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WILL THE COMING MAN GO TO CHURCH?

[By Rev. Rush R. Shippen, D. D., pastor All Souls' (Unitarian) Church.]

Or will he outgrow it and leave it behind as a dead superstition of the past? Why indeed are so many of the thoughtful, scientific, and the earnest workingmen of our time indifferent to the church, breaking loose from it, not found in it to-day, as they ought to be, and surely would be, if it were the practical help they could not afford to do without? Surely something is the matter with the church.

Three institutions are universal, found in all times and climes, permanent in essential substance, though changing in form to fit the growing needs of man. They are the home, the State, the church. The home enshrines the family. The State organizes the social polity. The church embodies man's spiritual aspirations toward the infinite. The home shelters and feeds him. The State protects and defends him. The church invites him up and on to eternity. Founded in deep and abiding instincts of human nature, never was man without them; their origin is divine and their necessity eternal. "The man without a country," a homeless wanderer on earth, touches the profound pity of all hearts. "The man without a church," spiritually bereft and homeless, might equally well furnish fit theme for the deepest pathos of some gifted pen.

Our critical time challenges the church. Prove your utility in this working-day world. It cannot live by the sentimental forces of ancient reverence. It must meet the new demands of the hour. It must come to men here and now; find them where they are and help them in their life struggle. It must no longer be a mere lifeboat to rescue them from a shipwrecked world, or ferry them over the dark river of death, but a living force to create better men and women to make this world a better world to live in, to bring in and establish here and now the kingdom of God.

Every true church exists to get good, and to do good. It is first to save the sinner, and then to make him join hand and heart in all good work to save the other sinners. It is not a private club where the saints may go off by themselves and have a good time. It is a trumpet call to the saints to gird on their armor and fight the Lord's battle for truth and right.

The church, like many politicians, has been too busy looking after its fences. Many churches seem more anxious about their fences than about the flowers and fruit grown inside. It their anxiety to fence out heretics and sinners, they have chiefly fenced in bigots and pharisees. Fences are well in their way, but good fruit grown on open prairie is better than thistles in the most finely fenced-up garden.

The bigotries, narrowness, and unbrotherly prejudices and divisions of the church are the weakness and disgace of christendom. No wonder that large-souled men prefer the company outside to that which too often they find inside. Let the church leaders lay aside their narrowness and timidity and bravely lay hold of the great problems of our day, and the workingmen and the truth seekers will alike rejoice to join the great brotherhood of seekers for the light, whose helpful fellowship they cannot afford to ignore.

As the nation mourns the loss of one of its most gifted preachers, the poet preacher of Chicago, we may well take to heart the word of his dying message. In a sermon preached in Chicago Music Hall, September 16, on "The lessons to be drawn from the great industrial troubles of last July," Prof. Swing well says: "Quite a number of clergymen have banded together to preach the Gospel of personal righteousness; that Christianity is Christ in human life, Christ in society, Christ in money, and Christ in work. We preachers must all come to that definition of the church. * * * It would seem that all the Christian clergy, Catholic and Protestant, and all the ethical teachers should this autumn enter into a new friendship to preach the gospel of a high humanity. All the intellectual and spiritual resources of the pulpit should be exhausted in the effort to advance human character. * * * In an age and in a republic marked by an amazing effort to turn all things, all days, and all life into gold, our pulpits must make a new effort to reveal and create in man the spiritual being; man temperate, man studious, man a lover of justice, man the brother, man Christlike. To reach a result so new and so great, the pulpit must select new themes. It must call them from the field where the mob raves, from the shop where men labor, from the poverty in which many die, from the office where wealth counts its millions. God did not give man this globe that it might be made a desert or a battle-field, but that it might be made the great home of great men."

RAILROAD PLATFORM ORATORY.

Old "Tippecanoe" Harrison never knew the beauties of the railroad campaign now being conducted by his grandson and by other prominent exponents of great political parties. In those days the rural voter had to be lured by forced marches on foot or horseback, and the successful candidate owed much of his election to a strong physique or a good piece of horseflesh.

But railroad platform oratory demands requirements of another character. The speaker must learn every morning something of the individual character of ten or fifteen different towns, and throw the resultant local coloring into ten or fifteen different speeches.

If the populace of a manufacturing hamlet gathers at the depot to meet his train, he must be primed and ready to digress in brief but pointed phrases upon the benefit or injury done by the prevailing tariff rates to the wooden nutmeg trade. If the car halts in the midst of horny-handed sons of the soil the theme must turn on legislation in regard to the cinch bug.

In addition, the lachrymal ducts must be kept well oiled for ready reference, and gestures must to be trained to abstain from collisions with the brakes and handle bars.

Shades of Jeffersonian simplicity and Whig austerity! To what a business system has pure politics been reduced.

THAT VIRGINIA HOLD-UP.

In addition to her old-time record for mothering Presidents, the grand old State of Virginia has put up a train robbery that sets all like Western episodes aside for future reference. It is to be noted, also, that the executive genius exhibited by the Virginia type of highwayman is about as marked as was ever displayed by a Virginia delegate to the White House.

But one improvement can be suggested. The Western style is too rough for the courtly Old Dominion. Her train robbers should introduce into their profession something of the grace and politeness that characterizes the bandit of Lombardy, the polished chronometer-snatcher of rural France or the old-time stage-stopper of England.

In line with these considerations it is evident that the frayed overcoats and trousers and the heavy boots which formed the costume in Friday's drama, should be supplanted by tight knee breeches, long-tail coats, buckled low shoes, tri-cocked hats, and that suave gentility of the State across the Potomac.

The average engineer could not resist such an appeal to his courtesy; the express messenger would remember Lord Chesterfield and open the safe; the passengers might indulge in a little friendly banter, but would certainly participate in the general bestowal of valuables.

When Virginia again makes an international exhibit of her hold-up resources she should reflect that the various wild West shows have presented the Western article in all its primitive beauty and sweetness. We are waiting for something original and distinctive, something with new local color.

Friday's episode was a case of the most flagrant plagiarism. Shades of James, Younger, and Dalton! Rise up and sue for infringement damages.

THE Allison boom has at last cleared the port of Dubuque, Iowa.

AGRARIAN discussions are lacking in David Bennett Hill's speeches. He should remember that Gov. Flower has created an appetite for that sort of thing.

AS THE weather grows colder our sympathy goes out to Li Hung Chang.

ONE thing remains for China to try against the advancing hosts of Japan—an Italian grind organ brigade with the sole repertoire of "Sweet Marie."

HON. TIMOTHY J. CAMPBELL has been turned down by Tammany, and will undoubtedly sign with the Parkhurst movement.

MR. REED announces a standing prize for train robbers who will hold up Mr. McKinley's touring train.

WE hasten to advise Gov. Mitchell, of Florida, not to cross any pugilistic rivers until they come his way.

A TAMMANY convention hissed the name of Parkhurst. One more laurel for the reverend gentleman.

THE New York Sunset stops purring over its beloved David long enough to spit a few snarls at Nathan Straus.

THE worst result of that train robbery is the possibility that it may start another Bill Dalton rumor.

J. J. VAN ALEN'S valet is undoubtedly grooming up his master for another political campaign.

THE Emperor of China is visiting his troops in disguise. It remains to be seen if the Peter-the-Great act will remedy the fortunes of the Son of Heaven.

Wise Words from Gotham.

An old prediction of Mr. Blaine's to the effect that tariff reform would be brought about, but that the people would repent in sackcloth and ashes, has been brought out by the Washington Post to do duty for the Republicans in this campaign. If it isn't handled carefully, the business boom will knock it into a cocked hat. The Post, which is shrieking for a return of McKinleyism, is off its base. It is not tariff reform that is reducing its revenues, but the hustling of its enterprising and newsy competitor, THE TIMES.—New York Mercury.

Newspapers and Workingmen.

Another change in favor of the organizations has taken place, and that is the seeming importance that the daily newspapers of the city are attaching to the proceedings of the labor bodies. It is but a very short time ago that it was next to impossible to get an important resolution published in the daily press. But how things have changed; reporters are constantly hovering over the doors of our meeting halls, and are anxious to publish anything that may be given them. Why, we believe that even the "walking delegate" will soon be recognized as a half-way decent kind of a fellow. Of course the working people are taking all this in, but at the same time they fully understand why this sudden conversion has taken place.—District Labor Advocate.

NEW YORK POLITICS.

Buffalo Courier—It would be idle to deny that William C. Whitney is a gifted letter-writer.

Oswego Palladium (Dem.)—Senator Hill's speech (of acceptance) is a trumpet-call to duty. The New York World says that his words electrified his hearers.

Cincinnati Enquirer—With Hill and Whitney joined the Democrats of New York ought to be able to make a strong pull.

Buffalo Enquirer (Dem.)—The Democracy of New York will rally to the support of the State ticket. There is going to be no hanging back, no sulking.

Buffalo Courier (Dem.)—Political prophets who neglect to make account of the religious-liberty issue in this State run the risk of a serious miscalculation.

Utica Herald (Rep.)—Senator Hill's carefully prepared acceptance is a noteworthy production. It is the wail of a discouraged and disheartened leader.

Albany Express (Rep.)—There is not the slightest doubt of the fact that he (Hill) will poll more votes for the Democratic ticket than any other man could obtain.

Rochester Herald (Dem.)—The man who forced this nomination upon an unwilling leader at Saratoga knew well the temper of the man. The fighting qualities of David B. Hill can be depended upon.

GALLERY, PIT, AND GREENROOM.

Lovers of the Shakespearean and classic drama will have ample gratification of their taste at Albaugh's Grand Opera House this week where Frederick Warde and Louis James, the eminent tragedians, will play their farewell engagement in Washington as joint stars. These artists represent the best elements in the higher class of the drama, and are the recognized leaders. Their productions have always been on a generous scale and have been instrumental in maintaining the taste for the legitimate drama.

The supporting company this season is said to be better than any of the past, and includes a number of clever Shakespearean actors. The repertoire includes several novelties in the shape of standard Shakespearean tragedies, among which are elaborate revivals of "Henry IV," "Richard III," and "Richelieu," together with "Julius Cæsar" and "Othello."

The engagement will commence with the production of "Henry IV," which has not been presented in this country for some years, but which has always been considered one of the most popular and interesting of Shakespeare's works. Certainly no other tragedy contains such an equal division of tragedy and comedy, nor such beautiful poetic passages. The revival will be characterized by the attention to scenic appointments and detail that has always marked the performances of these artists. This performance will be repeated Thursday and Friday evenings and at the Saturday matinee.

Tuesday evening Bulwer Lytton's "Richelieu" will be presented, Mr. Warde assuming the title role, and Mr. James as the Count de Baradas. This play deals with an interesting period of the French history, and the greatest statesman of the age.

"Julius Cæsar," with Mr. Warde as Cassius and Mr. James as Brutus, will be the Wednesday matinee bill. It will be interesting from the fact that Cassius is a new character for Mr. Warde. Wednesday evening "Othello" will be presented with the original arrangement of the principal characters. "Richard III" will terminate the engagement on Saturday evening.

To-night at Albaugh's Grand Opera House the Jubilee Choir Singers appear in their second Sunday evening concert, giving a new programme. These singers made a splendid impression upon a large audience at the opera house last Sunday. The box office opens to-day at 4 o'clock for the sale of reserved seats, which are 25 and 50 cents.

Augustin Daly's famous company of comedians will begin an engagement Monday evening, October 15, at the National Theater, which will be an event in our dramatic season. Our theater-goers and all lovers of the artistic in theatrical matters will, no doubt, hail with delight the coming of this famous body of players, who are fresh from their triumphs on the other side of the world. The names of Mr. Daly's company are nearly household words, so to speak, and nothing more than passing mention is necessary. Mrs. Gilbert, Misses Haswell, Hansen, Upham, and Catherine Lewis; James Lewis, Messrs. Carlyle, Gresham, Lederecq, and the "only" Henry Dixey—our Adonis—are potent members of the cast. The famous actress, Miss Ada Rehan, will terminate this notable engagement, her brief season commencing Monday evening, October 22.

Vaudeville has taken a prominent position in American amusements, but only in the last few years has it been introduced into leading theaters. Previously variety entertainments were confined to the lower order of theaters, where smoking and drinking was allowed. In raising this popular style of entertainment to its present standard refinement were the most essential element, and it is to refinement that Manager Ziegfeld has paid most attention in presenting his magnificent Trocadero Vaudevilles. During the past summer all Europe was searched for novelties, and the result will be shown at the Academy to-morrow evening, when in addition to Sandow a splendid company of entertainers will be presented.

Sandow is, of course, the central figure in the company. His normal chest measurement is 47 inches, expanded it is 61 inches. The greatest expansion ever known at the Olympic games in ancient Rome was 6 inches.

A carefully selected company from the principal theaters of Europe and America has been engaged to surround Mr. Sandow in his entertainment. The following artists will appear: Mlle. Marguerite; the Lucifers, grotesques; Billy Van, comedian; Tom Brown, the famous double note whistler; Acann, Europe's greatest mimic; Jane, chanteuse international; Herr Dewell, equilibrist; the marvelous Jordan Family and Dunham, astonishing aerial acrobats; Miss Scottie, the clever dog, who for the past two seasons has been the sensation of London and Paris.

At Butler's New Bijou Theater to-morrow and every night this week, with Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday matinees, the Atkinson Comedy Company will present that famous piece of American humor, "Peck's Bad Boy." The bad boy is always a welcome visitor. This week he will be especially so, for the reason that he has surrounded himself with a large assortment of novel and entertaining ideas in the way of songs, dances, and witticisms. The company is not only rich in specialty talent, but it is competent to make excellent character pictures of those interesting and well-known personages, the boy's pa, his girl, the corner grocery, and all the rest of the types of every-day human nature that the Milwaukee humorist wove into his sketches.

The attraction at the Lyceum next week will be the French Folly Company in conjunction with C. A. Sampson, who is said to be "the strongest man on earth." He was born in the province of Lorraine, France. His mother was a Spanish woman and his father French. As a boy he gave no promise of extraordinary strength. At the age of fourteen he sustained a severe shock from a bolt of lightning, and he believes that this probably exercised a great influence over his muscular development. From that time his strength began to increase, and in a short time he began to give exhibitions. The work is very wearing, and he is obliged to train carefully and systematically. He does not smoke and never drinks intoxicants. He exercises two hours a day, and takes the best care of himself. Some of Sampson's feats are really remarkable. He breaks silver dimes and quarters between his fingers with astonishing ease. He also lifts a miniature duplicate of the famous Ferris wheel which weighs 4,000 pounds.

The managers of the National Lyceum Course announce the opening of their sale of course tickets to subscribers, beginning Monday morning at 9 o'clock, at the Metzerott music store. Among the people with whom contracts have been signed are Mary Proctor, the daughter of the famous astronomer, in her popular lecture on the solar system; the Wesleyan University Glee and Mandolin Clubs, who will come during the holidays; Jennie O'Neill Potter, who is well and favorably known here; the Ollie Torbett Concert Company, which includes the well-known violinist herself, and the Swedish male sextette; Lewis Harvie Finney, Secretary Herbert's private secretary, who has lectured here before and received high encomiums on his work; and George Riddle, the Shakespearean reader. Other attractions will be Walter Damrosch in his lecture of the Wagner music drama; either Prof. Ragan or Prof. De Motte in an illustrated travel lecture; and the celebrated New York Philharmonic Club. This certainly furnishes variety enough. The sale of reserved seats will follow very shortly the sale of subscription tickets and the subscribers will have the first opportunity to make reservations.

TAMMANY'S TICKET.

Philadelphia Record—Tammany's nomination of Nathan Straus for mayor sterilizes the milk in the opposition cocoanut.

Philadelphia Times—Tammany has put up a remarkably strong candidate in Nathan Straus, a popular merchant and practical philanthropist of high character and great ability, who, if he could run on his own merits, should command the fullest measure of public confidence.

Philadelphia Ledger—The ticket nominated by Tammany Hall last night for city officers is unusually free from the names of machine politicians. Though named by the machine, the ticket is such that the machine would never offer the community unless it realized that the present campaign was most critical.

MUSICAL WASHINGTON.

The soloist at Seidl's first concert, on October 23, is to be one of Washington's most charming as well as talented ladies, Miss Lottie Mills. This little lady, whose home is in this city, has for the past three years been studying under Leschetizky in Vienna, and has attained a high degree of perfection in her chosen art. She speaks enthusiastically of her experience abroad and also of her teacher. In describing the peculiarities of his methods she says his class numbers about sixty, but he positively refuses to give more than five lessons a day, and unless you happen to be among the fortunate, instead of receiving a lesson every week you will be disposed of with one in two weeks, or possibly less, and as his fee is only 9 florins a lesson, paid for as the lesson is taken, no complaint can be made. Every Thursday from 4 until 9 the entire class assembles at his rooms for general review. With his characteristic indifference and independence he will saunter in, anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour late, take his seat at the piano, retaining his cigar, and call indiscriminately upon any of the pupils who will occupy the seat at a second piano and proceed according to his instructions. After this is over a few favored ones are invited to remain to dine with him, and as he is a great wit and very affable, in addition to being a fine entertainer, this courtesy is much coveted by every pupil. The average pupil of this great artist is so ambitious he is prone to practice from four to six hours each day, but this the master does not approve of, contending that three hours each day are sufficient, and arguing that too much practice tends toward mechanical execution. Miss Mills intends to rest and study until December, when in all probability she will return to Vienna.

Miss Ellen Beach Yaw, who will make her debut before a Washington audience shortly, is accounted the most remarkable soprano the world has ever known, having a compass of voice extending from G below to E in altissimo, a range of nearly four octaves. Her tones are produced without the slighest physical effort, and her perfect method and sympathetic quality of voice have evoked much favorable comment. She studied for three years under Mrs. Theo Bjorksten, of New York, later she went to Paris as a pupil of both Delle Sedie and Bax. Miss Yaw is an American girl, a native of New York State, but a resident of California.

Anton Seidl has prepared a wonderful presentment of great things for the Seidl concerts this season. One of the chief is the "New World Symphony," a prodigious creation by Dr. Antonin Dvorak, the distinguished director of the National Conservatory of Music, New York. This masterpiece has been heard but by a comparative few thus far, but during the present season Mr. Seidl will put it before the public at opportune times, and thus make the people acquainted with one of the loftiest compositions of the period, and one, too, that was created by Dr. Dvorak on American soil, and the inspiration of which was the native melodies which had first found utterance by the negroes and Indians. These suggest and lead up to, but the symphony is wonderfully wrought as a masterpiece of music and must go handed down to future periods as a classic from the present. It will be heard for the first time in Washington at the first concert of the series at Metzerott Music Hall, Tuesday evening, October 23. The soloists for this concert are Miss Lillian Blauvelt, soprano, and Miss Lottie Mills, pianist.

It is the opinion of a great many people that Verdi, who is eighty years of age, is the patriarch of musical composers, but such in reality is not the case, the honor belonging to Ambroise Thomas, composer of "Mignon" and "Hamlet," who was born in 1811, making him Verdi's senior by three years.

For several weeks past a movement has been afoot among several prominent lady singers of this city tending toward the organization of a ladies' glee club. Last Wednesday the originators held a meeting at Mr. Cloward's studio and the organization was completed. Mrs. I. M. Bittinger was elected president; Mrs. C. B. Rheem, vice president; Miss Louise Bailey, recording secretary; Miss Blanche Yewell, corresponding secretary; Miss Grace Lewis, treasurer, and Mrs. George Wells, librarian. The members are:

Mrs. Dr. Gardner.	Miss Florence Ricketts.
Miss Claudia Moore.	Miss Marie Bailey.
Mrs. Parsons.	Miss Laura French.
Miss Emily Given.	Miss Anna Yeatman.
Miss Virgie Keech.	Miss Junie Lusk.
Miss Carrie Sunny.	Miss Sue Davis.
Miss Tyre.	Miss Mamie Clean.
Miss Flora Holden.	Miss Hazel Henderson.
Miss Rosecrans.	Miss Edna Doe.
Miss Hester Armstrong.	Miss Glasco.
Miss Alice Draney.	Mrs. Dr. McPherson.
Miss Grace Noerr.	Miss Emma Mueden.
Mrs. Shea.	Miss Nellie Hauk.
Miss Clara Meyers	

Mr. N. Du Shane Cloward, director.

Rehearsals will be held every Wednesday afternoon at 4:15, No. 1224 F street.

A male quartet will sing the following selections this evening at the Church of Our Father, corner of Thirteenth and L streets northwest: "Lead Kindly Lights," Steele; "Softly Now the Light of Day," Barrett, and "Abide With Me," Steele. The members of the quartet are Messrs. Samuel H. Bond, Felix E. Mahoney, Harry Crafts, and M. D. Hensey.

Oscar Mendenere-White, the popular local musician, has several new compositions lately issued by John F. Ellis & Co. "The Corporal of the Guard March," which made such a hit last year, comes out with frontispiece of another edition. Mr. White promises an important work in the near future, as soon as he can get some song orders off his hands.

Dan Schiller's new song, "That Girl Next Door," is making a great hit in the hands of Annie Lewis, who uses it in her opera, "Prince Pro Tem." Mr. Schiller is a Georgetown musician.

Wilmuth Gary's "Gift of Gifts," a simple and exceedingly pretty love song, was issued from Ellis' last week.

MR. WHITNEY'S LETTER.

Mr. Whitney's letter proved not to be the one that never came.—New York World.

Mr. Whitney, of New York, will not be in the fight, with David B. Hill as his campaign manager, but he promises to stand by and say "Sic 'em, Dave," and tell him when he is beaten.—Boston Journal.

Ex-Secretary Whitney's services to the New York Democracy this year are limited to advice. He would not take the first place on the ticket. He will not take the place of chairman of the campaign committee, but he writes a letter saying that New York is the keystone of the political situation and telling the Democrats what they ought to do. It is probable that there will be a good many Democrats in New York just as active this year as Mr. Whitney promises to be.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

NEW YORK GRABBED THE CUP.

The baseball season is over, the Temple cup is lost, but the pennant still waves.—Baltimore Exchange.

Respecting baseball trophies, it can be said that one pennant is worth a dozen cups.—Baltimore American.

New York has won that cup, and now all Baltimore pessimistically believes that her championship doll is stuffed with sawdust.—Boston Globe.

The Temple cup series does not prove anything; it in no way clouds the victory of the Orioles, nor can it be accepted as a test of superiority. It simply establishes the fact that the champions felt satisfied with the distinction achieved in winning the pennant, and that the Giants fought tooth and nail for second honors.—Baltimore Herald.

Occult Science in Thibet.

Dr. Heinrich Hensoldt, the distinguished German scientist and Thibetan explorer, will lecture at the Academy of Music this evening. He will speak on "Occult science in India and Thibet."

MAN.

His Afflictions
And Disabilities.
His Doctor Should Be
His Confidante.
A Specialist, An Expert.

Few escape the direful consequences of folly. The crop is sown, and for harvest we have lack of energy, nerve force, vitality, feeblenss of purpose, melancholy, impaired memory, shyness, inability to concentrate the mind, want of confidence, lost or failing vigor, feel unfit for business or society, and that

Happy Marriage

is rendered impossible; the sufferer feels irritable, despondent, and almost demoralized, feels generally used up, and that life is losing its charm for him. If you are afflicted with some of the above symptoms your best interests will be served by consulting Dr. Carleton. He will get you well. The doctor has made the successful treatment of such cases an almost constant study for the past twenty-five years.

ORGANIC WEAKNESS, with all its train of miserable forebodings, doubt, disability, fears, and embarrassment. No other ailment is so discouraging or demoralizing, the sufferer loses ambition and energy and realizes that for him life has lost its charm.

This condition is speedily cured by the scientific and advanced methods of treatment I employ.

Blood and Skin

Diseases, Blood Poison and Taints, affecting the Body, Nose, Throat, Skin and Bones, Mucous Patches in Mouth, Ulcers, Tumors, Warty Growths, Varicocele, Piles, &c., radically cured by my unfailing method of treatment.

Kidney and Bladder

Ailments, Dreams, Spermatorrhea, Stricture, Scalding, Burning, Smarting, Frequent Urination, Discharges, Irritation, &c., promptly and radically cured.

Don't waste precious time—consult Dr. Carleton. His long residence in this city and his brilliant record of cures effected in apparently hopeless cases entitle him to your confidence.

Dr. Carleton,
THIRD YEAR AT
507 12th St. N. W.
25 YEARS' EXPERIENCE.
CONSULTATION FREE.

Hours: 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. and 7 to 8 p. m. Sunday, 10 to 2.

FREE LIBRARY IN PROSPECT

Mr. Spofford Looks for Its Establishment in the Near Future.

CENTRAL LOCATION IS NEEDED

The New Post-office Structure Seems to Be the Most Available Building—How the Catalogue of Works Will Be Made Up—Private Subscriptions Will Be Needed.

Always interested in public affairs which are manifestly of great advantage to the people of the District, THE TIMES made inquiries into the possibilities of the early success of the proposed free public library.

Librarian Spofford, ever alive to the vast benefit of the contemplated measure, replied most enthusiastically to the reporter's questions on the present prospects. To him it is a most surprising thing that the city of Washington, now more than a century old, has yet to experience the benefits of a free public library.

Said he: "While every city and nearly every considerable town in New England has enjoyed for years the benefit of this great source of intelligence, the Nation's Capital, with nearly 300,000 inhabitants, has no circulating library whatever.

"Even the old Washington Library, which maintained a precarious existence from a quarter to a half a century ago, ceased to exist during the civil war, and its books have been scattered or absorbed into other collections. This, however, was in no sense a circulating library of new literature even while it existed, having no reliable source of income, and not being able to keep up with the times, it naturally fell into that popular neglect which inevitably attends every institution which falls behind the wants of the people."

"Do you think that favorable legislation can be expected during the next session of Congress?"

"There seems now to be for the first time," replied Mr. Spofford, hopefully, "a reasonably assured prospect that the citizens of Washington will secure through the legislation of Congress a free library worthy of the name. As no appropriation would be asked from that body, but only a local habitation for the books, the project now before Congress should elicit no opposition, but every possible furtherance."

"Can an estimate be made of the number of Volumes which would form the nucleus of the circulating library?"

"The nucleus of the collection proposed in the bill reported favorably last summer by the Committee on the District of Columbia will consist of the duplicates, to the number of 10,000 to 15,000 volumes, which can be spared from the Congressional Library, together with such books from the department and bureau libraries of the government as are not required for reference and use in the current work of the government. Of course, no very approximate estimate could be made of the aggregate number of volumes with which the proposed free public library would start."

"How could that best be ascertained?" I interrupted.

"Only on report from custodians of each collection referred to after due consultation as to the books that must be retained in each collection, and those which could be spared. On this point, as practical librarians will tell you, guesses are of no value whatever. But the facts would readily be ascertained should this library bill pass Congress, rendering the proposed measure an actual fact."

"Is it your opinion that a library of such books would meet the popular demand of the readers of to-day?"

"As to the value of a collection of books thus gathered, it may be said that, while many would be duplicates or volumes which have almost ceased to be read, there would doubtless be a sufficiency of solid reading in standard literature, history, biography, travels, fiction, etc., to form a most useful basis for a library which would instruct the reader. Its riches in works of fiction and the newer literature could not be expected to come from the sources contemplated in the bill. This class of the freshest books (which would, of course, be largely demanded by the frequenters of the library) would have to come from indirect or associate efforts in securing funds for the purchase of desiderata, or to fill gaps in each department of science and literature. With so many men of wealth and public spirit as Washington contains, handsome contributions for this great public object should not be wanting.

"Nevertheless," he continued, "there is nothing succeeds in this country without zealous and organized effort. It is important that those having most at heart the success of the scheme for a free public library of circulation should be continually on the alert to forward the plan in every way, to enlist public interest and sympathy through the press, and to urge upon citizens having abundant means the importance of early contributions toward making the collection reasonably large and complete in the best books."

"What we do for ourselves is apt to be well done; what is done for us is seldom of so much value. The people of Washington should not think that a really useful and permanently successful circulating library can be built up by the gratuities of the government alone. While there is every reason for devoting to use and circulation the masses of books now largely unused in the various government depositories, no one of such collections, nor even all combined, can be expected to form a library of even approximate fullness for the wants of the readers of to-day.

"The fact that the citizens of hundreds and even thousands of American cities and towns tax themselves for the purchase of new books for general use in circulation, should incline our citizens toward similar liberality, to the end that the new city library may become worthy of the rank of intelligence which the National Capital should assume."

"What do you consider," I asked, "the proper location and fittest habitation for the projected library?"

"A central location," said he, "is of the utmost consequence. And what better or more popular locality could possibly be desired than the upper floors of the new city post-office building, where ample space would concur with the utmost accessibility. Nearly all people visit the city post-office at sometime during the week, and many do so in person or by messenger every day. That portion of Pennsylvania avenue is perhaps as much traveled as any part of Washington that could be named."

"In the light of the fact that work will soon begin on the upper stories of the post-office building this subject should meet with earnest consideration, so that the necessary legislation can be secured from Congress early in the coming session in order that the plans of the upper stories can readily be adapted to the uses of the public library.

When questioned as to the possibility of any opposition from the department officials to the change contemplated, Mr. Spofford said:

"The proposed library is so manifestly in the interest of public intelligence that I cannot but think that it would enlist the good will of all the members of the present administration, whose aid is of the utmost importance in securing the desired result."

THE TIMES endeavored to secure expressions of opinion from the administration, but so many of the Cabinet officials are out of town full statements from them cannot be obtained at the present time.

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