

thinkers from other sections, but, what is still more noticeable, it is increasingly tolerant of differences of opinion among its own writers. When one considers the intolerance recently manifested in the North and West in the matter of political independence, and the spirit of "boycotting" shown toward certain Northern leaders and periodicals, and when one sees this new attitude of Southern newspapers and leaders, one has food for reflection. Evidently a great many

changes have taken place in this country during the past twenty years.

A number of more or less dissenting essays and "Open Letters" have come to us from the South since the publication of Mr. Cable's last article, but we have thought best to confine the reply, at present, to a single representative essay of some length, which is now in preparation, and which will appear in an early number of *THE CENTURY*.

OPEN LETTERS.

The Claims of Chicago.

IN the September number of *THE CENTURY*, 1883, is an article entitled "Will New York be the Final World Metropolis?" in which the author aims to prove the affirmative of this inquiry. Now, while every one is willing to acknowledge that, so far as this country is concerned, New York from the stand-point of to-day is far in advance of any competitor, it is not so very clear that she will ultimately have the predicted world-wide preëminence. But, dismissing all question of competition from other countries, let us consider whether there may not be in our own land, and far removed from salt water, some aspirant to a higher position in population, trade, and finance.

The great majority of mankind "have no way of judging of the future but by the past." In deference to this characteristic trait of the many, let us consider for a while what the world's history thus far teaches us in the way of urban development. The great cities of Europe, notwithstanding the wonderful change which has taken place in the methods by which business has been conducted, maintain very nearly the same relative rank as they did sixty years ago, and the establishment of seaports does not seem materially to affect the cities of the interior. London and Paris, Vienna and Berlin, still hold their own, and a good deal more; and if Venice has long since been "crushed" and gone to seed, it is mainly because it had no territory of its own, and the conditions regulating trade in its day of prosperity, some four or five hundred years ago, have passed away.

It is from the land, and not from the sea, that the larger cities of to-day must derive their main support and continued prosperity. The sea in itself produces but little in comparison, and serves in matters of business chiefly as a highway of communication. It is the land that tells, provided the soil is good and the climate fair. As a gentleman from San Francisco said to the writer, who had made some flattering remarks as to its rapid progress and promising future, "After all, it stands to reason that a city like Chicago, which has land all around it, has a much better show than a city which has land only on one side."

Let us see what time has brought about in some of the older nations.

In China, united under one government, homogeneous in its population, and where a certain facility of communication and a peaceful history have allowed free scope in its business developments, we find by far the most populous and important city situated at

or near the center of its most fertile and productive territory,—a city excelling in numbers the aggregate of Canton, Shanghai, and Peking combined, and whose pulsations of trade are felt to the utmost limits of the empire.

Huc, the Jesuit missionary, who spent ten years in China proper, learned its language, and traveled extensively over every part of it, after expressing his surprise at the intense business activity which first met his eyes at the seaports, goes on to say: "And yet, when one has not penetrated to the center of the empire, when one has not seen the great towns of Han-yang, Wochang-fou, and Han-kow, facing one another, it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the amount of its internal trade." The population of this great triple city, situated on the Yang-tse-kiang river at the junction of one of its principal branches, was, before the Taeping rebellion, estimated at eight millions, and Huc was astonished "to see vessels of such size and in such numbers in the very middle of China."

If the same development has not taken place in Hindostan (with its two hundred and fifty millions), it may be attributed to the following causes: First, that there are no navigable rivers connecting with the interior, and until very lately no means of easy communication; secondly, that before the British occupation the country was divided up into diverse and hostile nationalities, creeds, and governments; and, lastly, because the English since they have held sway have as a matter of business and governmental policy endeavored to draw its commerce toward the sea-coast, where it could be more easily supervised and controlled. The other parts of Asia, either in consequence of rigorous climate or sterile and arid soils, are hardly worth considering in this regard.

It may be fairly questioned whether England as a nation, and London as its metropolis, did not at the outset owe their progress to the fact that as a whole the kingdom had the best soil in Europe. London, the world's present center of trade, is a long way in advance of New York, and is situated nearer the greatest aggregations of civilized communities; and it is all useless to consider New York a dangerous competitor so long as she can deal with her foreign customers only through the agency of foreign shipping, notwithstanding this country furnishes the great bulk of the commerce of the Atlantic Ocean. England is different from an extensive and self-sustaining country in its commercial aspect, inasmuch as she is obliged from her limited area and insular position to obtain a

large portion of her supplies of food and raw materials from abroad; and her commerce has kept pace with this growing necessity, a source of power and wealth in time of peace, and of solicitude and weakness on the interruption of amicable relations with other powers. In a limited territory like that of England a strictly central position for its chief city is not of so much importance.

France has the next best soil in Europe, and Paris is the result — a city which holds its own wonderfully well, in spite of its want of a free communication with salt water. It is substantially an interior city, though not so centrally located as Berlin and Vienna, whose rapid progress of late years is a matter of surprise to all those who have not closely considered its causes.

St. Petersburg, at the head of the Gulf of Finland, owes its origin to an imperial mandate, and not to the requirements of trade. It has a considerable territory on all sides of it, but cannot compete in the traffic induced by Moscow's central position. The great trade, where it has free scope, of most of the extensive countries of the world is the internal trade. The exports of a country are mainly of its *surplus products*, while the great internal trade deals in the *aggregate productions*. There is no comparison in this country between the two, the latter being probably ten times the former in quantity and value; and it is to the development of this internal trade that we must look for the development of our larger cities. Wherever there is a very large population in any country, and especially in a civilized country, a large business is a necessary result; and, with free communications from all quarters, that business or trade naturally converges toward the geographical and population center of the territory, if settled uniformly, or approximately so, in point of numbers.

It is generally admitted that the Mississippi Valley is capable of sustaining, and will in the future sustain, an immense population. And yet most persons' opinions in this regard are of a rather crude and indefinite sort, accepting the broad facts without caring to ask why it is so, unless for plain reasons which are patent to every one. The primary reason is that it has the best land in endless quantities. It has also a fair climate, and generally an abundant supply of coal, hardly excelled in this last respect in any portion of this or any other country, the coal area in Illinois alone being four or five times as great as that of Great Britain, and the coal selling at retail in many parts of the State at the low price of one dollar and a half per ton. The earlier settlements in the country naturally clung to the Atlantic coast, and it is only since the commencement of the present century that population began to flow freely into the Western States; while the prestige acquired by the maritime cities has given them an impetus which is still felt, though the cause for their establishment and growth has lost somewhat of its relative power. Now, however, the day of rapid increase has passed away. The Southern States may have a new dawn of prosperity; but at the present time, and for very many years to come, the West and Northwest promise the most rapid increase in numbers and wealth. Let us endeavor to form some estimate of the capabilities of this vast interior region for the sustenance of a dense and enormous population. The valley of the upper Mississippi and its confluent is com-

posed almost entirely of arable and fertile land, and there seems to be no good reason why it should not support as dense a population as any country in the world. England to-day has about 500 inhabitants to the square mile; Belgium has about the same number; and the three most densely populated provinces of China have an average of over 700. The great wheat-field of the continent may be considered as extending from the eastern boundary of Ohio to the western boundary of Nebraska, and from the southern boundary of Kentucky to the Peace River in the British Possessions. Estimating this territory as 1500 miles from east to west, and 2000 miles from north to south, we have an area of 3,000,000 square miles of arable and fertile land. There is no parallel to this on the face of the earth. If we suppose one million out of the three millions of square miles settled to about one-third of the density specified in the above cases, or about 200 to the square mile, we have, as a result, 200,000,000 people, who would consume probably per capita fully twice the amount consumed in other civilized countries, which would, in a business point of view, represent the consumption of 400,000,000 Europeans. 'Tis hardly worth while to expatiate on the immense amount of traffic which such a population will develop, as it must be self-evident. Of course these surmises apply to a distant future. Assuming, then, that a vast volume of business is a necessary consequence in the case, it follows that with such a net-work of railroads and their facilities for the transportation of passengers or freight, in a country yet in a formative process, a greater concentration of its trade will occur than has heretofore resulted in any other nation. As an evidence of this so far, St. Louis and Chicago are almost alone in the division of this great north-western trade, there being in all that immense region only one other city (Milwaukee) that has over 100,000 inhabitants. The next largest city to Chicago in Illinois has less than 40,000. Any reliable information of the size of the cities of China is difficult to obtain, but it is probable there are twenty cities there with a population of over a million each, though we hear of but few besides Canton, Shanghai, and Peking. If this empire had had in times past as perfect facilities of communication as we have here, we should have found much fewer although much larger cities as the result, and even Han-kow would have doubled its former enormous population. As the population increases, we shall consume more of our products of the soil and manufacture more of textile fabrics and other articles that we need, and the occupation of the ports as factors in surplus products both in exports and imports will be relatively diminished; and the main mission of the Atlantic, Pacific, and Gulf of Mexico ports may be as purveyors to the wants and distributors of the products of this great, populous, and central region of the continent, excepting so much as may possibly in the future find its ingress and egress by the way of the lakes and the St. Lawrence River.

Now, as a necessary consequence of the dense settlement of a territory like this, having every requisite for the development of all the agricultural, manufacturing, mining, and commercial industries on the grandest scale, with most perfect transport facilities, must be the establishment and growth of some great central

leading mart, most easily accessible from all parts, where the great exchanges of this region can be the most speedily and advantageously effected. Where will this point be?

The census of 1880, showing that Chicago had 150,000 inhabitants in excess of its strongest competitor (St. Louis), gives it the lead at present of all the cities of the interior, and a lead which, from the outlook of to-day, it seems likely to maintain. Situated at the head of Lake Michigan, the terminus of navigation of these inland waters, and on the watershed of this part of the continent, a canal of less than one hundred miles connects the waters of the lakes with the Illinois River, forming a continuous line of navigation of 5000 miles from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, running through the heart of the country, and of which Chicago is the central point. In addition to this, the old adage that "all roads lead to Rome" may find a new application. If we cast a glance at a good railroad map of the United States, where all the routes are plainly laid down, the eye is instinctively directed to Chicago as the point toward which by far the larger number converge. Five great trunk lines lead to the Atlantic; five more trunk lines will soon be completed to the Pacific; five more to Mexico and its Gulf, with an indefinite number toward the north and north-west, all of which have virtually their termini at this point; and these, with their multifarious branches, necessitate the arrival and departure of a thousand trains a day. Lakes Michigan and Superior extend 500 miles to the north, forming an effectual barrier for a large portion of the year to any direct transit, either of freight or passengers, between the North-west and the East; and all this business of necessity is *forced* for that portion of the year round the head of the lake and through Chicago. This gives it rather an exceptional position, the like of which is to be found in no city of the United States, as all other points can be "flanked" (so to speak) without loss of time or additional expense. With such advantages as these it would seem unnecessary to dwell upon the inevitable result—a large and rapidly growing trade, and a very large population. Few persons at the East have any adequate idea of the activity of the lake trade, and are hardly prepared to learn that the entries and clearances of this port in 1881, for the period of eight months, and as recorded in this Custom House, were 26,029, or 29 more than New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco combined for the whole year. This is exclusively, or nearly so, the trade of the lakes, the vessels employed in the trade being from 100 to 2000 tons burden. The enlarging and deepening of the St. Lawrence Canal will materially increase this amount, and vessels of 1500 to 2000 tons can run with their cargoes direct from foreign to the lake ports, without breaking bulk, for six months in the year. A few years since the writer received a letter from an English firm suggesting the establishment of a line of first-class steamers to run directly from Liverpool to Chicago. The proposition was of course premature, but we may rest well assured that sooner or later it will be accomplished.

The Canadians apparently are not pushing these works with much energy, under the impression that the through passage of these ships might deprive them of the advantages of reshipment which they now en-

joy. The idea some of the English merchants have, that an outlet to Europe may be found through Hudson's Bay, is probably chimerical, for it is not likely that more than two months of navigation could be depended upon. Middleton, a navigator who traversed these waters in the early part of the eighteenth century, speaks fully of the dangers he encountered, and states that the period of reasonably safe navigation extends only from the 15th of July to the 15th of September, and that he lost a vessel in the strait nipped by the ice in the middle of that short summer. Not a very encouraging outlook certainly!

So, too, as regards manufacturing as developed in this city, but few persons know that it holds the third rank in the United States, and that more than one-half the population is engaged in such pursuits, one hundred and twenty-seven new factories having been established in 1882 alone—only one, started within six months with eighty looms, being in the line of cotton fabrics.

The writer has no predilection for large cities, and looks upon railroads with less favor than some, inasmuch as they tend to concentrate business, and to foster monopolies and combinations alike prejudicial to good morals and a healthful condition of trade. But such seems to be the tendency in our day; and if there be any one place in the whole country where it will be more manifest than in any other, it is this same city of Chicago. The redundant population of the North-west will one day make it the best market in the world, and the productions and commodities of Europe and the Eastern States, of Asia on the west, and of the tropics on the south, as well as of the boundless wheat, grain, and grazing fields which stretch away to the distant west and north, will some day meet here as on common ground for sale and purchase. These predictions may seem extravagant to residents in the older States, but in the West there are many intelligent men who have a firm and abiding faith that these things will come to pass. During the last forty years the city has grown from a small settlement of 6000 people to a magnificent city of over 600,000, having increased a hundred-fold, and it would not be a whit more surprising if in fifty years more it should increase to five times its present magnitude. The Chinese call their great trading city of Han-kow "The Mouth of the Commercial Marts," and it may be that it will find its counterpart some day in the Garden City of the West. No one is now endowed with the spirit of prophecy, so that no one can say positively that these things will be so; but of one thing we may be reasonably well assured, and that is, that the great emporium of these United States will finally be developed at some point in the interior of the country which is the most accessible from every part, and which will be determined in the days of our children or grandchildren "by the inexorable logic of facts."

George M. Higginson.

Courbet, the Artist.

DR. COAN'S article on Courbet [about a year ago] doubtless seemed to all its readers what it seemed to me—an interesting account of an interesting man. But to those who care about Courbet chiefly as an *artist*, it