

# The World and His Wife

A POPULAR EXPLANATION OF THE AFFAIRS OF TO-DAY



THE prosperity and the riches of our country to-day are shown by three facts. Or, one may look at the United States and see three gigantic pictures of wealth-bringing activity as if they were painted on our continent as on a canvas. The first picture is on the Atlantic Coast, the next in the Mississippi Valley, and the third on the Pacific Coast. And these are only typical. The first picture is the almost complete rebuilding of New York. No such change was ever made in any great city in the world, no such rapid investment in permanent improvement. Leaving out the fabulous sums that are going into new private buildings, the public works alone that are now under way will cost more than the imagination can grasp. The underground electric railroad, now almost done, will cost thirty-five millions of dollars; other underground roads and tunnels that are planned and will be built will cost seventy-five millions more; the tunnels and new stations of railroads entering the city, ninety millions; the second bridge to Brooklyn, nearly done, twenty millions; the third bridge, soon to be built, twenty-two millions; the United States Government is spending there in buildings and harbor work twenty millions; the public library will cost three millions and a half, besides the five millions that the Carnegie branch libraries will cost; a new aqueduct, five millions; dock improvements, three millions; and these are by no means all. The State may spend one hundred millions in improving the canals to bring trade to the city. In the neighborhood of one uptown square private persons and companies are spending forty millions in new business buildings.

New York is not alone. It is only the biggest example of rich growth among our Eastern cities. Similar permanent improvements are making in nearly all the Atlantic seaboard cities that are centres of trade. This is not speculation. It is the foundation of a new era of growth and prosperity.

## A Picture of Mid-Continental Prosperity

THE second great picture of well-being is in the Mississippi Valley. A few weeks ago all the world was reading of the celebration at St. Louis of the one hundredth anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase. This great area, including what are now twelve States and two Territories, was bought by President Jefferson from France for about three cents and a half an acre. Farther and farther westward, now almost to the eastern border of this region, have moved the centre of population of the United States and the centre of manufacturing. For the great Mississippi Valley is not only the garden that feeds much of the world, but it is also a great manufacturing region.

In the value of the things it makes, what we used to call "the West" has left New England far behind, although New England makes more things than it ever made before. Hides used to be sent to the East and then sent back again to the West as shoes. Wool used to be sent to the East and then sent back again as cloth or as clothing. The West is now stopping this costly way of doing business, for it is making its own things out of its own materials.

The money laid up by Western farmers is now lent in the Eastern States. The State of Nebraska owns bonds of the State of Massachusetts. The Kansas banks have eighty millions of dollars on deposit, two-thirds of it the money of farmers.

Not only, therefore, are the great cities of the Atlantic States rebuilding themselves for greater trade and greater comfort and greater beauty, but the cities of the interior are doing the same thing; and not the cities only but the rural regions also.

Such a picture of prosperity and wealth as that which stretches over the wide spaces of our mid-continent the sun never shone down on before.

## Pacific Trade Changes and Our Prosperity Over-Seas

THE third picture is as wonderful as the others; for the trade of the Pacific States is increasing to such an extent as to change the old course of commerce around the world. Silk and tea and other products of Asia used to go westward to Europe and even to the United States through the Suez Canal. And our cotton goods and other things that we sent to Asia used to go eastward by Europe and the Suez Canal over the same route.

Now all this has changed or is changing. Chinese things come across the Pacific to our shores directly to us; and they are hauled across our continent and across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe. Our cotton goods and our flour and all the other things we send to Asia are now going westward on our railroads and across the Pacific.

Thus our Pacific States are changing the old trade routes of the world, which will be even more changed after the Central American canal is cut. The largest ships afloat, except one, are now on the Pacific Ocean; and the trade with Asia will become ours. The cities of the Pacific will become the homes of great commerce as the cities of the Atlantic have become.



Nor does our prosperous activity stop at either ocean. A Russian concession has lately come into American hands to develop the minerals, the fur trade, and the fisheries of a large part of Eastern Siberia. Our energy and capital have, of course, before gone into the mainland of Asia, for railroad concessions in China are held by Americans.

American companies are building electrical railways in cities in South Africa; they are sending electrical plants to Japan; they are putting up electrical machinery in mines in Spain; they are equipping machine shops in India; they are sending sawmills and electrical machinery to Mexico and railroad cars to Yucatan; and they have made contracts to build bridges in Austria and in Australia.

All these and many other such world-girdling activities are constantly engaging our manufacturers and engineers; for the foregoing are only a small part of the items that happened to be reported in the trade papers for a single week. A profit from them all comes home to swell the tide of American prosperity.

## How Long Will "Good Times" Continue?

HOW long our unparalleled prosperity will last men are asking themselves here and abroad. No people within a short time ever before made so much money from farms, manufactures and trade as we have made these last four or five years. Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan declares our condition healthful. The "London Times" thinks that we have had too much speculation and that an early day of reckoning will come—that hard times await us.

The large facts hardly yet warrant such a fear. Our railroads have more to haul than they ever had before—so much that they cannot keep it all moving; and they are spending millions of dollars to build more tracks and yards. The great steel mills have more orders ahead than they have ever before had. Our trade at home is greater than anybody five years ago would have dared to predict it could become in twenty years. Our foreign trade is again coming up to the enormous totals of two years ago. The solid facts of the business world all point to continued prosperity. Our factories are going, and our fields are again green with the promise of large crops.

There has been speculation. There has been the putting of false values on stocks. There has been much extravagance. But the productive activity of the people of our country is so much greater than the artificial putting up of values that the foundation of prosperity yet seems secure.

The greatest danger is that the requirements of business may possibly outrun the supply of money. The money in circulation is \$28.43 a person—\$4 more than it was ten years ago, and nearly twice as much as it was twenty-five years ago. But the need is of still further expansion. Even the wisest men of affairs have never yet well understood the delicate, world-wide influences that determine the coming and the going of good times and bad times; and no man's predictions have authority. But there are no big signs of bad weather yet.

## A Strong Swing Toward Peace

NO ONE can look about the world and fail to see that the great Governments are changing their kinds of tasks. Nobody (but the Turk) now thinks of war. Nobody thinks so much of party politics as he once thought. Military and political tasks are laid aside for tasks that help the people and for great works of commerce.

Our Government gave its best thought during the last Congress to the canal across Central America; England is engaged chiefly with an effort to make the Irish tenants the owners of the land; and the hero of the day in England is Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, who has gone home from a peace-bearing and constructive visit to South Africa; and the subject of discussion in all Europe is the Czar's decree for the improvement of the Russian people.

The military hero is not in the public mind. No General nor Admiral holds the people's attention. The talk of the world is of trade or of lifting up the unfortunate masses.

This change in the thought of mankind may fairly be credited to the United States. We have stood for peace. We have stood for work. We have stood for philanthropy. We have stood for the well-being of the man who toils. The other nations have seen that to go to war would mean a loss of trade, a loss of working power, an increase of individual misfortune—would mean getting behind in the race. Our republican prosperity has had much to do with putting a long-querrelsome world into a gentler and humaner mood. There is a strong swing toward universal peace.

## Third in Naval Fighting Strength

IN SPITE of the peaceful mood of the world, the energetic nations are building bigger navies than they had, till lately, ever dreamed of. The British Government will spend this year about one hundred and seventy millions of dollars on its ships, and we shall spend about half as much. Germany, too, is carrying out the largest shipbuilding program that she ever made.

Our Government is fast forging ahead as a great naval power. A few years ago it was sixth in the list of nations in the fighting strength of its ships. In an official report recently made by Captain Sigsbee, Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence, it was pointed out that we shall soon stand third. England has and is building ninety-four ships for her battle line; France, seventy; the United States, forty-six; Germany, forty-five. The tonnage of the English Navy will be more than the tonnage of any other two navies.

Thus the heavy burdens for protection on the sea are laid on all the leading nations. The naval tax is at least

a dollar a year on every man, woman and child in the United States. Nor is the time in sight when the navies will be smaller, for the policy is to make them continually bigger. The Governments regard them as insurance against war. Whether this view be right or wrong no Government is willing to let its insurance lapse.

One thing can be said for a large navy that cannot be said for a large army. If there should be need for it a big army could be put into the field in a little while. Men could soon be trained on land, and arms could soon be supplied. But the naval service would require long training, and warships cannot be built within a year or two. But the hope is that there may never be another war between Great Powers.

## The Bright Chapter of Our Dealings with Cuba

WHEN we went to war with Spain our Government pledged itself to make Cuba free, and the promise was promptly kept. But the island was impoverished, and we promised to help it by admitting Cuban products, especially sugar, to our markets for a period at a reduced rate of duty. We did not keep this promise promptly, but we shall probably keep it at last.

A trade treaty giving such a reduction has been agreed upon by the Presidents of the two Governments; it has been ratified by the Cuban Senate, and by the United States Senate subject to the approval of the House of Representatives; and President Roosevelt will call Congress in extra session early in the fall for this purpose.

When the treaty at last takes effect Mr. Roosevelt may fairly claim it as a personal achievement. He recommended it in his first message. The Senate did not act. He went forth last fall and made speeches to the people about it. He recommended it in his second message. Again the Senate did not act. He called it together in extra session. It ratified the treaty subject to the approval of the House; and he will now call Congress together in extra session. Thus he has shown his quality of unweariness.

And thus will close—one of the most interesting and honorable chapters in our history. It is the chapter of our dealings with Cuba. We found it a pest-land of impoverished people. We made the island a health resort. We gave the people their independence. We found them poor from war. We shall give them trade advantages to their enrichment and to our credit as a humane and honorable Government.

## THE DECREE OF THE CZAR

A GREAT struggle for the mastery of the world may at some time come between Russia and the nations that speak the English tongue. Although the British Empire has nearly twice as large a population as the Russian, only a small part of it is English. There are almost as many Russians as there are English-speaking people in the world. But the English-speaking nations hold many of the best parts of the earth; and they are strong because their men are free. They have free governments, free speech, and a free chance to work. The Russian masses are far behind the English-speaking masses. Many of them are yet only a slight remove from slavery.

One of the great questions of the future is whether the one hundred and thirty million Russians, with their increasing population, will be freed so that they will push into the activities of the outer world. They are yet held back. They have not free government, nor free speech, nor a free chance.

The Czar's decree for greater freedom, which he issued on the last anniversary of his father's birth, is, therefore, an historic event. He promised greater religious freedom, a larger share of local government, a better chance for the individual man. Although the Czar is the most absolute ruler in Europe he has less power than any other monarch to carry out reforms in his empire. His decree may result in little or in much. For the real power of Russia is the power of the nobility and of the officials, and most of them are corrupt. They regard their income from the people, whether it take the form of rent or of exactions, as their sacred right.

But the issuing of such a decree means much even if small immediate results follow. It shows the same liberal temper of the Czar that was shown when he called the Peace Conference at The Hague. It will greatly encourage the liberal and progressive party to push for greater freedom. It is a landmark in Russian advancement, and it brings nearer the time when this great empire, with its undeveloped strength of men, will be opened to modern influences.

It is the only empire that stretches continuously from the waters of the Atlantic to the waters of the Pacific. The great part that it will play in the world when it finds out its own strength under freer institutions is one of the most interesting revelations that the future has in store for the nations. This decree of the Czar may be a short step toward the development of his people, but it will become an historic one.

