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What the World Will be Like In a Hundred Years

By W. L. George

There is a good old rule which bids us never prophesy unless we know, but, all the same, when one cannot prophesy one may guess, especially if one is sure of being out of the way when the reckoning comes. Therefore it is without anxiety that I suggest a picture of this world a hundred years hence, and venture as my first guess that the world at that time would be remarkable to one of our ghosts, not so much because it was so different as because it was so similar.

In the main the changes which we may expect must be brought about by science. It is easier to bring about a revolutionary scientific discovery such as that of the X-ray than to alter in the least degree the quality of emotion that arises between a man and a maid. There will probably be many new rays in 2022, but the people whom they illumine will be much the same.

From which the reader may conclude that I do not expect anything startling in the way of scientific discovery. That is not the case; I am convinced that in 2022 the advancement of science will be amazing, but it will be nothing like so amazing as is the present day in relation to a hundred years ago. A sight of the world today would surprise President Jefferson much more, I suspect, than the world of 2022 would surprise the little girl who sells candies at Grand Central Station. For Jefferson knew nothing of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, automobiles, aeroplanes, gramophones, movies, radium, &c.; he did not even know hot and cold bathrooms. The little girl at Grand Central is a blasé child; to her these things are commonplace; the year 2022 would have to produce something very startling to interest her ghost. The sad thing about discovery is that it works toward its own extinction, and that the more we discover the less there is left.

It does not follow that, scientifically, the year 2022 should fall to be amazing. I suspect that commercial flying will have become entirely commonplace. The passenger steamer will survive on the coasts, but it will have disappeared on the main routes, and will have been replaced by flying convoys, which should cover the distance between London and New York in about twelve hours. As I am anxious that the reader should not look upon me as a visionary, I would point out that in an airplane collision which happened recently a British passenger plane was traveling at 180 miles an hour, which speed would have brought it across the Atlantic in eighteen hours. It is therefore quite conceivable that America may become separated from Europe by only eight hours. The problem is mainly one of artificial heating and ventilation to enable the aeronauts to survive.

The same cause will affect the railroads, which at that time will probably have ceased to carry passengers except for suburban traffic. Railroads may continue to handle freight, but it may be that even this will be taken from them by road traffic, because the automobile does not have to carry the enormous overhead charges of tracks. Certainly food, mails and all light goods will be taken over from the railroads by road trucks. As for the horse, it will probably no longer be bred in white countries.

The people of the year 2022 will probably never see a wire outlined against the sky; it is practically certain that wireless telegraphy and wireless telephones will have crushed the cable system long before the century is done. Possibly, too, power may travel through the air when means are found to prevent enormous voltages being suddenly discharged in the wrong place.

Coal will not be exhausted, but our reserves will be seriously depleted, and so will those of oil. One of the world dangers a century hence will be a shortage of fuel, but it is likely that by that time a great deal of power will be obtained from tides, from the sun, probably from radium and other forms of radial energy, while it may also be that atomic energy will be harnessed. If it is true that matter is kept together by forces known as electrons, it is possible that we shall know how to disperse matter so as to release the electron as a force. This force would last as long as matter, therefore as long as the earth itself.

The movies will be more attractive, as long before 2022 they will have been re-



placed by the kinephone, which now exists only in the laboratory. That is, the figures on the screen will not only move, but they will have their natural colors and speak with ordinary voices. Thus, the stage as we know it to-day may entirely disappear, which does not mean the doom of art, since the movie actress of 2022 will not only not need to know how to smile but also how to talk.

One might extend indefinitely on the number of inventions which ought to exist and will exist, but the reader can think of them for himself, and it is more interesting to ask ourselves what will be the appearance of our cities a hundred years hence. To my mind they will offer a mixed outlook, because mankind never tears anything down completely to build up something else; it erects the new while retaining the old; thus, many buildings now standing will be preserved. It is conceivable that the Capitol at Washington, many of the universities and churches will be standing a hundred years hence, and that they will, almost unaltered, be preserved by tradition.

Also, many private dwellings will survive and will be inhabited by individual families. I think that they will have passed through the cooperative stage, which may be expected fifty or sixty years hence, when the servant problem has become completely unmanageable and when private dwellings organize themselves to engage staffs to cook, clean, and mend for the groups. That cooperative stage will be the last kick of the private mistress who wants to retain in her household some sort of slave. In 2022 she will have been bent by circumstances, but she will have recovered her private dwelling, being served for seven hours a day by an orderly. The woman who becomes an orderly will be as well paid as if she were a stenographer, will wear her own clothes, be called "Miss," belong to her trade union and work under union rules.

Naturally the work of the household, which is being reduced day by day, will in 2022 be a great deal lighter. I believe that most of the cleaning required to-day in a house will have been done away with. In the first place, through the disappearance of coal in all places where electricity is not made there will be no more smoke, perhaps not even that of tobacco. In the second place I have a vision of walls, furniture and hangings made of more or less compressed papier mache, bound with brass or taping along the edges. Thus, instead of

scrubbing its floors, the year 2022 will unscrew the brass edges or unstitch the tapes and peel off the dirty surface of the floor or curtains. Then every year a new floor board will be laid. One may hope that standard chairs, tables, carpets, will be peeled in the same way.

Similar reforms apply to cooking, a great deal of which will survive among old fashioned people, but a great deal more of which will probably be avoided by the use of synthetic foods. It is conceivable, though not certain, that in 2022 a complete meal may be taken in the shape of four pills. This is not entirely visionary; I am convinced that corned beef hash and pumpkin pie will still exist, but the pill lunch will—roll by their side.

But at that time few private dwellings will be built; in their stead will rise the community dwellings, where the majority of mankind will be living. They will probably be located in garden spaces and rise to forty or fifty floors, housing easily four or five thousand families. This is not exaggerated, since in one New York hotel to-day three thousand people sleep every night. It would mean also that each block would have a local authority of its own. I imagine these dwellings as affording one room to each adult of the family and one room for common use. Such cooking as then exists will be conducted by the local authority of the block, which will also undertake laundry, mending, cleaning and will provide a complete nursery for the children of the tenants.

Perhaps at that time we shall have attained a dream which I often nurse, namely, the city roofed with glass. That city would be a complete unit, with accommodations for houses, offices, factories and open spaces, all this carefully allocated. The roof would completely do away with weather and would maintain an even temperature to be fixed by the taste of the period. Artificial ventilation would suppress wind. As for the open spaces, if the temperature were warm they would exhibit a continual show of flowers, which would be emancipated from winter and summer; in other words, winter would not come however long the descendants of Mr. Hutchinson might wait.

The family would still exist, even though it is not doing very well to-day. It is inconceivable that some sort of feeling be-



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between parents and children should not persist, though I am of course unable to tell what that feeling will be. I imagine that the link will be thinner than it is to-day, because the child is likely to be taken over by the State, not only schooled but fed and clad, and at the end of its training placed in a post suitable to its abilities.

This may be affected by birth control, which in 2022 will be legal all over the world. There will be stages; the first results of birth control will be to reduce the birth rate; then the State will step in, as it does in France, and make it worth people's while to have more children; then the State will discover that it has made things too easy and that people are having children recklessly; finally some sort of balance will establish itself between the State demand for children and the national supply.

Largely the condition of the family will be governed by the position of woman, because woman is the family, while man is merely its supporter. It is practically certain that in 2022 nearly all women will have discarded the idea that they are primarily "makers of men." Most fit women will then be following an individual career. All positions will be open to them and a great many women will have risen high. The year 2022 will probably see a large

this will go on. One may therefore presume that in 2022 most States will have nationalized railroads, telegraphs, telephones, canals, docks, water supply, gas (if any) and electricity. Other industries will exist much as they do to-day, but it is likely that the State will be inclined to control them, to limit their profits, and to arbitrate between them and the workers. We find a hint of this in America in the anti-trust acts; a hundred years hence the tendency will be much stronger. It is worth noting as an international factor that by that time purely national industries will almost have disappeared, and that the work of the world will be in the hands of controlled combines governing the supply of a commodity from China to Peru.

Unfortunately these international relations through trade are not likely to have affected political conditions. There will still be war. The wars of that period may be a little less frequent than they are to-day, and be limited by arrangements such as the Pacific agreement, the agreement between Canada and the United States of America to leave their frontier unfortified, &c., but it will still be there. I suspect that those wars to come will be made horrible beyond my conception by new poison gases, inextinguishable flames and light-proof smoke clouds. In those wars the airplane bomb will seem as out of date as is to-day the hatchet. War may ultimately disappear, but this lies beyond the limits of this article and even beyond those of my mind.

As regards the United States in particular, it is likely that the country will have come to a complete settlement, with a population of about 240,000,000. The idea of North and South, East and West, will have almost disappeared; by that time the American race will have taken so definite a form that immigration will not affect it. The American from Key West and the American from Seattle will be much the same kind of man.

That is to say as regards race, but I feel that mentally the American of 2022 will have enormously changed. He is to-day the most enterprising creature in the world, and is driven by a continual urge to rise, to make money. That is because the modern American lives in a country that is only partly developed, and where immense wealth still lies ready for him to take. In 2022 that will be as finished as it is to-day in England. American wealth will then be either developed or known, and all of it will belong to somebody. There will be no more opportunity in America than there is in England to-day. Those Americans will know that it is practically certain that they will die much in the same position as the one in which they were born. Those Americans will therefore be less enterprising and much more pleasure loving. They will have rebelled against long hours; the chances are that in 2022 few people will work more than seven hours a day, if as much.

The effect of this, which I am sure sounds regrettable to many of my readers, will, in my opinion, be good. It was essential that the American race should be capable of intense labor and intense ambition if it was to develop its vast country, but one result has been haste, overwork, noise, all of which is bad for the nerves. In 2022 American will have made her fortune and will be enjoying it as well as she can.

I think that she will be a happier country than she is to-day. The appeal of wealth will be less because wealth will be difficult to attain, so those Americans to come will be producing in art and literature infinitely more than they are producing to-day. To-day, in fiction, America leads the world by sincerity, faith and fearlessness, but the American novel of significance is a novel of revolt against the thralls of money, of convention and of puritanism. In 2022 American literature will be a literature of culture. The battle will be over and the muzzle off. There will be no more things one can't say, and things one can't think. No doubt there will be in 2022 people who think as they would have thought in 1922, or even a little earlier, but a great liberalism of mind will prevail.

It is not my business to congratulate the future, and I have no desire to do so, as it is impossible to say a thing is good or bad; all one can say is that it exists. But in case some of my readers feel repulsion when they contemplate my lunch pills or my nationalized railroads, to those I would say that they are perhaps unduly anxious. The world takes care of itself; it has been doing so for hundreds of centuries and is still spinning; the world will take care of itself in 2022; that is its chief occupation. More than that, I feel convinced that though the world may lose graces, it will develop other graces, that on the whole, and as time goes on, mankind grows more intelligent, more amiable and more honest.

The future will be difficult; what does that matter? So was the past difficult; difficulties did not prevent its turning into a tolerable present.

number of women in Congress, a great many on the judicial bench, many in civil service posts and perhaps some in the President's Cabinet.

But it is unlikely that women will have achieved equality with men. Cautious feminists such as myself realize that things go slowly and that a brief hundred years will not wipe out the effects on women of 30,000 years of slavery. Women will work, partly because they want to and partly because they will be able to. Thus women will pay their share in the upkeep of home and family. The above suggestion of community buildings, where all the household work will be done by professionals, will liberate the average wife and enable her out of her wages to pay her

share of the household work which she dislikes.

Marriage will still exist much as it is to-day, for mankind has an inveterate taste for the institution, but divorce will probably be as easy everywhere as it is in Nevada. In view, however, of the improved position of woman and her earning power, she will not only cease to be entitled to alimony, but she will be expected, after the divorce, to pay her share of the maintenance of her children.

As regards the politics of 2022, I should expect the form of the State to be much the same. A few rearrangements may have taken place on the lines of self-determination; for instance, Austria may have united with Germany, the South American republics may have federated, &c., but I do not believe that there will be a superstate. There will still be republics and monarchies; possibly, in 2022, the Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Norwegian kings may have fallen, but for a variety of reasons, either lack of advancement or practical convenience, we may expect still to find kings in Sweden, Jugo-Slavia, Greece, Rumania and Great Britain.

On the inside these States may have slightly changed, for there prevails a tendency to socialization which has nothing to do with socialism. Most of the European governments are unconsciously nationalizing a number of industries, and