

CLUB AND SOCIETY NOTES

West Side Shakespeare Club.

Owing to a misunderstanding, the attendance was small at the meeting of the West Side Shakespeare club on Tuesday evening. At the previous meeting the matter of postponement had been discussed so as to permit the members to attend the Shakespearean play on that night. Some thought this had been decided on, and so went to the play or stayed home.

This was the more regretted because Mrs. Kress, president of the Dillon Shakespeare club, was present and at the request of President Nuckolds gave a brief and interesting sketch of the manner in which the Dillon club studied the immortal bard. She concluded by stating that in the month of April her club would play "Merchant of Venice," and she invited the West Side club to attend, if not in a body to send a few delegates at least, a suggestion which the club seemed to approve of.

Current events were discussed, and when the question box was opened it proved full of interest. The only new play was "Othello," Miss Fanny Robinson then read the paper of the evening, "Early History of Venice," substituting for Mrs. P. W. Sheehy, who substituted early in the season. It was a clever paper, well written and well read, too.

The club will meet next Tuesday with Mrs. T. H. Dunstan, 951 West California, instead of with Miss Fosselman, they having changed places on the year book.

The paper read by Miss Robinson was as follows:

Early History of Venice.

In the fifth century, when the old Roman empire had nearly perished under the deadly hordes of barbarians, another devastating army entered Italy, led by a man, Attila, who was regarded as the "scourge of God."

A few men seeking to escape this vandal, fled to a group of uninhabited islands in the Adriatic. Exiled from land, they cast themselves in desperation on the sea.

These exiles were greatly rewarded for their courage. The sea became their mother, sheltering them with her circling waves. She forced them to build boats in which to transport merchandise from land to land. Obeying her, they grew from a feeble colony of refugees to a powerful republic, and made their city a nucleus of vast wealth and commerce.

Early Settlement.

The first permanent settlement on the site of the present city of Venice can be traced back to the beginning of the ninth century.

The physical conditions with which the earliest inhabitants had to deal were such as might seem singularly unpropitious to the growth of a large and prosperous city. Their untillable and salt-encrusted soil possessed no kind of mineral wealth; the thickets which here and there diversified the surface of the barren marshes produced no serviceable timber; and even water to drink was hardly obtainable. Yet it was here that the Venetians, by their inventiveness, their energy, their industry and their genius for commerce succeeded in establishing themselves on a firm soil and maintaining their independence, in making their neighbors their tributaries, in sending their fleets to distant shores, in controlling the destiny of empires, and consolidating a naval power that is unique in the history of the world.

Establish a Government.

The year 810 was one of the most important in the annals of Venice; it was then that the people chose to make the Rivo Alto with its surrounding islets the permanent seat of their government. The same year witnessed the beginnings of the basilica of St. Mark Angelo Partecipazio, who proposed establishing the permanent government at the Rialto, was chosen doge, and the town of Venice may be said to have been then founded.

From 811 to 1026 there was a succession of 18 doges, and it was an uncommon thing for the people to dismiss those whom they had thus placed in power. Murder, exile or cruel punishment closed the career of more than one of the doges, who had been called to the supreme authority by a unanimous vote.

On this Rivo-Alto the laws of the republic were proclaimed; merchants congregated here as to a vast exchange, and on this same bridge the forms of Shylock and Othello may have stood out in sharp relief against the sky.

In the sixteenth century the state prisons, which till then were on the ground floor of the ducal palace, were removed to a new building on the opposite side of the narrow canal on the east of the Riedel palazzo. A bridge usually known as the Bridge of Sighs, this bridge and the new prisoners were designed by a Venetian, who also built the Rialto bridge.

The Bridge of Sighs.

The Bridge of Sighs is one of the best-known structures in the world. It is supposed that prisoners in passing over this bridge have breathed through the grated windows a last sigh, as they relinquish life and liberty.

In the building on the right, far down below the water's edge, are some of the most horrible dungeons that human cruelty has ever designed. There are the fetid cells, slimy with dampness, shrouded in darkness, and stifling from the exhausted air which filters in through the narrow corridors. Also the guillotine, by means of which, after excruciating torture, the prisoner is put to death; and then the narrow opening through which the body is removed at night, and rowed out to a distant spot where it was death to cast a net.

A City of Bridges.

Venice is unique, resting upon a hundred islands, linked by 450 bridges, whose buildings appear to rise directly from the sea. It is a city of romance—the only place on earth where poetry conquers prose, and whose vehicles are boats, and is an incomparable illustration of the poetical and the picturesque.

Renowned in Song and Story.

Her buildings are massive and imposing with their marble balconies and elegantly sculptured arches. To build such structures on the shifting sands was a stupendous undertaking, and each of these structures has its legend—poetic, tragic, or artistic; thus, in the Palazzo Vendramini, the composer Wagner died. Not far from this stately mansion is the

body of St. Mark was secretly brought away from Alexandria and carried to Venice in 828. After the arrival of his relics, St. Mark became the patron saint of Venice in place of St. Theodore, and his bones were laid in the "confessio" of the small private chapel of the ducal palace. This chapel, however, soon lost its private character, and became the cathedral church of Venice, though not the cathedral church of the patriarch.

The small ducal chapel was burnt in 976, but was rebuilt on a larger scale, the building of which lasted about a century, and in 1085 was dedicated to God, the glorious Virgin Annunciate, and to the protector, St. Mark.

During the long period from its dedication in 1085 till the overthrow of the Venetian republic by Napoleon, every doge's reign saw some addition to the rich decorations of the church. By degrees, the whole walls inside and outside were completely faced, either with glass mosaics on gold grounds or with precious colored marbles and porphyries, plain white marble being only used for sculpture, and then thickly covered with gold. It is impossible here to give an adequate notion of the splendor of the whole effect; nothing short of the eloquence of Mr. Ruskin can do justice to the subject.

Beautiful St. Mark's.

St. Mark is the treasure house of Venice—a place of pride as well as of prayer. The doge's palace was the brain of Venice; the grand piazza was its heart; but this cathedral was its soul.

Here was heaped up the booty which was gained from repeated conquests. The work of beautifying the church was carried on for 500 years. Each generation tried to outdo all that had preceded it. Scores of marble columns are from Ephesus, others from Smyrna, while others are from Constantinople and more than one even from Jerusalem. On one of the hand of Cleopatra may have rested, another may have cast its shadow on St. Paul, a third may have been looked upon by Jesus.

Some of the ornaments are of pagan origin, others have come from Christian shrines. All, however, have had to pay their contribution to St. Mark's. Thus, Santa Sophia at Constantinople, though a Christian church and dedicated to the Saviour, was plundered to embellish the Venetian shrine named after his apostle. Hence it is the literal truth that, overflowing with the spoils of other cities and sanctuaries, St. Mark's is a magnificent repository of booty—a veritable den of thieves.

The Ducal Palace.

The ducal palace is a splendid symbol of Venetian glory, a record of the city's brilliant history preserved in stone. This spot for more than a thousand years was the residence of the doges. By day this palace is superbly beautiful, but in the evening, when illumined by the moon, it is perhaps the most imposing structure in the whole of Europe. At such a time it looks like an immense sarcophagus of precious stone, in which the glories of old Venice lie entombed.

An immense marble staircase, called "The Giant's Staircase," leading to the second story of the ducal palace, is an imposing sight. Between two colossal statues, representing Mars and Neptune, on the topmost stair, amid a scene of splendor, which even the greatest of Venetian artists could only faintly represent, the doges were inaugurated into sovereignty. Here they pronounced their solemn oath of office; and one of them, Marino Faliero, having betrayed his trust, was here beheaded for his crime. Byron's tragedy of Marino Faliero closes with the line: "The gory head rolls down the Giant's Steps."

The first bridge across the Grand canal, and for centuries the only one, was the Bridge of the Rialto. This is a most wonderful structure, for its huge arch is entirely of marble, and has a length of over a hundred feet.

On the Rialto.

Its cost exceeded half a million dollars; and the foundations are 12,000 trunks of elm trees, each 10 feet in length.

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home of Desdemona. Within another of these palaces the old doge, Foscarini, died of a broken heart at the ill-treatment of his countrymen. In one lived Byron; in another, Robert Browning, and another was once the home of Titian.

Can days have often taken place upon the surface of this siren sea, when Venice had no less than 30,000 gondolas, of which at least one-third were richly decorated and vied with one another in their gilded draperies and carvings?

His reckless competition advanced to such an extent that the doge finally issued a decree that they should thenceforth have black awnings only. These dark awnings increased the opportunities for crime or intrigue, and they have often been the rendezvous of hate and love—ideal vehicles for murder or elopement.

The most enchanting characteristics of this City of the Sea is the sunnier glow. Its softness, brilliancy and splendor cannot be described; the streets are filled with liquid sunshine, the steps of the patrician palaces appear entangled in the meshes of a golden net. The whole effect is that of a poem without words, illustrated by Titian, and having for a soft accompaniment the ripple of the radiant waves.

"In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more, And silent rows the songless gondolier; Her palaces are crumbling to the shore, And music meets not always now the ear. Those days are gone—but Beauty still is here. States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die. Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear. The pleasant place of all festivity, The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!"

The Atlas Club.

The Atlas club met yesterday afternoon as usual, in the rooms of the Business men's Association, with a good attendance. Current events were discussed and enjoyed. The color question came up, but the club deferred action for a week.

The first paper was on "Charlemagne and his Reign." Mrs. Green Majors read a paper on "Tannhauser." The papers were all of exceptional merit, the subjects in the two latter especially exhaustive and covering the ground thoroughly. The paper of Mrs. Ingham touched little of the dry history, but gave an outline of the man and the work he accomplished. It was as follows:

Charles the Great.

Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, was unquestionably one of the greatest figures of all history, not only a great emperor, but a man who loved art, literature and everything beautiful in nature, in life, who turned from the cares of state, the horrors of war to the sator he had established in his court. Truly a man of many parts.

Charlemagne has always been, one might say, a fascinating figure of early history; has still the power to take hold of the imagination as well as the mind, a power which has come down the ages, from the middle of the eighth century, when he was born in Aachen, at that period, and he died there in 814.

When he was a tiny child Europe was in an unformed state. All men lived by the land. The mountains which today are nothing to travelers were then impassable barriers. Thieves were many and the few public roads were in charge of toll collectors, tending to keep people in their own homes. It will easily be seen that such a life made farmers of the men, plodding and dull, with no thought but the state of the crops and stock.

A Patron of Science and Art.

Two powers were at the helm at this time in continental Europe, the Franks and the Lombards, and it remained for Charlemagne to make the Franks victors and to build a modern Europe from their victories. His exploits are emblazoned on the cathedrals of the Middle Ages. The Catholic church potentates inscribed his name upon the roll of those who had been foremost in building up the Kingdom of God on earth. He was the originator of the Crusading policy of hatred of feudalism. He first made possible the union of church and state.

Many say he built no great cities, he did not enrich the world of art, of science or letters, that he built no great monuments of himself. But he did as well as create, for he found the material at hand and so molded it that it lasts today. He made his court at Mecca for the foremost men of learning and of science. He made, it is known, although it was afterwards lost, his did his utmost to preserve the fragmentary literature, and best of all he established many schools all over the empire. In German literature we find Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers, or Paladins, as heroes in the legends; legends that 300 years after his death were collected and now form a mythological history of his reign. One such, "Roland and Oliver," maintains its place throughout the legends. Authorities say, however, that much of this so-called Charlemagne literature really belongs to the Italian and French schools. One thing is certain, he grasped the best ideas of his time in every line and put them into execution.

Came From a Great Race.

His father, Pepin, was also a great man, but history has done him so little justice that he is really almost a myth. He was in both mind and body, it is set forth in legends, a pygmy beside his son, Charlemagne. Yet the latter gave his father all honor. The former lacked the magnet necessary to bind the people to him and he lacked the dash and spirit of his son.

Of the younger son, Caroloman, his betrayal of his family and of the nation well bespeaks his character. At the death of Pepin each was, according to the custom, declared king; each departed to his own kingdom, Charlemagne taking Austrasia, and the greater part of Neustria with the lands lying between the Loire and the Garonne, the result being that the kingdom of Caroloman was half surrounded by that of Charlemagne, the younger owning Burgundy, Provence, Alsace, Alemannia and the southern eastern part of Aquitaine. Thus both had an interest in the wars against

Tassilo and in the pacification of Aquitaine.

Caroloman from the start contended that Charlemagne was illegitimate and that he should have been sole heir. The latter wanted to carry out the plans of his father and therefore wanted free rein. The result was inevitable; the spoiled, irritable boy was eclipsed on every hand by the brilliant Charles, who was a giant in stature and in mind, while the younger was weak physically and mentally. When it became necessary for Bertha Flatfoot, their mother, to choose between her sons, it speaks volumes for Charlemagne that she chose him. The pretext Caroloman sought for an open rupture came in the third revolt of Aquitaine. It was then the brothers parted never to speak again. Charles was victorious in this battle, though Caroloman refused him all aid. From this on for years Charlemagne isolated his brother.

Reconciliation Is Effected.

This was what the Lombards and Bavarians wanted, and finding this out, Charlemagne, through the offices of Queen Bertha, effected a reconciliation, and the united Frankland was a warning to all alien powers. Caroloman was married at this time to a Frankish woman, while Charlemagne had a left-handed marriage on his hands. Then came the marriage of the latter to Desiderata, whom he divorced because she bore him no children. He then married Hildegrade, a Swabian child. This gave rise to the first and last quarrel between the queen and her son. Desiderata was, of course, the Lombard king, who was, of course, furious. Then came Caroloman's death and the flight of his wife with her two children to Didier, who took up arms against Charlemagne, declaring for the rights of the two children against the former.

At the end of the struggle Charlemagne was victor, the fall of Pavia occurred in June, 774. From that day Charlemagne was called king of the Lombards. Didier and his wife ended their lives in religious retreats, as probably did the wife and children of Caroloman, though on this point history is silent.

Then came the visit of Charlemagne to Pope Hadrian. A medal was struck at the time, showing them with their hands clasped. In 774-789 came the first conquest of the Saxons and the absorption of the Bavarian duchy. The second Saxon war brought the first check Charlemagne met with, and while he was in the field his wife and mother died. In 800 he was crowned emperor.

The crown is now in the imperial treasury at Vienna. At the same time his eldest son was crowned as his successor to the Frankish kingdom. The many reforms he inaugurated in the administration of justice, military system, the law courts—all are told in history. Histories give a picture of the buildings and churches he erected, and also the statues and monument of Charlemagne himself. He died at peace with the world in January, 813, at Aachen, where he was born. Just before sunrise he murmured: "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and passed away.

The Monday Night Club.

The Monday Night club met last week with Miss Ewing at the Leonax. Owing to other attractions in the city the club was not as well attended as usual. The subject for the evening was, "Russia From 1815 to 1825."

Miss Broughton read a very interesting paper on Russian literature, which created much discussion among the members. The club adjourned to meet March 3 with Miss Coffin on West Broadway.

Society Personals.

Miss Deenie of Great Falls is visiting Mrs. Henry Gabse.

Mrs. J. B. Leggat has for a guest Mrs. L. G. Smith of Anaconda.

Mrs. Skyrme and Miss Bessie Skyrme have gone to Los Angeles to remain until May.

Miss Babe Curtin has gone to Helena, leaving for the Nordica concert. She will remain two weeks.

Miss Bessie Griffiths of Bozeman is in the city, the guest of her sister, Mrs. R. B. Wallace at the Lenox.

Mrs. E. V. Matlack has gone to Chicago with her two pretty little girls to visit relatives until May.

Mrs. D. J. Hennessy and Miss Scallion went to Helena on Wednesday to attend the Nordica concert.

James A. Murray has returned from a two-months' visit in California. Mrs. Murray did not return with him.

Mrs. T. Williams has as a guest at her home, 720 West Granite, her sister, Mrs. Henry Conley of Wallace, Idaho.

Mrs. T. S. Meenley of 660 South Washington street has returned from a long visit with relatives in Bruce, Ontario.

Miss Babe Metten of Dillon is in the city, the guest of her sister, Mrs. John W. Howard of 84 West Quartz street.

Mr. and Mrs. James K. Heslet will leave next week for Mexico, Arizona and different points in Southern California.

Alex Johnstone and Hal Johnstone made a trip to Madison county last week, Clark Johnstone going part of the way with them.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Walker Clark, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Clark and a party of friends went over to Helena Thursday to attend the Nordica concert.

Miss Patterson of Bozeman is in the city, the guest of Mrs. H. S. Clark at their home on West Granite. Monday evening a theater party was given for her by Mrs. Clark.

Today Mrs. W. S. Clark and Miss Belle Le Beau leave for a six-weeks' visit in Southern California. They will probably remain to witness proceedings at the biennial in Los Angeles.

Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Hanson, Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Gillette, Miss Gerberding, Miss Cornfield and Mr. Freeman were entertained at dinner Sunday evening by Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Winscott.

Society's Note Book.

Today the German club is being entertained by Mrs. C. C. Rueger at her home in Walkerville.

This afternoon Miss Edyth Bickford is entertaining the O. W. L. S. club at her home on West Granite.

Tomorrow evening Senator Mantle will entertain a number of friends in his usual delightful manner.

Miss Kate Sullivan of Walkerville has issued invitations for a progressive

whist party on next Monday evening.

Mrs. T. H. Thompson will entertain informally at dinner tomorrow evening in honor of her tenth marriage anniversary.

Tonight Miss Esther Melkiohn will entertain friends at her home on the West Side, whist to be the feature of the evening.

The entertainment for Masons only, and their wives who are members of the Eastern Star, will be given on March 19 and will be a novel affair.

A number of Washington parties were given last Saturday. Miss Eugenia Wethey gave a floral romance party in

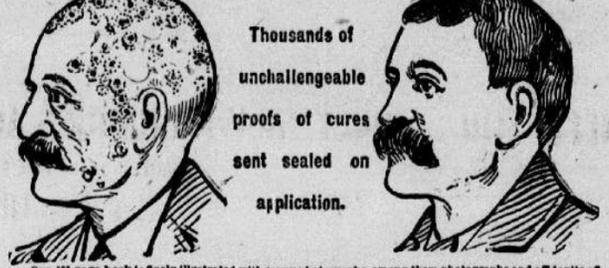
the evening at the home of A. H. Wethey. The G. A. R. and Relief Corps gave a pleasant entertainment. The D. A. R. also gave an elaborate and charming party at the home of Mrs. Frank Mitchell on West Granite.

Musicians are pleased with the advent among them of Edward C. Hall of Grand Rapids, Mich., who has taken charge of the music of the Mountain View church. Mr. Hall, who is said to be an excellent organist, makes his first appearance in the choir tomorrow, giving a sacred recital after the regular services, to which every one is cordially invited.

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