

Some may say loss of religious belief. Others, the increase of personal ambition under the impulse and opportunities of modern democracy. Both these causes have their influence; and the latter is indeed the half of the fundamental cause.

Under the impulse and opportunities of modern democracy we have vastly increased the range of individual aspiration; but the trouble is that we have only half done our work. We have not given opportunities enough. We have given sway to aspirations in a world preempted by vested rights. We are bees buzzing in a garden where the most and the best of the flowers are encased. We have a fettered democracy which cannot move with freedom; and we have not learned that the cure for its failings is more democracy.

In this lack of freedom lies the main cause of the strain and stress that are affecting the whole of society, begetting in every sphere of life the fearful dread of not "getting there," of "getting left."

A distinguished writer has recently said that the fear of not securing a living is in the heart of nearly every worker. It is this feeling, existing in spite of the boundless resources of the earth, which is, I think, chiefly responsible for the anxious restlessness which distinguishes the modern worker, who is free, and yet is not free to use the resources that belong to freedom.

Granted this spirit in the great body of industrial life, it is easy to see how it may affect all pursuits and all ages. All of a people's activities are more or less colored by the prevailing spirit which animates that people.

As to the part which religion, or the lack of religion, is playing in our mad dance of industrialism and anxiety to get ahead, this may be said. If religion had its former hold, it would go a long way to quiet men by making them more careless of their present lot. But in the absence of the former religious belief that the present counted for little, there is no such restraint as once existed from this source.

So the gist of the matter is this:

Our subconscious feeling is that we are here to get the most possible out of the Here; that this most possible is measured by visible, material possessions; and the fact is that in the race for material possessions most of us, though nominally free, are strictly limited by the preemption of the sources of wealth.

Most of us do not see this fact because in most instances the effect is so indirect and remote; but we would see it, if we would stop to consider the difference between a new and small population and an old and large population, the difference between an open country and a country whose resources have become monopolized. In the progress of civilization we have now arrived at a point where it is necessary for us to see that the curse of freedom is half-freedom.

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## NEWS

The formal proposals from England and Germany for submitting the Venezuelan question to arbitration (p. 579), were received by the American secretary of state on the 24th; but they have not yet been made public. According to newspaper reports, however, the proposals did not insist, as it had been supposed they would, upon President Roosevelt's acceptance of the responsibility of arbitrator as a condition of arbitration; and, taking advantage of their intimation that if such acceptance might possibly embarrass him a reference of the quarrel to The Hague tribunal would not be altogether objectionable, he urged that disposition of the matter. To this all parties are reported to have virtually agreed. But it is still feared that the settlement may fall through because of conditions imposed by both Germany and Great Britain—such as preliminary payments, guarantees and apologies—with which Venezuela cannot or will not comply.

It was reported from Willemstad on the 23d that the Venezuelan revolutionists (p. 599), "strengthened by the inability of the government to suppress the smuggling of arms and ammunition into the country, and by the fact that it has no longer any fleet at its disposal," had regained courage and were indisposed to re-

spond favorably to a proclamation from President Castro calling upon all parties to sink their differences and unitedly turn their arms against the invading foreigners. Gen. Hernandez is the only important revolutionary leader who has assured President Castro of his support in this foreign war. The Willemstad dispatch also described a three-column movement from the Orinoco river northward upon Caracas. One column, 2,500 strong and under the leadership of Gens. Ramos, Antonio Guevara, Urbaneta and Penalzoza, was about to march by way of the Guartice river; the second, under Gens. Antonio Fernandez, Osio and Crespo Torres, and also 2,500 strong, was to move from Camanagua; and the third, of the same strength and under Gen. Rolando, was to go from Atagracia. Gen. Matos was still at Curacao, but was expected soon to leave to take immediate command of the revolutionary forces in Venezuela. The armistice between the Venezuelan government and the revolutionists expired on the 24th, and on the 27th a brisk battle occurred near Coro, which is in possession of the revolutionists. The government force did not succeed in dislodging them. It was more successful at Barquesimeto, capital of the State of Lara. This city, which has long been in the possession of the revolutionists, was recaptured by the government about the 28th, after a bloody battle. San Carlos and Tinaquillo have also been taken from the revolutionists.

Meanwhile, the European powers maintain their warlike blockade of Venezuelan ports (p. 598); but its effects are damaging chiefly to British and German merchants in Venezuela, who complain that they are likely to lose more by the blockade than the financial interests at home would lose if the Venezuelan liabilities they are seeking to enforce were abandoned.

Signs of an ominous political disturbance in Mexico are plainly noticeable. Mexico has been free from political turmoil for 20 years, President Diaz having been reelected to office term after term since 1876, and no partisan division in national affairs having occurred. But opposing parties, representing extreme theories of government—plutocratic and democratic,—are now massing. The crisis was precipitated by the reig-