, and the market is there. Every large establishment in the country has either a warehouse or an agency in New York, Boston, or some other large city. The principal sales are made there. The raw material is bought there. The banking business is largely done there. But not only has steam increased the number of occupations in the city, but electricity has been introduced and is working wonders. Both steam and electricity are sold as regularly in the city as are drygoods and provisions. If there were not increased means of living in cities, population would not drift there in such great numbers. People must earn the means of subsistence. There are thousands of operatives earning a living in cities where hundreds of the same class could not a quarter of a century ago. Steam and electricity have greatly enlarged the industrial field.

Another reason for this strong drift toward cities is that in most instances the educational advantages are better, or at least are thought to be better in the town than in the country. Parents seek good schools for their children. The real advantages over the country may be overestimated. But the ungraded school in the country which is hardly open more than half the year does not meet all the educational needs. The result is that those cities which have the best schools are constantly making large drafts on the population of the country. Young men who have no taste for rural pursuits will always prefer the town to the country. It has always been so. It does not materially change the aspect of the case that many of them make a mistake. There are always enough instances of success to inspire the hope that what has been accomplished by the few will be accomplished by the many. Cities are constantly drawing upon the best population of the country. The men who have furnished the most conspicuous examples of success, according to the published biographies, were once country boys. The instances of failure from the same source are rarely noted. But there is good ground for the theory that the cities are depleting the country. Population is continually drawn to centers where there are supposed to be the greatest advantages. But there are outgoing currents as well. Thousands who have tried life in cities have gone to the country and are better satisfied with the latter, by reason of that urban experience. Three-fourths of the entire population of the country are outside of the limits of incorporated cities. It is a rural population, rather than an urban one. It is not at all engaged in agriculture. But as long as there are vast areas to be occupied, mines to be opened, rivers to be navigated, forests and quarries to be converted into building material and dwellings erected, roads and bridges to be constructed, there is no danger that cities will absorb the life of the whole country.—*San Francisco Bulletin.*

Customer—"Eggs forty cents a dozen! That's awful dear." Grocer—"Awful dear! Humph! I'd like to see you lay eggs at forty cents a dozen."

Forepaugh said as he was about departing: "Please notice that I'll get there ahead of P. T. Barnum."

Mrs. General Custer.

I occasionally meet on the street, writes a correspondent to the *Trois Press*, Mrs. Custer, wife of that great cavalry leader, who has often been called the Marion of the civil war. She spends most of her time in New York, earning her living by writing for the newspapers. I recall her when she was a beautiful young girl, known to every one as Libby Bacon. She was the daughter of Judge Bacon, of Monroe, Mich., and long before she was of age was one of the most popular girls in the Wolverine state. The name of Custer is still revered by the old soldiers, especially those who live in Michigan, where he is looked upon as the real hero of the late war. Mrs. Custer is almost as much admired as her illustrious husband was. After she married the General she was nearly always by his side. For two years she virtually sat in Washington with her valise in hand, waiting to go to the front. She was always the first woman in camp after a battle, and would have been delighted to follow her gallant husband in his impetuous onsets upon the enemy. She never seemed to know what fear was, and many times put herself in great peril. She was in Richmond two days before her husband reached there, and almost before the guns ceased to reverberate about the Confederate capital. Just after the surrender, when her husband came up from Nottaway Quartermaster to take her to headquarters, he remarked "that it looked pretty bad for a General to be beaten into Richmond by his wife after he had been trying for four years to get there first."

Of course, Custer, like all other soldiers, died poor, and his wife and family are practically without resources, except the pitiful pension of \$50 a month that the government has granted. Mrs. Custer has a great many relics of the war, left by her husband and given to her by different officers of the army. Besides possessing the first flag of truce the Confederates brought into the Union lines, she has the flag of truce carried by her husband into the Confederate lines. She also has much valuable data about the cavalry arm of our service that has never yet been given to the public. It is really a pity that a fair history of this branch of the service has not yet been written, or seriously contemplated. I was pleased to learn that she is getting a good income from her books and other writings.

Execution in China.

In other countries the criminal knows beforehand the day of his death, and has time to prepare for his fate. But in China all is different. Had the Hebrew prophets lived in that country, they would certainly have chosen an execution as the emblem of sudden destruction. At Peking the vermilion pencil marks the death warrant, which is immediately handed to a courier, who instantly mounts a horse and rides off to his destination. The pikes supply fresh horses, and he goes onward, sleeping and eating in his saddle, never halting by day or night, in sunshine or rain. After riding 700 miles he reaches Soo-Chow and delivers the warrant to the governor. Three messengers are immediately dispatched, one to the district magistrate who presides at the execution and who repairs at once to the place, a second to the camp for an escort, and the third to the jail. The victims are bound, dragged before the image of the Lord of Hades, which is in the prison, and pay their respects. They are then placed in cages, carried on coolies' backs and at a rough trot the cortege sets out for the execution grounds. The nerve and blade of one executioner is never trusted in Soo-Chow to take off more than three or four heads. If there is a greater number of criminals assistants are employed. There are generally from 50 to 100 executions per annum in Soo-Chow, where all the criminals of the province of Kiang-Soo, with a population of 21,000,000 are executed. They are mostly pirates.—*North China Herald.*

Two young and pretty women entered a Broadway, New York, car, each carrying in her arms a little parcel in the most tenderly and motherly fashion. So solicitous were they over their respective parcels that a lullaby seemed almost bursting from their lips. They were not nurse girls, so they must be mothers, although it was apparent that they were young mothers and very handsome ones withal. Half a dozen men jumped up to offer them seats. The girls giggled as they sat down—and no wonder, for the bundles they carried in such a motherly fashion had been deftly improvised under a sudden inspiration to represent babies. There was little of them except a crook of the arm and a lace handkerchief to cover a suppositious babe, but enough to deceive a poor, trustful man. The giggle was general, for the girls had obtained seats on a new and original plan.

THE COMING WAR.

Belgium to be the Battle-ground of France and Germany.

The Brussels correspondents of the *Paris Matin* has just had an interesting interview with Major H. Girard, the officer of the engineer corps in the Belgian army who recently resigned his commission in order to be free to write his somewhat startling pamphlet, *La Belgique et la Guerre Prochaine.*

"The collision between France and Germany," said he, "may be retarded, but it is none the less inevitable. The possibility of a peaceful retrocession of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany is too absurd for discussion."

After stating that the interest of Belgium in the present situation was too become the ally of whichever one of the belligerents would offer the best terms, he declared that the Belgian fortresses were worthless, and that the entrenched camp at Antwerp could not hold out for forty-eight hours. "The first cannon shot will be sufficient to dispel all the illusions of the Belgian people. It is well known that our army, deprived as it is of the indispensable elements for rapid mobilization, could not be ready to fight until long after the country could be invaded, occupied and traversed. Our resisting force consists, at the maximum, of 120,000 men, including the militia. To hold Antwerp with the development given to the fortifications of that place, we will need at least 30,000 men, without counting the garrisons needed at Liege, Namur and other places. What then would remain for us to offer battle with at any given point? And will we even be able to dispose of that 120,000 men? That is very doubtful; for at the moment of the declaration of war, which will be sprung upon us in short order, how will our militia men have time or possibility to rejoin their corps before being captured by the invaders?"

"But," remarked the correspondent, "could not France and Germany come to blows without the necessity of fixing on Belgium for their battle-ground?"

"It is impossible," replied Major Girard, "that the military chiefs of both countries have not fully studied the matter; and, from a strategic point of view, either of the belligerents that should neglect to take possession of the whole or a part of Belgian territory must compromise by that omission the result of ulterior operations. My profound conviction is that the concentration of the French and German armies will be effected on German territory. For that concentration the Germans have five lines of railway, capable of throwing in ten days 500,000 men between Aerschot and Huy, at the rate of 10,000 a day for each line. Twenty-four hours after declaration of war, which will probably be in the evening, the German cavalry will be able to occupy Hasselt, Saint-Trond, Tirclemont, Maestrecht, etc. The French concentration can be effected in the same lapse of time on the line between Alost and Maubeuge, and also twenty-four hours after the declaration of war the French cavalry can occupy Alost, Termonde, Ath, etc. You see, then, that except the militia of Malines and Brussels all the rest in the whole region between the Meuse and the Escaut will be unable to move. In a word, after a careful study I have become convinced that Belgium is completely at the mercy of coming events."—*New York Sun.*

British Investments.

Under the heading "British Conquest of America," *Armory B. Lydston*, of London, describes the difference between forwarding schemes in this country and England. "It is hard," he says, "for one who has never lived in England to understand how difficult it is to carry forward schemes or projects in that country. The law places all sorts of obstructions upon all money transactions which are in any degree out of the ordinary buy and sell. You have to pay the government a big fee before you can float the stock of a foreign country on the London market. In the case of the Minneapolis mill deal, the company had to pay out \$600,000 in fees of various sorts before the stock was sold. The conservative London capitalist is content with less than 3 per cent interest. He will not invest in any company which is advertised to pay over 6 per cent. A London bank will not pay interest on deposits, however large. Under these circumstances the progressive business man must look outside of England for profitable investments. Formerly, his first thought was of the colonies, but now he turns to America."

Since her recent attack of sciatism Queen Victoria has been obliged to give up wine for whisky and water. It is an interesting fact that she drinks Irish whisky in preference to Scotch.

Polite and Untruthful.

It is possible that there is such a thing as being too polite; at least, one may err in the direction of a too obsequious courtesy. It is said that a royal personage once asked a courtier what time it was, and the man replied with a low reverence and with bated breath:

"Whatever time your Majesty pleases."

Doubtless the King would have been better pleased with a less flattering and more definite answer.

There is a tradition in a certain house that one of its guests was so polite that none of her preferences could be ascertained, and the following incident is always quoted in illustration of her phenomenal courtesy:

"Now, Kitty, said her hostess one morning, 'we can either ride or drive this morning, which would you prefer?'"

"Thank you: that will be charming," was the non-committal reply, and, as her hostess afterwards declared, "wild horses could not have drawn from her a further avowal."

Such careful courtesy is often exceedingly amusing, and when used by an Irishman one can fancy that it would be provocative of smiles. An Irish sailor once called the captain of his vessel from a coffee-house with the flattering statement:

"An't plaze yer Honor, the tide is waiting for ye!"

Surely the Captain might have thought himself more than the equal of King Canute, who found by actual experiment, that he was unequal to control the sea.

Perhaps the advice of a certain dear old lady applies to etiquette as well as to other affairs of life. "Speak the truth always," she was wont to say, "but speak it gently."

The Gloves Did It.

Two well-dressed and respectable men called upon the proprietor of a gymnasium the other day and one of them remarked:

"We have a dispute. We think the best way to settle it is with the gloves. Can we engage your room for half an hour?"

"You can."

"And I want to see fair play," said the second. "I'm going to give that man the worst licking he ever got."

"And if I don't punch your head off then I hoped to be called a woman!" replied the other.

They were sent to separate rooms to prepare, the gloves were made ready, and, after considerable hesitation on the part of both, they were brought face to face with the gloves on. They stood for a minute or two, and one finally made a move and slipped. The other one jumped clean out of the ring at this, and the first no sooner recovered himself than he jumped clean out of the ring.

The gymnasium man tried to coax them back, but they wouldn't have it that way, but got together, shook hands, and the first said:

"Jim, I apologize for calling you a liar."

"And I apologize for calling you a thief," added the second.

And they went out together to be friends forever.

Ismail Pasha.

One of the most remarkable facts of contemporary history is the curious manner in which Ismail Pasha has been quickly permitted to drop out of sight and memory. Most people imagine that the ex-Khedive is dead, so little curiosity is evinced as to the whereabouts of a man to whom the Turkish government has granted the enormous sum of £1,000,000 per annum. A few years ago Ismail Pasha was perpetually to the front, now in Paris, at the Grand hotel, or at Vichy drinking the water. He passed the winter in the greatest magnificence at Rome or Naples and the summer season at various fashionable watering places, of which Hamburg and Vichy were the favorites. Ismail is now living a prisoner in one of the most splendid palaces on the Bosphorus. He enjoys his revenues and every luxury money can procure, but with the outer world he may not, and, what is more, he cannot communicate. If he were buried in a vault or dungeon his seclusion could not be greater; for beyond the ladies of his harem and his attendants, the ex-Khedive sees or hears no human face or voice. One day he will be found dead, and be sure there will be no inquest.

Barber—"Your hair is sadly in need of a shampoo, sir." Tailor, (in the chair)—"Yes, and your clothes are decidedly seedy, but I don't nag you about it."

Customer—"I say, Uncle, how long have you had these new-laid eggs in stock?" Rastus—"I dunno exactly, Boss. You see, I's only been wu'kin' heah a month."

Children Cry for

Pitcher's Castoria.

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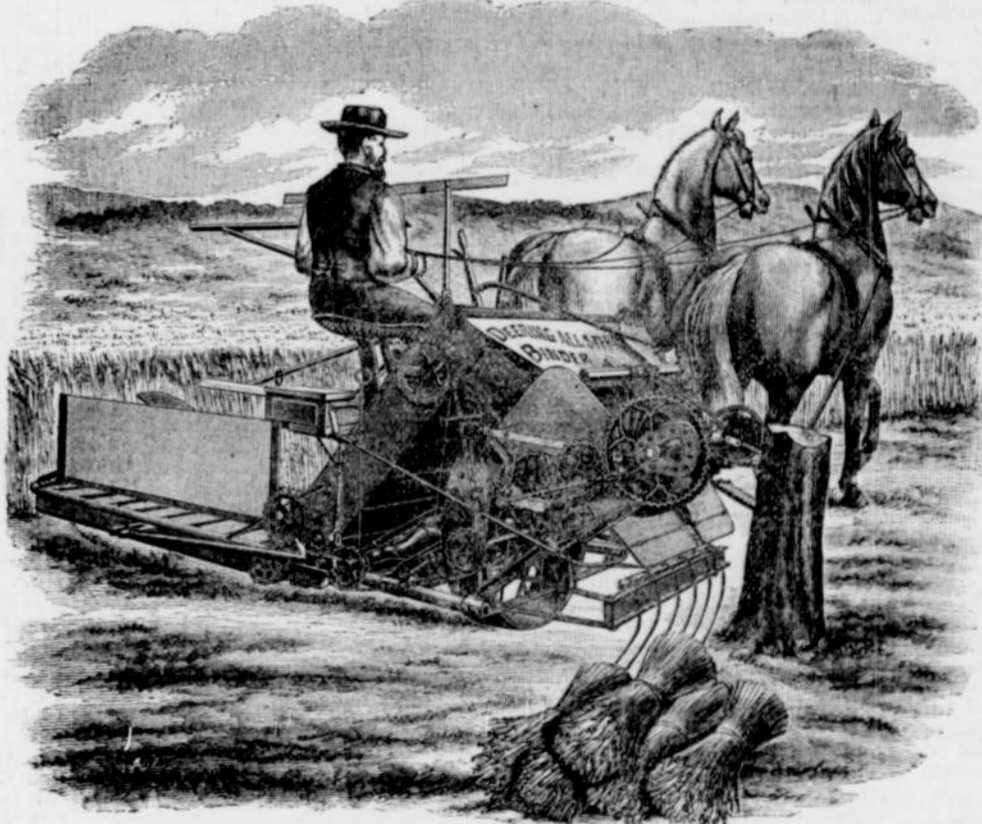
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