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THE first thing that strikes the student as a new fact is flashed before his mind is his colossal ignorance. It may sound like a paradox, but the acquisition of knowledge does not tend to feed the lust of vanity in the man who is earnestly digging for information.

The humblest and most approachable of men have always been the men on whom the world has bestowed its highest honors. The great savants of the race have always been distinguished as the least cock-sure in any assembly of their fellows or their worshippers. Humility sits on them as a part of themselves because the more they know the greater is their consciousness of the vast unknown.

Look into the face of Luther Burbank on this page. Does it strike one as that of a self-satisfied recluse who knows all that is worth knowing? Does it carry the air of a consciously "superior person," concerned chiefly about the acknowledgments of men in the fact that he is the custodian of a certain information that the Almighty has never breathed into the ear of another living soul?

We do not need to answer that query. The whole world is getting wiser every day, and the youngest schoolboy feels by common instinct that the man who knows most is the man he can most of all appeal to with perfect confidence under all conditions. It is the man who has scraped together a smattering of information that wears the pointed armor of the porcupine but the Burbanks, the Edisons, and the Kelvins have hearts that never grow weary in the service of mankind.

On one occasion Emerson was in the company of certain important stockbrokers and railroad magnates who had been discussing with him the subject of stocks and bonds and civic affairs. For a time he gave ungrudgingly of his experience to the conversation and then turned to his friends with the remark: "And now, gentlemen, let us discuss real things for a while."

Emerson has been called a "dreamer of dreams," and so have many hundreds of others we could

## What the World Owes to its Dreamers

name, whose thoughts, like Emerson's, have moved the world. They had the prophetic vision that seemed to take its range from the highest mountain peak in

importation of dromedaries to carry the mails across the great American desert!

Those worthy forefathers were no doubt accounted in their day



LUTHER BURBANK

sight and could travel beyond the clouds and clods of the intervening valleys—saw the world as it would be and the higher civilization that was even then in the making.

They were dreamers because they saw men and women, perhaps, half a century hence using and enjoying inventions and discoveries which make the most advanced utilities of to-day seem very antiquated indeed. In the department of locomotion alone, think of what the world has arrived at since that day not so very remote in American history when certain congressmen advised the

are few men now living who are enthusiastic in claiming kinship with these old unimaginative wooden heads who did their best to baulk that great transcontinental line of communication. But their progenitors are with us today, sitting in the same church pew, voting in the same booth, counting their change on the same bank counter with other visionaries and dreamers who see things that have not yet crossed the skyline even of an Edison or a Marconi.

Then think of the city builders along the line of the great Atlantic-Pacific highway. Who was the dreamer who saw the modern great metropolis of Chicago in a straggling Indian village? The first pin money the writer ever earned was in selling the illustrated journals of the day in the streets of Dundee in Scotland. Somewhere in his pile of relics he has preserved a copy of the "Illustrated London News" of October, 1871 in which there is a terribly realistic picture of the fire which almost wiped out the entire city at that time. He has a vivid recollection of the first impression that ghastly scene of destruction created on his mind. He had seen big fires even before that date—great jute and flax warehouses and spinning factories gutted in a few hours time. These, however, had all been rebuilt in time but here was desolation and loss irreparable.

This view, however, was not taken by men on the spot and especially by such dreamers as Marshall Field, Joseph Leiter and Potter Palmer. These "impractical visionaries" believed they saw in the ashes of Chicago of 1871 a new and glorified city, infinitely greater and grander than the old; they went to work in this belief and they were accounted lunatics and reckless plungers of their day; their memory is pleasant in our generation and their example will live for ever—a precious and splendid portion of America's national life.

"It can't be done" is still the cry of the man without imagination. "It can be done and it shall be done" the dreamer responds in a

It is to be observed that there