

The American colonist will find there both a garden of Eden and a gold mine.

#### THE AMERICAN TEMPERAMENT.

No character is quite so interesting to thoughtful Englishmen as that of the Americans; it is so like our own, yet so unlike, so complex and yet so simple, so intelligible and yet so full of unexpected turns. They are as difficult to depict as Englishmen seem to foreigners, and if we try to do it, it is with a full consciousness that after our best efforts many facets of the stone will still remain undescribed. But for two peculiarities which are universal and deep enough profoundly to modify character, we should say that the Americans, as a nation, more closely resembled the English in Ireland than any other people in the world. The long contest with enemies, with nature, has bred in them the inner hardness and incapacity of yielding to opposition which that peculiar caste derives from its long habit of keeping down superior numbers and exacting from them tribute. There is dourness somewhere in every American, a "hard pan," as they say themselves, to which if you get down there is no further progress to be made. You must crush it to powder or retreat, and nine times out of ten retreat is found to be the easier course. The American character rests, in fact, on a granite substratum, which has been the origin of their success, and will give them the mastery of the western hemisphere. It is not merely the English doggedness, though it doubtless had its root in it; it is a quality which enables its possessor to go on whatever happens, to charge, as it were, instead of merely standing to receive the assault. It is, in fact, if we are to be minute, doggedness made fiery by an infusion of hope, of a sanguineness which you would never expect from an American's face—that, owing to some climatic peculiarity, is usually careworn, especially in the east—but which colors his very blood. We never met an American in our lives who did not believe that he should "worry through" any trouble on hand, and reach at last the point desired, however distant it might seem to be. Like the Anglo-Irishman also, the American has a quick sense of the incongruous; he perceives the comicality alike of things and persons, and he has a habit of pointing that out with a reserved shrewdness which has always the effect of, and sometimes really is, mordant humor. (The humor of exaggeration, which all Englishmen attribute to all Americans, is, we fancy, accidental—that is, is attributable to humorists

with a Celt-Irish trace in them who have caught the popular ear). Like the Anglo-Irish, too, the American has a strong sense of personal dignity; he cannot bear to be belittled, and is, if anything, over-sensitive on the score of his individual claims to respect. His pride is not the glacial pride of the Englishman, who at heart holds the man who offends him to be a boor for doing it, and would as soon quarrel with a cabman as with him, but is a glowing pride, quick, perhaps over-quick, to resent insult and to imagine wrong. Add to these traits an almost infinite depth of inner kindness so long as there is no provocation and no resistance from inferiors, and you have the Anglo-Irish character on its strong sides, and that is also the American, about as efficient a character as the world presents to our view. He can fight or he can bargain, he can build or he can diplomatisé; and when doing any of these things, he generally contrives to come out at top, with perhaps just a glance around to see that the high place out of which he emerges with unmoved countenance has been noticed by the world around. We should add, for it is characteristic, though perhaps it is of little importance, that the manner of a well-bred American is usually, and allowing for individual idiosyncrasies, almost exactly, that of a well-bred Anglo-Irishman, courteous and kindly, with a touch of intended grace, and with a certain patience, as of one accustomed to other men's folly, which is not English at all. The Englishman's patience offends—that is the testimony of all mankind, to the Englishman's great perplexity—but the American's patience and that of the Anglo-Irishman leaves a sensation, not always fully justified, of friendliness. There are a hundred Lord Dufferins in America.

The American has, however, as we said, two peculiarities which differentiate him from all mankind. We should not call him a happy man exactly, but he is an incurably cheerful one. The weight of the dozen atmospheres which press down the Englishman is off the American's spirit. He does not expect to find anywhere persons superior to himself; he thinks he can make, instead of obeying, etiquettes; he sees no reason, unless, indeed, he is a candidate for his municipality or for congress, for professing to be anything but what he is. He is quite contented as to his past, and quite satisfied that the future will go his way. He lives mainly in the present, but as the past was good and the future will be better, the present will do very well for

the time being. If no one has affronted him he has no quarrel with anyone, but is disposed to look on all men with an appreciative smile, as being all equally creatures of Allah, poor creatures, some of them, no doubt, but still creatures. He takes life as it comes, in fact, with little concern whether anybody takes it differently, and with a complete admission, not only from the lips, but from the heart, that it takes a good many sorts of men to make up a world. The conviction of equality with all men has taken the social fidget out of him, and given him an inner sense of ease and tranquillity, never quite absent even when his external manner seems awkward or constrained. It follows that he is always ready to try anything, and that the English idea of living in a groove seems to him confined and small, a waste of the faculties that God has given. And it follows, also, that being inwardly content with himself, and having a whole continent to work in, he is seldom so thorough as the Englishman, is satisfied with knowing many things less completely than the Englishman knows one, and has for intellectual temptation, always provided that the task before him is not machinemaking, a certain shallowness. The kind of man who is least like an American is the kind of man about the British museum, who knows upon some one subject nearly all there is to know, and can tell you almost to a foot where all that remains to be known will ultimately be found. We doubt if the American is fuller of resource than the Englishman, who generally when Chat Moss has to be filled has his plan at last; but he is much quicker in bringing his wits to bear, and much less disposed to let any habitude of mind stand for a moment in his way. In fact, though the American, like every other of the sons of Eve, is clothed in habits, he wears them with singular lightness, and if his sense of propriety would permit, would on the smallest provocation cast them all away. There are only two exceptions to that with an American, his religion and the constitution of the United States. Those two are not habits at all in the Carlylean sense, but outer and inner skins.

There remains the strongest and strangest peculiarity of all, which already differentiates the American completely from the Englishman, and a hundred years hence will make of him an entirely separate being. The American is a nervous man in the sense in which doctors who study constitution use that word. He is not neurotic, no man less so, and is prob-

ably as brave as any man alive, but his nerves respond more quickly to his brain than those of any other human being. He feels strongly, and he feels everything. All news comes to him with a sharp, cutting impact. He works mentally under pressure, he does in a day what other men do in a week, he almost realizes the schoolboy's joke when taunted with too much desire for sleep, that "there are people who can sleep fast." Excitement maddens him a little. He is like Douglas Jerrold's hero who had almost infinite wealth, but whenever he wanted to pay for anything had to give a bit of himself to do it, till, though each bit was only a heavy bank-note, he was worn literally to skin and bone. The result is that the American when very successful or much defeated has a tendency to die of nervous prostration, to an extent which makes nervous disease a specialty of the great American physicians. They think, we believe, that the tendency is a result of "imperfect acclimatization," and no doubt a course of Europe has often a wonderfully invigorating effect, but we are not quite convinced that climate is the only cause. At least it is, it is curious that the aborigines should not be possessed of more throbbing nerves, and that the western farmer, who has a better climate than the New Yorker, should be so much more excitable than his rival in the east. We are inclined to suspect that the condition of so many Americans resembles the condition of overtrained men or horses, and that activity of brain continued for generations is injurious in a dry climate to bodily health. Be the cause what it may, the American is liable to be excited, and his excitement, which sometimes shows itself in bursts of tremendous energy, sometimes in fits of gaiety, and sometimes in almost incurable melancholia, constantly wears him out. It is the greatest distinction between him and the more stolid Englishman, or rather between him and the oldest of English colonists, the Anglo-Irishman, whom in all else the American so closely resembles, and who, though he has not succeeded in governing Ireland, pours into the British services a constant succession of men whom the empire could not spare.

#### THE WAR FROM A NEW POINT OF VIEW.

A young Irishwoman stood beside me as the car pulled away from the platform. She was telling a chance acquaintance that she had been out from the city [to the state camp] to see her husband.

"There ain't goin' t' be anny war at

all," said she. "It's all a story got up by the men t' fool the wimmen folks. Ivery wance in awhile the men has t' go off on a big jamboree. An' so they git up a great story about war. I don't believe there iver was such a thing."

"But you read about it in the newspapers," said the other woman.

"Yis," she replied, "but the newspapers is all run by men an' they're all in together."

"But you know how they used to come home wounded and dead from the civil war," said the other.

"Ah, I know," said she with the brogue, "but my man has come home wounded manny a time when I knew there was no war. An' wasn't Ted Gleason brought home dead not a month back with a big dint in his forehead? Wance in awhile the men have t' go off by themselves—millions o' them—an' they put guards around them t' keep the women away, an' they have all kinds o' games and prize fights an' divilment t'gether."—*The Cosmopolitan.*

There is one boy in town who is reading the war news from an entirely original motive. "It isn't that I'm not interested in it just like everybody else," he says; "but I'm not doing it from interest alone. It's to save trouble. In a few years, you know, all these happenings will be history, and I'll have to learn about them from a stupid old book. Well, I'm learning now, instead, and out of the newspapers and magazines. Then when it gets to be history and the teacher will tell me to study it, I'll know it all, and without studying, too. It's lots of fun. Only wish I could learn all history the same way."—*New York Paper.*

The torpedo destroyer, or torpedo-boat catcher, is simply a large sea-going torpedo boat, with very much greater speed and an armament of rapid fire guns to enable it successfully to attack and destroy the small torpedo boat, which it is its mission to seek out and disable. At sea it would act as a torpedo boat. We have none of this class in our service as yet, unless the one purchased abroad may rank as such. Their practical utility in actual warfare has yet to be demonstrated, but theoretically they are most dangerous opponents.—Henry W. Raymond, in *The Chautauquan.*

The opposition to the war, so far as it has come under my observation and knowledge, seems to be caused by overcultivation, using "cultivation" in all the ways in which it may be applied, from spiritual to lowest material. And overcultivation is more to be deprecated than undercultivation, because it

puts one out of touch with nature, and deprives him of the primitive emotions—those great elemental forces that keep the world vitalized.—Extract from private letter.

Every warship carries what is called the "homeward-bound" steamer. This is a forty-five-starred, red, white, and blue bunting, and is often hundreds of feet long, so that it sometimes trails in the water, unless the wind is blowing strongly.

When a war vessel starts for home, this is flown from the mainmast, and it is said to be the grandest and most imposing pennant in the navy.—*Great Round World.*

According to *The Outlook* it was brought out at the recent International Postal Congress that two-thirds of the mail of the world is addressed in the English language.

A home is never perfectly furnished for enjoyment unless there is a child in it, rising three years old, and a kitten, rising three weeks.—*Dr. Southey.*

Shall I seek Heaven that I may find a place  
Where with my soul 'tis well?  
If thus I seek, though I may strive for Heaven,  
My face is set towards hell.  
—*Hannah Kimball.*

**READERS** who find this paper interesting or useful, are requested to bring it to the attention of their acquaintances, and also to forward the names and addresses of such persons as they think might become subscribers after seeing sample copies.

#### THE PUBLIC

is a weekly paper which prints in concise and plain terms, with lucid explanations and without editorial bias, all the really valuable news of the world. It is also an editorial paper. Though it abstains from mingling editorial opinions with its news accounts, it has opinions of a pronounced character, which, in the columns reserved for editorial comment, it expresses fully and freely, without favor or prejudice, without fear of consequences, and without hope of discreditable reward. Yet it makes no pretensions to infallibility, either in opinions or in statements of fact; it simply aspires to a deserved reputation for intelligence and honesty in both. Besides its editorial and news features, the paper contains a department of original and selected miscellany, in which appear articles and extracts upon various subjects, verse as well as prose, chosen alike for their literary merit and their wholesome human interest. Familiarity with *The Public* will commend it as a paper that is not only worth reading, but also worth filing.

#### Subscription, One Dollar a Year.

Free of postage in United States, Canada and Mexico; elsewhere, postage extra, at the rate of one cent per week. Payment of subscription is acknowledged up to the date in the address label on the wrapper.

Single copies, five cents each.

Published weekly by

**THE PUBLIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, Room 622,  
Schiller Building, Chicago, Ill.**

Post-office address:

**THE PUBLIC, Box 667, Chicago, Ill.**

#### SUBSCRIPTION AGENTS:

Western Reserve, Ohio, OTTO FRISER, 316 American Trust Building (Telephone, Main 1069), Cleveland, Ohio.

Omaha and Council Bluffs, Mrs. C. D. JAMES, 2208 Douglas Street, Omaha, Neb.