

## LOOKING FOR ABLE MEN.

In several States just now there is a sort of Diogenes search not for merely honest but for able men in public life. Massachusetts is said to have gone so sterile in statesmen that there is no one to stand against Senator Lodge except Butler Ames. In Pennsylvania the rival nominees for the Governorship are scarcely known outside their own counties, and are without much honor there; while in Ohio the Republicans are sore put to it to find a man to run against Gov. Harmon who shall not appear ridiculous by comparison. The straits to which New York is reduced need only be mentioned. For months the anxiety of politicians has been to discover a successor to Gov. Hughes who should not provoke all over the State Hamlet's indignant question, "What judgment would step from this to this?"

Now, from all this seeming dearth of men capable of leading, at the very time when they are said to be most in demand, it would be rash to conclude that they do not exist. Ability is one thing, and the emergence of able men in public life is quite another. The latter is more a matter of chance or doubt than the former. The conditions temporarily affecting government service may so discourage citizens with high talent for it that they do not come forward—are perhaps not allowed to come forward. Complaints that we were without a supply of vigorous and compelling statesmen have often been heard in this country; sometimes, just on the eve of a new flowering of political genius. In 1888, Lowell delivered his lecture on "The Independent in Politics," in which he referred to the "growing doubt" whether we were not losing the power to produce men of real initiative and practical sagacity in the science of government. His conclusion was, however: "I believe that there is as much of the raw material of statesmanship among us as there ever was, but the duties levied by the local rings of majority-manufacturers are so high as to prohibit its entrance into competition with the protected article." Similarly to-day no competent observer really questions the existence of political talent; the main difficulty is to render the career for it open.

Without falling back upon the comfortable but fallacious assurances that the hour always produces the man, the

crisis the hero, we may yet gain a certain confidence from noting that we do now and then find hid treasure in unexpected places; that men whose fame becomes nation-wide start up suddenly out of obscurity. The country is just now called upon to mourn a Chief Justice who had been for twenty-two years at least a capable head of our highest court. Yet when he was appointed the scornful cry was pretty general in the press: "Who is this man Fuller?" Before, when President Grant named a Chief Justice, it had been: "Who is this man Waite?" The two cases show that we have undeveloped resources of ability as well as minerals. Take the instance of Hughes himself. Ten years ago he was absolutely unknown, except to a small circle of friends who were aware of his extraordinary powers. But that they should ever be put at the service of the public appeared then wholly improbable; and that they really came to be must be regarded as in the nature of a political accident. Yet it is entirely credible that ability like his exists in many a law-office, or in some study or counting-room, which we could draft for government work if we only knew how to find it and set it free.

True genius is said infallibly to fight its way to the front, in politics as everywhere else. This, of course, is merely to confuse genius with success; yet we are bound to take knowledge of the fact that able men with honorable political ambition have the struggle made easier for them by examples of success—or of failure. The trail which Hughes has blazed is so plain that even a wayfaring New York politician cannot err therein. Any man in the State who aspires to rise to anything like the popularity and the power that Gov. Hughes has conquered, cannot fail to see along just what road opportunity beckons. And, conversely, in Massachusetts, the present intense dislike of Lodge and the search for a real Senator to displace him indicate the things that must be avoided if a secure place in the honor and affection of that State is to be won. Should the coming contest result in the election of a Senator as little in the public eye now as Sumner was when first chosen, he would know, from the unpopularity of Mr. Lodge, that Massachusetts desired a representative in the United States Senate who would treat his work there with less of the air of a literary trifle, and

who would not wreak so much of his strength upon the creation of a personal machine that he had little left for the drudgery of legislation.

Among the circumstances that help to bring forward extraordinary men is dissatisfaction with the commonplace type. Discontent is often, even in politics, a condition of achievement. And it is evident that there never was a time when the people were more out of humor with the ordinary run of politicians than they are to-day. The very fact that the electors are so generally looking for public servants who shall tower like Saul from the shoulders and upwards above the hacks and the time-servers, is a ground for hope that such exceptional men will be found. Certainly, the appeal and the rewards were never greater in our public life. This being so, we may reasonably expect that here and there throughout the country men of unusual ability will grasp the skirts of circumstance and show to their grateful fellow-citizens that there is a sure reserve among us of courage and force to apply to our governmental problems.

## RUSSIA AND JAPAN IN MANCHURIA

Behind the Russo-Japanese convention which was signed at St. Petersburg on Monday of last week, rumor persists in scenting a treaty of alliance between the two nations. It is not necessary to accept such an hypothesis as a fact in order to recognize that harmonious relations between the two late antagonists in the Far East are now clearly reestablished. Against the probability of a Russo-Japanese defensive and offensive alliance are the two reasons that such an arrangement is neither necessary, nor, at such a short remove from the Treaty of Portsmouth, conceivable. Alliances are not cemented as rapidly as the political wiseacres would have us believe. It is one thing for a defeated nation to accept the results of war as a *fait accompli*. It is another thing for two combatants to execute a complete about-face and join hands for war against those who are now their friends. For that is what an alliance necessarily means. It must be an alliance against somebody, whether that somebody be nominated in the bond or left to be unmistakably understood. But, in spite of all that has been said about the cooling friendship between Japan and Great

Britain, it is unimaginable that the latter should be the Power Japan aims at. For one thing, Russia would be a broken reed to Japan in a contest with England. For another thing, Russia and Great Britain are now on the most amicable terms.

It is safest, therefore, to take the latest convention between Japan and Russia for just what it purports to be—an agreement for friendly coöperation in Manchuria, where the two Powers hold so predominant a position. The compact is the latest step in a series of agreements following upon the Treaty of Portsmouth. That instrument left important commercial and other economic questions for later settlement. Among these was the Pacific fisheries question, which was disposed of in the convention of July 30, 1907, the terms of which are now explicitly reaffirmed. The complexities of the Far Eastern situation require that, in any formal agreement between two Powers, the basic principles of China's territorial integrity and of equal opportunity for all nations shall be reiterated. This was done in 1907, and is done again to-day. It is a formula; but in the absence of specific evidence of an intention on the part of the contracting parties to violate its terms, the formula must be accepted as sufficient. It is a formula that we meet in all diplomatic arrangements regarding China. It occurs in the 1907 agreement between Japan and France and in the exchange of notes between this country and Japan in November, 1908. Following upon Japan's arrangements with France and the United States, this new agreement with Russia comes, evidently not as a menace to the peace of the world, but as the latest link in a chain of international *ententes* that are working decidedly for peace.

The Russo-Japanese agreement of July 30, 1907, left the Manchurian railways question undisposed of. With this subject the present convention deals. If the anxious gaze of a critic discerns therein only another "of a series of documents by which the two Powers seek to apportion Manchuria for exploitation by themselves to the exclusion of other nations," proof of this must be directed toward specific acts and policies. The fact remains that Russia and Japan are contiguous railway owners in Manchuria, and that the formulation of an harmonious railway policy between the two is

a very natural procedure. True, there is a clause in the agreement which to the suspicious eye might suggest something like an alliance. It is provided that "in case events occur of such a nature as to menace the *status quo*, the contracting Powers will enter into communication, with the object of agreeing on measures for the maintenance of the *status quo*." But it is necessary only to turn to the Takahira agreement between this country and Japan to find analogous proof of a Japanese-American alliance: "Should any event occur threatening the *status* as above described, or the principle of equal opportunity as above defined, it remains for the two governments to communicate with each other in order to arrive at an understanding as to what measures they may consider it as useful to take." Reading between the lines, it is one of those commendable arguments that work both ways.

As between the interests of the peace of the world and the interests of American trade in Manchuria, it is no treason to assert that the former are the more important. For that reason the steady improvement in Russo-Japanese relations can cause only the widest satisfaction. That the two nations mean to discriminate against American enterprise in Manchuria has yet to be proved. That the two nations have turned their backs on all wild talk of a resumption of hostilities in the Far East is pretty definitely established. The Russian jingo may continue to threaten a war of *revanche*, and the Japanese fire-eater may clamor for new victories in Manchuria. The two Governments have recognized that peace is what they both need. Russia dare not go to war again, at the risk of stirring up anew the fires of revolution. Japan needs time to assimilate what she has already won. There is significance, for instance, in the fact that the conclusion of an agreement with Russia should come almost simultaneously with the complete assumption by Japan of the task of preserving order in Korea. The latter step has been regarded as tantamount, or at least as preliminary, to annexation. That Russia, far from protesting, should be engaged in treaty-making with the master of Korea, shows how completely the Czar's Government has accepted the result of the late war.

#### THE FIGHT ON THE COLLEGES.

"There is no spectacle in American life to-day more pitiful than the contrast between what the college advertises to do and what it performs." "The teaching by our college professors is the poorest in the country." "The average third-year boy in the high school is more able to think, discuss, and express an idea than the average college student two years older." "The young man learns in college that he need not work, he comes to regard his college as a social and sporting club." "Colleges with their narrow and false ideals of culture, . . . their domination has reached a degree of intolerable impertinence." "The high schools in desperation have been drawing a line of cleavage between those fitting for college and those who are not. This is unnecessary, unfitting, and undemocratic."

These are not extracts from an article in a muckraking magazine; they are taken from two addresses delivered last week at the meeting in Boston of the department of secondary education of the National Education Association; one by the principal of a New York high school, the other by the State superintendent of public schools in Wisconsin. What was in view in the last of the above quotations may be judged from a resolution, almost unanimously adopted at the meeting, declaring in favor of the recognition as electives in college-entrance requirements "of all subjects well taught in the high schools"; some of the subjects especially mentioned in the preamble being manual training, "commercial branches," and agriculture, and the requirement of two languages other than English being expressly objected to. And the situation presented both by the addresses from which we have quoted, and by the resolutions adopted with virtually no dissenting vote, is one with which our college presidents, and all persons interested in college education, will do well to reckon promptly and seriously.

For that situation represents the culmination of a wave of criticism and restlessness which in large measure owes its strength and volume to what we cannot but feel has been a want of perception, on the part of many of our leading college presidents especially. To be conscious of deficiencies, ready to admit them and anxious to remedy them, is one thing; it is quite another thing to assume a position of apologetic defence,