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A FOOL'S NOTIONS.

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Expansion of Contraction.

We are at the threshold of an epoch unprecedented in history. The closing century has been full of marvels none of them so great as the civilization born of the new conditions which it brought. Never was there a Yesterday so wonderful and a Today so replete with surplus force yet barren of conscious purpose. What will so marvellous a present make of the impending morrow?

For ages the crisis, the wakening from slumber has come at the century's end. For this, there is a good psychological reason--as there is for all the apparent mysteries of history. The past of humanity, instead of a disconnected category of miracles, is when properly read, an orderly relation of constituent forces--a continued story of cause and effect. Inaction, quiescence, does not always mean retrogression with nations, any more than with individuals. Peoples must rest as well as athletes. Repose may mean growth or decadence--renewed strength, or overmastering lassitude. The chrysalid is not death but a time of swift, silent indeterminate development. Who shall guess its character? Only he who has carefully studied the nature of the moth which folded its wings to sleep within the golden casket. Today, the world has slept for a generation--its greater part, for two average lives.

Few national boundaries have been changed in half a century.

Prussia swallowed Silesia, Holstein, and a generation later Alsace-Lorraine. Then, grown strong enough she cast her iron arms about the straggling odds and ends which called themselves nations and with the hug of a hungry bear, gripped them into a whole and called it Germany. Out of fused fragments, weak and insignificant she made an iron empire--one of the four great powers of the world.

Italy has grown out of an indeterminate melange into uncertain empire. Greece has been again propped into so-called autonomy. The United States have bought Alaska from Russia, crowded Spain out of taken Cuba, ~~and~~ Porto Rico and the Philippines by conquest and annexed Hawaii on petition of its people. France and Germany have acquired territory in China and Africa. These are all the notable changes of national boundaries in the past half century. A glance backward will show that the century's ending is likely to bring new world conditions.

A.D. 1500.

At the end of the fifteenth century the world became possessed with a frenzy for discovery. New worlds, new continents, new peoples, new opportunities for conquest and plunder. Monarchs sought aggrandizement of thrones and dynasties. Nobles sought wealth and dignities; soldiers fame and power; navigators new lands long hidden by untravelled seas; merchants new wares; laborers better wages; criminals exemption from punishment. The known world looked westward and eastward, southward and northward, for something new and wonderful.

A.D. 1600.

A century later--the power of Spain was waning. Her great Arma-

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da had been destroyed. The Reformation had filled the world with the mighty force of individualism. The British privateers were on the Spanish Main. The world had been circumnavigated. Gunpowder had made the musqueteer the equal of a hundred savage bowman. The New World began to be a place of refuge. Men who could not resist oppression fled from it to unknown solitudes.

A.D.1700.

The frenzy of discovery had passed. Those who came from the old world to the new were less refugees than home-makers. Dreams of a mighty future stirred their hearts? The strife of the old world hatreds stained the soil of the new. National greed devised the "right of Discovery" as a patent of possession. The English Revolution not only overthrew the dynasty but left England a constitutional Monarchy --a nation in which the sovereign is a servant of the people and holds his right by contract not by divine selection. The epoch of popular government had begun. The New World was held by two forces-- Spanish gold-seekers and English home-makers.

A.D.1800.

The new forces which the previous centuries had developed, had ripened into national impulses. The American home-building, self-defending colonies, heirs of all the individual tendencies which the old world's theories had crowded out of its life, had developed a new world Republic. No sooner had the new nation half-recovered from its exhaustive struggle for autonomy than the surplus energy of its people drew them with frenzied eagerness into the commerce of the world; so

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that when the nineteenth century dawned, thousands of her little ships were plowing every sea and bringing the product of every land to the marts of Europe. At a single European port in one month of the former century's closing days, two ships arrived and departed every day, bearing the new nations's flag. In five years at the same port, more than a thousand American ships came and went. The people of the new republic were working out their destiny. In every heart, was planted the impulse of achievement. In their white-winged brigs and sloops--their Sallys and Nancys, Washingtons and Constitutions--they were putting out from every port and inlet to capture the trade of the world,--the empire of the seas. Long ago this would have been accomplished, but slavery divided our forces and the Great West offered another and more inviting field for our surplus energies. In the first days of the new century we bought all that lay to the west of the Mississippi, drained by its waters--the largest land-deal ever made. Before the century reached its meridian we had absorbed Texas, and conquered a golden empire from Mexico.

The century's dawn saw universal war in Europe. No nation saving the Island empire of Great Britain was strong enough to avoid the impress of Napoleon's heel. Thrones, dynasties and boundaries were ~~and~~ swept away by the armies of the French Republic. Their impulse was glory. When it had spent itself the nations slept. After two generations came the reflux wave and Bismarck, the builder, stood in the place of Napoleon, the destroyer. Germany, made of congruous materials, was hooped with Prussian steel. Her impulse is to outdo all other nations--in battle on land or sea; in the shop; in the mart; in every

line in which nations compete. Already, she believes herself the first nation of the world. Her emperor only voices the national impulse in arrogating to himself the leadership of christiandom. France dreams of the glory of the Napoleonic era and England holds to her imperial policy by defending her South African dependencies against the Boer insurgent's dream of a Dutch Dominion. Is it any wonder that the American people see in these conditions the need of making the United States a world-power instead of an isolated self-restricted nation?

A.D.1900.

The new century, like its immediate predecessors, bids fair to bring a period of national strife based on new conditions and inspired by new impulses.

For the first time in the world's history, production exceeds consumption. All the nations of Europe except Russia, depend on the sale of manufactured articles for the support of their people, the wages of their laborers, the profits of their merchants and the supply of raw materials. National power has for its chief purpose to-day the promotion of industrial prosperity, the finding, taking and holding new markets. Germany's immense naval preparations have for their objective, not the security of the empire, not mere rivalry of British sea power, but the extension of German trade--the conquest of the world's commerce--wages for her artisans and profit for her merchants.

The United States has a greater surplus of productive energy than any other nation of the world. Her mechanical inventions of the past half-century have increased even more than in other lands, the



productive capacity of the individual. The American farmer of to-day with two horses, produces more available food material than could ten men with thirty horses half a century ago. One man's labor, supplemented by machinery, produces now more iron and steel than could forty men fifty years ago. The nations of Europe take one-eighth their productive strength to keep up their standing armies, and yet they have such a surplus of labor that every manufacturing plant is overstocked with workers and wages are far below what ours receive. Our army is so small that its absence from the field of production is never felt; can indeed, hardly be estimated. Both of food-products and of manufactured articles we can easily produce many times our present consumption. How are we to secure and hold a fair share of the world's markets for our surplus?

Every man of common intelligence knows that commercial expansion must be backed with power. The right to trade depends always in this epoch of over-production, upon a nation's power to enforce its demand for opportunity. England's commercial supremacy is based, first of all things upon the opportunity her colonial possessions give. Germany since 1870 has made the most tremendous commercial strides because her government has opened the way for her merchants in every country of the world, by building not only a merchant marine but a naval power that commands the respect of all the world and the apprehension of a good part of it. Germany, Russia and France seek in China new commercial monopolies and England will spare no expense to hold her sphere of influence. Why? Because all expect to increase thereby

their area of profitable commerce. The United States demands the "open door" that is, an equal right to trade with all. Such right depends on our ability to enforce such demand. Duties are not the only means by which trade may be restricted. The American dealer must have a free <sup>opportunity</sup> to bring American goods into every market. The people of other countries cannot be expected to push American products. The inflexible law of tomorrow's commerce is that the seller must seek the buyer, the producer the consumer.

If we expect to hold our place in the commerce of the world, to have a fair competition with other producers and manufacturers, the "open door" must be kept ajar by force or the knowledge that we are ready to use force to open it if closed against our interests. If we had not had at hand in the Philippines an army and navy ready to maintain our demands, what would have been the conditions of our minister, our merchants, our missionaries in China? Had we been in the condition we were before the war with Spain, who would have paid any attention to our demands?

If the Boxer rising had occurred three years ago, we would have been compelled, humbly and submissively, to ask England or Germany or Russia or Japan to safeguard the interests of American representatives and American trade in China and to pay for such action by the grant of commercial privileges or by consent to territorial aggressions by these powers.

To-day, thanks to the providential events which gave us an army and navy sufficient to maintain the interests of American commerce

and safeguard American citizens, and to the promptness with which the President used these forces and made the Philippines an efficient base of operations, we stand as a nation, respected by all the world, able to secure from all the other powers such reasonable concessions as our interests may demand.

The impulse which impels the American people to demand the retention of the Philippines is not based on any consideration of the mere commercial value of the same or any desire to acquire new territory, but on the universal truth that a nation which has and maintains a world-commerce must be a world-power and must have possessions in the Pacific which will enable it to develop and protect our trade in the Orient which is to be the focus of that commercial expansion for which all the commercial nations of the earth are striving to obtain.

In the new century the chief impulse of national power, the main incentive to international competition among civilized peoples, will be to secure a market for the product of their national industries. Outside of Russia, dynasties, sovereigns and rulers are hereafter of little moment. The world-impulse with which the twentieth century will begin, is "Work for the laborer and profit for the manufacturer." Inspired by this, the great nations will employ every power to win in the great world-competition. No struggle of modern or ancient times can compare in intensity or universality with the fight for commercial supremacy which not only impends but has already begun. Every European power faces this grim necessity: It must find work



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for its laborers and markets for its manufacturers or face domestic strife which means political destruction. Never before has monarch or minister faced so terrible an alternative, for never before has the world's production capacity outrun the world's need and forced the nations of the earth to scramble for new markets.

In this struggle the United States has the advantage of natural position and surplus individual energy. She has the disadvantage of a larger proportion of Wise Men who prefer theories to facts as a basis for national action.

R. R. G.