

The Daily Picayune.

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SUNDAY MORNING, DEC. 24, 1899.

THE NEGLECT OF LITERARY CULTURE.

Attention has been recently called to the general "decadence of literary allusion" nowadays. Speeches made in debate in the British Parliament, or in the American Congress, are now rarely ever ornamented with quotations from classical authors, or illustrated with apposite references to occurrences recorded in ancient history. The change that has taken place in this respect, however, is probably not wholly due to the neglect of literature, either as a means of culture or as a source of entertainment. It is no doubt largely due to the growing expectations of both public and private business, and a consequently heightened appreciation of the value of time. The vast expansion of the British Empire within the last fifty years, the enormous increase of the population of the United States, the prodigious development of productive industry and commerce in all the civilized world, are facts which have made immense additions to the tasks and responsibilities of statesmen and men of affairs, and which could not fall to impress them with an almost painful sense of the extreme importance of economizing time. For this reason men generally have become intolerant of that old-fashioned style of oratory which delighted the grandfathers and great-grandfathers of the present generation with the pomp and splendor of its elaborate rhetoric and with the abundant wealth of its learned quotations. In debate, at least, the ideal speech to-day is all pith and point—a lance hurled straight to the mark.

The same tendency is more or less observable in periodical literature. In the old English and Scotch quarters there often seemed to be an attempt to avoid a direct and immediate disclosure of the thought which the writer intended ultimately to convey, as though it would be in bad taste to grapple with the subject before several paragraphs had been devoted to some very remotely relevant generalizations. But the reviewer of to-day has changed all that. His article is generally brief and rarely ever vague. The same thing may be said of contemporary newspapers, and especially American papers; but in their case the explanation is not difficult. They are made largely to meet the demands of business men and working people who read to get the news, without regard to the fact that all reading is an educative process. The ablest papers occasionally discuss current events from a philosophic standpoint, but systematically avoid the academic style, and, as far as possible, break away from all strictly literary tradition. Hence, in the daily editorial, classical quotations and allusions have become as rare as they are in the debates of deliberative and legislative assemblies. But the infrequency of classical quotations in speeches delivered in the Parliament of Great Britain during the last quarter of a century, or, perhaps, for a longer period, are not wholly attributable to the growth of business and the multiplication of the engagements appointed for the passing hour. In the great days of Fox, Pitt, Burke and Sheridan, the great majority of the members of the national legislature of Great Britain were brought up under a system of intellectual training which depended principally for its success upon a close study of ancient Greek and Latin authors, pure mathematics, a medium of metaphysics, and moral philosophy. Boys were prepared at Eton, Harrow, Rugby, and certain other famous public schools, to articulate at Oxford or at Cambridge. In the debating societies of those two great, essentially aristocratic, universities, young men destined to political life were trained for the strenuous party struggles in which they were presently to participate. They all knew each other, and "favorites" were picked out, as promising colts are for "the Derby." Referring to this exceptionally favored class of social and political leaders, Max Muller says, in a brief sketch of the character and work of Charles Kingsley: "This close intellectual organization is favored in England by many circumstances. The number of public schools is limited. Of universities there are, or were till lately, only two. Most men of note are acquainted with each other from school or from university, and whoever has gained the trust and love of his friends at Eton or Oxford retains it usually through life. . . . Almost everybody knows everybody, and the great families, clans and counties hold so closely together that whenever two Englishmen meet abroad they soon find out that they are distantly related or have at least some friends in common." The great scholar who furnishes this sketch of the governing class as it was in England fifty years ago adds other informing details of this sort, and the total effect is that of a beautiful picture of social "solidarity," which is noticed here because it serves to show how a special form of culture, enjoyed by a comparatively small part of the population of Great Britain, came to prescribe the style of eloquence which, for a long term of years, was found most effective in the national legislature of that country. It all comes to this, that Oxford and Cambridge were stepping stones to the House of Commons, and the classical training of the young statesmen of Great Britain preserved the traditional methods of ancient oratory in the discussion of strictly modern issues. But the development and advance of the democratic idea, the general diffusion of learning, and particularly the increased importance attached to modern science, are influences that have combined to deprive a distinctive classical culture of its former prestige, and to bring at once new men and a new ideal of eloquence to the front.

Admitting the urgency of the demand that every moment of time shall be economized—"spent to the best advantage"—it still remains to balance accounts, and to inquire whether the mental development of the nationalities immediately concerned has been forwarded or retarded by that neglect of literary culture which has been here indicated as one of the causes to which the altered style of modern oratory should be attributed. The complaint is that "the decadence of literary allusion" has been general. Modern oratory has been cited simply as illustrative of a general tendency. It is charged that literature is neglected in the schools; that it is in effect ignored as an indispensable means of education, and as an essential element of culture. One of the reasons given for this change is the increased attention attracted by physical science. Modern educators have decided that physical sciences has been too much neglected. The novelty of this idea has added something to its popularity, and the fact that physical science has been the handmaid of all the practical arts of life and has been immensely useful in the promotion of material prosperity has no doubt impressed many minds with a conviction of its paramount importance in any rational scheme of study. It should be evident, however, that any consideration of this sort is really a plea for technical education and without relation to the claims of culture, which, on its own high ground, is concerned simply with the development and refinement of mental power. Matthew Arnold, after a prolonged and careful examination of the various systems of common school education adopted by the different countries of Europe, retained his preference for literary culture, and advised that pupils in the secondary schools should be required to memorize certain selected poems. In his judgment, learning of that sort would be of itself an abiding treasure in the mind. And, indeed, no one can fail to see how, besides lingering in memory like so many beautiful pictures by great masters in one incomparably grand gallery of art, they would remain as centers of inspiration and refining influence.

Louisville and Nashville Southwestern Limited. Makes the quickest time between New Orleans and New York and eastern cities. The ship where women's property right or interest was involved, which really is a novel situation. Captain Savers stated yesterday that he had not yet heard from the Governor, but he had decided whether or not the coffee will be admitted to that city he will be allowed to discharge the 11,000 bags consigned to merchants in that city. Mr. Savers is of the opinion that after the thorough fumigation of the ship and cargo at the Mississippi river quarantine station. "He plays well that wins." Hood's Sarsaparilla wins the victory over disease because it possesses genuine curative power. A novel injunction proceeding is reported from Texas. A private citizen, Will R. Morris, sued J. B. Wardfield, for \$100,000, alleging that Wardfield had partially alienated his wife's real estate, if continued, would totally alienate his wife's real estate. Wardfield, in any manner, either directly or indirectly, communicating with Mrs. Morris by letter, writing, sign, or symbol. Subsequently Wardfield twice met and talked with Mrs. Morris. For this he was adjudged in contempt of court. He was fined \$100 and sentenced to three days in the county jail. The court of criminal appeals of Texas, in sustaining the injunction and the contempt judgment, said (six-pager) that, in 1898, the court held the rule that the courts would only interfere with some property right or interest was involved, but now it seems the writ will be applied to an innumerable variety of cases, which really is a novel situation. It may be said that where a court of equity has jurisdiction of the case, and that where some act threatened or that may be done pending the litigation, whether it be a matter of property in issue or to some personal right dependent upon some person or an act, the court should interfere. The court ordered Wardfield to remain to the sheriff to serve his sentence and to pay the costs of the writ of habeas corpus.

THE FIRE LADDIES PASS IN REVIEW. The Second Division Having Its Day of Display. The Slot Machine Measure Will Be Ready Tuesday, And Councilmen Will Show Exactly How They Stand. Mayor Flower Names a Committee to Co-Operate With the State Fair Managers.

There was a parade, review and inspection of the second and fifth battalions of the fire department yesterday evening on Canal street. The companies were started from Rampart and Canal, and marched on the upper side as far as Camp street. They were inspected by Second St. Charles and Carondelet streets. After that the march was taken again, the turn being made at Camp street to the lower side of Canal, and out Canal to Rampart. The fire companies, President Barker and Messrs. Cooney, Sullivan, Fitzpatrick, McShane and Meister, Chief O'Connor, his assistants, and Councilman Leahy took up a stand in front of D. H. Holmes' store, and reviewed the parade. Canal street was crowded with spectators, all of whom took especial interest in the self-propeller engine and the aerial truck. The latter was brought to a halt at the reviewing stand, and an exhibition of ladder raising given. One of the ladder-men ascended to the very top of the ladder as it stood projected full length, and was greeted with cheers. At that height he was well above any of the buildings thereabouts. The horseless engine was followed all over the course, and gave a most considerable favorable comment, because of its easy handling. The order of parade was as follows: The second battalion, under command of Senior Captain P. T. Burke, with the following companies: Engine company No. 1, Captain J. Baker, Lieutenant F. Kraus; chemical company No. 2, Captain J. Kilbane, Lieutenant J. Lehmann; chemical company No. 3, Captain J. Halpin, Lieutenant A. Monaghan; truck company No. 4, Captain A. Billie, Lieutenant J. M. McLaughlin; engine company No. 5, Captain W. J. Lee, Lieutenant M. E. Duncan; engine company No. 6, Captain Geo. Bull, Lieutenant J. Murphy; engine company No. 12, Captain J. Craig, Lieutenant A. Spreen; self-propeller, Senior Captain P. T. Burke, Lieutenant J. Scherer; engine company No. 13, Captain A. Barnhardt, Lieutenant D. Dowling; engine company No. 14, Captain J. Scherer; engine company No. 23, Captain G. Hanlin, Lieutenant J. Steib; engine company No. 24, Captain L. Fleming, Lieutenant V. Lundgren; engine company No. 27, Captain S. J. Stelling; water tower company No. 1, Lieutenant A. Dupre in command. The fifth battalion, under command of Senior Captain Chas. Baerjer, with the following companies: Engine company No. 10, Captain J. B. Bean, Lieutenant C. Hubler; engine company No. 17, Captain M. Byrne, Lieutenant F. Desabays; engine company No. 18, Senior Captain L. P. Buck, Lieutenant E. B. Harper.

SLIT MACHINE MEASURE. The slot machine ordinance which was introduced anew in the city council last Tuesday night, after being defeated, will very likely be before the council again next Wednesday night on final passage. This is a rather rapid move of the measure, being brought from a first reading on Tuesday to a meeting of the committee on public order on Friday, next to the city attorney, and back to the council.

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE FAILS TO MEET. There was to have been a meeting of the organization committee at 1 o'clock yesterday, but a quorum failed to materialize and the session was postponed until Tuesday evening next. There were present Chairman Hicks and Messrs. Leahy and Strouss.

CITY HALL CHRISTMAS GIFTS. Commissioner J. W. Murphy, of the department of police and public buildings, and City Engineer A. C. Bell were on yesterday made the recipients of handsome presents by their employees. Commissioner Murphy received a gold silver-plated pitcher and cup and a solid silver goblet for his little boy. Mr. Bell received a handsome pair of mantle ornaments.

STATE FAIR COMMITTEE. Yesterday Mayor Flower, in obedience to a resolution adopted at the last session of the council, appointed the committee of five who are to cooperate with a like committee from the Progressive Union in connection with the approaching state fair. This committee consists of Messrs. J. H. Lafay, Chas. A. Anderson, P. T. O'Brien, J. M. Sherman and Magnus Pedersen.

CITY FINANCES. The city treasurer makes the following report for the past week: Cash balance Dec. 16, 1899, \$240,890.81 Receipts since . . . 40,400.99 Total . . . \$281,291.80 Less payments . . . 27,079.27 Balance Dec. 23, 1899, \$254,212.53

1899 . . . \$24,555.31 1898 . . . 63,457.54 1897 . . . 20,110.28 1896 . . . 18,807.38 1895 . . . 4,835.13 1894 . . . 64.30 1893 . . . 2.50 1892 . . . 4.50 1891 . . . 5.80 1890 . . . 23.40 1889 . . . 2,618.23 1888 . . . 43.20 1887 . . . 1,511.91 1886 . . . 1,807.13 1885 . . . 981.70 1884 . . . 183.71 1883 . . . 182.84 1882 . . . 109.42 1881 . . . 1,400.12 Printing and advertising back taxes . . . 623.92 \$215,212.30

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The Queen's Christmas Dinner. There will be a Royal Feast at Windsor Castle. The News from the Cape Will Make Christmas Gloomy. General Desire to Give Up Life and Property. If It is Necessary to Save the Country—Theatres Doing a Losing Business. (Copyright, 1899, by Associated Press.) London, Dec. 23.—A banquet for the queen's Christmas dinner will be held at Windsor, Dec. 23, at the great kitchen of Windsor, in readiness for the royal dinner party on Monday. The great hall, when cold, will be furnished with shrouded horse tables, and with a board's shrouded horse tables, will assist in adorning her majesty's sideboard on Christmas day. This quaint announcement in the court circular, with the spirit of royal plenty on every line, sounds so much like a bold mockery of the sorrow and shadow of death which have turned the season of rejoicing into one of mourning. "Bad news from the Cape," writes one society authority, "has made London the dreariest city in the world at the season when it ought to be the most gay." Though this may be exaggerated, there is certainly much truth in it. The queen will spend Christmas at Windsor, instead of, as for years at Osborne, owing to her wish to be nearer the castle, thereby avoiding a habit very dear to her for years past. With her will be the duchess of Albany and her children. The prince of Wales will spend Christmas at Sandringham, and the duke and duchess of York will also be there. But, neither at Windsor, at Sandringham nor in the noblest homes in Great Britain will there be much merry-making, for, with 7000 men killed and wounded or missing in South Africa, there are few families in which have not been touched with this which have not been touched with this depression, which only serves to make the nation more determined than ever, and which is a silent accompaniment to one of the most spontaneous outbursts of patriotism and universal desire TO RISK LIFE and give up property that has ever marked the history of the country. Cook's sons are no less anxious to serve their country on the battle field than dukes' sons, or even the dukes themselves. The duke of Marlborough's offer to equip 160 men of his yeomanry regiment for service in South Africa is merely one of a hundred such offers from his class. The day of wild war enthusiasm and overconfidence, has passed, and there reigns in its stead a grim determination to atone for the mistakes of the past by individual effort, regardless of consequences. An instance of the spirit which pervades the country is that in the Cumberland and Westmoreland yeomanry, of which the earl of Londsdale is colonel. Every officer and nearly every man in the regiment has volunteered, and is using every influence to get accepted. Among the officers is Captain Hugh Jefferson, well known in America, formerly manager of the Sand Creek Cattle Company, of Wyoming. The duke of Marlborough will probably receive an appointment on Lord Chatham's staff. In the northern counties there is keen rivalry as to who shall do the most for his country in THE HOUR OF NEED. Northumbrians, headed by Earl Gray, have subscribed large sums to equip 2000 men, and the earl of Durham asked the men of his county not to be outdone by the Northumberlandians and hands the list with a substantial subscription. Two nephews of General Lord Roberts, both ex-majors of the regular army, have volunteered to go in any capacity in the yeomanry. The earl of Essex, who is the major of the Hertfordshire yeomanry, accompanies the contingent of his county. In short, the 8000 mounted men who have responded to the call for yeomen will have the brains, muscle and daredevilry of the famous American Rough Riders. By the death this week of the earl of Tankerville, Lord Bennett, who married Miss Leonora Van Marter, of Tacoma, succeeds to the title. The new earl is a well-known syndicalist and met his wife at a recent meeting at Tacoma in 1893. The late earl was the oldest member of the house of lords. His career was marked by many eccentricities. The theatres are feeling the effect of the gloomy phase of the war. The most popular attractions are suffering. Even at the Shaftesbury, where "The Belle of New York" had come to be regarded as a permanent institution, notices are up that the company returns to New York forthwith. In spite of the deep anxiety of the queen regarding events in South Africa, she has no intention to permit Christmas at Windsor to assume a gloomy aspect. The duke and duchess of Connaught, the marquess of Lorne and Prince and Princess Arthur, who are all other members of the royal families, and Canon Duckworth, the queen's chaplain, arrived at Windsor this evening, where they were met by the princess of Batterburg, the duchess of Albany and others, who will make up a cheerful party. An official of the household said to a representative of the Associated Press this evening: "I have seen merrier times at the castle, but Christmas cannot be gloomy where the queen resides, and there will be no exception to the rule. There is plenty of good cheer throughout the entire household and the queen is most cheerful and all her little folks."

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