

CURRENT TOPICS

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I—Magellans of the Air.

That was a triumphal march across the country when the World Flyers took their jaunt around the world. Who ever dreamed that these pioneers of the air would circumnavigate the globe, each in a machine having a lift of 2,615 pounds, and driven by a 400 horsepower engine? And these Magellans of the air flew at the normal rate of eighty miles an hour! This was a mighty feat, and yet it is the fulfillment of a dream had in the long ago. The truth is, the idea of circumnavigating the earth by the air route is 120 years old. A Belgian aeronaut made such a proposition to the European scientific societies in 1804. It was Guillaume-Eugene Robertson who proposed a huge aeroplane for an air voyage around the world. He was laughed at as are all pioneers in some mighty scheme. But now since it is done, since the dream has come true, we are throwing garlands at their feet.

II. What is America?

The other day a celebrated British journalist declared: "You must disabuse your mind of the idea that there is an American people as we understand 'people' in Europe. If you took the whole population of Europe, mixed it in a mortar, added a certain flavor of Africans, Asiatics and the like, crushed with your pestle, and scattered the results thinly over the continent, you would have something approximately America."

The question naturally arises: "What is the American people?" There could be no clearer answer than when Professor Balch, of Baker University, said that it includes, first, the "Colonial Stock," estimated by census officials at 44,000,000 people descended from ancestors in this country prior to 1790. Second, it includes the "Early stock," now some 10,000,000 derived from immigration between 1790 and 1850. Third, the "Later Anglo-Saxon Stock," some 9,000,000 consists of those who have come to use since 1850 from England, Canada and other Anglo-Saxon countries, together with their descendants. These groups together constitute some 63,000,000 Americans.

If there are only 63,000,000 real Americans—those to the manor born—the question stares us in the face: Who are the remaining more than forty millions? Will they prove an ultimate blessing or a menace to our boasted civilization?

III. The American Farmer.

On every hand we hear that the American farmer is on the verge of ruin. A wall of pessimism stalks out of every farmhouse in this goodly land. And it is said that the boys and girls are deserting the old farm and seeking the white ways of our congested centers. Most of this wall rises among professional politicians—men who would make personal gain out of social and economic unrest.

The Country Gentleman, after the most thorough investigation, has this to say: "The farmer today is far better off than he has ever been before. To be sure, some seasons hit him pretty hard, but that is true of the merchant and the manufacturer as well. Adversity is in no way partial. But considering the farmer's condition now, his wealth, his comforts, his pleasures, his opportunities for education and the enjoyment of life—in these respects the farmers of America are now far ahead of any of their predecessors. And not only that, but, as a rule, they are much better off than a large per cent of their city brothers."

This brings to mind some remarkable facts. In Kansas, recently, the professor of sociology in the Agricultural college, completed a survey of 97 farms, farm families and farm homes. In making the survey a mail route was taken at random, and the farms along this route—good, poor and indifferent—studied closely. Here are some of the things disclosed: Practically every farmer on the list owned a car and found the car to be necessary and helpful to his work; of those 97 homes, 75 had musical instruments, pianos, organs, talking machines, violins, etc.; 88 homes had daily newspapers, besides numbers of farm journals and other periodicals; the average hours spent by mothers in resting and reading were 1.38 per day in summer and 2.45 in winter; an average of \$36.91 a year was spent for schooling, with many of the children in high school and some in colleges; an average of \$40.12 a year was spent for religious purposes.

Perhaps the most striking thing revealed by the Kansas survey was that none of the ninety-seven families were poverty stricken. Many farmers were hard hit and forced to economize "but in all experience," as has been well said, "where there is always enough to eat and wear, and work enough to keep idleness away, there will be found happiness." The farm, all over this country, is enjoying its measure of prosperity, and is a good place to live.

IV. Passing of the Forests.

Germany has at least acted wisely in one thing—she has doubled her forest production in a hundred years. She has wisely used scientific methods in managing her forests, and at the same time imported enough lumber to allow her forests to grow and expand. There is a different story told of the United States. Original forests have been reduced from 5,200 billion board feet to 2,200 billion board feet. It is alarming to know that the remaining forests are only able to grow about one-fourth of the amount of timber consumed.

If these facts are true, certain conclusions ought to make us pause. In 25 years, according to certain authoritative estimates, the population of the United States will be 150,000,000. On the present basis of timber consumption, this country will need 76 billion board feet each year to meet the demand of 1950.

Where will we get the timber? That's the problem! In the twenty-five years we cannot grow the trees to satisfy the demand. When 1950 gets here, our entire supply will have been cut. Then we will be face to face with a timber famine of huge proportions.

V. Cost of the Silent Letter.

This is an age of statistics. There is a wizard in figures for most every field. And now comes the statistician who figures out the "cost" of silent letters in the language. It opens up a new field in economics. It costs as much to print a silent letter as it does to print the spoken letter. The wizard declares that if we were to strike out from our printing bill the silent letter, and England. And we might add, that 40,000,000 would be saved to France if the cost of superfluous words in our beloved America were stricken out, it might be enough to pay the national debt.

VI. The Young Man in History.

The enthusiasm and power of young manhood have been felt in every generation. One needs but to review the biography of the past to appreciate the place of the young man in history. It will be interesting to know that— At the age of fifteen Victor Hugo, presented a poem to the French academy. At the age of sixteen Bossuet held spellbound all who listened to his eloquence; Leigh Hunt was a prolific writer of verse. At the age of seventeen Michael Angelo had an lacet in the palace of Lorenzo de Medici; Mozart had enraptured the German court; Chateaubriand had won his commission; Alexander Hamilton commanded the attention of his country, and Washington Irvin had the readers of the Morning Chronicle on tiptoe.

At the age of eighteen, Charles Spurgeon was the pastor

of a congregation; Zwingli was a profound student of the New Testament; Grotius had issued his "Marcianus Capella."

At the age of nineteen Bach was organist at Amstadt; George Washington had been made a major; Bryant had immortalized himself in "Thanatopsis"; the steam engine was taking form in the brain of Stephenson; Galileo was close to the secret of the vibrations of the lamp in the Pisa cathedral.

At the age of twenty Robert Hall swayed the multitudes; Alexander ascended the throne; Weber was writing symphonies; Wallace had thrown himself against the arbitrary authority of Edward I.

At the age of twenty-one Beethoven had enrolled his name in the music world; Wilberforce was in parliament; Mazzini was a prisoner for truth.

At the age of twenty-two Alfred began one of the most magnificent reigns England has ever known; Hempsden was in Parliament; Savonarola had won his deathless name as a saint; Algernon Sidney had dared antagonize Cromwell; Rossini was without a peer in the realm of music; Schiller had written his "Robbers;" Richelieu was a bishop.

At the age of twenty-three Rubens found his exalted place in art; Browning had written "Paracelsus"; Richard Gagner stirred the world with his "Lohengrin"; Whitefield was preaching in the Tower Chapel in London; Bailey had written "Festus"; Arthur Hallam had stirred the very soul of Tennyson.

At the age of twenty-four Bismark was captain of the Kings Cavalry; Alexander had taken Thebes and crossed the Hellespont; Dante was distinguished as a soldier and a poet; Ruskin had written his "Modern Painters"; Rutledge was a Colonial orator; Scipio was commanding Roman armies; Sheridan was the author of "The Rivals."

At the age of twenty-five Aeschylus was the great tragic poet of Greece; Xavier was lecturing on Aristotle; Coleridge had become famous in his "Ancient Mariner"; Huss was stirring the world's religious

thought; Southey had already burned more verses than he ever published.

At the age of twenty-six Robespierre was defending Franklin in his onslaughts on the ignorance of his day; Roger Williams had stirred the intolerance of all New England; Turner had been enrolled in the academy; Mark Anthony was lionized in Rome.

At the age of twenty-seven Daniel O'Connell had begun his career as an agitator; Correggio had his commissions to execute frescoes which made him famous.

At the age of twenty-eight Wordsworth was an author of note; Warwick was distinguished as a soldier on the borders of Scotland; Hannibal was starting all Rome by his daring conquests; Bacon was the leading counsel for the queen; Napoleon had revolutionized Europe.

At the age of twenty-nine Lord John Russell had become the great reformer in Parliament; Milton had written his "Comus"; Arminius had set Germany intellectually free; Cromwell had begun his mighty career.

At the age of thirty Reynolds was England's greatest portrait painter; DeVincl dored to say "I will undertake any work in sculpture, in marble, in bronze, or in terra-cotta—likewise in painting I can do as well as any man, be he who he may."

VI. History of a Face. A close student of human nature can look at your face when you are fifty and tell you what you have done and what you will do again, given the same opportunity.

Someone has said that the face is the show window of the soul. The other day we read that if your shelves are stocked with cynicism, hatred, malice, greed, misgivings, doubts and fears, then your face will reveal these wares to the person with whom you come in contact. If your soul is wrapped up in the sunshine of life; if you carry in stock faith, confidence, tolerance, charity, love—then at fifty your face will attract, inspire and encourage.

Some happy spirits, living in the zone beyond the fifties, say they are

living the happiest days of their lives. The secret is, they had prepared to live before they reached the fifties. Touching all this, there is a wonderful little happening on record. It is said that Henry Ward Beecher spoke to two ragged newsboys, huddled in a corner on a cold night, "Aren't you terribly cold?" he asked the boys. "We were until you came," replied one of the boys. Beecher's face changed their temperature.

VIII. The Nation's Nerve Center.

"If America does not remake her cities," says one, "they will unmake here." If you want to grapple with a big problem, there's one for you. The rapid growth of our cities is amazing. In far less than a century, they have grown from 4 per cent to be now more than one-third of our total population. In 1820, 4 per cent of our nation's population was in the cities; in 1840, 8 1-2 per cent; in 1860, 16.1 per cent; in 1880, 22 1-2 per cent; in 1890, 30 per cent; in 1900, over 33 1-3 per cent. In 1910, the nation was making its usual rapid upward trend. The very latest shows that the cities in the United States are increasing in population 7 1-2 times as fast as the rural districts, according to the 1920 count. Add to this the erstwhile ever-increasing tide of alien population and you've got a question that throws its shadow over every other perplexing problem of the age. The future of America rests with her cities. They are our national nerve centers—and, for that reason, our storm centers. No man can love a country whose tongue he does not know and whose institutions he does not revere.

Throughout the history of the world the city has always been the dynamo whence comes our national thought and life. From these centers, like blood from the heart a nation's vitality flows through all the arteries of its moral, intellectual and commercial being. Corrupt the pent up blood at these centers and you poison the whole system. And shall we say it? It may be



(NOTE: Dr. Pierce is president of the Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., to which for 30 years past chronic sufferers have been coming for specialized treatment from all over the U. S. A., Canada and foreign lands.)

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that this great country of ours has gone stark wild over the amassing of fortunes. The head of the house drudges to build the fortune and the sons learn the art of wasting it. At last it's "from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves." It is barely possible that we are crucifying ourselves on a cross of gold. At least we have lost the art of the simple life. An Englishman of culture and prestige, having journeyed far in this land, returned home with the verdict: "The American ideal is the millionaire." How far wrong was the English man's judgment?

IX. That Great American Problem.

Just at this time we hear much about the incoming tides from foreign shores. No little is said about Americanizing the un-Americanized. "The Great American Problem" has become the shibboleth in some quarters. A little study of facts will show that the laborer from foreign shores contributes 25 per cent of labor in slaughter and meat industries. Does 7-10 of the bituminous coal mining. Does 7-8 per cent of all the work in woolen mills. Contributes 9-10 of all labor in cotton mills. Makes 19-20 of all the clothing. Manufacturers more than half the shoes. Builds 4-5 of all the furniture. Makes 1-2 of all the collars, cuffs and shirts. Turns out 4-5 of all the leather. Makes 1-2 of all the gloves. Refines nearly 9-20 of all the sugar. Makes 1-2 the tobacco and cigars.

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL TO HIS MOTHER

Two days before George Washington's departure for his inauguration as first President of the United States he went to Fredericksburg to pay what proved to be his last visit to his venerable mother. On coming into her presence he said: "The people, madam, have been pleased, with the most flattering unanimity to elect me to the chief magistracy of the United States; but before I assume the functions of that office I have come to bid you an affectionate farewell. So soon as the public business which must necessarily be encountered in arranging a new government, can be disposed of, I shall hasten back to Virginia, and—"

Here his mother interrupted him "You will see me no more," she said; "my great age and the disease that is rapidly approaching my vitals, warn me that I shall not be long in this world. I trust in God I am somewhat prepared for the better. But go, George, fulfill the high destinies which heaven appears to assign you; go my son, and may heaven's and your mother's blessings be with you always."

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