Enlarging New York City.

Evidently the only way that New York can keep up with Chicago is to widen and her boundaries and take in all such outlying points as Brooklyn, Long Island City and Staten Island. A "municipal consolidation inquiry commission" was appointed some time ago to look into the possibility of taking in as much of the outlying territory as would include some turnip fields and cabbage gardens within the corporate limits of the metropolis. Then the proper balance of power between the rural population and that of the city would be established.

The commission met not long since and reported progress. The main part of the progress that had been made was the preparation of an essay by Mr. Andrew H. Green, president of the commission, a gentleman who has long been sentimentally given over to annexation. He presented a new theory of population in the growth of the United States.

Heretofore the mainstay of the land has been its rural population. Legislation has been made with a view to the needs of the country at large. This was because the rural population outnumbered greatly the dwellers in the cities. But now that has changed. In the decade between 1840 and 1850 a tremendous current set in toward the cities. In 1790 a little more than 3 per cent. of the people of the country dwelt in cities. Now not far from one quarter of our whole population are in the cities, and Mr. Green believes there are those now living who will see more than half of all the people of the United States residents of the cities.

The potent magician who has wrought the change may be named in one word—machinery. Invention started factories, and the ready pay in them tempted young men and women from the farm to the town. This movement has been progressing steadily since 1850 and will continue to progress. More and more hand labor will be replaced by the all devouring machine until even the farmer will find that iron and steel—perhaps at no remote day aluminum, too—will do his work for him. One reaper and binder stops in and does the labor of ten men. The ten men must leave the farm and find work in the town and city. Thus the farms are deserted, and the towns grow at their expense.

Consequently it is the great city that will wield and shape the destinies of the nation hereafter. To this end Mr. Green advocates making the cities as large as possible, and taking into them as much of the rural districts adjacent as is possible. He also advocates tearing down the barriers of petty municipal governments that separate neighboring cities from each other and putting them under one consolidated administration. Then they will work together for the greatness of all. The thousand and one little conflicting interests and rivalries that now hold them down will be destroyed, and they will have only to go forward to a glorious destiny. It is the age of colossal combinations.

To this end Mr. Green would unite into one vast city Brooklyn, Long Island City, New York and Staten Island. He would take in Jersey City too, only, unfortunately, that is in another state, and the ancient commonwealth of Jersey would not willingly lose 180,000 of her people and 160,000,000 of her mosquitoes in that fashion.

But the finger of destiny seems to point to the consolidation of all the rest into one mighty New York with a population of 5,000,000. The fact that Brooklyn and New York are separated by East river signifies nothing. The majority of the great cities of the world are thus divided into two parts.

It will be a dire calamity if the natural gas wells really are giving out, as is claimed. But cannot a gas manufactured from coal be made to take its place? Wherever the natural gas has been used those who have become accustomed to it will be in despair at being compelled to abandon it and go back to the old frightful soft coal that makes mankind wicked and desperate from being so dirty. The natural gas itself is thought to be a product of coal. Let some Edison give us from coal a cheap artificial fuel gas.

A writer in Harper's Bazar says a human being can never be graceful till he forgets he has any feet and hands. The advice given is for persons to practice gymnastics and movements of the limbs and fingers till they are so limbered out that they will lose all stiffness of bone and muscle, and the individual will feel light and flexible as a bird. Well, it is pretty hard for a young fellow who wears No. 10's and is just beginning to go into company to forget all about his feet.

The West End Street Railway company, of Boston, operates 236 miles of track, of which sixty-five miles are equipped with electric cars. Twenty-seven miles more are partly thus provided. On the lines where the electric cars run travel has increased 44 per cent. since the horses were released from service. The public is ready for the electric cars at any rate.

In the Vermont legislature this winter there are 151 farmers. If anything remarkable occurs in legislative matters in Vermont, therefore, we shall know how to account for it. There will be one good result from this agricultural legislature at any rate. The farmers will hurry the necessary work through, so as to get home in time for the spring plowing.

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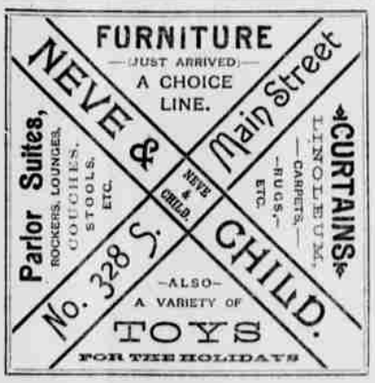

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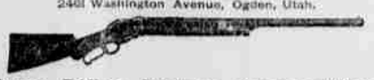

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