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TEMPERATURE

as observed by Hoarn & Harrison, Thermometer and Barometer Makers, Notre Dame Street, Montreal.

THE WEEK ENDING

May 21st, 1882.			Corresponding week, 1881.		
Max.	Min.	Mean.	Max.	Min.	Mean.
Mon.. 80°	40°	50°	Mon.. 70°	41°	57°
Tues.. 64°	38°	51°	Tues.. 63°	40°	51°
Wed.. 64°	38°	51°	Wed.. 60°	45°	52°
Thurs.. 65°	40°	52°	Thurs.. 63°	39°	51°
Fri.. 80°	45°	53°	Fri.. 64°	45°	54°
Sat.. 64°	45°	54°	Sat.. 63°	45°	54°
Sun.. 65°	49°	57°	Sun.. 60°	34°	42°

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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, May 27, 1882.

DECORATIVE ART A LA WILDE

Last week we spoke of OSCAR WILDE himself. It remains to add a few words upon his lectures as delivered in Montreal. Mr. WILDE is not a lecturer "to the manner born"; neither has his education or experience qualified him to be a teacher of great things. The natural result was that his stage utterances, though true in the main and throughout aiming at a great and true ideal, yet failed to produce any very remarkable effect. The lectures were in fact thoroughly unpractical. It is one thing to see the ideal of the beautiful and to wish to have it introduced into our homes. It is quite another to suggest methods by which this ideal may be won.

To take an example. Mr. WILDE told us that to produce really artistic work, the workman—and by this term he gave us to understand that he meant the ordinary everyday mechanic—should be surrounded by an atmosphere as it were of beautiful things. Now that is in itself very charming, but we all know that in fact not only are the surroundings of the average workman perfectly unlovely, but in the majority of instances they are so from the mere necessities of the case.

All this is the result of a want of practical experience in the reforms he suggests. Mr. WILDE like many others of his temperament, has a warm and wholly admirable sympathy for the lovely in Art, in Music, in Nature, but he has never studied (or if he has he has not profited by his studies) the conditions under which these effects are attainable in our present state of civilization.

What we want, and what we must clearly look to another than Mr. WILDE to give us, is a thoroughly practical exposition of the methods by which we may manage to obtain not perfection in art, not even, for the majority of us, the best in itself, but the best we can get for our money and labor—seeing that many of us have to decorate our rooms and dress our women with a view to the smallest possible outlay consistent with the end we have before us.

If Mr. WILDE has aroused by his coming an interest in these subjects sufficient to lead people to the consideration of them at all, he has our best thanks. If even he has persuaded our citizens that what many of them have been accustomed to consider beautiful because costly, is in the majority of cases the incarnation of ugliness and bad taste, then once more he has done a good work. And as for the lectures themselves. Well, people want to see the man, not to listen to him, and thus no one can complain, if they saw much and heard little.

MORAL INSURANCE.

Civilization may be defined in a rough way as the division of responsibility. The savage builds his own house, digs out the hollow log for his yacht, kills the material for his dinner, executes his enemy, divorces his wife, and due time burns or buries her himself. The cultured man does all these disagreeable duties by proxy. In like manner he finds it convenient to lighten his cares by shifting as many of them as possible on to other people's shoulders. He pays an insurance company an annuity for relieving him of the duty of providing for his family, rebuilding his house if burnt, or replacing his furniture if destroyed. For twopence a head there are speculative gentlemen in the city who will take their chance of having to make good to any number of widows and orphans the defunct products of a railway accident; and there are several associations which readily agree for a modest subscription steadily paid in advance to guarantee the soundness of your drains, the health of your horses, your doctor's bills, and the honesty of your clerks, or make somebody else pay all round for the damage done. But though it is doubtless very solacing to know that by joining the Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes we can be physicked free, or be put under ground at an absolute profit to our surviving—but not disconsolate—relatives by becoming members of the Ancient Order of Foresters, men do not live solely to make it hot for the sanitary authorities, and the anticipation of being carried to the Cemetery in good style affords but a moderate satisfaction to men not imbued with the Chinaman's philosophy.

Nor do these insurance companies, which undertake to guarantee, if not the honesty, at least the result of the dishonesty of their clients, exactly meet our wants. Probably few of us are consumed with a desire to forge anybody's name, to manipulate cheques, or to rob a bank. And; not unlikely, a still smaller number of us never have an opportunity of indulging in any of these vicious luxuries; while no system of moral insurance as yet devised has undertaken to save the erring subscriber from the legal consequences of his knavery, or even that the wordiest of counsel shall do his best to cheat the hulks or the treadmill of their dues.

Most of us meet with some accident or other in the course of our lives; many have fires, and all of us die. Hence the insurance companies, which gamble in the chances of these events, calculate on what is a greater or less certainty, and must accordingly charge corresponding premiums. But there are other incidents in most people's lives which no corporation has yet provided for, but which are even more urgent to be seen to.

Until lately marriage was one of these, but a Marriage Insurance Company has anticipated the appearance of this article, and should prove a great boon to the company. But there are other ways in which such a system of Insurance might be made available. The poor man, the rich man who has suddenly met with reverses of fortune, and the widow, could be enabled to educate their children in the way they had proposed in brighter days, and marry their daughters in something like the grandiose fashion which long custom has made almost indispensable. But there are other aspects of moral insurance which, if more difficult to work, are not less desirable to try and put in practice. Wards in Chancery in England at all events, as all the world, and more especially those impulsive young men who elope with them, know to their cost, are remarkably well looked after. Yet the Lord Chancellor has, personally, little to do with them. Paid officials manage the "the wards" like so many chattels, and keep the run of their affairs by a system of book-keeping by double and single entry. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to ask whether the system could not be extended to the operations of an insurance company? There is a general ten-

dency in mankind to go to the bad, and, doubtless, a statistician could easily tell us the average of black sheep in any given number of highly respectable families. The years between seventeen and twenty-five are notoriously parlous ones for the every-day young man to tide over. They are always getting into trouble, being sued for breaches of promise or for assaults, coming a cropper over the favorite, taking to billiards, brandy and politics, or getting hopelessly over head and ears in debt. Few mothers are capable of biting these "ne'er-do-weels," and many fathers, after being half-ruined in the attempt, give it up in despair. But the discreet solicitors and confidential agents of the Moral Insurance Company (Limited) could manage things much more easily. Montagu Montmorency (né Mordecai Moses), the advertising money-lender, would know it was no use "trying it on" with "the company," and the accommodating tradesman, who got a gentle hint that a particular minor was "in the hands" of the same powerful corporations, might restrain his ardour in proffering credit to a youth so well looked after. "The Company" might—and if the policy specified for this, would—send to their clients being settled in life, sent to the Northwest, or coached up with such skill as to be sure to win a place in some competitive examination. The rest ought to be merely a question of details and actuarial columns. It may be objected that all this would tend to reduce parental responsibility and encourage the objects of such policies in reckless courses. We hardly think so. Sane people do not run in front of a cab simply because in the event of having their limbs broken they are entitled to six guineas a week until they can walk; nor, as a rule, does the holder of a fire insurance policy burn down his house after paying the first year's premium. A good boy, even supposing he knew the fact, would be unwilling to forfeit the premiums paid to secure the advantages thus put in his way, while the bad one might indulge his evil propensities with greater caution when he remembered that he must in future reckon not with a soft-hearted mother or an inexperienced father, but with the keen, just, though unmanageable officials of a corporation.

LONGFELLOW'S EARLY PROMISE.

In the school readers of half a century ago there were two poems which every boy and girl read and declaimed and remembered. How much of that old literature has disappeared! How much that stirred the hearts and touched the fancies of those boys and girls, their children have never heard of! Willie's "Saturday Afternoon" and "Burial of Arnold" have floated away, almost out of sight, with Pierpont's "Bunker Hill" and Sprague's Fourth-of-July oration. The relentless wings of oblivion incessantly slow. Scraps of verse and rhetoric once so familiar are caught up, wafted noiselessly away, and lodging in neglected books and in the dark corners of fading memories, gradually vanish from familiar knowledge. But the two little poems of which we speak have survived. One of them was Bryant's "March," and the other was Longfellow's "April," and the names of the two poets singing of spring were thus associated in the spring-time of our poetry, as the fathers of which they will be always honored.

Both poems originally appeared in the *United States Literary Gazette*, and were included in the modest volume of selections from that journal which was published in Boston in 1826. The chief names in this little book are those of Bryant, Longfellow, Percival, Mellen, Dawes and Jones. Percival has already become a name only; Dawes, and Grenville Mellen, who, like Longfellow, was a son of Maine, are hardly known to this generation, and Jones does not even appear in Duyckinck's *Cyclopædia*. But in turning over the pages it is evident that Time has dealt justly with the youthful bards, and that the laurel rests upon the heads of the singers whose earliest strains fitly prelude the music of their prime. Longfellow was nineteen years old when the book was published. He had graduated at Bowdoin College the year before, and the verses had been written and printed in the *Gazette* while he was still a student.

The glimpses of the boy that we catch through the recollections of his old professor, Packard, and of his college mates, are of the same character as at every period of his life. They reveal a modest, refined, manly youth, devoted to study, of great personal charm and gentle manners. It is the boy that the older man suggested. To look back upon him is to trace the broad

clear and beautiful river far up the green meadows to the limpid rill. His poetic taste and faculty were already apparent, and it is related that a version of an ode of Horace which he wrote in his sophomore year so impressed one of the members of the examining board that when afterwards a chair of modern languages was established in the college, he proposed as its incumbent the young Sophomore whose fluent verse he remembered. The impression made by the young Longfellow is doubtless accurately described by one of his famous classmates, Hawthorne, for the class of '25 is a proud tradition of Bowdoin. In "P's Correspondence," one of the *Mosses from an old Manse*, a quaint fancy of a letter from "my unfortunate friend P.," whose wits were a little disordered, there are grotesque hints of the fate of famous persons. P. talks with Burns at eighty-seven; Byron, grown old and fat, wears a wig and spectacles; Shelley is reconciled to the Church of England; Coleridge finishes "Christabel"; Keats writes a religious ode on the millennium; and George Canning is a peer. On our side of the sea, Dr. Channing has just published a volume of verses; Whittier has been lynched ten years before in South Carolina; and, continues P.: "I remember, too, a lad just from college, Longfellow by name, who scattered some delicate verses to the winds, and went to Germany, and perished, I think, of intense application, at the University of Göttingen." Longfellow in turn, recalled his classmate, Hawthorne—a shy, dark-haired youth fitting across the college grounds in a coat with bright buttons.

Among these delicate verses was the poem to "An April Day." As the work of a very young man it is singularly restrained and finished. It has the characteristic elegance and flowing melody of his later verse, and its half-pensive tone is not excessive nor immature. It is not, however, for this that it is most interesting, but because, with Bryant's "March," it is the fresh and simple note of a truly American strain. Perhaps the curious reader, enlightened by the observation of subsequent years may find in the "March" a more vigorous love of nature, and in the "April" a tenderer tone of tranquil sentiment. But neither of the poems is the echo of a foreign music, nor an exercise of remembered reading. They both deal with the sights and sounds and suggestions of the American landscape in the early spring. In Longfellow's "April" there are none of the bishops' caps and foreign ornament of illustration to which Margaret Fuller afterwards objected in his verse. But these early associated poems, both of the younger and older singer, show an original movement of American literary genius, and, like the months which they celebrate, they foretold a summer.

That summer had been long awaited. In 1809, Buckminster said in his Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard College: "Our poets and historians, our critics and orators, the men of whom posterity are to stand in awe, and by whom they are to be instructed, are yet to appear among us." Happily, however, the orator thought that he beheld the promise of their coming, although he does not say where. But even as he spoke they were at hand. Irving's *Knickerbocker* was published in 1809, and Bryant's "Thanatopsis" was written in 1812. The *North American Review*, an enterprise of literary men in Boston and Cambridge, was begun in 1815, and Bryant and Longfellow were both contributors. But it was in the year 1821, the year in which Longfellow entered college that the beginning of a distinctive American literature became most evident. There were signs of an independent intellectual movement both in the choice of subjects and in the character of treatment. This was the year of the publication of Bryant's first alim volume, and of Cooper's *Spy*, and of Dana's *Ipsley Man*. Irving's *Sketch-Book* was already finished, Miss Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie* and Percival's first volume had been issued, and Halleck's and Drake's "Croakers" were already popular. In these works, as in all others of that time, there was indeed no evidence of great creative genius. The poet and historian whom Buckminster foresaw, and who were to strike posterity with awe, had not yet appeared, but in the same year the voice of the orator whom he anticipated was heard upon Plymouth rock in cadences massive and sonorous as the voice of the sea. In the year 1821, there was the plain evidence of an awakening original literary activity.

Longfellow was the youngest of the group in which he first appeared. His work was graceful, tender, pensive, gentle, melodious, the strain of a troubadour. When he went to Europe in 1826 to fit himself more fully for his professorship, he had but "scattered some delicate verses to the winds." When he returned, and published in 1833 his translations of "Coplas de Manrique" and other Spanish poems, he had apparently done no more. There was plainly shown an exquisite literary artist, a very Benvenuto of grace and skill. But he would hardly have selected as the poet who was to take the strongest hold of the hearts of his countrymen, the singer whose sweet and hallowing spell was to be so deep and universal that at last it would be said in another country that to it also his death was a national loss.

The qualities of these early verses, however, were never lost. The genius of the poet steadily and beautifully developed, flowering according to its nature.—G. R. CURTIS, in *Harper's*.

THE Chicago gambling houses are again in full swing.