

THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE REPUBLIC.

[Ninth Paper.]

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

WHOEVER desires to understand the commerce of this and other lands, and to perceive its true order and meaning, must first consider what words stand for—what commerce and manufactures really are in their simplest form. One to whom the word “manufactures” brings only the conception of vast factories for the working of cotton, wool, or iron has but the faintest idea of what constitute the true manufactures of the nation; and one to whom the word “commerce” brings up only the image of an ocean steam-ship laden with goods and wares from distant ports, or a train of cars drawn by a powerful engine bearing many tons of merchandise to far-away places, has an equally faint impression of the vast scope even of our inland traffic.

Commerce is an occupation in which men serve each other; it is an exchange in which both parties in the transaction gain something which they desire more than the thing they part with. It may sometimes be that the desire which is satisfied on the one part or the other is one that had better not be served: that is a question of morals with which we are not now dealing. Such exchanges are, however, the exception. The traffic in commodities that work permanent injury constitutes but an insignificant proportion of the vast exchanges of the world; true commerce in useful things lies at the very foundation of human welfare. Unless a good and wholesome subsistence is possible there can be neither spiritual, intellectual, nor æsthetic culture, and such a subsistence is only possible to the mass of men by means of an exchange of products. All commerce is the aggregate of small transactions. The milkman who brings the daily portion of milk to him who dwells in city or town represents a commerce of vast proportion, almost equal in this country, in its aggregate value, to the whole sum of our foreign importations. The value of dairy products consumed in the United States or exported in the form of cheese and butter is more than four hundred million dollars. The milkman is the representative of one of the branches of commerce which has grown to this vast proportion during the century, and in which the people of the United States have shown the greatest originality. The cheese factory represents a manufacture born of thrift and enterprise only, and our exports of cheese exceed ninety million pounds a year.

How little the true function of commerce has been understood may be proved by the

fact that only within the century has it been admitted among English-speaking people that there can be any mutual service in the matter. In this country even to this day this truth is but obscurely perceived, and hence the nation with which we have our largest transactions, our mother country, is often called our natural enemy by otherwise intelligent persons, because she tries to supply some of our needs at a low cost to us; yet had the true nature of commerce been comprehended a hundred years ago, war between us and England would have been as impossible then as it would now be infamous and absurd. It was a want of knowledge as to the true function of trade that caused the Revolution.

The year 1776 witnessed the publication of two documents of very great importance to the welfare of humanity, one of a purely public character—the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America; the other, the work of a single man, a poor Scotch professor, a treatise on the causes of the wealth of nations, by Adam Smith. It may be affirmed almost with certainty that had the book been printed fifty years earlier, the Declaration of Independence would never have been issued, because the wrongs which made it necessary would have been remedied without resort to war. Had the simple principle of mutuality of service been accepted, had it only become a part of the common knowledge of the English and the colonists that all commerce, whether among the people of the same state or between different states and nations, only exists and can only be maintained because it is profitable and beneficial to both parties, no English ministry could have been supported in the measures which were undertaken to prevent the establishment of manufactures and to restrict the commerce of America. It was the enforcement of these measures through a long series of years that gradually sapped the allegiance of the people of America, and finally led to the violent resistance of acts of minor importance, which in themselves would have been insufficient to provoke rebellion. The colonists were ready to pay money, but resisted the perversion of the power of taxation.

Viewed from a commercial stand-point, the war of the Revolution, therefore, was a terrible blunder, caused by a series of erroneous theories as to the true nature and function of trade on the part of the English statesmen who had controlled the government of Great Britain during the previous century.

They were imbued with the false idea

that in commerce what one nation gained another must lose, and their policy in dealing with their colonies was controlled by the same false assumption. Their great navigators had been many of them only buccaneers under another name, their merchants and ship-owners found no infamy in the slave-trade, and their conquests in the East had begun in motives of personal and selfish aggrandizement. Throughout their history it had become apparent only to a few obscure students or to one or two enlightened merchants that there could be greater gain in liberty than in restriction or slavery. How much of the true spirit of liberty our Puritan ancestors gained from the Dutch among whom they dwelt so many years might be a question well worth investigating. The policy of the rulers of England in regard to their own people was of the same character as toward us, and it may not be charged against them that they enforced upon us any more injurious or unjust measures than they inflicted upon themselves. To the student of political science no lesson is more clearly indicated by the acts of Great Britain during the eighteenth century than the extreme danger and unfitness of restricting the control of government and the right of suffrage to the possessors of property only. Through a long series of years England was governed by those whose claim to rule was based mainly upon the possession of property; during this period war was chronic, the profession of arms the one that gave the most influence and distinction, and the theory of government was the rule of the few for the alleged protection of the many, but the result was the privation of the many and the aggrandizement of the few.

The profession of the merchant and the tradesman was considered ignoble, and many of the great commercial and manufacturing cities were not represented in the government. Even the rude lesson imposed upon England by the success of the American colonies in achieving their independence was not at once comprehended, and for fifty years more she struggled with economic error, and under a false system of social philosophy sought to regulate and control the commerce of the world by restrictive statutes, carrying on gigantic wars, and burdening the English nation with the larger part of that enormous debt which even to this day retards its progress, and is one of the main causes of the poverty of so large a portion of the inhabitants of the British Isles. Not until 1824, or nearly fifty years after the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, did its truths become so well understood as to cause even the beginning of reform; at that date, under the lead of Huskisson, began the series of changes which have relieved English commerce from the shackles of meddling

legislation, but only within ten years has even her commerce been truly free and prosperous. In 1820 there were over two thousand acts on the statute-book of Great Britain unrepealed, which had been enacted at various dates for the regulation of commerce.

It seems passing strange that England should have maintained her false theories in the face of such evidence as was presented in the history of the Dutch Republic. A century before Adam Smith's work was published the great merchant of London, Sir Josiah Child, gave his list of reasons why the Dutch were more prosperous than the English. His reasons sound strangely modern, and are even in advance of our thought. He gave them in the following order:

Firstly. "They," the Dutch, "have in their greatest councils of state *trading merchants* that have lived abroad in most parts of the world, by whom laws and orders are contrived and *peaces* projected, to the great advantage of all men."

Have the United States yet learned this first rule of prosperity during our first century of life as a nation?

Secondly. "Their law of *gavelkind*, whereby all the children possess an equal share of their father's estate."

Thirdly. "Their exact making of all their native commodities, and packing of their herrings, cod-fish, and all other commodities."

Fourthly. "Their giving great encouragement and immunities to the inventors of new manufactures and the discoverers of new mysteries of trade, and to those that shall *bring* the commodities of other nations first in use and practice among them."

Fifthly. "Their contriving and building of great ships to sail with small charges."

Sixthly. "Their parsimonious and thrifty living."

Seventhly. "The education of their children, as well daughters as sons; all which, be they of never so great quality or estate, they always take care to bring up with perfect good hands, and to have the full knowledge of arithmetic and merchants' accounts; and in regard the women are as knowing therein as the men, it doth encourage their husbands to hold on to their trades to their dying days, knowing the capacity of their wives to get in their estates or carry on their trades after their death."

Eighthly. "The lowness of their customs and the height of their excise, which last is certainly the most equal and indifferent tax in the world."

Ninthly. "The careful providing for and employing the poor."

Tenthly. "Their use of banks, which are of so immense advantage."

Eleventhly. "Their toleration of different opinions in matters of religion."

Twelfthly. "Their *law-merchant*, by which

all controversies between merchant and tradesman are decided in three or four days."

Thirteenthly. "Their law for the transference of bills of debt from one man to another."

Fourteenthly. "Their keeping of public registers of all lands and houses sold and mortgaged."

Lastly. "The lowness of interest on money with them."

The jealousy on the part of England of the prosperity of the Dutch had, prior to the date of the last publication by Sir Josiah Child in 1691, caused them to enact the navigation laws, and these laws had then already caused two wars, as the result of which the first funded debt of Great Britain took form. The same jealousy continued, and the same ignorance of the true theory of trade led to the enforcement of the navigation acts and the restrictions upon the trade of the American colonies. Resistance ensued, and the colonies became a nation. But the people of the mother country failed yet to see the error of their system, and again attempted to enforce the same bad laws against us, thus leading again to the last war with Great Britain. At last, slowly and surely, the English people learned the lesson that the malign effect of such restriction was as injurious to themselves as to the people whom these acts had made their enemies. One by one they were repealed, and with each repeal England went onward toward the end she had failed to compass before. In liberty she has supremacy over every sea.

We also have succeeded in what we aimed at; we have maintained our navigation laws; but our ships are few and scattered, our steam marine has mainly existed through subsidies, and our flag is unknown in harbors and cities where the flag of other nations daily comes and goes at the mast-head of a gallant ship or a noble steamer.

We have the lesson yet to learn. A hundred years hence, by which time it is to be hoped the people of this nation will have intelligently grasped the simple theory of trade, it is not to be doubted that the declaration of principles by Adam Smith will be recognized as of supreme importance to the human race, while the Declaration of Independence will be looked upon even by the citizens of this country only as an important incident in the history of the Anglo-Saxon people, and the war which then ensued will be proved and acknowledged to have been caused mainly by a want of knowledge of that economic science of which Adam Smith was the first great expounder. If the people of this nation could but now respond to the grand forecasting of that true and humane statesman W. E. Forster, who lately visited us, and form an Anglo-Saxon alliance for the liberty of commerce,

for the repression of slavery, for the doing away of privateering or piracy upon the seas, the end of all war among civilized people would be at hand, and the grand vision of the prophet would be realized—"They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks."

To him who shall among us succeed in making this vision a grand and living truth will come deserved fame as great as ever yet belonged to any one among us; but that good time has not yet come, and will not come until the simplest principles of political science are made a part of common education.

We do not undervalue the Declaration of Independence when we recognize the fact that the vast material progress in this country during the century now about ending has ensued from only a partial realization of the principles of liberty therein contained. Our fathers threw off the fetters of British domination, but continued the restrictions of English thought, and they thus hampered themselves and us from within with the very trammels they had resisted from without.

It was not until the framing of the Constitution in 1787, and the adoption of the provision that no State should enact any law restricting commerce between the States, that even a true union was established.

Never before that time had commerce upon a grand scale, and through vast regions differing widely in soil, climate, and condition, been freed from restriction. And because of this partial liberty has the material welfare of the people of this country been so well assured as to blind them to the evils of the system that has prevented an extension of our foreign commerce on an equally grand and profitable scale. Although the framers of the Constitution itself may not have fully comprehended the importance of this act, or the truly scientific basis on which they built, they did so organize and assure a system of absolute free trade between the States that even the corruption of slavery failed to break the union.

The Union exists to-day partly because the people of the West would not permit the traffic of the great Southern water-way of the continent to be under the control of a foreign nation, lest it should be obstructed by custom-houses. When they presently realize the other fact that it is as important to them to have the traffic of the great Northern water-way through Canada as free from obstruction as the Southern water-way now is, another onward step will be taken, and another barrier to our full prosperity will fall—not this time, however, by violent means.

In treating the subject of our commercial progress during the past century, it is not worth while to waste time and space upon

mere commercial statistics which any one may compile, but rather to note the changes in policy and method that have occurred, and to see how far we are behind the position we might have held had we not been in some measure blinded to our opportunity by the very ease with which we have achieved great though but partial success.

As was once said of the policy of Austria in its treatment of Hungary, the bad line of custom-houses with which we have surrounded ourselves has caused us "to be smothered in our own grease." Long anterior to the year 1776 the infant manufactures of America had come into existence, and had obtained such a vigorous growth as to cause the utmost jealousy in the mother country. In 1750 the production of iron and steel and the manufacture of steel tools and iron wares had become so well established in America as to induce hostile legislation, and England prohibited the erection of rolling-mills and steel furnaces, and attempted to stop the domestic commerce in and the export of their products. This was one of the many acts which culminated in the separation of the colonies from England. The records of the owners of the Cornwall Iron Mountain, in Pennsylvania, prove the working of the ores long anterior to the Revolution, and one of the carefully treasured documents now preserved in the office of the mine is the account current between the former owners and the commissary-general of the patriot army, wherein they are credited by the government with shot and shell, and charged with Hessian prisoners at thirty pounds a head, whose services they bought for the term of their being held as prisoners of war.

Our ancestors were clothed in homespun, and the endeavor to stop commerce in wool and woolen cards was one of the most vexatious restrictions imposed by the mother country.

Our forefathers established a prosperous traffic among themselves, and sent commercial ventures in their small vessels to various parts of the world. But this was not to be permitted. The laws of England forbade her colonies to trade with the colonies of France and Spain. The power of taxation was invoked to prevent it. Naval officers were made custom-house officers, not so much to collect revenue as to stop traffic altogether, just as the civil officers had previously attempted to stop our manufactures.

What we have failed to perceive is that the measures which only provoked animosity when imposed from without are equally mischievous when enacted within.

We have not yet learned that restrictions upon commerce are most injurious to those who enforce them, and by continuing the same navigation acts we have compassed the very result that Great Britain failed to

accomplish by war. In one century we have reduced ourselves from the position of a dreaded maritime people to a position of comparative insignificance upon the sea. At the end of a century of vigorous life and effort we remain but a province, unable to keep our own flag at the mast-head of any fleet of modern vessels.

But let us turn from this sorry picture of perverted force and ignorant striving to imitate the long since discarded methods of England, to the far more satisfactory consideration of the result of our domestic commerce and the prosperity that has ensued from its unrestricted character. It has been fortunate for us that within our own limits we possess such diversity of soil, climate, and condition as to have prevented the restrictions upon foreign commerce from producing the same bad results as the restrictive policy caused and culminated in in Great Britain in 1841. At that time "the system which was supported with the view of rendering the country independent of foreign sources of supply, and thus, it was hoped, fostering the growth of home trade, had most effectually destroyed that trade by reducing the entire population to beggary, destitution, and want. In the manufacturing districts mills and workshops were closed, and property daily depreciated in value; in the sea-ports shipping was laid up useless in the harbor; agricultural laborers were eking out a miserable existence upon starvation wages and parochial relief, and the country was brought to the verge of national and universal bankruptcy."

As we are now about to enter upon the hundredth year of our existence as a nation, this dark picture will only partially apply to those identical branches of industry which the government has especially attempted to promote by restrictive statutes. Depression rules the hour among the mills, the mines, and the iron-works; strikes prevail in the factories; bloodshed is common at the mines; but the stove-maker, the wood-worker, the tinsmith, the wagon-builder, the blacksmith, the plow-maker, the millwright, the harness-maker, and their companions are busy and tolerably well employed, and these are the ones who constitute the vast army of manufacturers who must exist in every civilized community.

It is true that the depression in a few great branches of industry more or less affects all others, but it is also true that those special branches of industry are now the most depressed that have been most protected, as it is called, by the government during the last half of the century just ending.

We have only to glance at the vast force of free and industrious manufacturers and artisans, who are to be found in every corner of our fair land, to perceive how a free

inland commerce thrives and how true manufactures flourish in spite of and not because of the restrictive statutes.

The great centres of manufacture and of agriculture are not to be found where they are usually sought, and the true and great diversity of our industry and the extent of our commerce may be most fully realized by tracing them out. The census of 1870 gives us the data, and by it we find that the centre of manufacturing industry is in the city and county of New York, whose product of manufactures in the year 1870 exceeded \$332,000,000 in value; next comes Philadelphia, \$322,000,000; next, St. Louis, \$158,000,000 (in 1870, since increased to \$239,000,000 in 1875); and then follow Middlesex County, Massachusetts, \$113,000,000; Suffolk County, Massachusetts, \$112,000,000; Providence County, Rhode Island, \$85,000,000; Hamilton County, Ohio, \$79,000,000; Baltimore County, Maryland, \$59,000,000; Essex County, New Jersey, \$52,000,000; San Francisco, California, \$37,000,000; and in smaller sums we find the manufacturing arts wherever cities, towns, or villages exist.

Again, in agriculture the pre-eminence is not to be found in the West, where it would usually be sought, but in the list of counties producing the largest aggregate value each in its own State we find that Pennsylvania is at the head, while others follow in the following order:

Lancaster Co., Penn.	950 sq. miles...	\$11,815,008
St. Lawrence Co., N. Y. ...	2900 " " ...	9,508,071
Worcester Co., Mass.	1500 " " ...	6,351,411
Hartford Co., Conn.	807 " " ...	6,220,911
La Salle Co., Ill.	1050 " " ...	5,502,502
Oakland Co., Mich.	900 " " ...	5,154,231
Burlington Co., N. J.	600 " " ...	4,908,839

Then follow the rest of the champion counties in agriculture, indicating as little of the commonly assumed order as to position and section as the manufacturing and mechanic arts.

The exchanges of the products of these counties and States constitute our national commerce. It has been estimated that the aggregate of values moved over our seventy thousand miles of railroad in a year is over ten thousand million dollars, and for this service and for the transportation of passengers the sum of five hundred and twenty-six million dollars was paid in the year just ended. Yet all this vast movement is but for the supply of the simplest wants, and the utter futility of attempting to regulate or direct it by statute can be fully realized when we consider that it only exists because men choose to exchange bread for boots, beef for hats, pork for clothing, timber for dwellings, or the like. Thus commerce between States differing as widely as almost any section of the earth's surface in soil, climate, and condition, also differing widely in the rate of interest, in the incidence of local taxation, and in the wages of labor,

has yet called into existence our seventy thousand miles of railway, costing nearly four thousand million dollars, by means of which exchanges of goods were made last year estimated at two hundred million tons. Free commerce between the states of a great continent has induced this diversity of employment, and this establishment of manufactures in the immediate neighborhood of agriculture which assures prosperity to the mechanic, the manufacturer, and the farmer alike, while at the same time progress in the method of transportation has caused neighborhood to consist not so much in proximity as in the elimination of time. This freedom of commerce, and the division of labor that ensues from it, have led to certain results in the distribution of population which call for a passing notice. The production of the cereal crops upon which our whole prosperity now depends has ceased to be a matter of manual labor to any great extent, but is carried on by means of machines of complex character requiring few hands to tend them in proportion to their product. Had it not been for these new methods the war for the preservation of the Union would have been almost impracticable, because the million of men who were at one time in the loyal army could not have been spared without risk of famine; but in fact such had been the increased power of production and transportation that during the war, had the crops alone been considered, it would not have appeared that a single man had left his home upon the fields.

A further result has come in this, that as a less number of hands are needed in the field, a greater number may be employed in the arts, and herein is an explanation of the greater relative increase in the manufactures of the country than in the products of agriculture. This, again, has led to a far greater concentration in towns and cities. The tendency to concentration has been to some extent counteracted by the homestead and land-grant system under which the public lands have been distributed, but it is to be doubted if even this cheap land has caused any great increase in the relative number of the agricultural population; the new lands have been settled by a portion only of the immigrants from abroad, and by the farmers from the East, who have only changed their place and their method of work.

Men who have once been engaged in the arts or manufactures seldom return to the field, but the country lad does seek the town or city. It can not be doubted that this concentration in cities and towns will continue, and that population will be more and more condensed in narrow spaces, drawing their subsistence from long distances, and exchanging, in ever-increasing abundance, the comforts and luxuries which

they produce, for the food and fuel they consume; and with this condensation will come the more pressing need of solving the method of governing and administering great cities; of draining and ventilating, and of providing for the imperative necessity of parks, play-grounds, commons, and other wide, open areas, in order that, with these vast material gains that accompany free commerce and the division of labor, there may not be a grave loss in the moral welfare and in the physical vigor of the race.

The interdependence of our States and the service which each renders to the other find most homely illustration in a subject not fitted for poetic treatment, nor likely to appeal to the imagination—*commerce in hogs*.

The great prairies of the West grow corn in such abundance that even now, with all our means of intercommunication, it can not all be used as food, and some of it is consumed as fuel.

It often happens that the farmer upon new land, remote from railroads, can get only from fifteen to twenty cents per bushel for Indian corn, at which price, while it is the best, it is also the cheapest fuel that he can have, and its use is an evidence of good economy, not of waste. Upon the fat prairie lands of the West the hog is wholesomely fed only upon corn in the milk or corn in the ear; thence he is carried to the colder climate of Massachusetts, where by the use of that one crop in which New England excels all others—ice—the meat can be packed at all seasons of the year; there it is prepared to serve as food for the workman of the North, the freedman of the South, or the artisan of Europe; while the blood, dried in a few hours to a fine powder, and sent to the cotton fields of South Carolina and Georgia to be mixed with the phosphatic rocks that underlie their coast lands, serves to produce the cotton fibre which furnishes the cheapest and fittest clothing for the larger portion of the inhabitants of the world.

Here, then, is commerce, or men serving each other on a grand scale, all developed within the century, and undreamed of by our ancestors. The vast plains of the West, enriched by countless myriads of buffalo, can spare for years to come a portion of their productive force. Commerce sets in motion her thousand wheels, food is borne to those who need it most, and they are spared the effort to obtain it on the more sterile soil of the cold North. Commerce turns that very cold to use. The refuse is saved, and commerce has discovered that its use is to clothe the naked in distant lands. Borne to the sandy but healthy soils of Georgia and South Carolina, it renovates them with the fertility thus transferred from the prairies of Illinois and Indiana, and presently there comes back to Massachusetts the

cotton of the farmer, the well-saved, clean, strong, and even staple which commerce again has discovered to be worth identifying as the *farmer's*, not the planter's, crop, made by his own labor and picked by his wife and children, to whom only a few short years since such labor was ignoble, and because thus well saved worth a higher price.

Had the custom-house officer stood upon the Hudson River and said to the farmer of Illinois, "Your corn and meat must not come here, lest by your cheap labor you ruin our farmers," as the custom-house officer of the United States now says to the farmer and miner of Canada, when they try to send food and fuel to New England; had the tax-gatherer watched at the bar of the harbors of Charleston and Savannah to make the obstruction greater, lest the meat packed in New England should affect the price of the poor freedman's pigs, and lest the fertilizers made in Boston and Philadelphia should stop the phosphate works of those cities, as the custom-house officer of the United States now attempts to stop the refuse salt of foreign production, even when only needed as a manure; had the revenue official of Massachusetts stood ready to make the cotton more costly, as the custom-house officer of the United States now doubles the price of wool of Canada—this commerce could not have existed, the men of the West could not have rendered service to New England, nor they to their Southern brethren, nor they again to the people of all lands and all climes.

The century has witnessed the establishment of the culture and exchange of cotton, the extension of civilization over the prairies of the West, and the infinite and complex movements which we feebly try to grasp throughout all their ramifications, whereby the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, and the soil that has been burned over and scathed by slavery renewed and made more productive than ever before; yet one of the chief instruments in this vast benefit, by which the general struggle for life has thus been made less arduous, has been nothing but a *herd of swine*.

Turning a moment from this homely phase of progress, let us glance at another vast change. Early in the century a few small ships or barks sailed from New England, laden with muskets, beads, tobacco, and bales of red flannel, their destination the Northwest coast. Upon the voyage the goods were made up into packages containing each one musket, a few yards of flannel, and a small portion of beads and tobacco, each package the price of a bale of fur skins. Arriving at their destination, the vessel was laden with the furs thus bought, and then she slowly wended her way to China, where teas, purchased at about the same ratio of profit, were taken on board,

and, after a long period passed without being heard from, the ship returned to Boston or Salem. Under this system tea was the luxury of the few; now it is the comfort of the million. And how does it now reach the consumer? A telegram from St. Petersburg to New York or Boston calls for supplies of wheat or barley for the Russian troops on the Amoor River, the merchant in Boston or New York sends the message to San Francisco, the grain is laden upon a vessel there, the banker's credit furnished by the Russian government is transferred in a moment to China or Japan, and within a few weeks the tea of China or Japan, brought over the Pacific Railroad, is being consumed in Chicago in exchange for the wheat or barley of California, of which the rations of the Russian troops may at the same moment consist.

Were it not for the barriers that we maintain between ourselves and other nations, by which most of our manufactures are made more costly than those of other countries, orders not only for wheat and cotton and other crude products of the soil, but for the finer products of manufacturing industry, would be telegraphed for in the same manner, and we should serve the need of untold millions now almost unknown to us, receiving back that abundance of foreign comforts and luxuries of which we are in part deprived by the folly of economic superstition.

We are deprived of them under the pretense that our laborers can not afford the consumption of foreign luxuries, but that all such importations impoverish the country.

The end of all commerce is an abundant and general *consumption* not only of the necessary articles of subsistence, but of the comforts and luxuries of life; and the material prosperity of the country is to be gauged by the amount of its annual consumption more than by the magnitude of its accumulations.

The figures of the census, by which it is attempted to measure the wealth and progress of the people, are utterly fallacious if taken by themselves, the true measure of material prosperity being the amount of comfort and of luxury that the wages of workmen, relatively equal in intelligence and skill, will purchase at different dates and in different places.

A century since the man who now enjoys leisure and abundance, and whose hours of labor are not overlong, would have been forced to work the livelong day for a bare and coarse subsistence, while many of the ignorant emigrants who now swarm throughout our land would have starved had they then attempted to come into the colonies.

The great difference in the condition of the mass of the people a century since and at the present time consisted in this, that

then nearly all knew how to get moderate comfort from little means, partly because the labor of that day was nearly all of a kind that stimulated intelligence; there was much drudgery, but not the routine and monotony which now mark the condition of those who do the commoner sort of work. The Irish servant of to-day can obtain for her wages better clothes and more of them, is furnished with better food and more of it, and is better and more comfortably housed than the mistress of the house a century since; and these changes have come because the division of labor, the extension of commerce, and the improvements in means of transport have brought distant places near, and have increased production. The workman in the iron furnace, the weaver in the mill, the man who tends the machine in the boot factory, earns higher wages and may be able to live far better than the blacksmith, the cobbler, or the carpenter of old time. But he earns his subsistence in a far different way, and the abundance that he may enjoy may not be an unalloyed benefit. Why is not the man or woman of to-day who performs the drudgery of the world equal in thrift and intelligence to those who once did the work which they now do?

The reason is not difficult to find. The cobbler then used his brain as well as his lapstone; the blacksmith was an artisan, a leader in the church choir, and a chief speaker in town-meetings; the carpenter of that day was a craftsman; with poor tools, unaided by machinery, he was compelled to hew out his dwelling-place, and he built it firmly and well; the house and the man were built up together, and each was strong and true.

The housewife spun and wove the very cloth in which the family was clad, and as the web was woven, thrift and intelligence made part of the warp and woof. Each man and woman was the "builder of a brain" as well as of a home, and there could be no comfortable subsistence without true manhood and true womanhood.

Commerce has changed these conditions, and we are now at one of the half-way places. The same labor and the same intelligence that then gave but a subsistence, gained with arduous toil, but with much mental vigor, will now suffice to procure an ample competence and exemption from toil. The craftsman of the old time is the master of to-day, the housewife has become the mistress of a mansion; but the toiler of to-day is not the equal of the toiler of old time, and he could not then have subsisted at all. Commerce, invention, and the division of labor have increased abundance, but have also, to a considerable extent, separated the functions of those who work with the head from those who work with the hand; they have raised a large portion of

the community to a higher plane of comfort and luxury than could have been even dreamed of a century since, and in so doing have made a place and created occupations for those who could not then have existed at all in regions or countries which now have a dense population; but these occupations are of a new kind, and many of the methods by which this comfort and abundance are obtained tend to deaden the intelligence and to promote a merely animal existence. May it not be that one of the causes of the uneasiness of those who toil, and who constitute the laboring classes of some sections, comes from the monotony of their work rather than from the want of material comfort? Man can not live by bread alone, and ten or eleven hours a day spent in watching a machine, while they may yield more bread and meat than the hand spinner and weaver of a century since ever earned, may yet be devoid of that use of the mental faculties that alone makes existence tolerable.

Where the operation of the machine tends to relieve the operative of all thought, the man or woman who tends it risks becoming a machine, well oiled and cared for, but incapable of independent life. The culture of the past was more diffused, but it was obtained by means of the very toil that was needed to gain subsistence, because the work itself called upon all the faculties, and was not a matter of routine; the culture and refinements of to-day come from leisure and opportunity more than from the development of men in the necessary work of their lives. May it not be possible that one of the causes of the great demand which exists for bad and sensational books and for exciting amusements comes from the dreary monotony of many of the necessary occupations of men and women, and that one of the most essential developments of commerce or of mutual service in the future will be in the direction of more ample provision for wholesome amusements? As has been well said by an eminent and truly orthodox divine, "Amusement is a force in Christian life;" and unless this need is well served by the saints, we may be very sure that it will be ill served by those whose title is not saintly. How to provide cheap and wholesome amusements for those who toil is one of the great problems of commerce which must be solved.

We have said that much of the necessary work of the laboring people fails to develop character. In a higher walk of life, even the merchants of former days, though their ventures were small, their vessels of but few tons, and though their gains would only have been those of the small shop-keepers of the present time, yet seem to have been men of a larger type and of finer mould than the great tradesmen of our time. The merchant's work then called for foresight, en-

ergy, and a wide comprehension; but steam and the telegraph are great levelers, and the success of the merchant of to-day depends more on routine, method, and capital.

The grander men of this time, who would once have been great merchants, are now the builders of railroads and great works, the tool-makers and the machine-builders, the masters of the arts of all kinds.

On the other hand, the theory of Malthus that population gained faster than the means of subsistence, and that men must die of war, pestilence, and famine in an ever-increasing ratio, finds as yet no warrant in the experience of men. Commerce has eliminated time and distance, while invention and discovery have yielded greater and greater abundance for each given portion of time devoted to the work of procuring subsistence; and the one great fact which especially indicates the progress of commerce in the century just ending is this, that more men may now live, and need not die, on any given area in the civilized world than was possible a century since. This is as true of parts of our own country as it is of other countries.

The "progressive desire" which distinguishes men from brutes has been met by ever-increasing power of satisfaction. But it is not sufficient to have achieved only the means of living: life must be made worth living to each and all.

We have said that the nation is at one of the half-way points: division of labor and the extension of commerce have increased the supply of all that men need for subsistence, while altering the conditions of much of the work, so that it has become monotonous drudgery. On the other hand, the uses that have been found for refuse and offensive substances have led to inventions that have removed the degrading conditions from many kinds of necessary labor.

If we consider society as a pyramid, the constant rising of the apex has opened the way for a broader and firmer base of useful employment, and it can not be questioned that the constant tendency is toward a steady reduction of the necessary hours of labor, and a constant increase of the opportunity for mental stimulus in the hours of leisure; hence, as the labor of production becomes more and more a matter of machinery and apparatus rather than of individual exertion of brain and muscle, the capability for enjoyment which all covet but few attain will surely come for the mass of men, but it must come from culture and education outside their work, and not in the work itself. Hence it follows that the need of our time is not so much the promotion of greater abundance of material things, because the abundance exists even at this very moment to the extent of plethora, but the removal of the obstacles which exist in the

form of meddlesome statutes and constant attempts to hinder, by restrictive methods, that free exchange by which alone can even abundance be made a blessing.

It is a fact not to be gainsaid, that even at this moment the only conditions requisite to a comfortable subsistence for man or woman in this country are prudence, intelligence, health, and integrity. The question is not one of the supply of the things needed, but of the method of obtaining them; and yet our ever-increasing wealth is accompanied by increasing poverty; the attempt to protect, foster, and promote certain specified branches of industry by restricting exchange has enervated and emasculated those to whom the artificial stimulus has been given, and has obstructed the progress of those whose occupations could not from their very nature be included in the attempt to protect.

Added to these removable causes of harm we have another more subtle and vicious cause of a false and unjust distribution of the abundance of material things that we produce. We shall enter upon our second century of life as a nation under the curse of bad money. The most essential tool of our trade, the medium by which all the exchanges that constitute our commerce are made, is the dishonored promise of the nation. Issued under the stress of war, it continues to inflict the curse of war long after peace and plenty have become assured. Of it may be said, as was said of the legal-tender paper money of the Revolution, that it has polluted the equity of our laws, and turned them into engines of oppression and wrong; that it has corrupted the justice of our public administration; that it has enervated the trade, husbandry, and manufactures of our country; that it has gone far to destroy the morality of our people; and that it has done more injustice than the arms and artifices of the enemies of the Union for whose subjugation it was issued.

Thus does it appear that the century just ending, the first of the strictly commercial age, has been marked by greatly increased power over the productive forces of nature, and that the promises of the future material welfare of the nation are grand indeed. What we now need is greater liberty and a broader education, with instruction in what constitutes the true use of leisure, in order that there may not be the shadow of truth in the charge sometimes made that for a large portion of the community leisure is now but another name for license.

The legal obstructions to our true prosperity are maintained by the influence of the rich, and not of the poor; not willfully in the face of better knowledge, but because they are still misled as to the true function of commerce. We have provided well for the common education of the poor, and that provision is now our salvation. When we

shall have as fitly provided for the higher education of the rich, when we shall have reversed the old order, and it shall be the conviction of every man born to fortune that only the idle man is ignoble, then will the merchant, the tradesman, and the manufacturer fill their true places in the order of events. Then will come the time when peace and good-will may reign among the nations of the earth, and when by means of free commerce there shall be for the millions yet unborn not only material comfort and welfare, but the opportunity fully enjoyed for general culture and refinement, coupled with mental and spiritual progress never yet attained.

BOSTON, MASS.

EDWARD ATKINSON.

A PALACE OF COBWEB.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A SACK OF GOLD."

"I DOUBT if you ever marry at all," said Mrs. Ashby.

"Indeed!"

"Yes, my dear; and I have done my best for you."

"How kind of you! Consider me a *mauvais sujet*."

"When I say that you may never marry, I do not mean for lack of opportunity, and the most brilliantly attractive women sometimes remain single. Depend upon it, there is no more thankless task than that of the married woman who attempts to establish others as happily as herself."

"Every one can not find an Edward," said the girl at the window.

"I would not sneer, Elisabeth; it does not become you," responded the little matron, with dignity. "I have brought up whole platoons of eligible men for your inspection, but you would none of them."

"Did it ever occur to you that this very apparent marshaling of forces might be repulsive at the outset?" asked Elisabeth, composedly.

It was Mrs. Ashby's turn to flush now. What! were her tact and address in such delicate matters of diplomacy to be doubted?

"I have done my best. When youth, beauty, and wealth come together, it is natural to endeavor to forge the chain, for cold and lonely old age succeeds only too soon."

The girl came swiftly to the arm-chair, and gathered the little woman in her embrace. "Oh, my wee Queen Mab, do not bother your pretty head about such things. You secured the adorable Edward, and that is enough. Why try to manage the world?"

"I give you up," said Mab, smiling. "After all, I shall have the more of your society as an old maid; only promise me, dear, not to discover a vocation, not to take to charity schools and poodle dogs in a violent form." Thus Mab, bending over the sheet, tracing a delicate vine tendril in the water-color