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DANGEROUS CURRENTS IN MODERN LITERATURE.

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The streams—perhaps one should say the great tides—of literature can be kept pure and wholesome only by constant and conscientious watchfulness on the part of all who affect them or are affected by them. Indeed, the idea that letters take care of themselves, or are moved by mere "time and tide," is more idle, if anything, than the notion that a man is a creature of fate, or a nation the result of cold "manifest destiny," encountered without reference to popular education or the spread of righteousness. If anything in the world is an intentional creation, produced by the will of its maker and deliberately adopted or rejected by its reader, it is a book. Whatever figure we employ regarding literature,—its currents, forces, fashions,—the fact clearly remains that the great laws of free choice and individual responsibility apply to it in every moment of its existence and work. The good in printed matter is to be spread by intelligent purpose, and the bad is to be suppressed or lessened by honest and well-directed endeavor.

In trying to say something concerning evil tendencies in so broad a subject as that of books and reading it will be well to select a few well-marked ones, and to comment upon them in language the brevity of which shall at least be free from blindness or wearisomeness.

Three dangerous elements in our current publications occur, perhaps most promptly and strongly to the mind of the well-wisher to literature; and however poor or trite the comment upon these three things, it will be sure to be beneficial from the very fact that it must address many minds which, of their own motion, have more than once reflected upon the topics under discussion.

The first of these evils is sensationalism. Our newspapers and magazines, to be sure, have devoted greater space to the discussion of quiet, unsensational "realism," with occasional allusions to Tolstoi and pessimism or Zola and grim sewerism. But, after all, most American readers, if we use that word in the broadest sense; trouble themselves very little with Mr. James' three or four annual volumes; Tolstoi and Russian gloom are largely a temporary "fad" in the higher circles; and even Zolaism, to borrow the poet-laureate's word, is for the most part foreign and as yet unassimilated. When any little American writer experiments with woe and badness which would be complete if they were not so evidently artificial, the resulting attention is temporary. On the whole, our American taste does not like bestiality, adultery, or godlessness, so well as square honesty, homely purity, and mainly conscience. But for that reason it is all the more unfortunate that the universal craze for something new should lead thousands of readers to cheap and demoralizing "detective" stories; to preposterous and ill-written parodies of Poe or the Arabian Nights, with an occasional fragment of so-called modern "science" thrown in; or wretched novels, by native or foreign manufacturers, in which, if absolute vice is seldom portrayed, actual life is never by any possibility delineated. The "libraries" of ten or twenty cent pamphlets have until recently, done much to popularize standard fiction; but just now the printers and the news stands have discovered that more money is to be made by the sale of twenty-five or fifty cent duodecimos, in gaudy paper, by writers of whom no intelligent reader has heard or ever cares to hear. An inspection of the literary departments of our railway stations; or of the armfuls carried by the peripatetic vendors on the trains, is enough to remind us how much education is needed before half of our young men and women can really be said to know how to read at all.

A second mischief-maker in current literature is indifferentism. If the classes which, in view of their means for education and their apparent social position, are usually called "lower," err on the side of the

sensational, their alleged betters are sinners on the score of Laodiceanism in letters. Two many readers—and, of course, hack-writers, who know how to address themselves to the market of purchasers—feel or affect a liking for laziness, quietism, or lackadaisical superficiality. Any mental exertion, even that required by an old lachrymose novel of the order so dear to Miss Lydia Languish, is a trial; they may endure excitement in small doses, in the papers, but not in large, between covers. To write or read without plan or passion, without admiration or disgust, is almost more hopeless than to fall into mental sin or literary excess. We have scores of young novelists, in England and America, who can turn out a fairly respectable story—or set of meandering pages not deserving so coherent a name. Their wares are bought and then thrown aside, but meanwhile the mischief is none the less deadening because it is not malicious. Josh Billings once remarked that "you can't make a wet string stand on end," and sometimes it does seem as though indifferentism, though refined, were more hopeless than sensationalism, though crude. O listless book-maker and reader, be something!—either cold or hot, good or bad, optimistic,—and your work will either be healthful or curable. At any rate, it will have a mark and character of its own.

A third, and in one sense peculiarly American, evil, is a widespread tendency to turn everything into ridicule. Callow youth indulge less in cigarette-cynicism than twenty years ago; but the newspapers have not improved much in the matter. Our presidents are weakling or bores; our statesmen, tricksters or ward politicians; our ministers of the gospel, superfluous salary-takers; our public schools, places to rid parents of the care of their children; our doctors, drug-dispensers and grave fillers, in humorous league with undertakers; our lawyers, mere slysters; our army, a resort for "nerve-do wells"; our navy, a set of half-scuttled hulks. The "Indian problem" is how to deal with tomahawking brutes, and the "Southern question" one of endurance of six million chicken-stealers. If our children do not come to believe these cheerful statements, it will not be because they have not read them in some books, in more gaudy pamphlets, and in many journals. And just there, in too many daily and secular newspapers, is one great root of the present evil. Every really intelligent and thoughtful American must believe in the essential rectitude of our national life plan, and hold optimistic views concerning this great people of ours; a nation of freedom, intelligence, schools, churches, libraries self-reliant individualism, heroes and saints,—of men and women who, in the horrors of any new war or great disaster, or in the ordinary duties of humdrum life, are as worthy of beatification as half the old celebrities in the "Acta Sanctorum." And our newspapers, at their best, are by, of, and for such a people. But at their worst they misrepresent it, and one must say, though with reluctance, that their tone is lower than it was twenty five years ago. Let no one hastily arraign a whole profession,—profession which, as truly as any other, not excepting the clerical or the educational, ought to be the salt of our American earth; nor let any one forget many striking exceptions, especially, perhaps, on the part of religion, miscellaneous, and country newspapers, and of our monthly magazines, the best of which are the best in the world. But let each reader of these words dispassionately ask himself whether he is not annoyed, often and often, in some daily or weekly paper he reads, by detailed accounts of disgusting crimes, trials, or prize-fights; by disproportionate attention to horse-racing, ball-playing, and yachting; by a constant tendency to magnify the base or the trivial; and to minimize the seriously important; by cheap "outs" and cheaper jokes; by advertisements fraudulently printed as reading-matter, or accompanied by long "notices" which were a part of the corrupt promise made by the newspaper's solicitor; by violence or indecency of treatment of political opponents; by the vulgarization of Sunday through swollen sheets of irreligious and un-literary trash, hawked at the very

church doors, in a word, by sensationalism, indifferentism, and a constant tendency to turn things to ridicule? If you are never vexed by these ills, then you are wise or fortunate in your choice of periodicals; if they annoy you, then purify your home literature, and prove your strength of conscience, by forbidding this dangerous current to flow daily through your door. Better one act of improvement than a hundred words of empty lamentation.—*Sunday School Times.*

ALL ABOUT THE FARMERS

News and Courier.

Since the rumor that the agriculturists in this State were going to put forward candidates for State and county offices was published in the News and Courier last week, various reports have been rife concerning the alleged semi-political movement. It has been denied and again asserted as fact until the people have arrived at a point where they do not know what to believe.

Mr. E. L. Roche, assistant commissioner of agriculture, who was present at the Pendleton stock show, where the alleged caucus is said to have been held, was seen by a Reporter for the News and Courier yesterday and asked about the truth of the rumors.

"I really know nothing about the matter," said Mr. Roche, "except what I have seen in the News and Courier, but I do not think there is any ground for the reports which are being circulated. A caucus of some kind was held, and I thought it was a meeting of the trustees of the Clemson College, but I heard afterwards that it had some serious political significance I do not think there is any truth in this, however I talked with a number of the gentlemen named in connection with the reported movement, and they said the farmers were not going to go into any political scheme whatever, and so far as the Alliance, which has been mentioned in this connection, is concerned, the chief objects of organization are strictly non-political. Mr. Shell of Laurens, who was mentioned for secretary of State, has said that his present position is a much more preferable one, and I have no idea that Mr. Tillman will consent to run for Governor. The spirit of the Farmers' Alliance is displayed very clearly, I think, in the election of the officers of their organization in several counties, where they have defeated the extreme candidates and elected conservative ones."

A CHICAGO SCANDAL.

CHICAGO, August 20.—The wife of Millionaire "Mike" McDonald, the noted ex-gambler and politician, is missing. Mrs. McDonald disappeared from her home at the corner of Ashland Boulevard and Harrison street a week ago last Friday, and though a small army of detectives have been retained to discover her whereabouts, she has succeeded only in obtaining her diamonds, pawned or sold somewhere in the East. It is supposed that Mrs. McDonald is now in Europe. It is being reported this evening that she had a companion a Catholic priest, who, it is alleged, has been since unfrocked by the Church. The priest is supposed to have had a parish in South Chicago or some suburb in this locality. The story is that Mrs. McDonald became acquainted with the priest while he was on a visit to St. Jaralath's parish, of which she was a member. He became infatuated with her, the admiration was reciprocated, and the elopement was planned and executed. Hugh Mullaney, McDonald's coachman, took Mrs. McDonald from the house in a carriage last Friday, but said nothing of it until a week had elapsed, when he told Mr. McDonald, adding that he had promised to keep the matter secret for a week.

There is no escape from opinions, inferences, actions, save in sterility of thought. Deserts alone are free from vegetation. The fertile field is occupied; if not by this, then by that; if not by seemly, then by unseemly, growths.—*Buscom.*

We are now in danger of sentimental and simpering faith. Charity without principle to guide it may distribute its gifts very indiscriminately and injuriously. More evil may arise from lawless love, which is fascinating, than from hatred, which is repulsive.—*Dr. McCosh.*

A TALK WITH HAMPTON.

News and Courier.

WASHINGTON, August 21.—Senator Hampton, who is here for a few days, has very decided views on the political situation in the South and he never hesitates to express them in a straightforward, interesting manner at the proper time. No man, perhaps, is better qualified than the Senator from South Carolina to speak for the South. He said to a representative of the *Star* to-day:

"I do not think that Mr. Harrison's policy is as yet sufficiently defined for one to form a definite opinion about it. The Republicans have always made an effort to break into the South, and I have no doubt that at this time they are especially earnest. At present they are directing their attention chiefly to Virginia, where they will certainly be snowed under. They have no chance of carrying Virginia this fall, nor can they hope for better success in any other of the Southern States.

"They are trying to win by introducing the economic question in the South, but as long as the matter of local self-government demands our attention our people cannot be divided on this issue. Whether a man is a Protectionist or a Tariff Reformer, the safety or welfare of his home is paramount to the tariff."

"Do you think," was asked, "that there is a growing protective sentiment in the South?"

"No," the Senator reply, "I think the tendency is more likely to be the other way, especially in the mining and manufacturing districts. The interests of the States of Virginia, Tennessee and Alabama particularly are all advanced by low duties. They can produce iron and coal much cheaper than they can be produced in the East. The protection only assists the Eastern manufacturers to keep up this rivalry. Without the protection rivalry would be greatly lessened. The less protection, the more capital will go to develop the industries of the South. Seeing this I do not think our people will be led off by this question. The efforts of the Republicans will be in Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina and perhaps Alabama. I do not think they will meet with success in any one of these States. The exodus of negroes from North Carolina, if it keeps up, will hurt them there, but they could not carry the State anyhow. Mr. Harrison's appointments in the South have been of a character to strengthen us in the resistance of any attempts made upon the Southern States. I know it has been so in South Carolina and I presume it is the same elsewhere."

"Would any injury result to the South from an extensive exodus?"

"An inconvenience, but no injury. We would gladly see the colored people move elsewhere, and would be willing to suffer any reduction of representation that might result from their departure. It would deprive us of much of our labor and make it a little harder for the present generation, but it would be the salvation of the future. I do not wish any harm to the negroes, but I would gladly sacrifice whatever votes we get in the Electoral College or in Congress by reason of them if they would go off to themselves or settle in New England. I would gladly vote to appropriate \$50,000,000 for the purchase of Cuba or some other place for them to settle in."

"What do you think the Republicans will do with the 'Southern question' in Congress this winter?"

"They can do nothing, constitutionally. I think they will attempt to provide for Federal supervisors, and place the elections under Federal Control. This would be unconstitutional and vicious. I do not think they can succeed in this, and I do not see that there is anything else that they can do. There are Republican Senators who would oppose any measures oppressive to the South. Those who have investments there would oppose such a policy."

Senator Hampton expressed the opinion that there would be no extra session of Congress. One reason that he thought sufficient to deter the President from calling extra session was found in the elections to be held in November, which would necessarily take some members from their

seats. They could not do anything if any of these members were absent. The death of Mr. Laird, he thought, would tend to prevent a call.

Speaking of the Democratic policy, he said that they would stand together on the defensive, and he presumed that in the House they would resist any attempt on the part of Republicans to unseat Democrats merely to seat Republicans and strengthen the majority.

EX-PENSION COMMISSIONERS DUDLEY

is not the nonentity under the present Administration that many persons suppose. In several of the departments his endorsements are regarded as almost sacred, and the applicant who can produce a letter of recommendation from Col. Dudley seldom goes away empty handed. The Colonel does not restrict himself to letter writing but, he is frequently seen in the departments pleading with the appointing power in behalf of a personal friend. A prominent official in one of the up-town departments remarked only a few days ago that Col. Dudley's endorsement in a certain department is worth more than that of any member of the House, or Senate, and he has not been at all modest in his demands for his friends.

A MASONIC SENSATION.

Charleston World.

NEW YORK, August 20.—Some excitement was caused in masonic circles here to-day by the resignation of P. M. Grand Commander Wm. H. Peckham, a thirty-third degree member of Cerneau Consistory No. 1. The cause of the resignation was declared to be on account of the alleged affiliation of the supreme council of the body with the Grand Orient of France, which does not recognize the existence of a personal God. Following is Mr. Peckham's letter of resignation.

"To the Masonic Fraternity throughout the World:

For forty years I have been an active member of the Masonic order, as founded in London, England by Anderson and Desaguliers in 1717. During these four decades my full belief and allegiance thereto has never been doubted, while I have at no time permitted a shadow to darken its fair and honored name, and have always been found in the front ranks to extend the sphere of its usefulness and to defend it against any or all irregularities, holding the belief that there exists no institution founded by man outside of our loved and venerable order wherein or whereby God's creatures on earth can find lessons which teach peace and good will to all. Its dogmas and ethics are inspirations emanating from our Father who art in Heaven.

All Masons wherever found express their belief in his divinity and all-ruling power. It is the cornerstone on which the Masonic temple is erected; but the Grand Orient of France, from its foundation in 1725, through all its schisms and changes, after faithfully adhering to the aforesaid doctrine, in 1878 eliminated the name of God from its constitution and ritual, thereby compelling every symbolic Grand Lodge to denounce the act and sever all relations of amity and correspondence therewith and yet in spite of this well known fact, brother P. J. S. Georgia, the present Grand Commander of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish rite of the thirty-third and last degree of Free Masonry as established in these United States by Joseph Cerneau in New York in 1807, during a visit by him to France in 1888 did visit and meet with the council of the order, and did appoint one of the "obedience" of the said Grand Orient a representative thereto, and a guarantee of amity in behalf of the body over which he, the said Georgia, presides.

"Subsequent events confirm this fact, and painful as it is to me, I am constrained to publish it."

As a proof that the said council of rites, which he contends is a distinct body from that of the Grand Orient, Mr. Peckham gives the names of the Grand Orient of France "in whose bosom is the council of the order," Mr. Peckham adds, "thus showing beyond controversy that the names are

members of and owe allegiance to the Grand Orient and consequently are under ban of non-Masonic intercourse and that no true Symbolic Mason can ignore the edict of his Grand Lodge which interdicts his doing so. Looking at the matter in all its bearings, I find myself, as a loyal member of symbolic masonry, constrained to sever my connection with the Scottish Masonry and the Cerneau Consistory No. 1, thirty second degrees, of this city, and leave my action to the judgment of all conscientious names wherever dispersed.

Wm. H. PECKHAM.

Past M. P. General Commander State of N. Y.

TWO SPECIMEN OFFICE-HOLDERS.

N. Y. Evening Post.

In commenting the other day upon the fact that notice of Wanamaker's appointment to a place in the railway mail service found a negro office-seeker of North Carolina serving a term in the penitentiary for a burglary committed after his application for office was sent in, we drew the lesson that promptness on the part of the appointing power was indispensable in the interest of public morals.

A dispatch published by the *Tribune* this morning, however, shows that promptness in making appointments will not act as an insurance against offences. Now, according to this dispatch, Henry Rakestraw, a negro, was recently appointed postmaster at Chehaw, S. C., a town which, according to the *Gazetteer*, has seven churches and two academies. "Early this week he went to Darlington, a larger town, to get bondsman. After making vain efforts in this direction, he became disgusted and got drunk. He was soon arrested and taken to the guard house, where in default of \$10 he was sent to jail for ten days. A resident of Darlington telegraphed the facts to the postmaster general. Mr. Wanamaker did not reply, and finally the Democrats opened a subscription, the fine was paid, and the new appointee was given a free ticket home."

There is really only one sure cure for such troubles as these, and that is the "something equally as good" cure, which the *Evening Post* has repeatedly prescribed. Let respectable men be appointed to discharge the duties of the offices, and then pay the drunkards and burglars an equal amount out of the public treasury, to make sure that they will retain an "interest in public affairs." Under this system the politicians can "go off on a drunk" or rob a hen roost any time they choose, while the public will always be served by officials selected on the ground of fitness.

SYRUP FROM WATERMELONS.

News and Courier.

WALTERBORO, August 20.—Following your suggestions, one of our most progressive and enterprising citizens, who has as a side issue to his professorship the well earned title of model farmer, Prof. Benj. R. Stuart, has lately been experimenting in the manufacture of watermelon syrup, and in a late interview he furnishes the following:

He has manufactured an improvised press consisting first of a large washtub, into which is placed a box made of stout boards 15 by 12 inches, 8 inches deep, perforated on all sides. Resting on and fitting in this box is a shute 3 feet 4 inches tall; which when filled with the inside of the melons is subjected to the pressure of a heavy log lever, which extracts every particle of juice. He says that from twenty pounds of melons he gets one gallon of juice, and from fifteen gallons of juice one gallon of syrup worth 60 cents. That at this rate his small melons have netted him 3 1/2 cents, while much larger melons, from twenty-five to forty pounds, netted him when shipped to Northern markets only 3 1/2 cents. He calculates that with proper attention, without selling any of the melons, from \$8 to \$12 per acre can be easily realized according to the amount of fertilizers used.

Conceit may puff a man never prop him up.—*Rusk.*

THE PRESIDENT WILL BE ASKED TO SOLVE A PROBLEM IN LOUISIANA POLITICS.

Charleston World.

NEW YORK, Aug. 21.—A Washington special to the *Evening Post* says:

The President, immediately upon his return from Indianapolis to Deer Park, will be called upon by the Republican managers to make an important decision as to Louisiana politics; viz., whether he will recognize the element there of which ex-Senator Kellogg is the head, and thus secure a united Republican party in the contest to fill the vacancy in the third congressional district, or whether he will continue to ignore Kellogg, and thus make the election of the Democratic candidate in that district, young Mr. Price, almost certain.

It will be an embarrassing position for the president. One of his pet theories has been that the Southern Congressional district can be carried by white candidates formerly connected with the Confederacy, and the Democratic party upon the protection issue.

Such a candidate and issue were presented in the Third Louisiana district by the nomination of Mr. Minor, an ex-Confederate, who not very long ago was a Democratic anti-protectionist. But it happens that this district is a very unfortunate one in which to try an experiment with a white man's organization inside the Republican party. It is one of the great Republican districts of the Teche section, the home of Kellogg, the district which he has almost always carried by a very large majority whenever he has run.

Kellogg is master of negro voters of that district, and probably has more influence with them than all other Republican elements combined. If they understand that Kellogg is disaffected, either as regards the nominee or administration, it is very doubtful whether the whole Republican vote can be secured. And there is no hope of carrying the district without that full vote, together with such white accessions from Mr. Minor's former associates as can be secured.

Capt. Williamson is now selling hay from his farm near Raleigh to Raleigh livery stable keepers for twenty dollars a ton. They pronounce it better than any Northern hay that comes to that market, and cheaper than the Northern hay they can buy at the same price. This hay, the *Call* tells us, was cut from a field of twenty-five acres which produced two tons to the acre. It was composed of a mixture of tall meadow oat grass, and red clover, which is the Captain's favorite mixture. Here is forty dollars an acre for a crop which it costs very little to cultivate and which leaves the land richer than it was before. Is there any other raised by the North Carolina farm that will pay as well? Occasionally cotton does it on very rich land, and sometimes tobacco does it where the tobacco is of fine quality, going occasionally beyond these figures, but there is an immense amount of labor and uncertainty with both cotton and tobacco as compared with hay. There is money for our farmers, near cities or railroads, in hay, and with it a cheap and valuable fertilizer of lands, a good reason if no other existed why farmers should give attention to its cultivation *Wilmington Star.*

AN UNPLEASANT COURTING EXPERIENCE.

A young man named Dixon has just had an unpleasant courting experience in Innishowen, County Donegal, Ireland. His lady love is not only very pretty, but she is an heiress, her uncle having left her a fortune. Moreover, she is partial to Dixon. The young man was calling on the girl one day when he heard the footsteps of a couple of rivals, and in sportive humor he concealed himself in the butter box. While he was enjoying the conversation, the girl's father came along with a pail of hot water to scald the box. Before the girl divined his purpose he dashed the water into the box. The howl of agony he heard the old fertilizers used.