

MISAPPREHENSION BETWEEN WEST AND EAST

IN these days of change, by the time a national trait has come to be generally recognized it has vanished. The school geographies insist that the French are "gay"; in point of fact, they have become in the last forty years a very serious people. The world thinks of the British as "stolid"; but, since Mafeking night, these same British seem to have turned demonstrative, almost mercurial. We go on thinking of the Germans as cautious and sluggish, whereas, actually, they are daring and energetic.

So is it with sectional traits. By the time some impression about the West has sunk deep into the Eastern mind, the West has swept onward and falsified it. The Yankee thinks of the Middle West as the land of privation and hardship; it is, in fact, a scene of comfort and plenty. He regards it as peopled by a hodgepodge of aliens, whereas the hodgepodge is at his own door. He looks upon New England as the refuge of the primal American spirit, when, in sooth, Iowa and Kansas are more evenly American in tone than any like population in the East. The Back Bay may think of the Illinois farmer as raising corn to feed hogs, which he will sell in

order to buy more land on which to raise more corn to feed more hogs with which to buy more land; and so on. But the grandson of the man of whom this was said sends his daughter to college, taxes himself for a public library, and is patron of the local art-loan exhibit.

Nor is the Middle West without its delusions. It imagines it is growing faster than the East, because the drift from the crowd toward the Edge of Things, and from the wearied land to the virgin soils, has been a constant in American history. That the center of population, which has traveled westward at the average rate of fifty miles a decade, should halt, or even retreat, would be deemed a marvel, like the sun standing still in the vale of Ajalon. Yet that very portent impends. The center, which migrated fifty-eight miles in the seventies, and forty-eight miles in the eighties, shifted only fourteen miles in the nineties. That it then moved on thirty-one miles was due to the rush to the Pacific slope, where a family, being at the long arm of the lever, balances half a dozen Slovak families shantied in Pittsburg.

The truth is that the East grew faster than the Middle West through the nineties, and in the last ten years it has been gaining nearly twice as rapidly, having

added a quarter to its people while the West was adding a seventh. While in the East one county out of four lost in population, more than two counties out of five in the Middle West showed a decrease.

THE NEW BLOOD OF THE WEST—WHERE IT COMES FROM

ONE reason is that the Western farmer resents cramping conditions more strongly, and responds sooner to the lure of fresh acres, than the Eastern farmer. The West it is that peoples the newer West, while the enterprising spirits of the older commonwealths seek their chance in the near cities. A lifetime ago the old Yankee stock was faring overland to settle the wilderness. To-day only a sprinkling of the native Americans west of the Great Lakes claim an Eastern State as their birthplace. If in Iowa seventy-one counties out of ninety-nine have gone back in population during the last decade, and an equal number in Missouri, it is assuredly not from bad times, but from the call of cheap land in Texas or the Canadian Northwest.

New Englanders and Middle State people settled freely from the Western Reserve to the Mississippi. But the men from this area settled Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, and thence overflowed into Oklahoma and Colorado. Ohio, Wisconsin, and Illinois provided the bulk of the American element in Minnesota, and she in turn pours most of her increase into the region beyond. East and Middle West are not far apart in numbers; but since 1860, Colorado has drawn from two to three times as many of her people from the Middle West as from the East. In North Dakota, in 1900, five times as many people hailed from west of Pittsburg as from east of it; in South Dakota, five times as many; in Washington, three times as many; in Oklahoma, eighteen times as many.

While the West is even now being tapped by "home-seekers' excursions," which annually carry nearly half a million west-bound through Minneapolis, Omaha, and Kansas City, the East is soaking up the new immigration like a dry sponge.

From thirty to forty years ago, great numbers of Germans, Scandinavians, Mennonites, Poles, Bohemians, and even

Icelanders, landing at Castle Garden, journeyed straight through, with a railroad-ticket pinned to the shoulder, and within a year they were settled on government land. To-day the still virgin lands lie beyond the ken of the insweeping tides from southern Europe and the Orient, dreaming of jobs rather than of farms. Of these aliens, in their first crudeness, the East gets nearly three times as many as it should in comparison with the Middle West.

THE UNDERSTATURED IMMIGRANTS

A GENERATION ago the traveler from the valley of the Connecticut or the Mohawk was offended by the peasant look of many a settlement beyond Chicago. To-day this new immigration, which has Constantinople as its geographical center, is so alien, so ignorant, and so helpless, that it takes refuge in the first industrial harbors or bays it finds. The huge, pregnant, intimidating fact of our time is the progressive saturation of the Northeast with these understatured new-comers, who have no intention whatever of seeking the few remaining fragments of the frontier, —Idaho, the "short-grass" country, the Texas Panhandle, or the cut-over pine lands of the Northwest,—which remind us that Volume I of American history is not yet ended.

A recent leisurely drive through Connecticut prompts Mr. Poultney Bigelow to remark: "The overwhelming majority of those we saw by the roadside were Italians. . . . They cannot yet speak English nor can the hundreds of Slavonians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Poles, Rumanians, Syrians, and Bulgarians who seem to stand sentry at every cross-road where we yearned for some one of English speech from whom we might extract information. . . . To find the children of those whose homes represent the ruins of modern Connecticut, follow me into the slums of Boston, New York, or Chicago, or into the hundreds of equally unsavory factory towns that blot the landscape of this other-wise beautiful State."

Not scattered as in the flush days of free land, but marshaled in gangs of miners, shovelers, or concrete-mixers, or lodged in certain pockets,—a Ghetto, a Little Italy, or Little Hungary, or Little

Armenia,—the later aliens form, as it were, insoluble clots. Few venture far inland in their raw state. Those who filter through the industrial mesentery to the remote farming regions are already half Americanized and are readily absorbed into the democratic society of the West. This is why its proportion of illiterate foreign-born men is less than half as great as that of the East.

As fresh coal in a furnace sends up the steam-gage, so the automatic stoker at Ellis Island charges the vicinity with a cheap labor that is filling southern New England and the Middle States with dumps, coal-breakers, canneries, mills, skyscrapers, wharves, subways, barge canals, and metalled roads. It is also clinching their hold on manufacturing industries and postponing that proximity of factory to farm which is the dream of every Western town. While insisting masterfully on its tariff protection, this region, which in the late eighties was gloomily listing its abandoned farms, now sees its export trade spring up like Jonah's gourd, smiles at the West's endeavor to get mills of its own, and does not mind sending sheaves of its "commercial paper" to be rediscounted by Western banks.

DIVERGENCES IN THE AMERICAN STOCK

THERE is another basis of divergence between the sections. The American stock in the Middle West is not altogether of the same type as the American stock in the East.

On the physical side the evidence is strong. Dr. Gould's tabulation of the measurements of soldiers by the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War shows that the men from New England weighed 139.4 lbs., those from the Middle States 141 lbs., those from Ohio and Indiana 145.4 lbs., and the men from Michigan, Missouri, and Illinois 141.8 lbs. The last figure may reflect the dyspepsia which troubled the native volunteers much more than the foreign-born and which raged with special virulence in the newer regions, where people had not yet ceased to live on "hog and hominy." From New England the proportion of tall men in a thousand was 295; from the Middle States, 237, from Ohio and Indiana, 486; and from Michigan, Illinois,

and Missouri, 466. The chest expansion rose from 2.6 in New Englanders to 3.25 in the men from the West.

Even to-day the makers of ready-made clothing note a slight tendency toward larger sizes in the West, and observe that the Western man is generally broader than the Eastern man.

WHY MEN WENT WEST

A HUNDRED years ago the Rev. Timothy Dwight commented complacently on the benefit to Connecticut from the draining away to the frontier—then western New York—of the restless spirits who chafed under the rule of the old families and the Congregational clergy. It never occurred to him that these insurgent spirits were carrying with them to the wilderness a precious energy and initiative.

The unprosperous, the shiftless, and the migratory sought the frontier, to be sure; but the enterprising, too, were attracted by it. The timorous and cautious stayed and accepted the cramping conditions of an old society; but those who dared take chances, to "place a bet on themselves," were apt to catch the Western fever. Among the sons and grandsons of such risk-takers the venturesome temper cropped out much oftener than among the sons and grandsons of the stay-at-homes. Hence, the strange fact that it was the roomy West that settled the farther West. On each new frontier have swarmed men from what was itself frontier only a generation earlier.

During the hundred years required to settle the country from the Alleghanies to the Rockies, the venturing spirit became visibly intensified in the Americans of the interior. Less and less provocation was needed to make a man pull up stakes and head for the open country in a covered wagon. The stalwart youth spurned his natal spot as "too crowded" when, in fact, it was full of every opportunity save that of free land. In the last Westernmost decanting of the pioneering breed, courage and love of independence reach their greatest intensity. To-day in the recesses of the Rocky Mountains you come upon steady-eyed, eagle-faced men with tawny mustaches, whose masterful, unswerving will and fierce impatience of restraint remind you of their spiritual kinsmen, the heroes of the Icelandic sagas.

A COMPARISON FROM THE CIVIL WAR

THE fiber of the pioneering breed comes out in a remarkable way in the stubbornness and extraordinary willingness to take punishment shown by our soldiers in the Civil War. On comparing the average losses of troops in great modern wars we get this table:

For the twelve principal battles of the Seven Years' War, victors 14 per cent., defeated 19 per cent.

For the twenty-two principal battles of the Napoleonic epoch, victors 12 per cent., defeated 19 per cent.

For the four principal battles of the Crimean War, victors 10 per cent., defeated 17 per cent.

For the four principal battles of the Franco-Austrian War, victors 8 per cent., defeated 8.5 per cent.

For the six principal battles of the Austro-Prussian War, victors 7 per cent., defeated 9 per cent.

For the eight principal battles of the Franco-Prussian War, victors 10 per cent., defeated 9 per cent.

For the twelve principal battles of our Civil War, the losses of the Union Army amounted to 19.7 per cent., and those of the Confederate Army to 19.6 per cent.

The comparison suggests that two centuries of frontier selections may have gradually built up in the Americans a peculiar strength of will, a trait which presumably retains its greatest freshness and vigor in those who have followed farthest the migrating frontier.

WESTERN SELF-RESPECT AND INDEPENDENCE

IN the pioneer blood lurks, too, a secret horror of taking another man's orders or pay. The man borderers despise is not the wight who is poor or out-at-elbows, but the man who for a wage submits himself to another's will. They regard the negro menial as sent by Providence to render necessary services no *real man* will undertake, and they marvel that in older communities are to be found white men who will serve as waiter, porter, or boot-black. I have heard sturdy farm-lads wish they might once gaze upon a valet or footman, "just to see how that sort of fellow would look."

"Why," I asked the Master of the National Grange, "is the Grange so much stronger in the East than in the West?" "Because," came the reply, "the social advantages of the Grange appeal much more to the Eastern farmer than to the Western. The Western farmer is absorbed in making money."

His mind *has* run to crops and bullocks, and some take it as proof that he is sordid. But there is another way of looking at it. The Westerner's willingness to give up home, neighbors, and old associations for the sake of a "claim" on the prairie is not sordid. His stern preoccupation with "getting ahead" is a part of his inherited passion for personal independence. I have seen a gray hue steal over the face of the settler when speaking of some one who had "lost his farm" and "had to go out by the day." For the wage-earner's lot the true-born Westerner feels a dread quite incomprehensible to cities and to old communities. If he ruthlessly sacrifices comforts and culture, it is that he may win a footing of his own and so call no man master. Once he has cleared off the mortgage, improved his place, and gained a soothing sense of financial security, he will provide books, piano, music lessons, travel, and college education for his children, even if in the meantime his own capacity to enjoy has been atrophied.

The surest proof of the Westerner's hidden idealism is his response to the charm and appeal of girlhood. No people in the world offer so many of their daughters a college education or discriminate less against daughters in providing opportunities.

Not long ago I talked with one of our best artists in black-and-white returning from his first trip to the West. "Yesterday," he said, "I saw in St. Paul a wonderful and beautiful thing, which would be impossible in New York City or in Europe. It was Tag Day, and on the street corners and in the lobbies of hotels and office buildings were stationed couples of bright-eyed girls in their teens, soliciting contributions to charity. Here were these pretty, unchaperoned young creatures accosting every man who passed, and yet I doubt if one of them met yesterday with a word or look that could wound her innocence. It was Arcadian."

SIGNS OF DETERIORATION IN NEW
ENGLAND

FURTHER proof that the wanderers to the West differed from the home-stayers is gained by scrutinizing the descendants of those who for generations withstood the call of the frontier.

Of course the growing cities of the East have always vied with the frontier in luring the ambitious, and there is, therefore, no perceptible difference in fiber between the business and professional corps in the Eastern centers and the corresponding element in the cities of the Mississippi Valley.

Then, too, the already successful and established people in the older communities were quite too well off to be attracted by the West. Those with the right combination of ability and temperament to keep themselves at the top at home had no incentive to migrate. Hence "the Brahmin caste," as Dr. Holmes called it, the old, influential families of the seaboard States, which have given great leadership not only to their region, but often to the nation.

But looking past these conspicuous and well-recognized tendencies, one comes upon something very significant. In the rougher parts of New England to-day one finds old towns that touched their zenith eighty years ago. The élite of the young people have regularly migrated, formerly to the West, of late to the rising cities of their own region. Aside from the aliens that here and there have seeped in, the inhabitants are of the blood of those *who always stayed behind*. In such districts the children are, in general, so listless that they have to be incited to play. Left to themselves, they do nothing but loaf about and play mean tricks on one another. Not half the high-school lads will watch their ball-team play a match game. They shrink from a "hike" of a few miles on a Saturday afternoon, and find the "boy scout" work too strenuous. The elderly farmers are obviously less supple and active than men of fifty ought to be. Outsiders agree that the average farmer accomplishes no more in three days than "a good, bright man" can do in one day. A laziness worthy of the hook-worm belt will keep a man sitting on his door-step till his barn tumbles down before his eyes. Never-

works loaf all day about the grocery, the feed store, or the livery-stable. In villages still bearing traces of the famed New England neatness, loose clapboards, unpruned trees, cluttered-up door-yards, broken windows, unpainted houses, leaning fences, and crazy buggies testify to the sagging of the community below its former plane. Tidy places are to be seen, but the proportion of slovens has visibly grown.

In some of these fished-out communities the teachers complain that the school-children do not make the progress of children elsewhere. To hold the pupil's attention, it is necessary to keep him amused. The mentally incompetent are rapidly increasing, probably because the normal couple averages less than two children, while the dull has four or five. Intellectual craving is very rare, and in a town of fourteen hundred the preacher could not recall in his five years a youth who had gone to college.

The comment of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction upon the classical academies which once flourished in these towns is pertinent. "Out of these academies went a steady stream of sons and daughters who were, other things being equal, always the strongest of the generation, for otherwise they would not have gained this education. They became lawyers, or physicians, or clergymen, or schoolmasters, or business men in the cities, and the girls went with them pre-vaillingly to be their wives. The unambitious, the dull, the unfortunate boys and girls of the old country-side, who could not get to the academy, as a class remained behind and became the dominant stock. And the old academy, having sorted out and sent away the ambitious stock, is now dormant."

Social workers doubt if the morals of these country boys and girls are as good as they are in the ordinary city tenements or on the Bowery. With the departure of the finer youths, vanish the higher interests that hold up the young. Gone are the singing-schools, spelling-matches, and debating-societies that once enlivened the long winter evenings. The rising generation seem utterly dead to higher things. Card-playing, smoking, dances, and motion pictures sum up their recreations, and those who try to interest them in religion, education, or even sport, agree that there is "nothing to build on."

Solitary tippling is in great favor with adults, and marital transgressions are frequent. There is little public spirit, and men of ample means are not ashamed to refuse a contribution to a welfare undertaking on the ground that they "see nothing in it" for themselves. The prospering are very furtive about their investments, and each strives to hide from his neighbors how well off he is.

In the communities of which I speak, the churches are dead or languishing. In villages that once maintained three, two will be found boarded up. The habit of church attendance has almost died out. The clergymen are in despair, for their members are elderly people, mostly women. Young recruits are not in sight, and the church is dropping into the graveyard.

LACK OF COMMUNITY LIFE

ALTHOUGH this is an extreme case, the downward tendency is wide-spread. Says the head of the Church and Country Life Department of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions:

Allowing for some exceptions, not too numerous, it may be said that throughout the prosperous and productive farming regions of the United States, which have been settled for fifty years, community life has disappeared. There is no play for the children; there is no recreation for young people; there are no adequate opportunities for acquaintance and marriage for young men and women; there is not a sufficient educational system for the needs of country people, and there is not for the average man or woman born in the country an economic opportunity within reach of his birthplace, such as will satisfy even modest desires. There is not in a weak community that satisfaction of social instinct which makes it "a good place to live in." Time was in New England and New York and Pennsylvania when there was a community to which every farmer belonged with some pleasure and pride. The absence of community life throughout these country regions expresses to-day what one man calls "the intolerable condition of country life."

OTHER REGIONS THAT SHARE THIS RETROGRESSION

IF the moral sag is deepest in certain New England spots, it is only because nowhere

else in the North has a rural population been so skimmed and reskimmed. But the thing has a wider range than people suspect. The disfranchisement of seventeen hundred citizens of Adams County, Ohio, for selling their votes lets in a pitiless ray on the dry rot of the lifeless communities that have missed the electrifying touch of railroad or city. The knots of gaping, tobacco-chewing loafers that haunt railway-stations in some parts of Indiana suggest that the natural pace-makers of the neighborhood have moved on to create prosperity elsewhere. In southern Michigan, in Illinois, and even on into Missouri, are communities which remind one of fished-out ponds populated chiefly by bullheads and suckers.

The investigations that led to the establishment of the "county work" of the Young Men's Christian Association show that rural decay is to be found, on the poorer soils at least, in purely farming regions as far west as the Mississippi River. "It is like a solar eclipse," said one investigator, "with its darkest shadow resting on the New England hills, and its penumbra reaching out even to regions only two generations from the pioneer stage."

THE "WE-FEELING" OF THE WEST

WHATEVER be its range, the cause of the phenomenon is not degeneration, but folk-depletion, which seems to have swept west with the same pace as the twin blight of soil-depletion. Over the leaner areas the more ambitious and stirring persons who, had they stayed, would have led in community coöperation and stamped upon their coarser neighbors their own ideals, sought the beckoning cities or the inviting soils farther West. The longer this drain has gone on, the worse the slump. In the younger States the signs of sag fade out, and you find in the country school-houses the same literary societies, debating-clubs, and lecture courses New England was priding herself on sixty years ago.

The preacher or teacher stationed in the decaying communities imagines that the heartbreaking spiritual deadness he sees about him reflects a general condition, and concludes that the whole country is on the down grade. It has never occurred to him that the choice spirits whose departure has so impoverished the neighborhood are

—many of them—serving as moral dynamos to lift the tone, the refinement, and the ideals of communities in the West. Let those who despond at the spread of caries in the old “bone and sinew” of the nation watch the crowds—mostly farmers—at some agricultural fair in one of the States beyond the Mississippi. What he will see there in the way of stature and thew, of poise and carriage, of clearness of skin and eye, of sobriety and good temper, of good manners and natural politeness, will convince him that there is a morning freshness to balance the twilight that broods over some of the old homes of the American stock.

“Do you note any difference,” I asked a Western man in the service of a New England State, “between your people and the people here?” “Yes,” he replied, “my own people look at life in a big way. They are more willing to cooperate, more generous in supporting things for the general good, more ready to use the State government to serve their common needs. The folks here lack the *we*-feeling. An intense parochialism keeps them jealous of their State government, and a suspicious individualism hinders them from working together for their common benefit. In many directions I see their narrow-mindedness and mistrust of one another holding them back from prosperity.”

THE QUESTION OF VIRILITY

In an Eastern county-seat town a resident of less than two years was able to count among his acquaintance forty-seven childless couples. Another informant could recall among fifteen couples, friends of his, only three who had any children. “They don’t want the bother.” School after school that used to boast twenty or thirty children is now lonesome with from five to ten. There is no way of separating in the records the native births from those among the foreign-born; but a State officer versed in statistics avers that the American blood is not averaging more than one child to the family, whereas the aliens exhibit from five to twelve children a couple.

But if the old branches on the tree

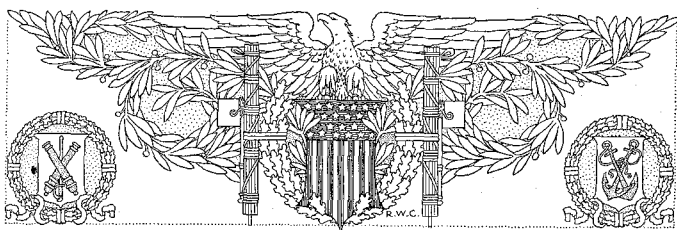
are well-nigh sapless, the transplanted scions in the West do not fail to put forth young shoots. Children in proportion to women are half as numerous again in the Middle West as in New England and twice as numerous in the Dakotas. This despite the fact that a third of the children of New England were furnished by fecund immigrant mothers.

Not without justice is the West spoken of as “virile.” Through the Northeast the women outnumber the men, to the point sometimes of being a drug in the matrimonial market. In New England the shortage of men is three per cent., in Massachusetts six per cent. But the Middle West shows eleven men for ten women, the trans-Mississippi country eight men to seven women, and in the Dakotas the excess of men is a third. Hence, as you leave salt water the status of women rises until, in the inter-mountain States, where there are at least two suitors for every woman, the sex becomes an upper caste to which nothing will be denied from street-car seats to ballots and public offices.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE WEST

THAT the divorce rate rises as you go West is partly due to the willingness of chivalrous legislators to put this weapon into the wife’s hands, partly to the *divorcée’s* much better chance of remarriage. It is a curious fact that the order of the forty-six States arranged according to divorce rates, beginning with the lowest, tallies in a remarkable way with the order of the States arranged according to proportion of women, beginning with the highest.

Any shortage of women that makes the men eager suitors alters the terms of the marriage partnership to the advantage of the wife and betters the lot of the married woman. Accordingly the codes of the Western States treat the wife with more liberality than did the codes of the older States, and fairness to women seems to be a Western practice that spreads East. Indeed, the enviable position of the American woman is largely the cumulative outcome of the scarcity value she has for a time enjoyed in the newer commonwealths.



THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE ANTI-TRUST LAW

ITS MERITS, ITS OPERATION, AND THE MEANS
TO SUPPLEMENT IT

BY GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM

The Attorney-General of the United States

DISCONTENT with the Sherman anti-trust law and its enforcement by this administration is not nearly so wide-spread as is popularly supposed. A few thoroughly discontented people are apt to make far more impression than do a host of people who are wholly satisfied with the same conditions which produce discontent on the part of the others. It is a reasonable assumption that the majority of the people who are discontented with the Sherman law and with its enforcement are the stockholders and others interested in those corporations and combinations charged with its violation. The people who will most benefit from the enforcement of the law are the great army of consumers who have been purchasing the products of these corporations. It is certainly obvious that the number of consumers so benefited must far exceed the number of stockholders who may, in some degree, be injured. But even in the case of the stockholders, the injury to them is greatly exaggerated. The purpose of the law is not to destroy industries. Because the courts have not sought to destroy property, some extremists have uttered loud complaint, but that fortunately will not lead the courts to change their course.

THE PURPOSE AND EFFECT OF THE SHERMAN LAW

THE real purpose of the Sherman law is to compel fair trade, to protect the aver-

age business man from injury due to unfair methods of competition. It is meant to keep the highways of commerce open to all, big and little, rich and poor, on the same terms. Therein lies its greatest ethical value. In the contemplation of our wonderful industrial development, the number of small producers who in the past have been forced to the wall by unfair methods has largely been lost sight of. The purpose of the Sherman act is to prevent undue combination and centralization of power, and therefore, in issuing their decrees, the courts have merely compelled the combinations against which they have been directed to resolve themselves into their integral parts. The property of the stockholders remains. It is as capable of production and of earning dividends as ever. It has been deprived not of its legitimate earning capacity, but only of such unfair advantage as it acquired by illegal combination and restraint of trade. In the course of time these facts will become obvious to what has been referred to as "the great army of stockholders," and as I believe that the majority of them are not looking for an unfair advantage, so I believe their dissatisfaction will be abated.

There is of course some genuine discontent with the Sherman law, but I suspect most of it arises not so much from any real uncertainty as to its meaning as from a *realization* of that meaning. There are two classes of people who are directly