

WESTSEEN BY EASTERN EYES

Observations of a Traveler from the East Who Looked Over the Country.

PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS ARE /LIFE

Conditions of Life in the West and the East Contrasted—Notable Tributes to the Productive Forces of the West.

The current issue of the New York Independent contains two notable articles written from opposite viewpoints, yet in which the writers reach strikingly similar conclusions. "The West Through Eastern Eyes," by Stephen M. Dale, an eastern journalist, presents in perspective the business and social characteristics of the west as they appeared to an open minded observer who traveled about the country for the purpose indicated in the paper. In a companion paper, "The East Through Western Eyes," Dr. E. E. Henson of New York City, a former resident of Wyoming, contrasts the characteristics of the eastern and western people, decidedly to the advantage of the latter.

Leaving the east to the tender care of the former Wyoming doctor, the west will find much that is agreeable, much to soothe its pride, much gratification in a pen picture drawn by an appreciative and truthful artist.

Mr. Dale's itinerary covered the country along the traveled routes from the lakes to the Pacific coast, going out over the northern route and returning on the central route to the Missouri river. By the west the writer wished to be understood as meaning "the big west"—that stretching from Chicago to the Pacific ocean. Concerning the physical and mechanical features of the country, the people and their characteristics and institutions compared with those of the east, the writer draws these contrasts:

Mechanical Features and Institutions.

In such an attempt there come first in any such series of contrasts those of mere mechanical equipment; and of these, first of all, because simplest of all and most noticeable of all, are the railroads of the west. Both in their appearance and their operation the western are in marked contrast to the eastern railroads. As everyone knows, yet perhaps not everyone, they are all single-track roads. How nearly universal is this characteristic is shown by the fact that one road advertising its claim to patronage "The only double-track road between Chicago and the Missouri river." Beyond the Missouri there is none. Again, their construction was a more simple task than was that of railroads in the east. For hundreds of miles the country will be found so level that not a cut or fill or grade is needed; consequently the cost of building such a road consisted merely in surveying the route, running a ditch on either side to drain the roadbed and ballasting up a row of ties to hold a pair of rails. The building of the road, then, was done in many cases too soon, perhaps; there were probably too many competing parallel lines built in that singularly unique period of general railway construction a quarter of a century ago, but they have "paid for" it. It is far cry from Jay Gould's "two streaks of rye through an uninhabited plain" to the condition of that same one of these great trunk lines today.

And the whole idea of railroading, the very raison d'être of railroads in the west, is wholly different from that in the east. The two methods of operation are different, as the ends to be gained are different. The aim of these transcontinental lines is almost exactly the aim of the transoceanic steamship lines. Their object is to connect points far apart, to cross the ocean and separated from each other by land which is itself in large part worthless and in large part consequently uninhabited. Out of this fact there grows another, as a corollary would out of a proposition in geometry, viz., that of railroads in the west, both the officials and employees are conspicuously more courteous than in the east. This might be ascribed to the custom of the country; it might be because that competition there is greater, more lines connecting the same points and hence more chance for travelers to choose; but it is more probably because of the peculiarity cited above, the "long hauls." Many of the roads have only two through passenger trains a day, but these two trains are longer, the cars are larger, the seats are more comfortable than on eastern roads, and in every way local traffic is subordinated to through traffic. The same train conductor is with a party all day and the same Pullman conductor for three or four days, so that their relation to the passengers becomes almost that of the captain of an ocean steamer to those in his charge.

Contrasts in Cities.

Secondly, there is a striking contrast between the cities of the east and west—in their public buildings, their public works, their heating, lighting and water supply systems, and, chiefest of all, in their street cars. Rates for use of all these things are lower and accommodations better, the climax of all street railway systems, for example, being reached in that system—the Twin City Rapid Transit—which connects St. Paul and Minneapolis and which is conceded on all hands to be the standard system of the world. The hotels, stores, theaters and public buildings, too, are finer by far than those of cities of corresponding size in the east, the use of electricity for both light and power having become general there earlier than here.

All of which is due no doubt to several very simple causes. One is that such systems in each city have all been organized at one time by one corporation under one management. This was because the period of the construction of these things fell within the range of that modern era dominated by the spirit of combination, and the others have had to bring about elsewhere by means of deals and consolidations these were able to do at the start; nor did they have to wait until one system still partly efficient was wholly worn out or until the period of its franchise had wholly elapsed. There was no economic waste to be considered; they could build on clear ground and build well early. Doing all this, too, so long after their eastern neighbors had done similar things, they could profit by those neighbors' mistakes; they did not have to experiment, they simply adopted that which had proven itself to be of value elsewhere.

Public School System.

Next after this pair of so-called mechanical features there may be considered a pair of institutions. He was right who said that "The American people are the most widely newspaper-read and the most thoroughly public-schooled of any people in the world." He would further have been right if he had gone farther and said that this is more true in the west than it is in the east. Indeed, one of the things that most of all surprise one in the efficiency of its working in the public school system in the west and the dignified placid that institution holds in the opinion of the people. It has always been and still is in cities of the second, third and fourth class that the public school system of the country is seen at its best. The teaching force, on the one hand, is better, and the patronage of the best people, on the other hand, is more hearty. The teachers are better, in part because they are better paid and in part because that there the

"Teacher" has a higher social status, and the profession therefore attracts more competent and more ambitious men and women. The schools themselves are better, both ward and high schools, because that in these cities they are practically the only schools. The best people of the city, therefore, stand back of them; their interest is keen in the work that these do for their children, and that because private schools have not as yet divided with the public schools these people's interest.

The Press.

The second of this pair of "institutions" is the press. This is a delicate point, for the east is especially proud of its daily press. The unabridged unvarnished truth, however, is that the daily papers of the big cities of the west and far west are ahead of those in the east and far east and in that their interests are more general and in that they have a more general perspective. Consider the front pages of the New York City dailies, for example, with those of Chicago, Denver, St. Louis, Salt Lake City or San Francisco, and what I have in mind becomes apparent. Here interests are much more local; pride is more provincial. Three columns of a front page will be given up to the daily press, while the daily papers of the big cities of the west and far west are ahead of those in the east and far east and in that their interests are more general and in that they have a more general perspective.

Religion and Patriotism.

And there are still two other things this pair may be called institutions, but only in the highest sense; they might be more accurately called, perhaps, traits of national life. I am thinking of the church and the state, of the religion and the patriotism of the west and the east. There is an old saying that "There is no God west of the Missouri river." The fact is, however, what I was surprised at most was not the absence of churches, but their presence; not their scarcity, but their abundance. In little towns which stand all dotted through the west, looking like troops of Falstaff's soldiers with their dozen private members toting each one with exact precision the straight line of a single street, and facing the railway as though drawn up to present arms on a dress parade, one will see invariably one store, one postoffice, one school house, a "Palace hotel"—and always a church. The practice seems to prevail of having such an edifice, no matter how small the community or how isolated from other communities. In states they range from tiny chapels all the way up to those magnificent ecclesiastical structures of many of the great cities, buildings which, as mere edifices alone, would do credit to Fifth avenue.

Churches Ready.

How many people are in them? I do not know. I do know, however, that in just the same way that railroads and other institutions, they, too, are on the ground in time, ready, waiting to receive and serve the coming growth of population. Even though they may be subsidized by eastern capital in the form of "home mission" appropriations, they differ not at all in this respect from other things. There are, for example, only a few churches in the west which are only weekly, bi-weekly or tri-weekly services, just as there are, I suppose, churches in which there is but one service a month and one pastor to three congregations. On one of those very roads, in sight of some of those very churches, I rode one day for four hours, one of only three passengers in a whole Pullman coach. That coach did not pay for its carrying over that section, and yet it was carried, and it will be carried until the traffic on that road will fill it. And it will have paid to do it. So of the churches.

Secondly, their patriotism.

The patriotism of the west may not be greater in amount than that of the east; it may not be even of a better type if put to the test of dying for one's country; but the principles which prompt its exhibition are more nearly basal principles. The difference is simply this: In the west the great questions of national policy, national defense and national honor are considered on their own merits solely, not always apart from secondary conditions. The consideration of them is less mercenary, less selfish, than it is likely to be in the east; it takes into account fewer commercial, financial or business considerations; it does not see the national capital through the vista of Wall street.

This may be for two reasons.

It may be first because the westerner is more likely than the easterner to be him a landowner, to live on his own estate, to own the ground under his feet and to gain his subsistence from the soil at first hand. This being the case, cataydams and catastrophes of state are likely to affect him only slightly; whereas, in the east, fewer men are property holders and more men derive their income from, as well as have their money invested in, business enterprises which would be the first to suffer. Secondly, men in the west, living further inland, far away from the seacoast, feel in less danger, indeed in no danger at all, of attack; they know that their business and their positions could never suffer from invasion, and consequently have that sense of security which goes along with reaching it and which in its turn breeds independence.

Contrasts in Men and Manners.

First of all, the thing that strikes one about the people of the west is their bigness. This has already struck him regarding the land itself. He decides that such stupendous things is enough to make men more generous in their thoughts and sympathies as well as big in stature. It is an old theory that the conditions of life, of climate and of nourishment in the west conduce to largeness of physical stature among those who live there; but one also comes to realize that the outlook on such broad expanses of prairie, plain and mountain slope have of themselves bred great ideas and begotten great enthusiasms; that they have of themselves conducted to strength in terms of mental vigor and to the spirit of charity in terms of broad outlook. The very terms in which men in the west appear to think of things and the very language in which they express themselves are larger than in the east. For example, if one there speaks of direction it will always be in terms of north, south, east or west; things seemingly have no relation to each other subordinately, but are all determined in direction by relation rather to the stars. If the porters and the brakemen on the trains are asked how far away a thing is or how long we will be reaching it, they reply, "Oh, just a little way," or "Just a little while," which in the east would mean ten miles or ten minutes, there as like as not will mean 300 miles or two hours time. The very names the people give things, too, are interesting; the word which gives a name to a huge object, a mountain is always a "hill," a cyclone is only a "blow," a canal is a "ditch," cattle roam in "bunches," sheep in

"bands" and farms are measured, not in acres, but in "sections."

Industry of the People.

As a second general thing it is interesting to compare the industry of the average man east and west. One of the first things that struck me there was the abounding industry of the people. Every man seems willing to work, and, so far as I could observe, every man has the chance. They have little patience with the man who idles, so little, indeed, that they revert to that very primitive, very simple method of the bees of the hive—the drone may simply starve for all they care. As a consequence he must either never have arrived or else he must have starved literally; for I certainly did not see a drone for two or three months that I moved about the railroads, ranches and mining camps and walked the streets of those cities I was not once accosted by a single man on the street who told the story so familiar on the streets of eastern cities—told by those who try to throw 10 cents for a sandwich or a night's lodging. This fact is most significant. A man moving about the streets of New York for the same length of time would have been approached in this way by fully 1,000 people.

To be sure, there is also a striking absence of very well-dressed or very wealthy looking people. This simply means that, in their process of social stratification, they have not yet reached either extreme. There is no very wealthy class; there is no very poor class. The great body of the population ranges to the west of the middle class to be less pretentious, middle class between these two extremes. But that middle class there, it is plain, is a better class than the same class east. Perhaps only better appearing, and that, perhaps, only because better dressed, and this, once again, perhaps because the prevailing rates of wages are upon the average higher.

Just What They Seem.

There is a third general trait, the nature of which it is difficult to make clear and the importance of which it is still more difficult to make impressive, yet it is important. As nearly as I can phrase it, it is the genuineness of the people. One has all his life before him a frank, natural, unreserved people of the west. This simply means that they are what they seem and have not learned how to seem what they are not. There is noticeable an absence of pretense, a willingness to be thought poor if they are poor and a equal willingness to be known as rich when rich. Nor is a man there reckoned great—certainly not as here—because of what he has, any more than because of what he is or what he knows. His fellows argue, and that logically, that his fortune may happen as a matter of chance, over his night. They likewise reason that what he was before he came west does not count; this would be a case of the cackling of the geese that saved Rome. The only thing they take account of and the only process which is ever applied in the reckoning of a man's importance, is not what he was and not what he has, but what he can do. The supposition is that he may suddenly "go broke," but that if so, if he can do something, of this he need have not much dread, and for having had this experience only slight regret. If in himself, the opportunities lie all about him to begin over again and, inasmuch as his chief asset is his labor, he has equal chance again with every other man.

Straightforward Honesty.

And not only did I notice this, which seemed to be straightforward honesty in the giving of impressions, but, as well as that honesty in dealing with me, it appeared, certainly among the wage-earning class, among clerks and employees of that temper and spirit of "smartness" and flippancy so noticeable in the east. The prevailing feeling on the part of these folk seems to be that they are getting rich fast enough honestly, and that to cheat or not to be simply a waste of time. They seem to have learned that one cannot get rich honestly and dishonestly at the same time, and they seem to have chosen out of sheer policy to take the former course. The one other trait which it is equally hard to define, but which is equally noticeable in the west, is that, if one might coin a word, might be called the approachableness of the average man in the average position of responsibility or service. I think it goes without saying that in the east the underlying temper in determining any attitude toward any stranger is the temper of suspicion; men take it for granted that the other man is trying to "do" them, that he must be checked and that the person interviewed must be on his guard against the interviewer. In the west the very opposite of this seems to be the temper. Every man who approaches a stranger is taken to be honest until he proves himself to be otherwise. This proof may come of course, but the other thing is given a chance to come first. There is a striking willingness to take up any matter on its own ground, to pass judgment on it on its own merits according to his own judgment, to pass quickly in it and decide regarding it upon this ground.

Daily Life More Happy.

As a result in part, perhaps, of these traits one other fact evolves itself—that is the people of the west are in their daily life more happy than those of the east. This is due in part most likely to their greater self-reliance; they are more independent-independent in action, in thought, in social custom, even in dress. Another factor in their lives at all. The very stores of such towns are better supplied than the stores of towns of corresponding size far east; for, just because the people are so far off that they must be a law unto themselves, so those who dream and furnish them must be so well equipped in stock that they can supply necessities and even luxuries at first hand.

Another reason for this which I conceive to be the greater happiness of the people west than east may be the small number of social grades or of degrees of social status. No one has yet learned either to look up or to look down upon one another; consequently all are happier. The man in some clerical position who in the east would be nobody, who would be looked down on by those above him and in turn look down on those below him, here has social rank more nearly equal to those both below him and above him. Insofar as there is such a thing as an "inner circle" in western society any man who is a man has entered it. In one of those western cities, for example, the man who stood all day behind the desk as clerk at the hotel where I was staying I discovered later passing the plate in the aisle, a vestryman, of the Episcopal church where the same evening I attended service. All of which is due, I think, to the absence of extremes in the social order.

I remember some one complaining that the thing he had most noticed in the western cities was that he "never saw a single gentleman on the street"; the thing that I most noticed was that every man I saw on the street was a gentleman. The difference, I suppose, must all be in the way one looks at it.

Special Round Trip Rate to Chicago.

The Chicago Great Western railway will sell tickets to Chicago at only \$20.00 for the round trip. Tickets on sale to November 25th. Good returning to December 15th. For further information apply to E. D. Parkhurst, general agent, 1512 Farnam St., Omaha, Neb.

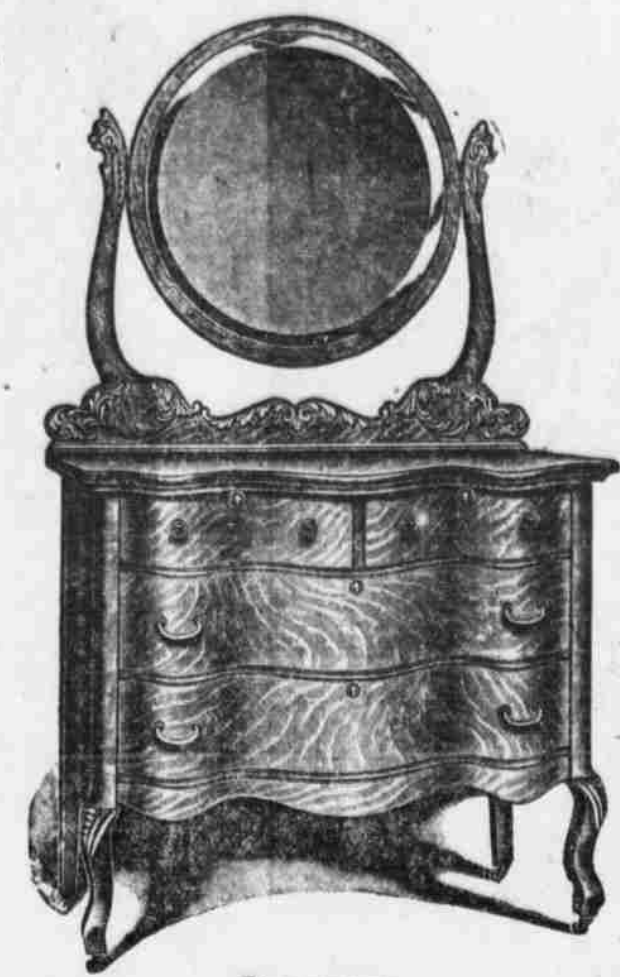
Orchard & Wilhelm Carpet Co. Special Nov. Furniture Sale

To make room for Holiday goods which we will have on display December 1st, we must clear 7,500 feet of floor space. In order to do this we have inaugurated a General Special November Sale and have sacrificed the price in order to move the goods and obtain room. Furniture for the parlor, library, dining room, bed room and fancy furniture pieces at reduced prices—an excellent purchasing opportunity. As a criterion we quote the following articles selected promiscuously throughout the department.

Table listing Parlor Furniture items such as two-piece Solid Mahogany Suit, three-piece Mahogany Suit, etc. with prices.

Table listing Couches items such as Velour Couch, Pantalone Couch, etc. with prices.

Table listing Bed Room Furniture items such as Bird's-eye Maple Chiffonier, Bird's-eye Maple Dressing Table, etc. with prices.



Dressers. Dresser, like cut, comes in genuine mahogany, bird's-eye maple or golden quarter-sawn oak, full serpentine swell front, curved feet, shapely top 22x36 inches, drawers finished inside, French bevel mirror 24x24 inches, regular selling price \$22.00, choice of the three woods—Special November Sale Price, each 13.75.

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