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THE BUSINESS SITUATION

In the summer months the public is prepared for statements that business is dull, wages low, and industrial and commercial affairs generally in the dumps. It is all the more pleasing to learn that no such announcement need be expected this year.

In fact, the reports of the leading commercial agencies for the week just past are almost rosy in their presentations. They inform us that the early reports of crop failures or shortages were much exaggerated, and that, instead of there being a deficiency in the great grain staples, there is really a surplus. Corn, for instance, is reported to have yielded more abundantly than ever before; wheat is almost normal, and indications point to an unequalled oat crop.

As for other cereals and fruits, they all promise better than last year.

When the farmer prospers, all business interests enjoy good times. It is quite in keeping with the favorable reports on the agricultural conditions to be informed that the great manufacturing industries of the country are unusually active, and that some of them are barely able to keep up with the demand for their wares.

The enormous demand for structural steel and iron denotes, more than any other one thing, the flourishing state of our people, for building operations are never brisk when money is scarce. The immediate future looks bright and promising for the American people and the calamity howler's plaint will make but slight impression, for men are too busy to listen.

PATRIOTISM

By B. W. REISS,

Recording Secretary of the Oldest Inhabitants' Association.

The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants feels a pardonable pride in the fact, as stated by Commissioner Macfarland, that it is the only organization in this city that celebrated the Fourth of July, 1902. Mr. Macfarland, however, gave the association credit in the somewhat indefinite remark that the celebration was held in the county.

As a fact the exercises took place at the junction of Fourteenth Street northeast and the Brentwood Road, with the apex of our national Capitol in full view.

Since its birth, in 1865, the organization has invariably celebrated those glorious events in our national history, the Fourth of July, and February 22, with enthusiasm.

While article 2 of its constitution deals principally with local and social affairs, the association has manifested a deep interest in the nation's history and progress, and has always expressed its patriotism in every manner possible.

WHAT FOUR NATIONS DRINK

J. H. Schooling, in "The Fortnightly Review," contributes to the study of the liquor problem by presenting some figures that are calculated to shock the readers' nerves. Mr. Schooling makes a comparison of the drinking records of the English, American, French and German peoples. We regret to see that John Bull makes a particularly bad showing, but we are especially pleased to note that the American people are proved by the figures to be the most temperate of all. In the last five years of the nineteenth century the annual consumption of drink for each individual in the several populations was as follows: The United Kingdom, 33.1 gallons; France, 32.3; Germany, 29.9; the United States, 14.2.

These figures are truly surprising, and rather flattering to our national sense of self-righteousness. They show that we are not so drunken a people as some of our contemporaries; and not so often drunk as our temperance lecturers would have us believe. Few persons will be prepared to hear that man for man (and woman for woman) we drink less than one-half of England's measure. Moreover, when an American takes one drink a Frenchman takes two and a fraction, and when the former takes an ordinary glass of beer a German takes a schooner. These facts are proved by the figures, and figures in such cases do not dissemble the size of the drinks.

We are sorry to note, however, that according to Mr. Schooling's statistics the nations are gaining upon England, and that the United States shows an unfortunate tendency to catch up with her—in this as in other things.

But such figures as those prepared by Mr. Schooling, in order to be accurate, should take count of the kind of liquor consumed, and of its strength in alcohol. By such a test England is not so much of an alcoholic power as either France or Germany. The actual amount of proof spirit per head represented in this deluge of drink was as follows: France, 2 gallons; Germany, 1.9; the United States and the United Kingdom, 1.1 each. Thus it is seen that Americans are not far in the rear, but are still behind the wine-drinking Frenchmen and the beer-drinking Germans.—Philadelphia Medical Journal.

THE TRUE MEANING OF A PRACTICAL EDUCATION

By JOHN L. SHEROY, in the "Pennsylvania School Journal."

We hear so much talk about "practical education" these days that I am inclined to inquire what a practical education really is.

As generally considered, it is an education that gives a sufficient knowledge of reading, arithmetic, penmanship, history, geography, etc., to enable a youth to start, at once upon leaving a public school, into work that will bring him an immediate financial return.

But there is a great variety of employment for young people, and it is surprising to hear the definitions of practical education as voiced by men of different avocations. The bookmaker and accountant say penmanship and rapid addition are the essentials. The architect says drawing. The mechanic says manual training. The department store says gentlemanly conduct, tact, and alertness. The physician says psychology. The druggist says chemistry and botany. The artist says sketching and color work. And the literary man says composition.

But the teacher who would devote a large proportion of his time to any one of these ideas would bring upon his head the swift censure of the others—and justly so. It is not the school's business to prepare for any one line of work, but to so train the mental powers—the memory, the judgment, the reason, the will, that the youth can turn to any one of the many lines of work, and, in a short time, dovetail himself into the position he has chosen.

With this last idea the "practical" agitator brings his argument to a close—but is this all? Dr. McCaskey says that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, of Bethany, must have been pleasant people to live with. That is what a practical education should be also. It ought to teach how to make the most of life and how to enjoy life.

I want to know not only the regular round of daily toil, but also know about birds, about flowers, about trees, about bugs, about butterflies—so that wherever I am, I am never alone. I want to look up and see the stars and planets, know some of their names and recognize them as friends of the night. I want to see the crystals in the snowflakes, the diamonds in the morning dew, the radiant glory in the rising sun, and the gorgeous array of coloring upon the walls of the western sky at eventide. I want to love good music. I want to love books, good books, and feel a sweet companionship whenever I am in their presence.

I hear you say: "I have no money, no time, no opportunity for all these things." Can you read? Then all is open to you. No money? Books are cheap, and it will surprise you what a few dimes will buy in a second-hand book store. No time? You waste enough time in idle gossip to get a college education. No opportunity? The birds, flowers, sunrises, sunsets, stars, dews, crystals—all are yours. Who owns the landscape? You. Why do people plant beautiful roses in their front yards? For you to enjoy as you go by. Teach your soul to love good, true, beautiful things and you will be happy.

Elihu Burritt learned eighteen languages while earning his living as a blacksmith; Hugh Miller became a writer of remarkable fluency and vigor while pursuing his trade as a stone mason; Chancellor d'Aguesseau translated the Greek Testament in the quarter hours he was waiting for his wife to dress for dinner.

If these have done much, can you not do at least a little and learn a few things in your waste moments that will relieve the strain of daily toil and brighten and cheer not only your own life, but the lives of all with whom you come in contact?

Is life worth living? Yes, if you have tuned your soul to respond to the harmonies of earth and sea and sky—to the minors of sorrow, to the majors of joy and triumph, and, best of all, to accord with the will of the Divine power that giveth wisdom, whose "ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace."

WHEN I WAS A BOY

By EUGENE FIELD

Up in the attic where I slept
 When I was a boy—a little boy!—
 In through the lattice the moonlight crept,
 Bringing a tide of dreams that swept
 Over the low red trundle-bed,
 Bathing the tangled curly head,
 While moonbeams played at hide and seek
 With the dimples of each sun-browned cheek—
 When I was a boy—a little boy!

And O the dreams, the dreams I dreamed
 When I was a boy—a little boy!
 For the grace that through the lattice streamed
 Over my folded eyelids seemed
 To have the gift of prophecy,
 And to bring me glimpses of times to be
 Where manhood's clarion seemed to call.
 Ah, that was the sweetest dream of all—
 When I was a boy—a little boy!

I'd like to sleep where I used to sleep
 When I was a boy—a little boy!
 For in at the lattice the moon would peep,
 Bringing her tide of dreams to sweep
 The crosses and griefs of the years away
 From the heart that is weary and faint today,
 And those dreams should give me back again
 The peace I have never known since then—
 When I was a boy—a little boy!

FAINTING

It has frequently been noted of late that fainting fits are not as common, either in literature or real life, as they used to be. Formerly no work of fiction could be written unless the heroine was capable of fainting at least three times, once for grief, once for apprehension, and once for joy, and occasionally the hero fainted also. Neither was it at all uncommon to see a woman carried fainting out of church or theater, especially if any accident occurred. When anything of that sort happens nowadays it excites remark.

Several reasons have been assigned for this change. It is said, for one thing, that most people, especially women of the better classes, take more exercise out of doors than they did forty years ago. Since fainting is usually a matter of defective circulation, it follows that anything which stimulates the circulation in a natural way will prevent its occurrence even among those constitutionally liable to it. It never was so common among the active, alert housewives of this country as among the richer folk, for the very good reason that they led healthier lives, and also, perhaps, because fainting was not regarded by them as picturesque or admirable. They took a sort of pride in being superior to weaknesses which would interfere with their work, though they were not at all above the gentle and kindly womanliness which comforts the sick and sorrowful. They recognized the fact that when anything serious is the matter it is more beneficial to do something to help it than to faint.

Another thing which may have contributed to the result in question is that people are not so much afraid of fresh air indoors as they used to be. It is not so very long since "night air" was spoken of as if it were something of the nature of the black plague. No wonder people fainted in theaters and churches.

Woman and Violin--Their Singular Similarity

By FRANZ KALTENBORN,

Virtuoso, Composer, and Conductor.

"To bring out the sweetest potentialities in the soul of female or fiddle, the power of a master is required."

"A violinist loves his instrument. The very position in which it is held is suggestive of endearment."

Look at the violin. It has a neck and head, shoulders and waist, carved in graceful, curving models. Had it arms or anything to take the place of them, the resemblance to the old courtly Spanish conception of a lady's personality would be perfect. The courtly old Spaniard's definition of a lady serves the purpose here, for surely a lady is a woman. There is a temptation to pun about the indispensable bow, but it is bravely met and conquered.

Musicians know that the violin has a soul. Every man but a Turk will attest that every woman has one at the least. Soul is understood to be mind. To bring out the sweetest potentialities in the soul of female or fiddle the power of a master is required, we are told. Women have been known to exhibit no love, no tenderness, nor any of the graces of their nature to first wooers, yet they were fountains of affection and sympathy to their next gallants.

Similarly, violins have been played with poor or mediocre effect, which, in the hands of others, would yield delicious melody. It is not that the second player is necessarily a better performer than the first; it is not that the second and successful wooer is necessarily handsomer or more attractive than the first; it is in each case a curious sympathy between the positive and passive sources of the harmony.

Spontaneously, mysteriously, the soul of the woman obeys that of some one man. It appears from the experience of music schools that the spirit of the violin is similarly responsive to the spirit of some one player.

A violinist loves his instrument. The very position in which it is held during the performance is suggestive of endearment. The arm is around the neck, the fingers are toying with the strings, which may be poetically likened to the tresses of a lady fair, cheek is against cheek. Surface contact is

more extensive between performer and instrument than in any other kind of playing.

But it is in the passion utterance of the violin that it most resembles woman. The emotions which it can best express may be called peculiarly her own. The poet says these are:

Fury, frantic indignation,
 Depth of pain and height of passion
 For the fair, disdainful dame.

Besides her deep sympathy with suffering, and her strong feeling of the need of love, what is woman's strongest emotion? It is the rage of jealousy. Her own high-pitched, angry accusation can no better tell her agony and burning longing for sweet vengeance than can the sharp shrilling of the violin.

Women like a violin? Violins are women. Their spirits are the souls of damsels whose early experiences ran the gamut of all the joys and sorrows, and who died waiting their anguish for false lovers' treason.

Should Government Secure to Investigators the Fruits of Their Discoveries?

By

WILLIAM HALLOCK, Ph. D.,

Professor of Physics, Columbia University.

"It should be possible for the President of the United States or Congress to call upon the National Academy of Sciences for decisions upon disputed scientific points."

A clearing house for discoveries, a cold storage for ideas, may at first appear to be an institution devotedly to be wished for, and yet it is a great question whether, loaded with the usual human frailties and prejudices, it could be made to command the respect which it must have if its promulgations are to be accepted.

For years the French Academy has from time to time ventured to attempt the adjustment of the claims of rivals for the honor of certain discoveries, and, while its decisions have been generally accepted by the French, the rest of the scientific world has given them little thought, especially where the rivals were not both Frenchmen.

Such a tribunal or bureau should be international to be of any particular value. Science ignores national boundaries, and its judges must act for the whole world. In point of fact, if the matter is of any considerable importance, the scientific press is the court in which the case should be tried; and the body of scientific readers should be the jury.

We already have two institutions, either of which could perform this duty quite as well as a new governmental bureau. The National Academy of Sciences has as its reason for existence the desirability of having a body of pre-eminent scientists to which the Government may refer any scientific question in the assurance

that the answer will be as nearly correct as human liability to error and the bounds of human knowledge will permit. It should be possible for the President of the United States or Congress to call upon the National Academy of Sciences for decisions upon disputed scientific points, and in general their conclusions would be accepted by the scientists, at least in America.

The Smithsonian Institution could also be relied upon to adjust such disputes by calling to its council the specialist in the subject involved.

Both of the institutions are, however, national, and hence insufficient and lacking jurisdiction in international questions.

As to the cold storage of undeveloped ideas, that can readily be done by depositing a sealed description thereof with the Smithsonian Institution, for example, to be delivered for publication on subsequent demand. But this leads to an indiscriminate filing of all sorts of wild and undeveloped ideas in the possibility of claiming priority for a discovery which someone else develops and makes available and for which the latter deserves the credit.

In fact, one might file two opposite explanations of a phenomenon and subsequently call for the publication of the correct one, claiming priority over the real discoverer, who showed which of the two was correct.

AN APPEAL

By A. M. C.

There has been so much said in the newspapers and elsewhere concerning leave of absence and early closing in the different branches of the Government service that I do not think it would be out of the way to have an agitation in favor of the hard-worked special delivery boys of the Postoffice Department.

They are out in the rough weather of winter and the hot weather of the summer. Sometimes they go miles with a letter to earn the small sum of 8 cents, and they have to endure many hardships in the discharge of their duty.

It seems to me that, being in the employ of the Government, the special delivery boys might be paid reasonable salaries instead of the present way, and that the boys ought to have leave of absence.

Delivering these letters in a hurry and often at great distances is hard on the boys and hard on their wheels. We all appreciate their good work. Let them receive considerate treatment.

RODENTS IN INDIA.

Although the famine over the greater part of Rajputana, Gujerat, and the Central Indian states, is less widespread than hitherto, there will, nevertheless, be much suffering during the next few months, and 400,000 people are already on government relief works. The rats have to a large extent disappeared, but have destroyed a considerable portion of the cotton crop. The inhabitants of Gujerat are convinced that the rats are reincarnations of their friends who died in the last famine, and it is for this reason that the British officials have found it impossible to get any assistance in destroying the pests.—London Mail.

OYSTERS AS BUILDERS

Dr. Grave, of the United States Fish Commission, has recently been studying the islands found in Newport River and Beaufort Harbor in North Carolina, says the "Fish Trades Gazette." The islands, which are in various stages of growth, are shown to be built up of generations upon generations of oysters, and appear to grow in very much the same way as the coral islands of the Pacific. The original reefs grow across the river, and the reason of that is because the swift current keeps the edges clean, and thus makes a favorable surface for the attachment of the young spat. In course of time, by the action of wind, waves, and vegetable growth on the accumulating generation of oysters, the reef eventually becomes established as an island.

Islands of oysters are by no means rare. There is every reason to believe that the islands at the mouth of the Tagus, in Portugal, owe their origin to reefs of oysters. The mouth of the River Tagus is comparatively narrow, but widens out into a vast natural pond several miles wide, and in this pond immense deposits of oysters of the well-known Portuguese variety accumulate. The area is studded with reefs of these oysters formed of generation growing upon generation, with here and there islands which were no doubt formed in the same way as those in the Newport River, U. S. A.

It must not be considered that the Tagus basin is in a fossilized condition. Oysters flourish there vigorously. Considerable quantities are brought to England every year and relaid in beds for fattening. It is said that 100,000,000 could be taken from these beds annually and their absence be hardly noticeable, so abundantly do they flourish.

A SHORT FUNNY TAIL.

"What is an anecdote, Johnny?" asked the teacher.
 "A short, funny tale," answered the little fellow.
 "That's right," said the teacher. Now, Johnny, you may write a sentence on the blackboard containing the word."
 Johnny hesitated a moment, and then wrote this:
 "A rabbit has four legs and one anecdote."

TO GREEN PASTURES

We can't go to Europe and cross the salt foam
 Where the tempest blows wild and the screaming gulls roam;
 But, thank the good Lord, there's a river at home,
 And we'll cross to green pastures, my dearie!

We can't have the papers a-sayin', "Today
 The So-and-Sos sail, to be six months away."
 But we won't have the bills that the rest have to pay,
 And we'll cross to green pastures, my dearie!

And sure, in the hovel, as well as the dome,
 The honey of life may still drip from the comb;
 The happiest heart stays the longest at home,
 And we'll cross to green pastures, my dearie!

—Atlanta Constitution.

HER STRANGE EXPERIENCES

A Baltimore lady who had occasion to go to Washington not long since had a succession of novel experiences. Early in the course of the day she boarded an electric car, and after riding some distance asked the gentleman who was sitting next to her how near they were to a certain street. The gentleman stared blankly ahead and made no response. The lady made another attempt, and this time attracted the attention of the man, who told her in plain language that he was deaf and dumb, and indicated his regret at not being able to give her the information she wanted.

Later in the day the lady got on another car, and seeing a vacant place on the other side of a gentleman, who apparently had not noticed her entrance into the car, motioned to him to move up so that she could take the place. For a second time in the day she received no response—and close investigation proved this to be true.

The day was warm and sultry and the lady became thirsty; so on her way to the railroad station, as she was start-

ing for home, she stopped at a soda fountain and quenched her thirst with a glass of ginger ale. After the train had started she let the cares of the day slip away—it had been a very tiresome day—and leaning her head against the back of the seat fell asleep. It was nothing but the lightest sort of a nap she was taking, and two or three times she felt something tugging at her dress. But she was too sleepy to pay any attention to the thing, until one sudden, violent tug made her open her eyes. To her amazement there sat a little alligator on her lap, making friends with her lace scarf. "Horror," she thought, "did that one glass of ginger ale go to my head? I'll never take another drop of ginger ale."

But another tug at her scarf woke her thoroughly and convinced her that she was seeing the real thing and not a ginger-ale vision. Her startled exclamations aroused her fellow-passengers and resulted in the return of the alligator to its rightful owner—a tourist on his way north from Florida.—Baltimore Sun.