

Eloquence, Wit and Pathos

At a Chicago Stag.

"An evening around a festal board with T. Thomas Fortune, of the New York Age, and a countless number of other newspapers, Harry C. Smith, of the Cleveland Gazette, Hon. J. Madison Vance, the sage of Louisiana politics, and Dr. A. M. Curtis, the world's most eminent Negro surgeon, is an evening that one having once enjoyed would go miles to enjoy again."

Thus sayeth the Fellowship Club And the Fellowship Club knows where of it speaks, for it had that rare pleasure last Saturday night.



T. THOMAS FORTUNE.

It happened this way: Dr. A. M. Curtis is an honorary member of the Fellowship Club, He is passing through the city. And the club always takes advantage of his presence here to do him honor. For he is one of Chicago's own, the club's own.

In fact, the Fellowship Club gave Dr. Curtis to the world.

It has more men, too, just like him. Don't forget that.

However, on the occasion in question, a peculiar condition prevailed. The guests were late in arriving, and not-



H. C. SMITH.

withstanding the fact that they all knew they were coming to a feast, each man seemed bowed down beneath some mighty burden. Amusements were eschewed, conversation lagged, and there was a general feeling that the entertainment would be insipid and dull beyond redemption. But such, happily, proved not to be the case.

When the gentlemen were summoned downstairs, and were seated at the table, and the lights turned full on so that all their faces could be plainly seen, that same stolid, heavy expression I have mentioned was still visible in every countenance. Not even the supper was able to brighten them. Just

why this condition should obtain among gentlemen on a festive occasion I am not able to say. Perhaps it was due to the lateness of the hour; perhaps it was the darkness which appears just before the first burst of sunshine.

At any rate when the Toastmaster, Mr. W. F. Taylor, arose and rapped for order, his deep, well modulated



HON. J. MADISON VANCE.

voice announcing the purpose of the gathering, his tall, striking figure outlined against the white curtains, as a background, his genial face beaming with smiles, not even he was able to drag the entertainment from beneath its heavy spell. The gentlemen pushed their chairs back and prepared to listen, their faces lit up with dull smiles. In fact the air was surcharged with a strange interest. It was felt by everyone in the room. Each man was an



RICHARD B. HARRISON.

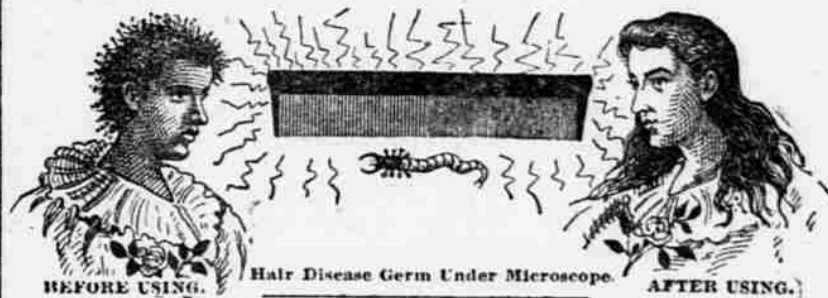
Atlas with the world on his back.

R. A. J. Shaw was the first man called upon. Suave and graceful, he did much to lighten the burden. He responded to the toast, "Our Guest." That gentleman he found in the south land, where the magnolia nods its head in unison to the babbling of brooks, and when he brought him North and landed him among the rustle and bustle of Chicago, and finally in the chair at the head of Freedmen's Hospital, he not only covered himself with glory, but put every man in the room on his mettle. Throats were cleared, heads were raised and eyes sparkled with a new interest. Bob had set the pace.

After one or two other gentlemen had been called upon, T. Thomas Fortune was asked to respond to the toast, "Supremest Moments." Gaunt and erect, his hair standing straight up like a bush, his eyes spitting fire, and his bony index finger beating time to his

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impassioned eloquence, he told the gentlemen about him what were his "supremest moments." His supremest moments, he said, came with every opportunity to strike a blow in defense of his people, and he never let one pass. Every time he reached out he landed a hard blow full and square on a vulnerable spot of the enemy. The big Injun, Hoop-la Tillman, with his many-tined pitchfork, came in for a scolding about as severe as was ever poured out upon the head of man. His De Kalb speech was noticed, and, for that matter, his impudent audacity along every line considered as only Thomas Fortune can consider it. Trembling and much overwrought from his effort, he sat down amid tremendous applause.

J. Madison Vance spoke of Chicago from a southerner's point of view. He likes Chicago, likes the atmosphere, the hustle and get there of the people.

Dr. George C. Hall was called upon to respond to the toast, "Aspiration." Dr. Wesley was asked to speak, and then Harry C. Smith, of the Cleveland Gazette, was requested to speak to the toast, "The Joys of a Journalist."

If Mr. Fortune had been striking and eloquent, if Mr. Fortune had been impassioned and pleading in his manner, Mr. Smith, if possible, was more so. His words flowed from his lips smooth and red hot, burning themselves in the brain of every man about him. He took the present, past and future of the Negro and told how he thought their great problem could in a measure be solved. Not by a Crumpacker bill, he said, but by the intelligent Negroes unifying their interests so that they could make of themselves a bulwark that would be strong enough to protect the ignorant, a bulwark that could stand for all time against the dashing waves of the tempestuous enemy. His greatest joy, he said, lay in advising his people, as best he could, how to attain that end.

The speech-making was now over.

So Richard B. Harrison was called upon for a recitation. Richard, too, had caught the fever. He had been inoculated with the virus of the eloquence that had just preceded him. He recited Paul Laurence Dunbar's "Pahty," and he put his whole soul into the work. At its conclusion he was so uproariously applauded that he responded with that tendere of all dialect poems, "When Mal'by Sings." Not even Paul himself could have read it better. Tenderly, sweetly, in that own winning way so peculiar to Dick, he stole through the poem to find at its conclusion that tears were standing on the lids of many masculine eyes.

WILLIAM A. MORAN.

In the Conservator.

To Contributors and Correspondents.

The demand for space in The Colored American at this time is very great, and it is not always convenient to print everything that is sent. The Colored American is a national and not a local newspaper and it endeavors to cover the whole country and not any one particular part of it. Contributors and correspondents whose matter is sometimes omitted in one issue may look for it in the next, provided said matter is acceptable. It is not necessary to write long and abusive letters to the editor and demand to know why such and such an article was not published. In matters of this kind, however, the largest complaints come from those who want the biggest share of space but who, as agents, sell the fewest number of copies. A little patience and consideration on the part of our contributors will save lots of worry, and a little effort on their part to get new cash subscribers and send in the cash, will make lots of sunshine for the printer and the box office will "flourish like a green bay tree."