

TEN FINE SPEAKERS.

BRIGHT MINDS BEHIND SILVER TONGUES IN THE HOUSE.

Bourke Cockran Stands at the Head—John R. Fellows Comes Next, and Amos Cummings Is in the List—Interesting Gossip From a Reliable Source.

[Special Correspondence.]

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9.—For two weeks we have had an opportunity of testing the merit of a large number of orators in the house of representatives. The house is full of orators. It has been times as many effective speakers as the senate, with only a little more than four times as many members. The explanation of this is not difficult to find. The house is the body that stands closest to the people. A large pro-



BOURKE COCKRAN.

portion of the members of the house are chosen every two years for their record of ability and usefulness or on account of the manner in which they please their people at home with public speeches. On the other hand, senators are too often chosen for their wealth. Many men reach the senate without having ever made a public speech, and while public speeches are not indispensable to useful statesmanship, and too much speaking may interfere with the business of legislation, as a rule one likes to feel that his senator or representative in congress is able to get up and acquit himself handsomely if called upon.

Genuine Orators.

Of the three hundred and fifty odd members of the house, I suppose fully one-half are able to make pretty good speeches, with or without preparation. A dozen or a score of them are entitled to rank as genuine orators. If I were called upon to name the 10 best speakers in the house, the 10 orators of our house of commons, I would make up a list something like the following:

- Bourke Cockran of New York.
- John R. Fellows of New York.
- John C. Black of Illinois.
- Thomas B. Reed of Maine.
- W. J. Bryan of Nebraska.
- W. C. P. Breckinridge of Kentucky.
- Charles A. Boutelle of Maine.
- Jonathan P. Doolittle of Iowa.
- Julius Caesar Burrows of Michigan.
- Amos Cummings of New York.

Bourke Cockran is without doubt the finest orator in the house today. Though not a member of the majority, with native gifts of uncommon brilliancy, he has not been content with these. For years Cockran has been a most earnest student. Though for a long time identified with Tammany Hall in New York city, and exceedingly active in the politics of that organization, he has always made good use of his time. His evenings he has spent at home in efforts to perfect himself for a public career. Hundreds of books on history, political economy and philosophy have passed in review before his eager eyes. Moreover, he used to take lessons in elocution from one of the best teachers in New York and by these means has polished and perfected those gifts which nature so lavishly endowed him. The result is an orator who stands without a peer in the American congress. In my humble judgment, there is not another man, either in the house or senate, who compares with him in this respect. This is a pretty good position for a man to occupy who is not yet 40 years old, and who was born a poor boy in Ireland.

Cockran is intensely ambitious. His hope is to occupy a seat in the United States senate and there to make a great name for himself. He had hoped to be elected to the senate last winter, when Mr. Murphy was chosen, and quarreled with Grand Sachem Croker of Tammany Hall. The organization would not make him its candidate. But Mr. Croker had given his word to Mr. Murphy and could not withdraw it. Mr. Croker is a man of great energy and effect of this quarrel upon Mr. Cockran's political future. If he does not patch up his differences with Croker, it is assumed he will not be returned to congress, and his public career may come to an untimely end.

If this should be the result, it will be regretted by all who know him, for such orators are not to be spared even from a body as rich in eloquence as our house of representatives. Mr. Cockran's wife is a distinguished wife and social leader at the capital, too, where they have a handsome house and entertain liberally. Cockran made enough money during his practice of law in New York to make him independent so far as income is concerned, and he had settled down to a public career with zest and accomplishments for it which are rarely met with.

Tammany Eloquence.

It is somewhat remarkable that three of our best orators should come from Tammany Hall. Many of my readers may be prejudiced against this organization and its methods, as I confess I was till I had an opportunity to learn more of its men, but it must be said in justice to Tammany that as a rule it sends pretty strong and able men to the house. In the opinion of many people, John R. Fellows is the finest orator in the house. He, too, is a natural orator and, as a rule, his speeches are a great deal of study and polish.

Cockran has one advantage of Fellows, and that is in voice. He also has a somewhat better presence, being a giant in size and many in bearing, while Mr. Fellows is a little man, not much bigger than Billy Mahone, who is said to be no larger than a pint of cider. While Cockran's voice is robust and virile, Fellows is soft and pleasing. Their methods are different. Cockran knows and practices the art of modulation. Like Henry Ward Beecher and Ingersoll, he has a register of great compass. He uses the well known but always effective art of following a torrent of words with deliberate periods and exclamations.

Fellows, on the other hand, runs straight along. He is a stream which flows without breaks or eddies, without whirlpools or rocks in its pathway. But he is magnificent. He never fails to touch the spot. Every time he rises in the house, even if it is but to say a few simple words, he instantly commands the attention of every person in the hall. He can make the simplest and most commonplace of topics glisten with the reflected light of his divine gift of eloquence. The marvel is how he manages always to employ such perfect selection of words, how he contrives always to turn his sentences with such irreproachable neatness and grace. But he does it, and it is not possible for human soul to sit within sound of his voice and escape his subtle fascination.

Amos Cummings' Gem Speech.

Perhaps this is the finest Amos Cummings ever uttered of being an earnest orator. As a rule, he does not rise to this height, but I have heard Amos make a number of the best and most effective short

speeches that were ever delivered in the house of representatives. If he makes a long speech, a carefully prepared speech, it is likely to be something rather prosaic. Where he is at his best, where every man is at his best, if he only knew it, is in rushing in, without premeditation, without preparation, and dashing off a few burning sentences that come right from the heart, and which are sure to reach the spot for which they were intended.

I remember an occasion in which the house had spent an hour or two discussing something or other, I forget what, but the more men talked the more confused every one appeared to be. They only managed to fill the air with fog. They had editorialized, and from my perch in the press gallery I saw that Amos was anxious to get into the arena with a paragraph. Presently he found his chance and sailed in. He spoke about two minutes. But every word was a gem. Every sentence had lightning in it. In those two minutes he cleared away the mist and fog. He went right to the heart of the whole business, and when he had finished there was nothing more to be said. The house voted, and voted the way Amos wanted it to vote. His paragraph had beaten all the editorials. It had been an italicized paragraph, and it won the day. The orators and better orators are not often heard in our halls of congress.

Tom Reed's Lile.

Some people may say I am wrong in putting Tom Reed in my list of great orators. In truth, it is difficult to tell whether Reed is an orator or a debater. In my opinion, he is both. That he is the greatest debater alive there can be no doubt. He has not his equal in the house or the senate nor in the British house of commons or the French chamber of deputies. He is always a debater, but in the process of debating he often strikes a note that entitles him to rank also as an orator. Of late, however, Reed is falling into an unfortunate habit of giving attention to but a single idea. Parliamentary law and the rules of the house may be fine topics with which to impress his ability and his learning upon those who hear him, but he cannot make a great national reputation in that way. The people want something besides quibbling on technicalities or a lawyer's sparring for courtroom advantages. It is high time for Mr. Reed to drop his one idea role and use his magnificent talents in battling for something higher and nearer the hearts of the people.

If Reed has any rivals as a debater in the present house, they are Cockran and Burrows. The former needs a few more years of experience, and then he will be at least the equal of any man save Reed. Burrows is a great debater, and when he is stirred to action, which unfortunately is but infrequently, can and does make a genuine orator of himself. He and Reed are rivals for leadership on the Republican side, and if the Republicans ever gain control of the house again you will see a pretty fight between them over the speakership. A greater debater and much greater orator than either of them was lost to the Republican side when Bitterworth retired to private life. He is a remarkable man, and it is a pity Ohio doesn't send him to congress again.

A Silver Tongue.

Another remarkable orator is W. C. P. Breckinridge, or "Willy" Breckinridge, as his friends call him to distinguish him from his cousin, Clifton Breckinridge, from Arkansas. He is justly called the silver haired and silver tongued orator. In a soft and pleasing voice, with graceful gestures and his white head nodding like the plume of a lily, he produces a flow and rhythm such as no other man in the American congress can approach. His speeches are poetry. He is a Kentucky song bird, I remember the poetry of his in which he pictured the harmony that should exist always between the two sections of the country—the north and the south—and in which he spoke of the horrors of war as things that he hoped would never again be seen in this country. Many of his listeners were in tears.

Wholly different is Boutelle of Maine. He is a sharpshooter. Sometimes he more resembles a gatling gun. One of the most



HON. W. J. BRYAN.

successful speeches ever made in the house was that of Boutelle's of a few years ago, in which he employed Dickens as a basis for some delightful ridicule of Mr. Holman and the Democrats in general.

Among the young men who have won great reputations of late are Doolittle of Iowa, who has a lively fancy and a staccato style which is very taking; Bryan of Nebraska, who is both an orator and a debater, and who is able to take care of himself anywhere and in any company; and General Black of Illinois, the former pension commissioner, who comes from a family of orators and has already made his mark in the house.

Buried Gold.

A ton of gold is annually buried in the cemeteries of the United States. A law for the filling and plugging and plating of teeth with silver billion would come right handy in this emergency. If this use of gold for repairing of teeth goes on many thousands of years, it is easy to see that the entire stock on hand will be exhausted, and that our remote posterity will be compelled in self defense to resort to placer mining in the old cemeteries in order to recover the precious metal that has been wasted by their ancestors.—Reno (Nev.) Journal.

Influence of the Moon on Madness.

A short time before Dr. Charcot died he said in a lecture that semicentists had for more than 50 years ridiculed the idea that the full of the moon was a dangerous time for mad people. Better informed men are coming back to that old time notion, said Dr. Charcot, as the result of increased learning on the subject of earth tides, similar to the oscillation of sea tides.

He Had Been There.

A lady well known in Washington as a lobbyist always accuses a stranger with, "I think I have seen you somewhere," which often leads to a clever farce finding out the history of the party. One evening she played off her usual game on a gentleman that understood her character, and who replied, "Most likely, madam, for I sometimes go there."—New York Ledger.

Cause and Effect.

"Love," said the lecturer, "is a psychic manifestation." "Yes," murmured a young man in the audience, "I do the sighing, and her folks do the kicking."—Indianapolis Journal.

The searchlight on Mount Washington in the White mountains, with a power of 100,000 candles and a reflection of three feet, can be seen from points 100 miles away, and newspapers can be read in its beams at a distance of 10 miles or more.

GEMS IN VERSE.

**Revolt of the Soul.**  
I hate to live and suffer, to know hunger, grief and shame  
And see in the throngs about me men mangled, blind and lame.  
I hate to see cold winter's snow bear the print of shodden feet,  
And the desolating hand of hunger pinch faces young and sweet.  
I hate to know each freezing blast blows through a cheerless love,  
I hate to see a poor head sweat o'er pick and spade and shovel.  
I hate to think that tender flesh writhes under lash and blow,  
And babes unwanted daily born for sorrow, shame and woe.  
I hate to think that thousands toil in squalor, grief and pain,  
That one may rise above his kind and countless treasure gain.  
I hate that which permits these wrongs, with a hate that cannot die,  
Be it the demons 'neath the earth or a spirit that reigns on high.  
—Louise Ingersoll.

**Song of the Stars.**  
When the daylight fades in the evening shades,  
And the blue melts in the gray,  
We pitch our tents in the firmaments  
To guard the milky way,  
And we gather the broken sunbeams up  
That the day has left in its path,  
To kindle and build the glow and gold  
Of what our sparkling constellations do.

With fond caresses we jewel the tresses  
Of the moon as she mounts the seas,  
And the heavens we sprinkle with many a twinkle  
That leaps from our sparkling eyes.  
But when the stormcloud rolls his car  
In thunder across the sky,  
And the lightning dashes in fitful flashes,  
We hide till the storm goes by.  
The sun is our master, and no disaster  
Can come to his night of rest,  
For with constant eyes on the dim horizon  
We guard the east and the west.  
We sometimes find where the comet hides,  
And we frighten him out of his lair,  
Till he spears through the night, like a fox in his flight,  
To his home in the great nowhere.  
We sometimes pause in our journey because  
We see ourselves in the glass  
Of the silent lakes or the sea that takes  
Our picture as we pass.  
But when the light quivers and breaks,  
And the gray melts into the blue,  
The tears we shed o'er our fallen dead  
Are found in the morning.—Alfred Ellison.

**Appearances Don't Govern.**  
I have just about concluded,  
After figgerin' quite a spell,  
That appearances don't govern,  
And that blood don't tell.

Sometimes the shaller plowin'  
Will make the biggest crop,  
And it ain't the tallest maple  
Allus runs the sweetest sap.

It ain't the richest, roughest grass  
The cattle likes the best;  
'Tain't likely all the eggs we find  
Are the best's that make the nest.

The tallest stalk of corn that grows  
In my twenty acre field,  
Ain't got a nubbin on it  
Nor any sign of yield.

The likeliest apple tree that grows  
In my neighbor's orchard lot  
Is full of blossoms every spring,  
But the fruit is sure to rot.

While the crooked, orn'y seedlin'  
Standin' outside by the road,  
Comes up smallin' every season  
With a headin' woun load.

The scrubbiest nag upon the track  
May win the longest heat,  
While the one that has the backen  
May be the easiest bet.

The sweetest drink I ever took  
I drank from out a gourd;  
The deepest water in the creek  
Is just above the ford.

So I've just about concluded,  
After figgerin' quite a spell,  
That appearances don't govern,  
And that blood don't tell.  
—Will W. Primmer.

**Six Words.**  
Six little words lay claim to me each passing day:  
I ought, I must, I can, I will, I dare, I may.  
I Ought—that is the law God on my heart has written,  
The mark for which my soul is with strong yearning suitor.

I Must—that is the bound set either side the way  
By nature and the world, so that I shall not stray.  
I Can—that measures out the power entrusted me  
Of action, knowledge, art, skill and dexterity.  
I Will—no higher crown on human head can rest;  
'Tis Freedom's signet seal upon the soul impressed.

I Dare is the device which on the seal you read.  
By Freedom's open door a bolt for time is made.  
I May among them all loves uncertainty;  
The moment must at last decide what it shall be.

I ought, I must, I can, I will, I dare, I may;  
The six lay claim to me each hour of every day.  
Teach me, O God! and then, then shall I know  
each day  
That which I ought to do, must, can, will, dare  
and may.  
—"Wisdom of the Brahmin."

**One at a Time.**  
One at a time the murmuring raindrops patter  
On drowsy pools with an incessant chime,  
Till, all an ocean, ere the cloudlets scatter.

One at a time the shimmering sunbeams wander  
Adown to earth from yonder cloudless clime,  
Till lowest mountain tops are smelt with splendor.

One at a time appears the master builder  
Stone upon stone, with horny hands agrime,  
Till shoot aloft the turrets that bewilder.

One at a time the shuttle swiftly flies  
Flings thread on thread like flocks of throbbing rhyme,  
Till glows the tapestry with hues undying.

One at a time each patient, mute endorser  
In forging character suggests sublime  
In souls whose influence shall be felt forever.  
—W. C. Richardson.

**Doesn't Look the Same.**  
If life were as I dreamed it was some twenty years ago,  
There'd be no need of paradise; we'd rather stay below.  
But youth in brilliant colors paints to watch the pictures fade,  
And life's as far from what I dreamed as it could well be made.

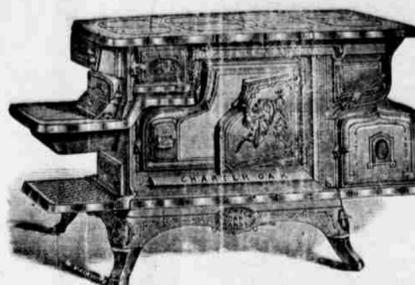
Now sometimes, when I study it by later lights  
In milder hues,  
I'm half inclined to label it, "A Symphony in Blue."  
—Detroit Tribune.

**Decision.**  
Decide not rashly. The decision made  
Can never be recalled. The gods inspire not,  
Plead not, solicit not, which, once being passed,  
Returns no more.  
—Longfellow.

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