

**The Barnwell People-Sentinel**

JOHN W. HOLMES  
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B. P. DAVIES, Editor and Proprietor.

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**The Electric Age.**

The use of electricity is today almost 25 times what it was 35 years ago, according to W. C. Mullendore, executive vice-president of the Southern California Edison Company. Its cost is only one-third what it was then. This remarkable reduction of cost has been achieved in spite of the fact that operating expenses of almost all kinds have risen, and the industry's tax bill is 94 times as great as it was in 1902.

Cold figures cannot adequately tell what this remarkable record of service means to the American people. Expressed in human terms, it means that where only a small proportion of homes enjoyed the blessings of electric power at the beginning of the century, more than 80 per cent. of all homes have electricity today. It means that we can use power to operate radios, refrigerators, stoves and other labor-saving equipment for less than we used to pay for lighting alone. It means that the average family's electric bill is actually less than its tobacco bill, and a great deal less than its theatre and amusement bill. It means that hundreds of thousands of farmers have been provided with power that performs swiftly, efficiently and cheaply, tasks of back-breaking severity.

Private capital started the electric industry. Private initiative and energy developed it. Vision foresaw its magnificent potentialities. In other lands, where electric developments have been dominated by government, progress has been nowhere as great. There the dampening had of politics has deprived their people of electricity's maximum aids to a happier, more comfortable life.

**Comments...**

..... On Men and News

By Spectator.

**ARE WE DEGENERATE?**

The question is asked seriously. Are our public men less patriotic, less respectful of principles than were public men 50 years ago? Have the complications of a busy life, of varied interests, confused principle with policy, ideals with so-called practicality? May it not be true that the assumed superiority of a former day is due more to the glossing over of the records than to facts?

I recall being engaged in a case in Court, during which one of the "great lawyers" was engaged in several murder trials. I had heard of this lawyer and was humble before his transcendent learning in the law. But, aside from a "grand manner," a vast pomposity, he had nothing that overawed even a young worshiper.

Many reputations for learning in the law, and in the pulpit, and many reputations for brilliancy of mind or of achievement are due to the partiality of newspaper reporters or sympathetic admirers, rather than to facts. Reporters and journalists of long ago were more inclined to hero-worship than they are today. Today, everything and everybody are open to the close scrutiny that is predicated on the suspicion that there is something theatrical about public men and that they are "feeding us the bunk." If a man should strike a pose today or speak with the gush and grandiloquence of a hundred years ago he would be laughed out of court. But some of our older writers still have illusions and by their illusions create for posterity false estimates of men. I read recently that a certain man had "just resigned" a political job "after a career of singular brilliance." Knowing both the author of that and the subject of the sketch I marvel. Now, is this man to go down in our history as a man of brilliance, or as a public official whose career was distinguished by brilliance?

But what really distinguishes our "great men" from the men of today? Let us consider the preachers first. I say "preachers" because it is the preaching of the Word that we have in mind. It may be that great preaching was easier in a simpler age. The rank and file of churchmembership are more in touch with men and events than was true 5 years ago. News-

**On Paying(?) Subscriptions.**

The People-Sentinel just can't "get" the attitude adopted by some subscribers when request is made for payments of or on their subscription accounts. During the depression years, we have been rather lenient in the matter of subscription collections, believing that our friends would pay their dues when conditions improved. It begins to develop, however, that in many instances this was a most erroneous belief, while in some instances requests for payment have been met in a most discourteous manner.

Frankly, we consider dues for a year's subscription to a newspaper to be just as honest a debt as one for a grocery bill or merchandise account, and just why any honest person should feel otherwise is more than we can understand.

The People-Sentinel has never tried to force the paper upon anyone. We are confident that it is worth the small subscription price asked (less than the cost of a 3-cent stamp per week) and those who feel that they cannot afford to pay even that small amount should notify the publisher to cancel his or her subscription.

Publishing a newspaper is no small task—it requires considerable time, effort and money and at least a semblance of brains to fill the columns week after week with interesting reading matter—and then, when statements of subscription accounts are met by pleas of pauperism or the delinquent subscriber "gets huffy" and discourteously casts the statement aside with some other flimsy excuse, it is discouraging, to say the least.

While money may not be as plentiful as many of us would like to have it, conditions on a whole are better than they were a few years ago and we do not believe that there is a single subscriber on our list who cannot afford to pay us at least one year's subscription at this time.

The cotton crop is now being marketed and farmers are assured of 12 cents a pound for the staple, so we are once more asking those who are in arrears to make an effort to pay us some part of the amount that they HONESTLY owe us.

papers, schools, colleges, radios, automobiles—all bring the world to us and carry us to the world. We may possibly suffer from too many advantages. The great principles of conduct are few, but in an age of infinite variety they may have phases of obscurity. It is easy to denounce downright theft, but sometimes it presents itself almost in a twilight zone of moral obfuscation.

It is probable that the preacher of old studied fewer subjects and had a firmer grip on a few than the preacher of today can have on a great number. Greatness in preaching must be clear discernment of essential truth and lucid exposition of the truth. Oftentimes we think of greatness in preaching as courage to proclaim and apply the truth, though it crash like an avalanche on those in high places.

Greatness at the bar is commonly associated with skill as a trial lawyer and especially in criminal cases. Civil actions are comparatively dull to the onlooker; it is the criminal case, particularly a murder case, that offers full theatrical effect and falls within the mental grasp of all in attendance. Both the eyes and ears relish the skirmishes among the lawyers, the effort to pry off the lid so as to get the whole truth from the witnesses; or, mayhap, to "squelch" the witness before he can tell more than the lawyer wishes the jury to hear.

Great lawyers may have developed when there were not so many statutes and when there was both opportunity and occasion to apply the great principles of law. There is small opportunity for that today, for every detail of life has been covered by some statute or constitutional clause or judicial decision. The great lawyer whose grasp of principles gave him the appearance of an intellectual has no place among us today; the successful lawyer is the most diligent seeker after "cases in point," decisions by courts on similar facts.

"Greatness" is like "scholarship" in that there is no uniform standard for our guidance in evaluating qualities and attainments. A man who devotes a dozen years to the classical authors is accounted a scholar; though a master of applied science is regarded as a chemist or physicist—nothing more. Yet he may be incomparably greater in science than was the so-called scholar in the humanities. There is vastly more of intellectual acquirement today than ever before, but it does not express itself in ponderous manner, nor yet in quotations from ancient philosophers.

How do our public men, our officials and politicians, compare with the leaders of 70 years ago? In large measure they reflect the conditions under which we live. There is so much going on, here and abroad, that life tends to superficiality. We are all so busy running to and fro that we do little real thinking. More often we rush off on impulses or hunches or send up trial balloons, as it were. The old-style lawyer wrote most of his documents with his

own hand and he labored over them proudly. Today all of this is dictated to stenographers. The old-time lawyer was a lawyer; he read law, he thought law, he practiced law. More recently a lawyer is likely to be a real estate agent (directly or indirectly) a banker, or something else. He is usually more of a man of business than the lawyer of old. He is also more of a politician. That requires an explanation. In the olden times there were State and county leaders, not bosses. Lawyers were steeped in politics (public affairs,) but were not such glad-handers as political men are today, as a rule, though there are exceptions. Today political preferment depends on an appeal to voters and that takes a lot of starch out of a stuffed shirt. Again, this is an age of amiable simplicity; we don't marvel at the greatness of anybody and we live in an atmosphere of soft collars. We have cast off suspenders and coats; everybody has a radio and a car and moves with the genial current of the more abundant life.

Life is expensive today. We must have things and go places. A dignified, austere lawyer of the old school would starve to death, with so many go-getters all around.

And so today a lawyer can't wait in dignity and aloofness for a fee; he must be somewhat of a busy man of affairs. The very times tend to make a lawyer less profound than his brethren of other days. Even the same mental energy must flow over broader surface.

It may be that both our lawyers and preachers read more today than of old, though more reading is of contemporary matter, writings, though perhaps not "literature." Might we say that they read more, but not so well? Or does that permit us to say that what enters into one's general preparation is only that which he masters?

In a simpler era the reading or studious men read and reread Gibbons, Carlyle and authors of that rank—read them time and again, marked them, underlined them, mullied over them and talked them. Conversation being of things read they seemed to be profounder men than their present-day successors. But I'm not sure they really were profounder. I heard a man speak eloquently of the taste of music of Italian children. He marveled that they whistled snatches from "Opera" instead of "Ragtime." But is that really proof of anything? If a child hears "Opera" and not "Ragtime" he will "hum" or whistle "opera," of course, just as a French child speaks French without any special ability as a linguist, although most of us can't train our noses so as to get the proper pronunciation. But let's hear that French child speak English!

In the hurley-burley of life today we are seeking a means of accommodation; we try to sink our differences in order to "get along" with other people. That suppresses effort less at the bottom of our disregarding principles

and great fundamentals. The ruling philosophy is to work in harmony with other people; principles, tenets—or whether once caused the forthrighters to storm and thunder are laid aside. To labor in peace, cheerfulness and effectiveness with another man has come to overshadow all principles, whether of law or faith. This desire for peace, for the easy, quiet way, blotted out differences of creed and doctrine, whether theological, political, legal, constitutional, or economic.

The easy road of accommodation is athwart the path of greatness. Great men make great issues and great issues make great men. Life is easy and peaceful; in this country no issues of life or liberty are at stake, unless it be the ancient unhampered right to contract and be contracted with as best suits the contracting parties. A generation hence may proclaim the greatness of him who promulgates a program of broad social regeneration or it may crown the achievement of him who challenges programs which usurp the functions of the individual, even though it increases his bread and meat. Greatness among us today seems asleep, though here and there a voice is raised. But the unwavering, vigorous adherence to a course of action, regardless of one's personal fortunes—the readiness to dedicate oneself, even to consecrate oneself, to a cause, to a principle, with calm disregard for all possible personal disaster—that isn't common today. Of course, it never was common, but methinks it grows rarer.

We are not destined to greatness; we get together and compromise and get something done. Do we overdo it?

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