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Readings from the Monthlies.

THE HOT SPRINGS OF THE YELLOWSTONE.

THE following is from Prof. Hayden's article on the Yellowstone, in the February number of SCRIBNER'S. This article is a second in a series on "The Wonders of the West."

From the river our path led up the steep sides of the hill for about one mile, when we came suddenly and unexpectedly in full view of the springs. This wonder alone, our whole company agreed, surpassed all the descriptions which had been given by former travellers. Indeed, the Langford party saw nothing of this. Before us arose a high white mountain, looking precisely like a frozen cascade. It is formed by the calcareous sediment of the hot springs, precipitated from the water as it flows down the steep declivities of the mountain side. The upper portion is about one thousand feet above the waters of Gardiner's River. The surface covered with the deposit comprises from three to four square miles. The springs now in active operation cover an area of about one square mile, while the rest of the territory is occupied by the remains of springs which have long since ceased to flow. We pitched our camp upon a grassy terrace at the base of the principal group of active springs. Just in the rear of us were a series of reservoirs or bathing-pools, rising one above the other, semi-circular in form, with most elegantly scalloped margins composed of calcareous matter, the sediment precipitated from the water of the spring. The hill, which is about two hundred feet high, presents the appearance of water congealed by frost as it quickly flows down a rock declivity. The deposit is as white as snow, except when tinged here and there with iron or sulphur. Small streams flow down the sides of the snowy mountain, in channels lined with oxide of iron, coloured with the most delicate tints of red. Others present the most exquisite shades of yellow, from a deep bright sulphur to a dainty cream-color. In the springs and in the little channels is a material like the finest Cashmere wool, with its slender fibres floating in the water, vibrating with the movement of the current, and tinged with various shades of red and yellow, as bright as those of our aniline dyes. These delicate wool-like masses are undoubtedly plants, which seem to be abundant in all the hot springs of the West, and are familiar to the microscopist as diatoms. Upon a kind of terrace covering an area of two hundred yards in length and fifteen in width are several large springs in a constant state of agitation, but with a somewhat lower temperature than the boiling-point. The hottest spring is 162°; others are 142°, 155°, and 156°, respectively. Some of them give off the odor of sulphuretted hydrogen quite perceptibly. A qualitative analysis shows the water to contain sulphuretted hydrogen, lime, soda, alumina, and a small amount of magnesia. It is beautifully clear, and slightly alkaline to the taste.

The water after rising from the spring basins flows down the sides of the declivity, step by step, from one reservoir to another, at each one of them losing a portion of its heat, until it becomes as cool as spring-water. Within five hundred feet of its source our large party camped for two days by the side of the little stream formed by the aggregated waters of these hot springs, and we found the water most excellent for drinking as well as cooking purposes. It was perfectly clear and tasteless, and harmless in its effects. During our stay here,

all the members of our party, as well as the soldiers comprising our escort, enjoyed the luxury of bathing in these most elegantly carved natural bathing-pools, and it was easy to select, from the hundreds of reservoirs, water of every variety of temperature. These natural basins vary somewhat in size, but many of them are about four or six feet in diameter, and one to four feet in depth. With a foresight worthy of commendation, two men have already pre-empted 320 acres of land covering most of the surface occupied by the active springs, with the expectation that upon the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad this will become a famous place of resort for invalids, and pleasure-seekers. Indeed, no future tourist in travelling over the Far West will think of neglecting this most wonderful of the physical phenomena of that most interesting region.

The level or terrace upon which the principal active springs are located is about midway up the sides of the mountain covered with the sediment. Still farther up are the old ruins of what must have been at some period of the past even more active springs than any at present known. The sides of the mountain for two or three hundred feet in height are covered with a thick crust of the calcareous deposit, which was originally ornamented with the most elegant sculpturing all over the surface, like the bathing-pools below. But atmospheric agencies, which act readily on the lime, have obliterated all their delicate beauty. Chimneys partially broken down are scattered about here and there with apertures varying in size from two to two inches in diameter. Long, rounded ridges are also quite numerous, with fissures extending the entire length, from which the boiling water issued forth and flowed over the sides. Thus the sediment was continually precipitated in thin oval layers, so that a section of these oblong chimneys presents the appearance of layers of hay in a stack, or the structure of a corn-cob. Some of these chimneys were undoubtedly formed by geysers, now extinct; others by what may be called spouting-springs, as those which are in a constant state of violent ebullition, throwing the water up two to four feet—a phenomenon intermediate between a boiling-spring and a true geyser. The water is forced up through an orifice in the earth by hydrostatic pressure, and overflowing, precipitates the sediment around it; and thus, in time, it builds up a mound varying in height according to the force of this pressure. One of these cones is very remarkable, surpassing any observed in any other portion of the West. From its peculiar form we almost involuntarily named it the "Liberty Cap." It is entirely composed of carbonate of lime, in flexible cap-like layers, with a diameter at the base of fifteen feet, and a height of about forty feet. It is completely closed over at the summit. This is probably an extinct geyser, and was the most powerful one of this group.

TRIFLERS ON THE PLATFORM.

THERE was a time in the history of our popular "lecture system" when a lecture was a lecture. The men who appeared before the lyceums were men who had something to say. Grave discussions of important topics; social, political, and literary essays; instructive addresses and spirited appeals—these made up a winter's course of popular lectures. Now, a lecture may be any string of nonsense that any literary mountebank can find an opportunity to utter. Artemus Ward "lectured," and he was right royally paid for acting the literary buffoon. He has had many imitators; and the damage that he and they have inflicted upon the institution of the lyceum is incalculable. The better class that once attended the lecture courses have been driven away in disgust, and among the remainder such a greed for inferior entertainments has been excited that lecture managers have become afraid to offer a first-class, old-fashioned course of lectures to the public patronage. Accordingly, one will find, upon nearly every list offered by the various committees and managers, the names of triflers and buffoons who are a constant disgrace to the lecturing guild, and a constantly degrading influence upon the public taste. Their popularity is usually exhausted by a single performance; but they rove from platform to platform, retailing their stale jokes, and doing their best and worst to destroy the institution to which they cling for a hearing and a living.

This thing was done in better taste formerly. "Drollerists" and buffoons and "Yankee comedians" were in the habit of advertising themselves. They entered a town with no indorsement but their own, and no character but that which they assumed. They attracted a low crowd of men and boys as coarse and frivolous as themselves, and the better part of society never came in contact with them. A woman rarely entered their exhibitions, and a lady never; yet they were clever men, with quite as much wit and common decency as some of the literary wags that are now commended to lecture committees by the bureaus, and presented by committees to a confiding public.

It would be claimed, we suppose, by any one who would undertake to defend the employment of these men, that they draw large houses. Granted; they do this once, and perhaps do something to replenish the manager's exchequer, but they invariably send away their audiences disappointed and disgusted. No thoughtful or sensible man can devote a whole evening to the poorest kind of nonsense without losing a little of his self-respect, and feeling that he has spent his money for that which does not satisfy. The reaction is always against the system, and in the long run the managers find themselves obliged to rely upon a lower and poorer set of patrons, who are not long in learning that even they can be better suited by the coarse comedy of the theatre, and the dances and songs of the negro minstrel. Nothing has been permanently gained in any instance to the lyceum and lecture system by degrading the character of the performances offered to the public. A temporary financial success consequent upon this policy is always followed by dissatisfaction and loss, and it ought to be. Professional jesters and triflers are professional nuisances, who ought not to be tolerated by any man of common sense interested in the elevation and purification of the public taste.

But shall not lyceums, and the audiences they gather, have the privilege of laughing? Certainly. Mr. Gough's audiences have no lack of opportunity to laugh, and there are others who have the faculty of exciting the mirthfulness of those who throng to hear them; but Mr. Gough is a gentleman who is never low, and who is never a good object. He is an earnest Christian man, whose whole life is a lesson of toil and self-sacrifice. Mr. Gough is not a trifler; and the simple reason that he continues to draw full houses from year to year is, that he is not a trifler. Wit, humor, these are never out of order in a lecture, provided they season good thinking and assist manly purpose. Wit and humor are always good as condiments, but never as food. The stupidest book in the world is a book of jokes, and the stupidest man in the world is one who surrenders himself to the single purpose of making men laugh. It is a purpose that wholly demoralizes and degrades him, and makes him unfit to be a teacher of anything. The honor that has been shown to literary triflers upon the platform has had the worst effect upon the young. It has disseminated slang, and vitiated the taste of the impressible, and excited unworthy ambition and emulation. When our lyceums, on which we have been wont to rely for good influences in literary matters, at last become agents of buffoonery and low literary entertainments, they dishonor their early record and the idea which gave them birth. Let them banish triflers from the platform, and go back to the plan which gave them their original prosperity and influence, and they will find no reason to complain of a lack of patronage, or the loss of interest on the part of the public in their entertainments.—Dr. T. G. Holland, in Scribner's for February.

Public Opinion.

THE FISK MURDER.

(Independent.)

THE man who was assassinated has often enough been called a harlequin, and often enough a thief. He was both of these, and he was a great deal more. He was one of the ablest as well as one of the drollest and one of the worst men in the country. This is not the age and New York is not the city in which buffoonery or robbery, singly or together, can amass the enormous wealth or grasp the huge corporations which James Fisk, Junior, controlled.

This fellow, whom a country school barely taught how to read and write (that is, if writing does not include spelling), was a "self-made man." He got his education as the wily Ulysses got his—not by letters, but by seeing the world, by mingling with men, and sharpening his wits by the contact. But he had the wits to start with. He is a brilliant example of what a "self-made man" can accomplish if he has only brains. No ordinary man, whatever his education, could have died at the age of thirty-seven after having stolen Erie, checked Vanderbilt, bullied Wall Street, bought legislatures, enslaved courts. He was associated with other able men; it is true—with Tweed, and Gould, and Field; but he was the ablest man of them all, full of resources and full of courage. He could devise plans faster than the eminent lawyers who assisted him in his villainies could consider them; and he never lacked nerve to execute them.

The man was good enough, as the world goes, except in two somewhat important particulars: he was a robber, and a libertine. He had plenty of physical and moral courage. His conduct at the time of the July riots, though grossly lampooned by most papers, was highly creditable. He was generous and kindly. He was no drunkard. He

was no hypocrite. He has been called a buffoon; but the jovial faculty which delights a company with merry quips and tales has been highly valued in eminent statesmen and divines. Abraham Lincoln was often charged with buffoonery, and we remember Dr. Bethune, and we recall that the most brilliant punster in the country is a university chancellor. It is true that Fisk had a coarse, vulgar soul, that he loved to display himself for the admiration of fools; but this was not so much a moral failing as the result of his nature and of lack of cultivation.

The public have known little of his better parts. It has recognized him as a coarse robber and libertine, and condemned him. His wealth, his display, his colonelcy of a city regiment failed to conquer society. He never could get his *entree*. His crimes were not too great, but they were too gross. This much homage for virtue we must set down to the credit of society.

Every man's first thought on hearing of his assassination was, What a pity he should have died as he has. How often has it been said, Jim Fisk never will die rich. Divine Providence must make an example of him. We had all hoped that he might be tripped up at last by the law, have his wealth stripped from him, and thus suffer the penalty of his crimes. But a second thought tells us that it is as well that his licentiousness should bring his punishment as his dishonesty. The public needs this lesson quite as much as the other. Property will find means to protect itself. Robbery is a very tangible crime, and can be more easily punished. But the public virtue is comparatively undefended. Lust is the deadliest canker of society, and the hardest to correct. In these days, when a shameless woman dares to preach the doctrine of free love, and she has a right to change her partner as she pleases, we are not sorry to see an example of a man who has been so much more needed lesson—that social purity is the holiest law that binds humanity, and cursed be he that violates it.

Who now evies Tweed, or Connolly, or Hall, or Fisk? The mills of the gods have ground quicker than usual, and a larger grist. It does not pay to be a villain.

THE RULE OF RUM.

(The Nation.)

IF THE question were put, Who rules America? a candid answer would be, The liquor interest. Rum is king. We affirm this in no spirit of exaggeration. It is literally true, not only of our cities, but also of the country at large. Late events are sufficient to convince any one who will be convinced by evidence. The official robberies in New York, the disgraceful maneuvering in Massachusetts, in order at once to catch prohibitory votes and to avoid prohibitory legislation, the notorious management by which the ignorant and debased are drawn into the support of this and that candidate, or party clique, are closely and directly connected with the sale of intoxicating drinks.

The ruling power in this city, gathers, and governs, and rewards its immense army of voters by appointing liquor dealers to numerous offices, by permitting a grog shop on every corner, and distributing stolen money to those small politicians who buy and sell votes with whiskey. In Massachusetts, where the efforts of temperance men have been most persistent, there is no political party, of considerable power, who dares take a decided stand in opposition to the unrestricted sale of intoxicating drinks. A law which means nothing, or an executive who does nothing, seems to be the most which years of struggle seems to have gained for temperance. And, if in other States there is less of open defeat, it is because the friends of legal restriction have not dared to challenge it. They know that the grog shop has a veto-power more potent than any mentioned in constitutions, and that no live law repressing temperance has yet been enforced, to any large extent, and for any but a short period.

Humiliating as the situation is, it is necessary to realize it. That a majority of voters are directly or indirectly controlled by those who fatten on the ruin of their fellow-men is past question. That indifference to fraud and corruption of every sort, turns largely on this one pivot of indulgence in drink, is a fact which we may not ignore, if we wish to institute a radical reform in society and government. For so long a consent of silence is accorded by a hundred thousand drinkers, every official arch-protected and profligate, can afford to be defiant. Protected in the enjoyment of their lusts, why should these gawking citizens disturb their protectors in the enjoyment of theirs? To ask the drunkard who steals from his wife and children, to rebuke the officers who permits him to do it, is to take a rather foolish view of human nature.

Are we, then, to wait for the reform of drinking habits in order to stop the iniquity which rules in high places? To do that would be to wait for the river to flow by, in order to seal up the fountain. We cannot hope, either for temperance, or for other reforms, while this combination of low in-

dulgence, and high criminality remain unshaken. It will be seriously threatened so long as a hundred diverse purposes distract the friends of order.

To make any reform movement thoroughly and permanently successful, there must be on the part of Christian leaders concentration of purpose. As affairs now are, a dozen reforms of varied importance, and pertaining to the most complicated and distant interests, are permitted to distract the action of good men. Satan and his servants are wiser than the children of light. Let the action of either political party be what it may on other questions, the devil makes sure the liquor shall be free. The common-place proverb, "One thing at a time," and the scripture injunction to do with one's might he carries out to the letter.

The followers of Christ should likewise be intent on carrying one position at a time. The most important thing first, and nothing else until that is gained this policy would, with God's blessing, be more efficacious than the most strenuous efforts divided among many minor causes. Such a policy points to a separation of local from national politics and a separation of moral questions from partisan tactics. Until Christian citizens are willing to combine, irrespective of the claims of party, for the purpose of destroying one evil at a time, we must submit to the rule of the stronger, when, however, it may be guided with a certain thinness of good government, is, nevertheless, the rule of rum.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE PRINCE CONSORT.

(Morning Post.)

THE country has deplored the exceptional persistence of sorrowing with which the Queen has mourned the loss of her husband. In the country has not been slow to admit that, if ever such sorrowing were justified by facts and circumstances of unusual weight and cogency, it was in this case. The 14th of December, 1861, overwhelmed the nation with surprise as well as with grief, for the fatal termination of the Prince Consort's illness was anticipated by but very few in the country. But as years rolled on, and the real worth and character of the Prince became more thought upon and understood, so the feeling of the national loss sustained became more and more deep. So deep, general, and earnest is this feeling, that, did the Prince of Wales to-day lie but on a bed of ordinary unalarming sickness, the fact would assuredly tend to bring very vividly before the public mind the life and the death of the Prince Consort. But now, that the Prince of Wales is immediately menaced by the same death as that of his father, there is, as it were, a multiplication of the sorrow of the country. The two cases come to be viewed together; and what the country has lost, and what the country may lose, are considerations not to be very widely separated on this particular day and at this particular juncture.

(Daily News.)

IT was only when Prince Albert was no more a living presence, and his gentle and gracious character had become a memory, that the strength and charm of his virtues began to be fully discovered, and that word—too often idly uttered—"irreparable" was pronounced with one accord over his tomb. So true it is that we only learn to value what we have lost. To his family and friends, and to those who were permitted to enjoy his confidence in public or private intercourse, his admirable qualities, his conscientiousness, his fidelity, his devotedness, his exquisite purity of thought and feeling, his large and comprehensive intelligence, were well known. The public had always respected him, but had often failed to penetrate, through the calm and stately outward aspect, to the noble spirit that inspired a consistent integrity of character and conduct, and bequeathed a stainless example.

Do not affect fine language; speak in a simple straightforward manner, without pretence or affectation.

By attending to order, we avoid idleness that fruitful source of crime and evil. Acting upon a plan, meeting everything in its own place, constantly tending innocent and useful employment for our time.

A Yankee in Taxes, who sat listening to the stories of a Louisianian in regard to the marvellous growth of sugar-cane on his plantation, near New Orleans, finally said, "That ain't nothing. I've seen cane in Ew England more'n a mile long." "What kind of cane was it?" was the general inquiry. "A hurricane!" answered the triumphant Yankee.

The "Abyssinian sketch" has superseded the "Grecian Bend" and the "Kangaroo droo" among the bells of fashion. It is supposed that this will have a short run, as the "Madagascar flutter" and the "Feejeean sprawl" are waiting to be adopted.

While the flames were devouring the North Side of Chicago, a clergyman met a bewildered young man in Chicago Avenue. "Where am I?" he asked. "On being informed, he said, 'Well, I've been married three weeks; I don't know where my wife is; but if she is burned, it is the Lord's will: let her go.'" And off he started.