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What Is Luxury?

That is not an easy question to answer. In fact, it cannot be answered in so many definite words; but it is, nevertheless, a good question to ask, as it provokes an interesting discussion. In the International Journal of Ethics, Mr. John Davidson, University of New Brunswick, Canada, contributes an interesting essay on "Luxury and Extravagance." He tells us that all political economists are agreed on one point, "that it is work, whether physical work, or mental work, or moral work, which makes wealth, and that the mere spending of wealth is not a service to a community, such that a man may plume himself upon it, and regard himself as a benefactor of the species." But the fallacy still lurks in the minds of the people, that the reckless consumption or destruction of property is a good thing.

The first comment the writer heard on the news of a disastrous fire, which swept the town of Windsor (Nova Scotia) from the surface of the earth, and rendered thousands homeless and dependent on charity through the long rigors of a Canadian winter, was, that it would be good for trade. And some newspapers and makers of opinion were prompted to urge on the war with Spain, because it would be good for business.

Mr. Davidson then accounts for the persistence of the popular opinion, by showing the half truth that is in it. Great good has come out of great disasters. "Chicago, before the fire, was a city of mean streets; it rose from its ashes a city adapted for commerce and worthy of its destinies. Business was hampered in Newfoundland by the old financial system; but when the ground was cleared, they imported the Canadian banking system, and started on a new basis and on a new career of prosperity. The destruction of wealth in these cases was analogous to the pulling down of some poor building or shanty which occupies an expensive lot in the middle of the city." And further, great expenditure is not necessarily great destruction. "When a nation spends \$250,000 for a great picture, the wealth is not destroyed, it is simply transferred. When the Jubilee Plunger ran through \$2,500,000 in twelve calendar months, the wealth of the world was diminished only by the amount of it he and those who sponged on him put down their throats, and otherwise wantonly destroyed. In so far as it was simply transferred to others to whom he paid extravagant prices, it was not destroyed."

All of which facts simply show that in endeavoring to find out what is luxury and extravagance and its effect upon the common life, we are dealing with a very complex problem. The plea that is set up, is that though luxury may not make wealth, it makes money circulate. This plea, our essayist maintains, is the last infirmity of purblind minds. "Money always circulates, unless it is hid in a napkin. The most that luxury can do is to make it circulate in unfruitful ways. The pool-room and the lottery make money circulate, and if mankind played dice till the last man starved, money would still circulate. The important thing is that in circulating, in passing from hand to hand, it should fructify the fields of industry, and increase the utilities, and not the utilities of life." But now we come to a definition of luxury. "It consists in using up the results of our labors in unworthy and irrational ways, and luxury is therefore, unfortunately as much within the reach of the poor as of the rich."

We cannot follow the essay in detail, as he attempts to show that the luxury of the rich degrades the poor, inflames their passions, and constitutes a grave danger to the body politic. We are still somewhat in the dark as to what are worthy or unworthy ways of using up our substance, as the following passage shows: "What is luxury? Tobacco, urges the ex-finance minister, who does not smoke, ignoring the fact, which his own speeches demonstrated by tables of figures, that the consumption of tobacco is yearly increasing, and apparently ignorant of the fact that to some tobacco is a condition of work, that lumbermen have been known to quit the woods because the supply of tobacco ran short, and that in literary work, for instance, there is a practical consensus of opinion that tobacco is a necessity of production."

"Thus, after all, it is difficult to define luxury. I have heard a country minister blamed because he bought books, while his church starved him on \$600 a year; and men who spend a small fortune annually on cigars, or fast horses, seem to have no hesitation in condemning others who spend a tithe of the sum on books or on pictures."

Well, all that we can say is, that such men are small men, not only ignorant of political economy, but also lacking in spiritual insight, and the sooner they at least get a clearer and better idea of what constitutes luxury the better for themselves and for the society of which they form a part. If we cannot get an answer to our question with mathematical precision, we may gain something from the asking of it.

Old World Topics

Britain Fully Conscious of Her Power—Chamberlain's Speech Discussed as Seriously as Salisbury's.

"The Progress of Geography"—Strong Fraternal Feeling for the United States Among the British Working Classes—Why Britain is Arming—The Kaiser Influenced by Windsor Castle—Blow at Russian Bureaucracy—A British Magistrate Declares Boxing Is Laudable and Necessary.

London, Nov. 21.—Britain is in a militant mood. There is something deeper than jingoism afloat in England—there is a new consciousness of the potency of sea power. This new consciousness of power will not menace the peace of the world, so long as it is held under restraint by the Anglo-Saxon strength of responsibility. A fine illustration of the sobering effect of this perception of power and its moral obligation has been offered by Mr. Chamberlain, whose speech in Manchester has been discussed on the continent quite as seriously as Lord Salisbury's recent addresses. They are perfect examples of diplomatic phrasing and temperate exposition. The German estimate of these speeches is more correct than the French. They were plain-spoken, but not aggressive; they revealed with admirable lucidity and moderation the real temper of the English people respecting the Nile Valley and the harassing tactics to which the nation had been exposed in many parts of the world in its recent career of over-sea expansion. They also contained a comprehensive study of what he grimly described as

THE PROGRESS OF GEOGRAPHY, by which blank spaces on the map have been converted into potential markets, exciting jealous rivalries among maritime nations, and the frank confession that the best guarantee of an open door principle in China was the basis of the common interests of England, Japan, Germany and the United States. The only surprise which Mr. Chamberlain had in reserve for his Lancashire audiences, was the complete revelation of his capacity to discuss all large questions affecting the empire with the judicious gravity befitting an English prime minister, rather than a party leader. Mrs. Chamberlain shared her husband's welcome at the Free Trade Hall, and was heartily cheered when the Marquis of Lorne paid her a well-deserved compliment.

GOOD FEELING TOWARD JONATHAN. The noticeable feature of these Lancashire meetings was the remarkable heartiness by which every reference to America was applauded. Industrial England is brimming full of good-feeling for the United States. Lancashire, with its vast cotton trade in the far east, may have practical returns for favoring a policy which will carry America into the Philippine group, and into a diplomatic alliance with England on the China question, but even where self-interest is not apparent, as in the Bradford district, there is a strong current of good feeling for America. Bradford's trade with the United States has been cut down from \$25,000,000 to \$7,000,000 annually by the new tariff. A bitter feeling of resentment might naturally be expected there, when business interests had been affected unfavorably, but it does not exist. Industrial, workaday England is the real stronghold of English-American unity. For many years past, when business was good, and the world was in tune, and fashionably west end and St. James' and working England and Scotland are ardent and earnest in their expression of fraternal feeling for Americans.

A GRAVE SITUATION. Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Manchester showed clearly that England will require France to vacate the whole of the Bahr-el-Ghazal provinces, where Commandant Marchand has established seven armed posts, and that this constitutes an extremely grave situation between the two countries. But there is more danger than even this. There are more than 70 warships at two hours' notice, but the authorities are preparing to make even greater and more striking efforts in the near future. The coast-guard batteries are to proceed and cruise around the coast. Coast-guard ships, being thus relieved, will reinforce the Mediterranean squadron, should occasion arise, so as to enable the channel squadron to return home, which it will do before Christmas. The French fleet from Brest spent the whole week in energetic maneuvering along the channel, in gun practice by day and searchlight tactics at night. To solve, if possible, the mysterious problem why today upon a friend whose work brings him into close contact with the diplomatic circle, and asked him frankly where the trouble was. "France has failed to find anybody anxious to share the risk of fighting us, and appears to be willing to agree. In what other direction can the government possibly anticipate even greater tension in the near future?" I asked. He replied: "France is no longer the chief point of danger. Then he took down an atlas, and opened it at a map of the far east. The atlas contains the answer to all riddles of relations of nations," he said. "Russia is at present the dominant power in the far east. Let us draw your attention to that she is."

ABOUT TO BE HIEMMED IN by a cordon of hostile powers. She is in Manchuria and in the gradually shallow Gulf of Pe Chi Li. Look at the circle closing around her. Here is Japan—a ring around her from Siberia to below Korea, while the Loo Choo Islands and Formosa are all Japanese. Continue the line to Central China. The Philippines are now to a point where it incloses the territory of Russia's ally, France, while England rivets it tight by her extremely strong position at Hong Kong—stronger now than ever, since she has just added two bays and 400 square miles of mainland to it. Moreover, both America and England have reinforcing lines beyond these encircling lines at San Francisco and Esquimaux. Russia, you thus see is about to be

shut up within a ring fence of rival powers. How can she permit her recent splendid successes to be thus strategically neutralized? She must either break the cordon or get outside of it. And the anticipation to do so is what causes the present alarming situation. Germany at Kiau Chau is also inside the circle, but I think you will find she has accepted the inevitable in the Philippines, and will content herself with one of the more remote Caroline Islands, England very possibly having mediated between her and the United States in this matter. This is what the map tells me." This friend has frequently thrown light for me before upon tangled problems of foreign affairs. I have never found him far wrong.

Of course, if Russia opens a diplomatic or any other campaign, France will join forces with her. This would explain why France has carried her naval preparations so far, while all the time she has been waiting for England's challenge. Then England, America and Japan would act together, while Germany, faithful to the role of Bismarck long ago laid down for her connection with the near eastern question, would profit both directly and indirectly, without sacrificing the "bones of a single Pomeranian Grenadier."

WINDSOR CASTLE'S INFLUENCE. There has been much interest in the Kaiser's movements, and the reason for the change in his plans is political. The fact is that the incident demonstrates again the reality of an Anglo-German agreement, and British friendship with the United States. It is certain that the Kaiser was greatly influenced in his abandonment of the Spain trip by representations from Windsor Castle and Downing street. On arriving at Manila on Wednesday, the Kaiser found long dispatches from these two quarters in the hands of the governor. On Tuesday, instead of proceeding towards Spain, according to programme, he called for Medina, forming Berlin of the change in his plans.

London, Nov. 21.—A curious report in regard to Spain's future government is current in diplomatic circles, which, from its source, is entitled to weight. It is that there will be a change of dynasty, but a peaceful change. The queen regent is said to be convinced of the hopelessness of her son ever reigning, and has, upon the advice of the Emperor of Austria, decided, soon after the peace treaty is signed at Paris (and everyone regards this as only a question of days), to quit Spain with her family, and Don Carlos will be proclaimed king. Everything is reported to be already arranged, and the army and clergy are alleged to be eager for the change. According to the programme Don Carlos, so soon as things are running smoothly, will abdicate in favor of his son, Don Juan.

PROPOSED FILIPINO REPUBLIC. There is much agitation among the Filipino representatives in Europe over the Philippine situation. Agoncillo, the representative of Aguinaldo, who has been in Paris watching the progress of the peace commissions, has started for Washington. It is learned that on Wednesday he called a meeting of all the Filipinos in Paris, when a committee was formed with the object of doing everything possible to induce France to recognize the so-called Philippine republic. A telegram was sent to Aguinaldo asking for instructions, and the following reply is said to have been received:

AGUINALDO'S ADVICE. "Insist upon absolute independence. Otherwise fight to the death. We are all united, and the government is progressing smoothly. All the independent tribes of the mountains are submitting to Aguinaldo and the chiefs are bringing in presents of gold." The statements made by Gen. Wesley Merritt in reply to the appeal of the American people have caused indignation among the Filipinos. They are especially incensed at the suggestion that they would look, and act, as a colony. The Filipinos of Paris are sending a dispatch to President McKinley protesting against the assertions made.

A SHINING MARK FOR CRITICISM'S SHAFTS. The Liberal's cartoonist pictures Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, Sloan-like, bestride a galloping lion and catching up to other patriotic orators with the remark: "I must hurry up with my lion, I am a little late." In fulfillment of this sentiment the colonial secretary has made three speeches, handling the whole field of Great Britain's foreign and domestic policies in his customary ungloved and breezy fashion, which has brought upon his head a storm of criticism from continental politicians. Their organs remark that no Englishman speaks nowadays without throwing compliments at the United States, and one paper charges Mr. Chamberlain with becoming remarkably bold, "since Great Britain has induced America to promise to fight her battles, to which the Spectator replies: "We trust the American public will clearly understand that we are seeking a hard and fast political alliance. We do not desire to go beyond the acknowledgment that if we or the United States get our backs to the wall the other Anglo-Saxon will be at his side."

INTERNATIONAL CORDIALITY. The English newspapers are unable to find anything but good in the trend of affairs in the United States. They even discuss the Dingley Bill in a friendly tone, the Statist finding in the acquisition of colonial territory "a hope of a relaxation of the high tariff in the United States themselves. It

observes that it would be a startling anomaly if the Dingley tariff bill was maintained in all its prohibitive force in the United States, while the new-protections were open to the trade of the world. The Statist does not doubt the United States fully recognizes this, and adds:

"International cordiality has obtained such warmth that the forboding is often heard from the man-in-the-street that it may be impossible to maintain it without cooling. As a politician put it, antagonistic interests may be developed which may lead the Americans to discover that we have always been arrogant, land-grabbing Britons, and we remember them as offensive Yankees. The United States-Canadian conference is watched with some nervousness owing to fear that it may put the friendship to a strain."

A BLOW AT RUSSIAN BUREAUCRACY.

The czar has given new proofs of his determination to rule the Russian Empire over the heads of officialdom, which strengthens the belief that the peace proclamation was the enforcement of his personal will. Persistent rumors have reached the Russian capital for months past of crop failures throughout European Russia, and the czar's inquiries on the subject have elicited stereotyped reports that the suffering is exaggerated. The ministers being too absorbed with diplomacy to interest themselves in the famine, sent the minister of the interior on a tour, and he conferred with the local officers, who threw dust in his eyes. The czar has now commissioned two of his personal adjutants to learn the facts, and report upon the efficiency of the local officials. They have been instructed to deal directly with the people, and to ignore all officials. The Russian press rejoices at this, and declares that bureaucracy is panic-stricken at seeing its control threatened.

SATIATED WITH AGITATION. The French appear to be satiated with agitation, and are willing to accept whatever judgment the court of cassation will render in the Dreyfus case. Only a few of the demagogues who achieved notoriety by identifying themselves with the affair, keep up their furious denunciation of their antagonist.

ARMY VS. NATION. The prosecution of M. Urbain Gohier for his publishing the book entitled "The Army Against the Nation," promises to have sensational effects upon presidential aspirations. One of the chief counts in the indictment of the army is that of mismanagement of the Madagascar expedition, resulting in the waste of lives and money. M. Dupuy, the general who is the instigator of the prosecution, has his eye on the Elysee Palace. MM. Faure and Carnegie are barriers to his ambition, and M. Dupuy is credited with the sinister motive of exhuming the scandal in order to fix their responsibility.

BOXING NECESSARY. Sir John Bridge, the chief police magistrate of London, boldly gave a judicial ratification of old-fashioned British sporting standards in committing to trial the officials of the National Sporting Club who were concerned in the fight in which Thomas Turner was fatally injured. The magistrate declared that it would be a great misfortune if glove contests were decided to be illegal. He said it was necessary and laudable for youths to become boxing experts; but, he added, he was compelled to declare the fight illegal because the contest was for money.

AT DEATH'S DOOR. Sir George Baden-Powell, M.P., who was British commissioner for the Bering Sea in 1891, and British member of the joint commission at Washington in 1892, is pronounced to be at the point of death.

THE KAISER'S CHANGE OF MIND. A Berlin correspondent says: Emperor William's sudden abandonment of his intention to visit one or more Spanish ports on his return to Germany by sea, and his determination to go home by way of the Adriatic Sea, has given rise to considerable speculation as to the real motive for the change. The official explanation, giving the health of the empress as the sole reason for his majesty's rapid return, is still more to be doubted. Dr. A. W. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills have a direct action on the liver. The make the liver strong and active, and regulate the bowels. Dr. A. W. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills are purely vegetable, pleasant and effective, and act naturally. Only 25 cents a box at all dealers.

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to open these in person, thereupon decided to return directly. The ministers have all returned suddenly to Berlin, and the greatest activity is observed in political circles.

THE REICHSSTAG'S ANTI-STRIKE MEASURE.

The discussion of the government's anti-strike measure promises to make the sessions of the Reichstag extremely lively. It is suggested in some quarters that Emperor William's rounders about defour from Potsdam by way of Innsbruck, capital of the Austrian Tyrol, was dictated by a plan which, since the assassination of the Empress of Austria, and the discovery of a plot against the emperor's life at Alexandria, Egypt, has governed his majesty's movements—namely, complete secrecy as to the time of his departure from any place, and the exact route to be kept secret until the last moment.

A SPY'S PUNISHMENT.

The trial of a French spy, Isidor Decoq, for betraying important military secrets to France, was opened before the imperial court at Leipzig on Saturday. Decoq's accomplices have not been traced, but the evidence points to German military men being incriminated. The spy was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, to ten years' loss of civil rights, and to police supervision. The public prosecutor said Decoq was an agent of the French intelligence department.

THE LIPE-DETOLD INCIDENT.

The absorbing topic in the German press during the past week has been the Lippe-Deimold incident. The publication of the documents, which first appeared in a Vienna paper, and which were afterwards copied by the entire German press, enabled the nation generally to form an intelligent idea of the whole matter. The regent's original letter of complaint is shown to have been couched in very respectful, calm language, and apparently the emperor had no reason whatever to reply by the curt, insulting telegram, forbidding the regent ever to address him in a similar manner again. None of the answers received to the circular letter divulged, but it is said in diplomatic circles that several of the replies are conciliatory and sympathetic, especially one from the prince regent of Bavaria, while the replies of the King of Saxony and the Grand Duke of Baden counseled more moderation.

According to reports from those who are near to the emperor, his majesty has lately changed his opinion of the whole case, and now regrets treating the Regent of Lippe-Deimold so haughtily and allowing the case to go as far as it has, and becoming a national scandal. It is too late now, however, to stop the matter, and the bundsrath will take up the case at an early opportunity. The points to be dealt with are the regent's formal complaint against the emperor and the proposal of the emperor's brother-in-law, Prince Adolf of Schaumburg-Lippe, against the diet's adoption of the law of succession, which declared the regent's lawful issue entitled to succeed to the throne of Lippe.

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