

THE ST. CLOUD DEMOCRAT.

JANE G. SWISSELM,

"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."—EXODUS, CHAP. XIV. VERSE 15.

EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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CULTURE.

A lecture delivered at Anoka, March 15th, and at St. Cloud, March 18th, 1861.

BY C. C. ANDREWS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—I wish to speak of culture as it mainly affects our material interests.

The outside world will judge of Minnesota by its harvests and its homes. Inasmuch as our homes are comfortable and elegant, and our harvests abundant, will the stranger who comes among us depart with a favorable opinion of the State. If he sees evidence of neatness, taste, and culture about our habitations, he will remember us with more pleasure, and in the opinions he expresses about us, will inspire a desire among many to come here and try their fortunes. But he will excite the opposite feeling if he goes away with images pictured on his mind of supineness, indolence, rudeness and poverty. His friends will then exclaim: "What! a new State with such bracing air, and the people wanting in energy!—a soil rich and easily cultivated without plenty—scenery diversified and beautiful and homes rude and unadorned. I think I will not go there."—Such indeed would be the opinion of the kind of people we really want; but the indolent and slothful might have a different view. They might think it just the place to suit them—that they would here find a plenty of sympathizing company.

Suppose however our visitor should be able to say that Minnesota is indeed a noble and promising State. Her climate is temperate and salubrious. Her undeveloped resources are capable of sustaining more than twenty times her present population. The native beauty and variety of her scenery are a constant and exquisite source of delight. Her people are intelligent and liberal in mind, and independent and just in action. Labor is so bestowed and apportioned to different tasks that it is a pleasure and not a burden. They are yearly rewarded with a certain increase of wealth, because they are economical and yet not avaricious. They regard time as a great treasure, and so measure and economize it that although they cultivate the soil they do not neglect to cultivate themselves. You will find upon the remotest frontier many valuable musical instruments and much skill in their use; and you will also find numerous and extensive libraries. There is evidence of neatness and refinement in their dwellings and about, and around them arbors, lawns, flowers and trees, are so finely arranged as to contribute a serene happiness to all who behold them. The people, too, wisely discerning that what promotes the public interest, benefits essentially each individual, generously co-operate in accomplishing important improvements. In this way they have constructed extensive roads over wild areas, and splendid bridges across their great rivers. They have already by self-culture attained so proper a control over themselves that even the laws against libel and slander are by no means a dead letter. Character is esteemed as a part of one's property, and it would be thought as strange and mean to assault and blacken it as to break into one's stable and shear or disfigure his horse. They are not a people who pay the highest compensation to lawyers, the next to doctors, and the least to preachers, as if they placed the chief value upon their estates, the next upon their health, and the least upon their souls. They possess a high and laudable State pride, so that if a crime is committed or suffering exists in the limits of the State, however remote, it keenly affects their sensibility; since they rightly consider that the guilt of one in some degree tarnishes the general fame, and that they are morally bound to alleviate the misery of their fellows. Hence, with a discriminating justice that is rare indeed, they have thought it their duty before going abroad to redress evils, to set about the cure and prevention of those in their own limits, and have made much progress in establishing institutions for the shelter and protection of those who are helpless either from indigence, blindness, or insanity.—Being singularly exempt also from envy as well as hatred and uncharitableness, they appear to take pleasure in the success and prosperity of those around them; and if one gains distinction it is not a cause of jealousy and detraction, but is felt as a contribution to the common stock of credit, and made the subject of congratulation.

In short those people being themselves pioneers are imbued with the true heroic spirit; and having left behind them the most of their previous failings, and such as generally obstruct the happiness of mankind, seem determined to establish a standard of culture that shall correspond with the fair and lovely country which they have adopted as the home of their destiny. If a stranger could conscientiously speak of us in these terms, Minnesota would shortly receive a large reinforcement of people and wealth.

But a more important agency than the testimony of the stranger is at work in forming opinions of this region. Ten thousand reports are going forth from our borders to people in our sister States, and to

the populous districts of the Old World, concerning the advantages and disadvantages of life here. Everybody writes home. And what shall our hardy settlers say to their friends? What shall they say—what have they said to the parents and brothers and uncles and cousins in the Old World? Have they said that they were better off than ever before? Do they feel that they would be justified in encouraging their friends in the Old World to hasten out here? Many of them have not so said.—Many do not so feel. It depends upon us all whether they can in the future say so. It depends upon us all individually and collectively whether these ten thousand voices that are constantly going forth, and which speak to many more thousands shall say we are alive and active, or rusting out. Whether in fact we can be able to say that there is here earnest endeavor and enterprise and concert of action and regard for those things that make life comfortable, cheerful and refined.

Has not the fact that a steamboat was launched upon the Red River of the North two years ago, and made to navigate its waters successfully, helped us abroad?—Has not the fact that a route of travel has been opened from the Mississippi to the distant settlement of Selkirk, whereby the trip of 500 miles is made in nine days helped us abroad? Is it not of advantage to us abroad that we have 235 miles of Railroad graded and ready for the superstructure? And would it not be of additional advantage if some of these roads were in operation, whether they were in the Northern, Southern or Central part of the State?

It cannot be denied that our people have been enterprising and public spirited in works of improvement, both in town and country. In a few instances perhaps they have been too self-sacrificing. Let us consider then what now lies in the scope of our means and ability; and first in regard to towns.

The proprietors of Superior at one time contemplated the erection of an expensive hotel. But they said to themselves here is a vast forest that separates us from the fertile prairies of Minnesota. Let us take this money and build a wagon road to the Mississippi. They did so. They expended \$20,000 in building the Mille Lac road, terminating at Crow Wing; and the country in which the town is situated expended \$18,000 more in turning the military road leading south towards St. Paul. How infinitely better under the circumstances was it to build a road instead of a new hotel. They now recommend emigrants to Minnesota to come to Superior by water without transhipment, which they could not have been justified in doing without a convenient road for an outlet. If the money which has been expended in most of our large villages in grading streets and the erection of buildings not yet needed, had been appropriated for the construction of important routes of inland travel, their trade to-day would have been much more prosperous. A want of foresight has led many towns in the West to incur large indebtedness for local improvements, such as public buildings, street grading and gas light; and their bonds widely scattered and tardily paid have injured the credit of the North-West. Avoiding such errors we shall advance the future interests of our towns better by making it convenient for settlers to reach the public lands. In this way the country will be developed. We must have a country before we can have a town—and we must have good routes of travel to that country. Although Nebuchadnezzar laid Tyre, the queen of the sea, in ruins, the people were enabled soon to rebuild it to its former splendor, because it still commanded the great routes of ancient commerce. But in after times when commerce was diverted to other routes, it dwindled down to a dozen huts. Louis Napoleon undoubtedly wishes and expects to make Marseilles a much greater city than it is. If he should act on the principle that has governed many of our Minnesota town builders, he would erect a few splendid marble palaces, and lay out some additions to the city, procuring at the same time an elegant map of the additions. But he is pursuing a wiser plan. He begins by cutting a ship canal between the Mediterranean and Red seas, so as to shorten the route to the Eastern world. This done, he knows that the commerce of Marseilles and the greatness of the French nation will be wonderfully increased. It is on this principle that England is now endeavoring to augment her power by expending twenty-five millions of dollars annually in public works in India, where besides the construction of Railroads, she is opening canals for the irrigation of 400,000 square miles of cotton growing land—an area as large as that devoted to cotton growing in this country. Then if we would build a town we should devote the main expenditures at the start in improvements outside of its limits.

But there are many works of culture to be accomplished in a town, that are always within the boundaries of present needs and present means. One is a public library.—If a hundred persons contribute a dollar each they can purchase 150 standard volumes of useful and entertaining books.—

That will do well enough to start with.—Considering that a man can read only one book at a time he derives nearly as much advantage from a public library as if he owned it himself. Let a town then extend its hospitality to the great sages of the world! Invite Bacon, Franklin, Milton, Scott, Macaulay, Gibbon, Hume, Irving and a hundred other illustrious names to take up their abode in your limits.—They are no Japanese visitors. They will require no champagne—no sumptuous dinners. It will cost nothing to sustain them; and only a humble roof for their shelter. But their presence will be an honor. They will give their advice on all great matters of human concern. How serene and sweet they are to those who seek their fellowship. In thoughts profound and God-like, in language of beauty and of eloquence they will explore with you the springs of human action, and conduct with a radiant light along the winding labyrinths of knowledge.

Another of these contributions of culture is music.—Nothing so much impressed the Prince of Wales on our continent as the singing a national anthem by the school children of Boston. Did we wish to hear Jenny Lind? And is there not much more music in the well trained voices of thirty children? Is there anything more eloquent than the melody of choral voices?—anything more soul-stirring than the harmonious strains of a vast congregation led by the sonorous and pealing notes of the organ? Practice gives compass and flexibility to the voice. And with reasonable effort a choir can be formed in every town which can execute the noble choruses of Handel or Mozart in a way that will afford a delightful entertainment to the people. Let us not long for the concerts of the great cities, but get up a home article and rely upon our home resources.

An instrumental band is also a great acquisition to a community. Such contributions to general pleasure are evidence of public spirit, and good taste. They make a place much more attractive and desirable as a home.

Is music beneath our notice? We are told that it is the principal occupation of the inhabitants of heaven; and that angelic harmonies

"In loud hosannas fill the eternal regions."
Music is food for the soul. How much oppressed, how often wounded and lacerated is the poor human soul. And yet how scanty and insipid is its diet. While, then, we lavish delicacies upon the stomach, let us give a little nourishment now and then to the soul.

Landscape gardening is another important kind of culture, not only for a town, but for the country. The rudest cottage looks cheerful when surrounded with shrubbery and neatly cultivated grounds. Whatever is done at present with music and libraries, I must insist that every householder and every officeholder shall have a garden. Hear what the wise Lord Bacon says: "God Almighty first planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures; it is the greatest refreshment to the spirits of man, without which buildings and palaces are but gross handicrafts: and a man shall ever see, that when ages grow to civility and elegance men come to build stately sooner than garden finely, as if gardening were the greater perfection." And hear also a great poet and philosopher of antiquity: "This" says Horace "was ever amongst the number of my wishes.—A portion of ground not over large, in which was a garden, and a fountain with a continual stream close to my house, and a little woodland beside." "Come" said the illustrious Montesquieu to a distinguished guest, "Come, then let us walk: I long to show you my villa as I have endeavored to form it according to the English taste, and to cultivate and dress it in the English manner." "I never had any other desire so strong and so like to covetousness," says Cowley, "as that one which I have always had—that I might be master of at least a small house and a large garden with very moderate conveniences joined to them and there dedicate the remainder of my life only to the culture of them and the study of nature." And the holy prophet when he would express the complete joy of Israel once again gathered together in security and plenty says, "their soul shall be as a watered garden." "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel! as the valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side." "What more delightful than the fragrance it breathes forth to greet the morning sunbeams? How sweetly does it smile after the grateful shower. How serene the content it whispers on the twilight zephyrs.

"The soft air Salutes me with its cool and temperate breath; And, as I walk, the flower-besprinkled lawn Sends up a gale of fragrance. I should guess, If e'er Content deigned visit mortal clime, This was her place of dearest residence."
When we graze upon nature, then do we enjoy the true realization of beauty, of majesty and delight. There is a pleasure too in surrounding a residence with plants and flowers that are native to every clime. There is nothing exclusive or aristocratic in the kindred and nationality of flowers.

Side by side you can cultivate—to take a list from Shakspeare—

"The marigold, that goes to bed with the sun And with him rises weeping;"

"Daffodils, That come before the swallow dares, and take The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes, Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses;

* * * bold oxlips, and The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds, The flower-de luce being one."

You can have such as adorned the famous walks of Tully and Pliny, or bloom spontaneously on the banks of the Ganges; in the short lived summer of Greenland; on the plains of Peru; in the valleys of California and Oregon, or such as spring up in wild luxuriance on our own prairies.

As to the manner of laying out gardens, Lord Bacon advises that "they be square, encompassed on all four sides with a stately arched hedge." Mr. Kemp an English gardener says: "Where the place will at all justify it,—and it must be restricted indeed if it will not do so,—the walks and plants should be so disposed as to afford as many different views as possible. From no single point, unless it be an elevated one, should every part be seen. A lawn need not be like a bowling-green, with a simple fringe of plantation; but should have a variety of minor glades and recesses, that are only to be discovered and examined from particular points."

And Mr. Sargent, who has edited the valuable work of the late A. J. Downing, remarks:

"In this country, where we have no rural sports as in England, nothing in fact for the amusement of our friends and visitors, except what is beautiful or interesting on our grounds or in our gardens, we have always thought it highly desirable not to tell our whole story from the house, but to set aside in different and distant portions of the place all our objects of interest,—a flower garden in one spot, the vegetable garden in another, an arborium or pinetum in a third; and so make and multiply as it were various interests in different parts,—properly connected, but as widely separated as convenience or space will allow,—which shall furnish to our guests excuses for a walk, and give to a small place the appearance of a large one. In other words, to afford as much interest and diversion as the capacity of the grounds will allow, and prevent that ennui and fatigue which nothing to see and nothing to do produces, not only in our visitors, but in our families. We cannot imagine anything more dreary than those country-places where there is no motive to go out, because everything is gathered and crowded around the house, and can be seen from the windows."

We have many varieties of native fruit trees; and I submit that some attention should be given not only to the cultivation of them, but to the planting of shade trees and evergreens. There are about eight different species of evergreens indigenous to England, but they have succeeded in acclimating nearly a hundred from different parts of the globe. We have many handsome varieties of evergreens in Minnesota; among them the graceful arbutive, the silver-tipped spruce, the balsam and the cedar, either or all of which would be ornamental to a residence and contribute much to disarm winter of its cheerlessness, and break the strong current of the penetrating winds. And among our native shade trees there are some which have a special value such as the sugar maple, the black walnut, and the hickory.

I see no excuse why the poorest citizen should neglect having a neat and productive garden. If he cannot conveniently procure sawed lumber for a fence, it is easy to obtain rails—such as need no splitting—and poles, which with the bark on do not only make the neatest, but the most fashionable kind of fence; for what most resembles nature has become the most fashionable as we see by the settings made of natural limbs of trees, and those made of iron in imitation of them. The labor of one or two days will open the ground and arrange the walks and beds. It is an easy matter then to get an abundance of shrubbery. The plum, the blackberry, the raspberry, the currant, and the gooseberry, all delicious and all found in profusion growing wild, will greatly improve the prospect. Much of the cultivation of the garden can then be left to the wife and children. If they have not good health they will want a little outdoor exercise to regain it; and if they have health they will want the air and exercise to preserve it. This sort of exercise is much better than patent medicines. It cures headache—in short, to use the expressive language of Mr. Spalding's advertisement,—it will cure sick headache—"symptomatic headache," "idiopathic headache," "nervous headache," and all kinds of "headache."
For literary men, students, delicate females, and all persons of sedentary habits, it is valuable as a laxative, improving the appetite, giving tone and vigor to the digestive organs, and restoring the natural elasticity and strength of the whole system; and may be taken at all times with perfect safety, without making any change of diet."

Think not to perfect everything the first season, but go on steadily improving. You will surely find that your garden adds daily to the pleasure of your life and home. "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The various objects around you changing with the changing seasons will beguile many an hour; and thus communing so often with nature, you will acquire more spirit for severer toils, and a better relish for reading and meditation. The birds will come and build their nests in your trees and waken you with their morning warbles. Need I say there will be kinder hearts in such abodes—less of fretfulness and despair—more of cheerfulness and of peace? It is impossible to describe how much more attractive a village would appear where every residence was thus surrounded! These are matters of fact. They are not impossible or visionary improvements. For their accomplishment they only ask your leisure hours. I think gentlemen, that your love for your state, to say nothing of your own personal advantage, will induce you to carry this branch of culture into practice. But if you remain indifferent and inactive in the matter, then I appeal to the ladies to form a horticultural society and declare that gardens shall be made, and then it will be done!

Let us now attend for a moment to culture in the house. We all admire those things which please and do not weary the sight. If we have flowers from all countries in our gardens, so let us have maps of these countries in our houses. Let us people our dwellings with pleasant objects;—with pictures, and books, and statuary. Never buy these five cent gaubs representing fat infants, and oval faced maidens in pink and white, or prim young lovers in dressing gowns and slippers, which are a burlesque on human nature. Sooner than this, buy a tailor's last years fashions, or a picture of Pharaoh crossing the Red Sea, showing Pharaoh and his hosts all out of sight under water. Dont buy ornaments because they are cheap, on the principle that Mrs. T. bought the dog-plate of the name of Jones thinking it might sometime be convenient in the family. But let us save our money till we can purchase a work of art of real merit and which will be of permanent interest. The engravers art has brought within our reach the most splendid works of genius, giving us copies of those triumphs of architecture which have been the work of centuries, and miniatures of the sublimest forms of nature.—The colossal grandeur of St. Peter's; the ruins of Adrian's magnificent villa; the barbaric hut; the fallen glories of Venice; the graves of crumbled states; the crowded harbor where commerce waits its opulence; the peaceful valley; the field where war has spent its havoc—these, and such as these, in striking contrast, are pregnant with instructive and ennobling lessons. And thus, though we might reject the austere counsels of wisdom, the arts teach us similar lessons with a persuasive and fascinating eloquence.

If what I have already said meets with favor, then I can pass over the subject of conversation; for newer and happier topics of talk will then have come to take the place of those light and trivial matters which too commonly monopolize the tongue.

Pardon me however if I speak of manners. I mean not the formality which is technically called etiquette; but that conduct or manner when we meet a fellow creature which, at least, indicates that he is one of our species. No wonder people like to visit France! The Frenchman salutes a stranger on the highway with a kind word and a pleasant smile. Perhaps, alas, the manners of our countrymen are a true index of their feelings; and that they are indeed indifferent to the condition and welfare of all in whom they have no personal interest. The last words uttered by Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd—who expired in the noonday of his fame as a Judge and a writer—were in a charge to a grand jury. He was speaking of one of the causes of crime, and thought it attributable in no small degree to the want of sympathy between the different classes of society. "This feeling," said he, "arising from that kind of reserve peculiar to the English character, does, I think, greatly tend to prevent that mingling of class with class, that reciprocation of kind words and gentle affections, gracious admonitions and kind inquiries, which often, more than any book-education tend to the culture of the affections of the heart, refinement and elevation of the character of those to whom they are addressed. And if I were to be asked what is the great want of English society—to single class with class—I would say, in one word, the want is the want of sympathy." We have perhaps inherited too much of this reserve, but henceforth let us put into our platform of culture one plank for sympathy and for kindly manners.

It is related that at a public performance in Athens, an old man came too late to procure a suitable seat. But some of the young men motioned to him that they would accommodate him with one if he

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