American Sentinel

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POLITICAL CONTENTMENT

The most marked feature of the political situation at this time, is the subsidence of radical sentiment. Even many people of radical tendencies admit this condition. They can see clearly that the people do not respond cordially to their demands for upheaval. They admit that the Coolidge administration is very popular, and that this popularity shows no signs of abating.

Certain farming districts where local conditions have been bad, are the only ones where there is still any considerable discontent. Such discontent is quite largely due to conditions beyond the control of the government. If the farmers raise more of certain crops than they can sell, or if they paid so much for their land that they are too heavily burdened with debt, they must look primarily to themselves for relief from such conditions.

The masses of the population in the cities and towns realize that they were never so well off as they are now. When some agitator comes along and calls them "wage slaves," they look at the regular work they have been having, they consider the automobiles, radios, and various comforts that they have been purchasing, or which they can reasonably hope to obtain if present conditions continue. They say that conditions have vastly improved for them since the political party now in power obtained the management of the government. Why change this situation which has shown such great improvement for them, they say, and try experiments the results of which they can only guess.

The masses of the people do not appreciate fine spun political arguments or analyze masses of statistics. When times are as good as they are now, and their condition is improving, they see no reason for changing their political administration.

ORIGINAL THINKING

We hear much of over production of most everything. There is one thing in which there is no over production, and that is of intelligent thought. Those who know how to do their own thinking are always able to command interest.

Take it in the field of the preacher, for instance. You can find innumerable churches where the congregations are scanty. That may be due largely to the fact that the popular mind is absorbed by amusements and money making. And yet you also find crowded churches. In such churches there is usually in the pulpit a man who has the power of original thought. It is the same in the field of statesmanship or the lecture platform.

The reason why many people lack the power of thought, is that they accept the statements that they read in the newspapers or that someone gives them, without any effort to go over these subjects by their own processes of reasoning. They should ask themselves if these things are true, and if they accord with the facts of their own experience.

That power can not be acquired all at once. But if people in their youth will form this habit of considering the statements that are made to them in a dispassionate way, and reaching conclusions of their own based on their actual observation and knowledge, they will gradually gain this power of originality. Their words and ideas will be listened to.

There are many persons who do a good deal of thinking, but they do not command respect because they do not think straight. Their minds are governed by prejudices, and they can not see things in an impartial way. The popular common sense rejects their views. But if a person can think, and if one's thought shows candor and intelligence, one will count in whatever circle or profession he is found.

71 YEARS OF JOURNALISM

Mr. Kessenger of the Rome, New York, Sentinel began a few days ago, his 71st year of active work on that newspaper. He started in with it in 1856 as a printer's apprentice, he became one of the proprietors of the paper in 1864, and has stuck to it ever since.

What a wonderful career such a man has had! All over the town he must see results which his newspaper helped to gain. Some kinds of careers may make a man more widely known over the country, but it is hard to conceive of one that would do more to build civic institutions.

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Among our modern thinkers are many pessimists who seem to feel that the country is in a pretty bad way. One complaint often heard is that the whole nation is engaged in a mad scramble for wealth, in which only a few can be successful. The rest of the people, it is argued, are forced to get along in a narrow kind of way in which they can find little pleasure.

But the average person can have a great many satisfactions, even if he or she does not attain any wealth. If people have education, the wide world of books and literature is open to them at slight cost. Such people should find greater pleasure in the masterpieces of romance and poetry, than is ever obtained by spending money.

Whether or not people have education, there are many pleasures open to them. Modern invention has brought the automobile to our doors and placed it within the reach of the average family. With this wonderful facility we can wander around the country on our off days, and take delight in the beauty of nature. The wonders of moving pictures, radio instruments, the phonograph, etc, bring us constant entertainment for little money.

It seems a rather coarse view of the world, to feel that only by spending a lot of money can one obtain happiness. The wealthy are not probably any happier than the average person. Happiness is obtained by some form of pleasant activity. The penniless youngster playing baseball or tennis and putting the full enthusiasm of his nature into his game, is probably a lot happier than the average man of wealth, who has often injured his health in the struggle for success.

Family relations should give a great deal of happiness. The poor man with strong sons and daughters growing up often feels richer than the childless man of wealth. Happiness is not measured by the opportunities to gain riches.

THE BEST CITY

There are some folks so constituted, that if you put them into the highest class city or town in America, they would look at its institutions and privileges in a deprecating sort of way. They would be constantly remarking that if they could have their way they would go elsewhere, but they merely stay on there because they are forced to by having a job or business there.

And there are some, who if placed in any old ordinary town, where there is nothing out of the usual, and no exceptional advantages, will yet love it and say it is the best town on earth. They will be such loyal friends and good neighbors, that they will attract the affection of all the people they meet. They will feel such deep attachment to a community where these ties exist, that it will seem the best place on earth. And so it will be, for them.

We need more of that type of folks in Westminster.

THE COST OF AUTOMOBILES

It costs the average automobile owner $700 a year for everything connected with his car including the original cost, according to figures given out by the Bureau of Industrial Technology. It would be interesting to compare that figure with what we all pay for house rent or the cost of owning a house.

Probably the average automobile owning family pays more than $700 a year on account of its home, but the cost of the automobile in many cases is as much as the rent.

The family of moderate means that wishes to operate a car will do well to study the means by which automobile costs can be kept down. Rapid driving over rough streets and roads will greatly increase the charge for depreciation and repairs. If people must tear around the country as if they were rushing to a fire where their property was being burned up, they will have to pay an extra charge to the garage man. Also the old car will deserve the favorite title of "junk" much sooner.

Where people own their own homes and erect their own inexpensive garage on their own land, they reduce the cost of storage to a small item. In the days to come, every family ought to learn to do simple repairs on its own car. The inexperienced owner may do his car more harm than good when he tries to make his own repairs. But if he makes a thorough study of the mechanics of his car, he ought to be able to do the less difficult repair jobs.

The young man of the future will find it is just as desirable to know how to repair a car as to do complicated arithmetic examples. The country is getting great benefits from the general ownership of cars, but people need to study the methods by which such ownership can be made inexpensive.

CHARACTER RATINGS—INDUSTRY

Much interest has been excited of late, by the experiments in various schools, in marking their pupils to a large extent upon character achievement, instead of mostly upon the things they had learned out of books. The Minneapolis board of education is one of those that have been trying out such methods, and it is marking its students largely on the qualities of industry, honesty, judgment, punctuality and deportment. Such methods probably indicate some radical changes likely to occur in American education during the next few years.

Whether or not the schools place special emphasis on these points of character, they count tremendously in business and industry. The people who go to work in offices, stores, etc, are constantly being observed to see how they measure up according to these standards.

Take the quality of industry, for instance. It lies at the foundation of all success. It is the very basic element in achievement. Even if a person is brilliant, and his head is full of clever ideas, he may never get anywhere if he is not industrious. The world is sick and tired of brilliant geniuses who act on a "steady by jerks" principle. It wants instead good reliable pullers, who are working every hour to get results. In the long run these folks get there, while half of the geniuses get tired and quit.

The habit of steady industry is one that can't be beaten. Not merely do the industrious people get a lot of work done, but as the result of their steady persistence, they commonly acquire good judgment, and their experience is very valuable. They learn how to meet difficulties and overcome obstacles, and please the people whom they are trying to serve. The first question asked of the aspirant in the field of business is this, "Are you willing to work?"

DISEASE AND POVERTY

Disease and poverty go together, said the general director of the New York Society for Improving the Condition of the Poor in a recent address. Probably disease is the greatest single cause of poverty.

If we could produce a healthy population, poverty would vastly decline. Many persons who are called lazy, are suffering from physical defects that sap all their energy. Healthful homes, medical inspection of children, removal of children's defects in teeth, nose, throat, etc, would do a world of good in abolishing poverty.

PUTTING THE BEST FOOT FORWARD

Some folks are always pointing out the defects of their home town for ridicule. And some are always pointing out the useful things it has done, and dwelling on them.

The country village correspondent, who is ridiculed for sending in the item about So and So who has painted his barn, has the right idea. She sees in that occurence a sign of progress, and she has felt that such a display of the spirit of improvement ought to be noticed. It might be a good idea for a local newspaper to print each spring a list of the people who are painting their houses. It might stir up some of these folks who are content with shabby looking buildings, to clean up and brighten up, and make their places look like the real homes of progressive people.

THE COUNTRY'S SAVINGS

It is a quite remarkable fact, that stocks and bonds valued at $6,200,000,000 were floated in this country last year. The notable thing about it is that these securities were sold without depressing the general level of security prices. This suggests that many folks who formerly could not save a cent, have become investors and have their bank books and are stockholders and bondholders.

If such an enormous amount of securities had been thrown on the market before the war, the price of stocks and bonds would have fallen a long way. The people who are now borrowing money at five per cent or less for their enterprises, would probably have to pay seven or eight per cent or even more.

THE PRESIDENT'S FATHER

The whole country will mourn with President Coolidge in the loss of his father. This fine old gentleman would never have been widely known had it not been for his distinguished son, but he had in full measure those substantial qualities that have made America a great nation. It is simple minded men like him in positions of local prominence who have shaped the thought of the people in accordance with the original ideas of the republic.

When the populations of cities have put their thought into trivialities, and the people of country towns have been tardy in taking up new ideas, it is men like this old gentleman who have held the nation true to its ideals and kept it moving along the path of genuine progress.

FOOD SHORTAGE

Predictions are made by experts that during the coming century the world will face the danger of food shortage. It is said that unless more efficient methods of production are used, or means found to create foods out of cheap materials, existing supplies will be insufficient.

But before anything of that kind happens, it will be likely that the American farmer will learn how to grow more food from an acre. He will find out how the peoples of Europe long ago learned to make every foot of ground produce its maximum, while we in our lavishness have hastily scratched over big territories.

Also as civilization advances, families grow smaller. The majority of people hesitate now before bringing a flock of children into the world whom they can not properly train and educate. In due time we shall not think so much of population growth as of population quality.

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The boys are urged to aim high, but about now they are occupied in aiming at that shiny glassie in the marble ring.

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