

ACADEMIA MEETING.

A Delightful Evening Spent With Wallace.

Papers Read Upon His Life and Writings, and Their Character and Influence.

A meeting of the Academia was held last night at Chickering Hall, a good attendance showing that the interest of the members has not abated.

The subject of the evening was "The Life and Writings of General Lew Wallace," and those who were present felt well repaid by the programme.

MISS TINDALL'S PAPER. Miss Anna Tindall read the first paper on his life, as follows:

We all feel a natural desire to know something of the lives and habits of those with whom we have become acquainted through their books; and when this desire may be carried to the extreme of meddling some into a man's private affairs, still I think we need not desist from the feeling of friendly interest, but rather a friendly interest for which few whom we meet in daily intercourse is there a closer bond than with those who have admitted us to the inner sanctuary of their minds and hearts through their books.

General Lew Wallace belongs to an old and honored family of Indiana, various members of which have held positions of prominence in the State and have always been on the side of progress and advancement.

His father, David Wallace, served a term in Congress and was a member of the Committee on Commerce, and while in that position voted for an appropriation to develop Morse's electric telegraph, though that vote cost him his re-election.

Lew Wallace was born at Brookville, Indiana, in 1826, and received a common school education, and, at the beginning of the Mexican War, was a law student.

At the call for volunteers, he entered the army as First Lieutenant in Company H, First Indiana Infantry. At the close of the war he resumed his profession in Covington and afterwards in Crawfordsville, also serving four years in the State Senate.

At the outbreak of the Civil War he again was prompt in responding to his country's call. He was at that time Captain of a volunteer company of State militia, and as his company was the best drilled and best equipped in the State, they promptly enlisted.

Miss Tindall then gave a sketch of his military career, in which he gained so much of glory, which she sketched his return to civil life, as follows:

Having thus won an honorable place among the military men of his time, he has since become even better known through his literary achievements, and a prominent position among the writers of to-day. His wife had devoted considerable time to writing and was the author of a number of successful children's stories, and it was through her influence that he turned his attention to literature. In 1873, he published "The Fair God," a story of the conquest of Mexico, being especially fitted for the task by the knowledge of Mexican affairs, gained during his service in the Mexican War.

Literary work was with him a pastime rather than a business, and his book-making hours were such as he could snatch from professional employment. In an article from his own pen, entitled "How I Came to Write 'Ben Hur,'" he says: "Numerous paragraphs of my book are recognized as having been blocked out in the cars between cities or in the waits at lonesome stations. Thus Tirzah's little song, 'Wake Not, but Hear Me, Love,' is the result of a delayed passage from Indianapolis home."

Of course most of his writing was done at Crawfordsville, with nights at the favoring time. On summer days, business permitting, his adventures were to be seen in an old beech tree, where he wandered with Ben Hur through the Grove of Daphne.

The story of the Wise Men from the East, led by the Star of Bethlehem to the manger of the Christ-child had always made a profound impression on his mind from early childhood, and in 1875, as he was getting over the restlessness due to years of service in the Civil War, he occurred to him to write the conceptions which he had long carried in his mind of the Wise Men from the East.

At that time, however, says that his state of mind was that of absolute indifference. He had no convictions about God or Christ. He neither believed nor disbelieved in them.

This serial, now Book I, of "Ben Hur," was finished and laid away in a desk until he should have favorable opportunity of opening communication with the Harpers. Soon after this he became engaged with Ingersoll, a person friend of his, in a discussion in regard to what Ingersoll considered the numerous inconsistencies existing in the Bible.

Ingersoll asked Wallace if he had so studied the Bible with the idea of comparing different portions and seeing whether there were inconsistencies or not. Being answered in the negative, he requested Wallace to make a comparison of the Bible with this in view and he agreed to do so.

Wallace thus describes his own feelings: "I had been listening to a discussion which was very much disconcerting to me as to God, Heaven, life, hereafter, Jesus Christ and his divinity. Trudging on in the dark, except as one's own thoughts may be company, good or bad, a sense of the importance of the theme struck me for the first time, with a force both singular and persistent. My ignorance of it was painfully a spot of deeper darkness in the darkness. I was ashamed of myself, and I had haste now to declare that the mortification of pride I then endured, or if it is preferred, the punishment of spirit, ended in a resolution to study the whole matter, if only for the gratification there might be in having conviction of one kind or another."

Then the manuscript in his desk came to his mind—that ended with the birth of Christ—why not make it the first book of a volume and go on to his death?

Of the five years given to this book, the least part was occupied in actual composition. Research and investigation consumed most of the remaining time. He had never visited the Holy Land, but in making it the location for his story, it was necessary to be familiar, not only with its history and geography, but also with the customs and usages of the peoples representatively introduced: Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and especially the children of Israel.

The success of this painstaking work we all know. As for himself, he says: "Long before I was through with my book I became a believer in God and Christ."

The eighth and last book of "Ben Hur" was written in a cavernous chamber of the old palace in Santa Fe, N. M.

From 1878 to 1881 Wallace was Governor of Utah, but the study necessary for the writing of "Ben Hur" naturally inspired in him a strong desire to visit the Holy Land, and about the time the book appeared friends were urging upon President Hayes his appointment as Minister to Turkey.

Hayes at first refused, but a mutual friend sent a copy of the newly published "Ben Hur" to the White House, which was read and so much enjoyed by members of the President's family that he decided that the man who had written such a description of the Holy Land should be given an opportunity to visit it, and accordingly Wallace received the appointment.

After actually visiting the country himself he said to friends that he found the descriptions in his book had been so accurate that he had no desire to make any changes. The gate scene he found to be especially true to life.

While Minister to Turkey it is said that Garrison suggested to him the idea of writing a story in regard to the religion of the East, the result of which has recently been given to the world in the "Prince of India."

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The thought of this book was in his mind, his wife being his sole confidant. He worked upon it with his usual painstaking diligence, devoting two years of the time to the study of astrology alone.

We may hope that the "Prince of India" may not be the last product of his pen, and rejoice that, at the close of the story of General Lew Wallace, we need not write "Concluded," but "To be continued."

A fine vocal solo by Miss Mattie Beaumont followed, which was well rendered and appreciated.

Mrs. E. M. Seymour then read a review of "Ben Hur," in which she spoke of the powerful descriptive power displayed, the accuracy of the work and the painstaking style in which it was written. She described Ben Hur, of a despised and persecuted race, imbued with a desire of reprisal upon the nation of his persecutors, bending his energies and faculties to preparation for that work. Then came the description of the peaceful evolution in his feelings and the entire change of his future life produced by it.

As a fitting compliment to the review, Miss Mary Morris gave a splendid rendering of the description of the chariot race in "Ben Hur," so vividly that the scene seemed almost spread before the eyes of her auditors, and they could almost see the furious steeds, hear the clank of the chariots and view the final catastrophe. The hearty plaudits of her hearers attested their appreciation of its merit.

Miss Ruth Spilman gave a review of "The Prince of India." She said the author had laid the scene of his story in a land not familiar to the majority of readers, which heightens its interest. In the account of the capture of Constantinople the author had brought out the important points of the epoch. The book revives the legend of the Wandering Jew and his awful fate, destined, as he is, to wait the coming of Christ. It is as well written as the other books of the author, but neither in "The Fair God" nor "Ben Hur" do we find such a study of character. She compared it with the work of Eugene Sue, and pointed out the difference in the conception and carrying out of the two characters.

The paper was an excellent one and was listened to with much attention.

Miss Minnie Sweeney followed with a paper on "The Style and Influence of General Wallace's Writings," as follows:

MISS MINNIE SWEENEY'S PAPER. To consider justly a writer's style, we must look for the motive of his work. If the motive be to amuse, light will be his task, for we follow him as we follow a winged feet. Should he, however, aim to instruct, how reluctant often are we to begin at all the pursuit of his subject.

Wallace has boldly chosen for his theme, "The Religions of Constantinople, Their Effect on Politics and Character," a subject so somber, so cumbersome that only a master could hope to introduce it into romance with even a slight degree of success. He has, however, done so to success, first, the inherent, universal interest in religion itself; and second, the glamor of enthusiasm, with which the writer invests this dearest child of his thoughts.

With what consummate address he approaches us, always on the most susceptible side! Is the reader fond of change, adventure, war, with its struggles, contests, battles, is he not carried, by land and water, under ever-varying skies! Is he a poet, a scholar? What treasures of sentiment, song and such lore are offered to him! He dwells he, however, in the common experiences of the passing hour, how must the depictions of the every-day passions—gain, loss, hate, jealousy, filial affection, friendship and love—draw and hold him with magnetic force! But all these are but the adjuncts, the adornments, the prelude and the interludes of the grand main theme, religion, which illuminates with an inner, glowing light, every page that speaks to the patriot, the philosopher, or the spiritual minded.

In dramatic plot and in wealth of vivid detail our author rivals the great Scotchman, but the writers he resembles most are Charles Kingsley and Bulwer. In noble, womanly intellectuality Irene, who, in the mother of Ben Hur, suggests their prototype, the beautiful, wisdom-loving Hypatia. With similar sorrowful amazement do Wallace and Kingsley contemplate the divisions of the early church and the brutality of factious and religious themselves followers of the gentle Christ.

As we linger over the bits of sentiment presented to us in the pauses of the action the subtle fascination of Bulwer's romanticism is recalled, and the likeness is further intensified by the choice and limpid language in which are set the scenes of feeling so pure and so poetic.

The resemblances considered appear as similarities in the mental fiber of the writers, rather than in the actual treatment of the subjects.

In two points at least Wallace seems to me to stand without a peer in literature. His first excellence—I had almost said perfection—appears in the skill with which he portrays the sentiment of reverence, that divine enhancing distance kept by the loving heart between itself and the object of its affections.

When we consider the conduct of the faithful Amurath, the grateful friend of the Hurs; the devotion of the gallant Mirza to his sovereign and friend, Mohammed, or the feeling of Irene for the long-absent teacher of her childhood, we discern that divine inspiration that makes human beings sacred to one another. In the opening chapter of "Ben Hur," again the irresistible charm holds us as we read in the hearts of the Wise Men of the measureless depths of their worship of the Creator. And once more, when the fainting lad receives from the unknown, passionate Christ the cup of water, at the glance and the touch there stirs in the breast of the captive that instinctive homage which the soul renders to virtue. Impalpable and pure as the perfume of the flower is the balm breathed from the fragrant petals of the Hurs; again our author's superior catholicity of sympathy. He cannot be said to break down our prejudices; he nobly assures that we have none; and well he knows how to permeate our minds with the glow of his own. Ben Hur is a Hebrew, but what Christian fails to love him?

What Jew refuses honor to the courtly Constantine? And would not Jew and Gentile unite to greet in admiration the brave pagan Aztec, Guatemala?

The critical complaint of inaccuracies, and of the imperfect development of certain characters in Wallace's work. In a task so extended and intricate as that the writer has set for himself one could hardly expect perfection; but to the mass of

readers, not the author's peers in the field of study, these flaws scarcely appear in work otherwise characterized by exquisite finish.

Our hearts have caught the spirit of patience, reflection and broad tolerance, which proclaims Wallace an exponent of these, our liberal times; that spirit which silently, yet powerfully, is changing our dream of man's universal brotherhood into a blessed reality.

In the nobility of his theme and in his masterly treatment of it, no writer of the last quarter century surpassed General Wallace. His genius has lifted his work to a place among the treasured classics.

An instrumental trio by a portion of the High School Orchestra completed the programme, and was heartily encored, the performers being George Clifford, Simon Heilbron and Charles Stickney, with Miss Annie Schaw as accompanist.

The following committee for April was announced: J. A. Woodson, Jesse Anderson and Misses Virna Woods and Anna C. Weeks.

ALL A BLUFF.

An Alleged Would-be Suicide Fools His Audience.

Yesterday railroad officer True arrested a man at the depot who was threatening to throw himself in front of a locomotive. After being detained at the police station for a while the man was allowed to go. He still talked about committing suicide, and struck out for the Yolo bridge, followed by a trio of newspaper reporters.

It soon became evident that the fellow was, in theatrical parlance, "playing to the gallery," for after walking up and down the bridge and making a cold bluff at attempting suicide he wandered away.

AMUSEMENTS.

A very large audience at the Clunie Opera-house last night witnessed the second presentation of the melo-drama, "A Celebrated Case." The play was better presented than on the first night, Mr. Sambrook improved his method, and Mr. Cooley was noticeably stronger in the very heavy part he has to sustain. The audience was manifestly pleased with the company, which had in its ranks a bit of its mettle. By one of those unaccountable mistakes that will occur, the part of Joseph was credited to Mr. Muller in yesterday's Record-Union. It is to be noted that skilled work to have its author deprived of its credit. "A Celebrated Case" again to-night.

At the Metropolitan Theater to-night Sutton's double Uncle Tom's Cabin Company will appear with two Topsyies, two Marks, and an Eva said to be the youngest ever seen on the stage. There will be a street parade of the troupe at 11:45 A. M. to-day. The press of the North-western and transmissory States, where the company has been traveling recently, give it commendatory notices.

SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

Sheriff Conroy of Placer County is down from Auburn.

John T. Harrington, a prominent lawyer of Colusa, is in the city.

S. Morris, a Chicago journalist, formerly of Colusa, is in the city.

The Sutter Club will give a musicale this evening to the members and lady friends.

The Sans-Souci Social Club will give its Valentine Eve card party this evening at Steiny Hall, and it promises to be a delightful social event.

Mrs. O. C. Walden of Blue Canyon, who has been visiting this city, leaves to-day for a few weeks' visit to her sister, Mrs. J. M. Gaskin of San Jose, after which Mrs. Walden and Mrs. Gaskin will leave for Bridgewater, N. Y., to visit their mother, Mrs. N. K. Kendall.

Arrivals at the Capital Hotel yesterday: J. W. Frost, Thos. Fleming and boy, J. B. Freed, San Francisco; E. T. Barnes, Grand Rapids; G. Munny, Sonoma; O. K. Olmsted, Grand Rapids; Chas. Wilson, E. B. Filger, Sacramento; E. C. Uhlann, J. H. Beecher, J. W. Keystone, J. D. French, A. C. McLaughlin, J. G. May, W. R. Harvey, G. E. Reed, Jr., San Francisco; F. L. Watson, St. Louis; I. M. Bedell, Colusa.

The Coming Football Game. Last Saturday the Oakland High School Football Club defeated the St. Mary's team at Oakland by a score of 14 to 4. It can well be seen from the result of this game that the Sacramento High School boys have for the 22d "foemen worthy of their steel."

Nevertheless, the members of the home team feel confident that they will give the Oaklanders one of the hardest games they ever "tackled," and unless the Oakland eleven is far above every expectation, the home boys stand a very good show for victory.

Admitted to Practice. Charles O. Marsh, a young gentleman who has been pursuing his study of the law in the office of Justice Devine, yesterday passed a satisfactory examination before Judge Johnson and was admitted to practice in the Superior Court.

Three New Citizens. Owen Pendergast, a native of Ireland, William Ellery, a native of England, and Edward Pendergast, a native of Ireland, were admitted to citizenship yesterday in Judge Johnson's court.

Do not neglect disorders of the kidneys and liver. Hood's Sarsaparilla is just the remedy to rouse the impotent organs to healthy and regular action. Give it a trial now.

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New Spring Underwear! At Special Sale. This Morning at 9:30 O'clock.

This morning we will place on sale a line of new Spring Gowns, Drawers and Chemises just received from New York. These are all bright, new goods and the values are surprising.

We have moved our Muslin Underwear Department over to the east side of our store, to the place formerly occupied by the Hosiery Department.

Ladies' Muslin Drawers, trimmed with embroidery and clusters of tucks. Sale price, 32c; regular value, 50c.

Ladies' Plain Muslin Drawers, nicely tucked, made of extra good muslin. Sale price, 32c; regular value, 45c.

Ladies' Muslin Drawers, trimmed with wide embroidery and clusters of tucks. Sale price, 42c; regular value, 60c.

Ladies' Muslin and Cambric Drawers, trimmed with embroidery and fine tucks. Sale price, 54c; regular value, 75c.

Ladies' Fine Muslin Drawers, trimmed with fine open-work embroidery and clusters of fine tucks. Sale price, 72c; regular value, \$1.

Ladies' Mother Hubbard Nightgowns with tucked yoke, turned down collar and cuffs of embroidery. Sale price, 68c; regular value, 85c.

Ladies' Mother Hubbard Nightgowns, V-shape yoke of fine embroidery and tucks. Sale price, 79c; regular value, \$1.

Ladies' Muslin Gowns, yoke of fine tucks, large rolling collar and cuffs of colored embroidery. Sale price, \$1; regular value, \$1 25.

Ladies' Muslin Mother Hubbard Gown, yoke of fine tucks, rolling collar and cuffs of embroidery, cascade of embroidery down front. Sale price, 89c; regular value, \$1 15.

Ladies' Cambric Nightgowns, empire style, trimmed in colored and white embroidery. Sale price, \$1 25; regular value, \$1 50.

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General Notices.

TO THE PUBLIC.—THE SACRAMENTO Athletic Club begs leave to announce that, on and after Friday, February 10th, classes in the gymnasium will be as follows: Senior class—Monday and Thursday, 8 to 10 P. M. Junior class—Wednesday, 3 to 6 P. M.; Saturday, 10 to 12 A. M. Ladies class—Friday, 10 to 12 A. M. Ladies class (special)—Wednesday, 7:30 to 9 P. M. Girls class—Monday and Thursday, 3 to 5 P. M. Physical examination—Tuesday and Saturday, 7:30 to 9 P. M. Business men (special)—Wednesday and Saturday, 9 to 10 P. M. For further information apply to Professor John Schenk at gymnasium, Old Pavilion, corner Sixth and M. Tel. 4-31. ED. J. KAY, Secretary.

AUCTION SALE OF FURNITURE.—To-day at DITMAR & WHEAT'S, 914 J street, opposite Plaza, at 2 and 7:30 P. M.

UNION HALL, TWENTIETH AND O.—Cooper meeting TONIGHT by W. G. Love, London.

GRAND SCOTCH CONCERT.—To be given at Pioneer Hall Wednesday EVENING, February 14th. Exhibitions of athletic games, sailor's hornpipe and Irish jig, in costume, by Prof. J. C. Fraser and R. M. Murdo. Admission 25 cents. Tel. 10-21.

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