

The Progress.

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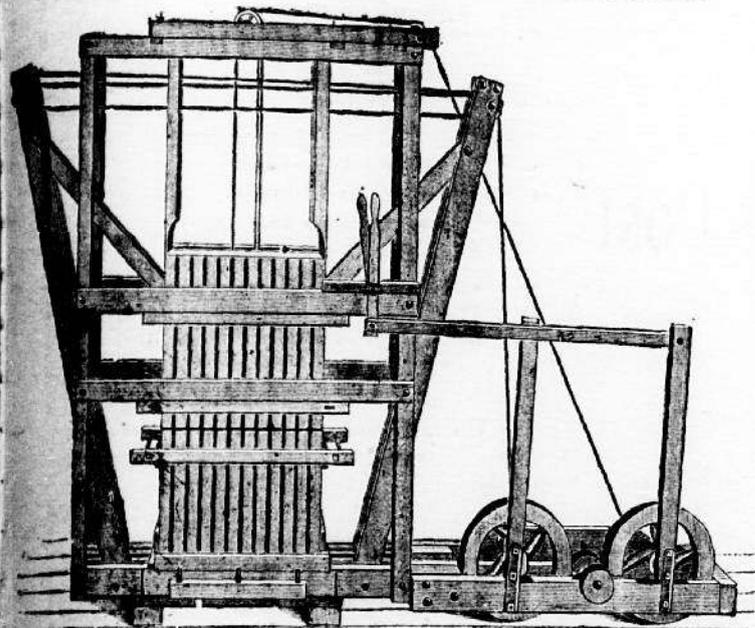
SHREVEPORT, LA., August 6, 1898.

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SOME THOUGHTS

ON THE ART OF DISCRIMINATION.

In our time the ability and power to plausibly discriminate, while being entirely partial, has made rapid progress. First it was tolerated; it then became an art; and finally developed into a science. And to-day this science is one of the most potential powers in our city and parish.

Of course this science owes allegiance to Politics as its master director. No other potentate could maintain a position for it as a live factor in the affairs of men.

Of course these comments were superinduced by something more than the ordinary of events. Several bubbles, some of them wave-like, have appeared on the bosom of the sea of public action in Shreveport recently, which have led us to musing along these lines.

The Progress confesses that it possesses a very suspicious nature in some things. For instance,

its keenest doubt is always actively alert when looking at public men, politicians; engaged in half business, half political movements. We always look for "the bug under the chip." We do not always locate the bug, but we seldom fail to see the chip moving, showing that the "varmint" is there.

Several movements have been inaugurated recently, though they are still in a half embryo state—which have aroused our people to a fermenting state: and yet—if our senses remain true to us—Politics, with his mailed hand, is stirring the coals that the kettle may boil.

First was the contest at the court house. A meeting was held there for the ostensible purpose of allowing the people to decide to this very important question, relative to the V. S. & P. bridge:

First—Shall the bridge remain a toll way at present charges?

Second—Shall it be a toll way, but with charges sufficient to main-

tain it? Or

Third—Shall it be made a free passage-way entirely?

But what was the result? The initiated soon saw this was but a subterfuge. The audience was treated to a spectacular display of factional buncombe, in which Hon. J. M. Foster received a terrible (political) castigation about things which were not up for discussion. We thought it extremely uncalled for and out of place then; and do so yet. But Politics was directing affairs; and on the one side was to kill the new city charter: the other, to lay a foundation for a political fight soon to be on.

The second move is the selection of the seven councilmen at large. Another feature is introduced in this act. This is the quality of the water supply. A certain contingent (so the little birds say) will make the basis of their fight: as a main issue, a literal fulfillment of the Water-works Company's contract with the city. That is to say, it must furnish "wholesome, pure water." In the name of the people—it is said—this move will be made.

But is this true?

Let us retrospect a little.

Some five or six years ago The Progress raised this point. This was before the Messrs Youree had any direct connection with the company, if any at all. Major Crawley was the resident manager for foreigners. Then Dr. John P. Scott bought the plant, or a controlling interest; which afterwards passed into the hands of, and under the management of Hons. Peter and H. H. Youree.

But at the time referred to, The Progress was so urgent, strong and persistent in its demands that the people became thoroughly aroused on the subject. So much so, that Captain R. T. Vinson, who was then mayor, called a meeting of citizens to investigate, and see to the complaint. A committee was appointed—among the number one or more members of the Board of Health, we believe, we know there were more than one physician—. Quite a number went over to the plant, looked all through the works, saw that the Company was not complying with that part of the contract which was under discussion; that they were not pretending they did: they were making no effort to filter the water, nor was any promise made to do better. B-u-t—the matter

was hush—ed, right there. Politics had already made his decision.

The water was as bad then, as it is now. Why—after all these years of silence and submission, is the way just opened, whereby this contract may be enforced? Why has the welfare of the public become so suddenly a matter of such deep concern? Is it because some one would like to use a dagger on the purse strings of the Yourees! Be there political vengeance to satisfy? Or, is this interest suddenly developed because it seems to furnish a splendid vantage ground for a political fight? Rest assured that Politics, that vacillating yet ever cruel monster, is the power that is directing every movement.

And now the Jennie Love case!

Ah! the plot thickens. It always does when a woman plays a part.

But why must Jennie Love be thrown out bag and baggage, and her name held up to vilest infamy while Elnora Welsh rests and abides secure and undisturbed, under the very shadows of the First Methodist church? Surely it can not be because Jennie is white and Elnora is colored? Then why all this furor over Jennie Love's case, while a peaceful, babe-like silence pervades all the atmosphere around the domain of Elnora?

The Progress is not defending Jennie Love. It knows nothing about her or her case. It could not afford to do so, if it did know her. But it does know something of the Elnora Welsh case. Our editor was present and heard the testimony. He thought the proof that she was conducting an unlawful house, conclusive. But the mayor thought differently. He fined her fifteen dollars for keeping a disorderly house, and warned not to repeat the offense. After this, petition was presented to the City Council, praying that Elnora be forced to move. This petition was signed by reputable citizens, members of the First Methodist church, and, we are informed, by the pastor himself. But Elnora seemed to possess the grip of the lion's paw some how. She gave the political tip to the City Council; and the petition was ignored. She then waved the same magic wand over the city, and every tongue was hushed, every paper silent, or practically so. Talk of impeachment would have been