THE HOTEL CLERK ON PURIFYING THE STAGE

BY IRVIN S. COBB.

"I SEE there's a lot of talkin' about purifyin' the stage," said the House Detective of the St. Reckless.

"And they'll do it, too," said the Hotel Clerk.

"Do wot—purify it?" asked the House Detective.

"No," said the Hotel Clerk, "talk about it. When we're in doubt about a thing in this country we talk about it. Conversation is just about the same to us as trumps. The stage doesn't need purifying, anyhow. It's some of the people connected with it that ought to have the delicate attention of the garbage inspector. The stage is doing very well at this writing, thank you for asking, and the same to yourself. It's a strong and lusty institution. It blamed well has to be, to stand some of the jolts it's got lately at the hands of its friends."

"There's always a lot of them professional reformers around lookin' for a chance to stir up trouble," said the House Detective.

"Strange though it may sound to your ears, it's not the professional reformers this time," said the Hotel Clerk. "This movement has been started from the inside, like a case of cramps. I don't see how it was that Anthony Comstock ever overlooked such a grand opportunity to rush into one of those places where angels fear to tread and parties like Anthony feel so perfectly at home. He hasn't overlooked any other good bets since the Post Club canonized him as its principal he-saint. You know Anthony, Larry—the kind old gentleman with such a pure mind that everything looks evil to him?

"He's praying for the day when by law all babies will be required to be born with overalls on and there'll be a spike fence 12-feet high running along the sea shore to keep the general public from looking upon the heaving bosom of the deep. At making a vice of virtue he stands without a peer.

"Up until now Uncle Anthony's butt-in average has been 1000. But he certainly lost a swell chance to take a hand at grabbing the Drama by its back hair and reforming it. The managers beat him to it. A bunch of the most prominent producers got together here the other day and looked over the situation. It was depressing in the extreme. A perverted public taste was leading the crowd to go to bad shows when they had plenty just as bad, if not worse, that were playing nightly to audiences consisting of a bored orchestra and the house treasurer's lady friend. Goodness knows they'd done everything, although I hesitate to use the first word in this connection. Anyway they'd done everything that human beings and press agents could think of. They'd started out by dressing their show ladies on the half shell and gradually removed everything piece by piece, until the final costume bore a strong resemblance to that worn by young Kid Stilton when he goes on for a six-round bout with Battling Brie before the Cheesemont Athletic Club. They'd got out a dainty line of posters showing a fair damsel of the chorus with everything taken off except the enamel of her teeth. They'd induced the police force to raid 'em from time to time, and the crowd that gathered about the patrol wagon walked away without buying any tickets from the speculators on the sidewalk. They'd worked the press to a perspiration and the pulpit to a pulp, trying to get a few editors and clergymen to give 'em a line of desirable free advertising by warning everybody to stay away from their houses. And still it looked as if the only way to help business would be to let the ushers bring their wives.

"So they got together, as I was saying, and decided by a unanimous vote that it was high time to uplift the Drama a few hurried lifts, and they're now engaged in doing same, partly by a spirited campaign for the purification of the stage and partly by handing the opposition a hearty wallop on the point of the jaw every now and then. Yes, sir, the movement is certainly booming. And why shouldn't it boom? I ask you. Hasn't it got as its main champion and chief megaphone a purity expert who qualified for the job a few seasons back when he staged a production that was taken from the French, the French Health Department concurring, with a lady star in it who had a kiss that was a combination of endurance trial and a rainy spell? This gentleman thinks the day has come when we should return to those peaceful, simple, homelike plays, such as our fathers once went to see. Well, I don't want you to think I'm of a suspicious nature, and far be it from me to question any man's motives, but I'll bet you a good cigar—if there are any good cigars any more—that the gentleman has a set of Blue Jeans props or Hazel Kirke scenery packed away in some storage warehouse somewhere.

"The crusade, young and lusty as it is, has been going along like any young and lusty crusade always goes along until it gets a puncture. And so there's the devil and all to pay. It started out like a good theatrical season, too. To begin with, there was the new theater nearing completion and rapidly reaching the point where the three directors would get together and submit to each other three systems for running it, at the rate of one separate and distinct system per director. You've heard of the New Theater, of course, founded as a place where American native art and genius is to be fostered, and scheduled, I understand, to open with an English star in a French play, translated by a German author and supported by a strong company direct from London."

"Where does the American part come in?" inquired the House Detective.

"Oh, it was American money that built it," said the Hotel Clerk, "and there's also talk of getting a bunch of American stagehands to handle the scenery, although some favor Swedes as being willing to work cheaper and not so liable to start forming labor unions or anything of the sort.

"But, be that as it may, the first setback of the season came when somebody with a stone in his bosom instead of a heart started a war upon the gentle creature known to the trade as The Angel. I don't know why anybody should want to uproot the angel industry. The Angel has certainly been a boon to musical comedy in his day. I've known managers that had little Eva looking like Simon Legree when it came to starting up in the air and meeting an Angel on the way. But there's bound to be a lot of jealousy in the producing business; and I imagine that maybe some manager who'd been out angel-hunting all Fall, and hadn't been able to bag a mess, observed a compatriot returning from the chase with the tips of wings and checkbooks protruding from his game bag, thus denoting the presence of one or more fallen angels. Naturally this would be calculated to fill the soul of the first fellow with envy and the next thing anybody knew there was a proposition to make it a closed season on that class of kind-hearted, easily-touched young men of the millionaire class, with money in the bank and a lady friend in the chorus who rather leans toward the idea of doing a little prima-donning. But this onslaught, I may say, met with the silent rebuke which it deserved. Without the first aid of the Angel, what would we do for so many of the stars that shine on Broadway, not to mention so many of the shines that star?

"So that fell through, and now along comes this inspiring crusade against the saucy show and the ultra-saucy show, not to mention the chili-saucy show. Well, so far as I'm concerned, Larry, I could be just as happy if they never had another of those plays such as the careful father forbids his daughter to attend, one reason being that he doesn't want her to learn about things that she can read on the front page of the paper any morning, and the other being that he's afraid, if she does go, that she might see him there. There's quite a number of that kind in town right now against which a prudent parent warns his offspring and then telephones down to the box-office to know when he can get a couple of desirable seats in Section A, Row 1, directly facing the point where the objectionable and disgusting disrobing scene takes place.

"'I'm easier to please, Larry. It's always more or less of a shock to my sensibilities when a manager departs from the time-honored traditions of the drama. I like for my comic opera lead to wear white flannel tenor singing trousers, and chase the limelight over the stage, all during his scenes, with one winsome blue eye fixed on the prima donna and the other on the kid behind the calcium up in the gallery. I want the chorus to be dressed in red, white and blue tights at the finish of the first act and line up behind the cast waving the Murikin Flag as the curtain goes down, because, in common with so many of my countrymen, including stage managers, I believe it to be all wrong to use the National emblem as a label on a box of celluloid collars, but all right to advertise a leg show with it. I like my villain to be addicted to white hair at the temples and the cigarette habit, and to be foiled every few minutes, if not oftener. If he slaps a riding crop up against a pair of low calf boots at critical junctures so much the better. I prefer for him not to indulge in any psychic stunts or to cook up any mesmeric messes, when he might be better engaged in getting the goil aboard the lugger; and I'd much rather he'd be caught cracking a papier mache safe at r. u. e. than stealing away the hero's brains by hypnotic suggestion. Anyway, it's only petty larceny to steal the average stage hero's brains, and personally I prefer grim and sanguinary deeds, taking place all over the premises when I give up my good money for a show.

"I want the low comedy character to rub his stomach with a slow circular motion, denoting great internal enjoyment, when he drinks the stolen whisky from a property bottle containing cold tea, because, while I never saw a man in real life who did massage his abdomen when he took a drink, I never saw a good stage comedian who didn't. Also, when he gets through he must smack his lips in a loud, comic manner if he expects to get any hearty laughs out of me. And the missing papers must have large red seals on 'em when they finally turn up in the last act. I must positively insist upon the red seals, with the long tapes and sealing-wax dingues attached. Without the red seals I refuse to accept them as the missing papers under any circumstances.

"So, you can see from this that I naturally deplore the current season's output of high-browed, subtle productions just as heartily as if I was a manager who hadn't been able to pick a winner off the garbage dump; and I don't believe, honestly, that I'll ever learn to care deeply for the new thought play, where you don't know what's coming next, but fear the worst, and the problem play, where everybody knows what's coming, but doesn't care to talk about it."

"Wot's been the greatest problem play of the year?" asked the House Detective.

"Getting the public to cough up two dollars for a seat," said the Hotel Clerk.

MAINE'S PROHIBITION EXPERIENCE

Sixty Years of Legalized Hypocrisy Has Made Outlawry a Virtue; an Awful Example.

IN ONE of the recent issues of Harper's Weekly, Holman Day, a reputable citizen of Maine and a good writer, tells us the story of prohibition. Four years ago, for the first time in the history of the state, Maine elected a Governor who had the moral courage to put its prohibition professions to the test. During those four years enforced prohibition has been on trial in Maine. The result has been such wreck in the Republican party, obliged to stand sponsor for enforcement in accordance with its platform—such imminence of overthrow if the trial is persisted in, that the incoming Legislature, controlled by the Republicans, is to repeal the law, so that the merest system of toleration may be resumed.

I—Political Devilry of Prohibition.

In the light of events it would seem as though Maine has been passing its anti-liquor laws as sops to conscience. Every convention of the Republican party for half a century, state, district or county, adopted resolutions declaring unswervingly for prohibition, and Legislatures passed fresh enactments to twist the neck of rumsellers. But real enforcement has pricked the bubble of political protestations!

Many leaders have now come to a realizing sense of the state's dishonesty in not putting its protestations into practice. A few men have been brave enough to come out and argue for regulation of a traffic that gave plain evidence that it could not be killed by prohibition until human nature shall change its spots. These men have been damned politically, ticketed as "rummies" by the radicals and having the nomenclature indorsed by the hypocrites.

A few other men have been bold enough to use their delegated power and insist on enforcement. These have been doomed politically—and of this class Maine's retiring Governor is the best and latest example. The great majority of men who have been looking for preferment and have secured it—and of course these are the political leaders—have trimmed discreetly.

II—History of Hypocrisy.

Maine has got law enough, and for 50 years has had law enough to smash rumselling and rumsellers flat. The penalty for a first offense used to be either fine or imprisonment; for a second offense, fine, "and in addition thereto" imprisonment. The same penalties were attached to the offense of keeping a drinking-house, while a fine might be imposed for the illegal transportation of intoxicants.

The radicals asked for more teeth in the law. The Legislature of 1887 and the Legislature of 1891 thereupon passed acts making imprisonment the specific penalty for all offenses under the prohibitory law. The court had no discretion. But the succeeding Legislature promptly annulled the effect of these drastic changes, not directly by repeal, but indirectly by an amendment that was not debated at all, so far as legislative records show. The law still stands with penalties expressly worded—but for 15 years it has been in the discretion of the court to impose fines or imprisonment for all offenses.

The liquor-sellers themselves admit that they will not continue to sell when conviction means imprisonment. When it is known that a ramrod Judge is coming into a county, dramshops are closed and rumsellers flee. Maine watches occasional examples of this sort, and the radicals rejoice. But the great mass of the people do not seem to care much about it, anyway. No Judge is criticised when he uses his discretion and imposes fines in place of imprisonment. When liquor-sellers understand that conviction means a fine merely, they understand that the practical result is the system of county license which—until the enforcement commission got busy under Governor Cobb—was in vogue in the majority of Maine counties. The amount of the "low license" fee was determined by the number of cases secured each year against individuals—this matter being in the hands of the county prosecuting officer, who evidently taxed according to the business a rumseller was doing.

It was very clear that public opinion in the "loose" counties backed up the tolerant officers. It got to the point where juries would not convict when it was understood that jail sentences were to be imposed. Any lawyer or Judge in Maine will aver that this latter fact bred disrespect for all criminal law in Maine. In some respects, at least, there was less scandal attached to the nullification of the law by the loose counties. The fines passed into the county treasury through the courts. Counties were flush and thrifty—built new courthouses from these "easy-money" receipts, and relieved the taxpayers of direct taxation for county charges. The officers did not even raid grogshops to secure conviction. An agent for the county, just before court time, went to the office of the Collector of Internal Revenue for the United States at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and drew off a list of those who were paying a liquor-retailers tax in the county in question. This, by agreement between officers and rum-sellers, was accepted as prima facie evidence, and the party was fined $100 and costs. In most counties the rum-seller was asked up to the captain's office twice a year—a very comfortable low license.

By bringing down the club just as hard as the law allows, an offender could be grabbed red-handed any day and put into jail for years, and fined several thousand dollars—it being necessary merely to multiply counts! But no! The rum-seller went into partnership with his county officers and the court, and the taxpayers were silent partners. But any county or municipality that wanted to be "dry" kept dry without fuss or trouble. The officers simply gauged the sentiment of the people.

III—Inevitable Result of Hypocrisy

But such a perversion of constitutional law could not continue without grave abuses springing up. The very conditions fathered fraud. The hotels that sold liquor in the State of Maine endeavored to make their barrooms decent—if there is any such thing as a decent barroom possible. But for the most part the traffic was not under legal, moral or financial restraint, as it is in sections that control by high license.

Police and Constables did not bother the rumsellers. By tacit agreement the Sheriff of a county had the whole handling of the matter. It came about therefore, that the State of Maine witnessed a most curious hodge-podge of spasmodic and sporadic enforcement, some men selling openly and without molestation, others being persecuted continually. Goods addressed to some parties were seized by the wholesale at railroad stations; casks, jugs and bottles came regularly and safely into the hands of other dispensers. It became evident that in some counties the Sheriffs were taking advantage of the laxity of public opinion regarding enforcement to peddle indulgences. In some sections that system was carried to such an extreme that certain rumsellers organized into a sort of "trust;" only so many were allowed to sell, and these were men who could be trusted to pay their fines to the court, their tribute to the party's purse for election purposes, and other sums that made a Sheriff's job worth at least ten times as much as the salary of the Governor of Maine, who receives $2500 a year, providing the Sheriff employed his advantages—and if he didn't he was called a fool.

But when some Sheriffs seemed to be making too much money the proletariat got mad.

Curiously enough, "tight times" in the rum traffic followed, not as a result of a great moral awakening on the part of the people in certain counties, but from a desire to break up "rings." It requires the shibboleth of politics to stir up people in Maine to really do things—and that's so much the worse for the prohibitory question as a moral issue!

IV—The Preacher in Office.

In Cumberland County, after years of wide-openness, Republicans and Democrats flocked together and elected for High Sheriff a clergyman, the head of a temperance mission, nominated by that political joke in Maine, the Prohibition party. The Rev. Henry Pearson was a sincere sort of a man, but too guileless for his job. He lectured frequently in various parts of the state, describing his efforts to enforce the law, and told of the immense sums that had been offered to him by out-of-the-state liquor wholesalers as bribes. He refused these bribes. He was not so fortunate in some of his special liquor deputies, selected from among his religious friends. There was a public scandal in his office, and the reverend High Sheriff retired to a health resort and died before he had completed his term of office. The popular verdict in Maine was that he died of a broken heart.

Then Cumberland County elected a Democrat who shrewdly felt the pulse of the populace, and established a system of regulation by which a certain number of hotels and saloons were allowed to sell, closing at certain hours and obeying the Sheriff's orders implicitly. All the Sheriff's deputies had to do was to watch the permitted places, and raid those that were outside the pale. The popularity of this plan, administered without implication of private graft, was shown when this Sheriff was re-elected in most triumphant fashion. He is now just retiring from office.

Androscoggin County, containing Lewiston, the second largest city in the state—Cumberland has Portland, the largest—elected a minister of the gospel, too. After about a week's deadlock in the county convention the radicals had tired out the liberals and forced the minister upon the Republican party. He was Sheriff two years, was renominated by his party—which promptly went back on him, and helped the Democrats to elect their man—the first Democratic Sheriff in Androscoggin for 20 years or so. Seeing that the minister had really tried to enforce the Republican prohibitory law, his defeat is not a handy argument for Maine's sincerity, for never did the Republican platform declare more strenuously for prohibition and its enforcement than it did that year the minister was defeated. That was four years ago. It was plain that after these instances just cited, Maine proposed generally to go back to nullification.

V—More Political Scoundrelism.

It was then that Governor Cobb took Maine by the collar and held her up so that she could look at herself in the glass of candor, and then led her up to the dough-dish of beauty.

In other words he, for the first time in the state's history, put enforced prohibition on trial in the state—and—well, alas!

His party, the Republicans, put him on a platform that declared, as usual—only in a little stronger terms—for prohibition and its faithful enforcement. District and county conventions passed strong resolutions so declaring. When the candidate went about the state speechmaking, local leaders all urged him to "put it to 'em strong on the temperance and prohibitory questions." Therefore he promised to do all in his power to enforce the law.

As the law stood then the Governor of the state had no power to secure the enforcement of the liquor statutes. In his inaugural address he sharply criticised the state's anomalous position on the enforcement of this important law, stating that as a business man he took his party's protestations seriously and believed that the credit of the state demanded that local nullification and Sheriff-made law be put down. I was present at the reading of that address and well remember the tumultuous applause that greeted the Governor's earnest utterance on that subject. Maine's politicians have got into the habit of beating their palms furiously whenever an orator makes reference to "the grand old State of Maine" and its stand on the question of "rum." It was supposed that Governor Cobb was like his predecessors in office. All had heard that talk many times before. But an enforcement law was put before that Legislature. It was called the "Sturgis bill," from the name of its sponsor in the Senate. It practically made the Governor the grand high Sheriff of Maine. It put all the resources of the state treasury at his command for the purpose of hiring enforcement deputies. The Governor insisted grimly that this law, or one similarly efficacious, be put into his hands—and the Legislature passed the law. The Governor appointed three enforcement commissioners, men of high standing and probity, and these men, consulting with the executive in every move, put deputies at work in all counties where, it was believed, the Sheriff was not doing his best to enforce the liquor laws. Thus Maine had three sets of officers — policemen, Sheriffs and "Sturgis deputies"—to enforce one law.

During the first two years the state paid a little less than $30,000 to the new commission and the deputies—and the political uproar caused by this enforcement was something dreadful.

The next Legislature passed an act repealing the "Sturgis bill." But the uncompromising Governor would not heed the appeals of the politicians. He vetoed the act of repeal. The Senate stuck to its guns and passed the act over the veto. But the House failed to secure the necessary two-thirds, and the Sturgis law remained on the books.

During four years, therefore, we have been witnessing Maine's only real and state-wide attempt to enforce the constitutional law. As to how well Governor Cobb's party supported him on that platform they had placed under him, witness, he was elected—this was before the enforcement commission was heard of—by rising 27,000. He was re-elected by 7000, and only after a tremendous fight.

The politicians say now that continuing the policy of enforcement means the wreck of the Republican party so far as its domination of state matters is concerned. The new Governor, whom the Republicans have elected to succeed Cobb, after a struggle fully as bitter as that of two years ago, and by a margin as narrow, tells me that he will not compromise on the matter of enforcement, but adds that he does not believe that the Governor should be called upon to be general high Sheriff of the state. It is believed that the next Legislature will repeal the enforcement law. This means that Maine wants to go back to county option—and human nature is just the same in Maine as it was a few years ago! Local nullification, depending on the sentiment of communities, is bound to result.

VI—How the Old Thing Worked.

During these protracted and frequent occasions when Maine has been "wide open" under the prohibitory law, nullified by tacit agreement between politicians, people and rumsellers, the liquor traffic in the state has not presented many peculiarities. A stranger traveling through might think that he was in a high-license state.

He would find at his hotel a regulation bar, within easy reach of the hotel office. There has been no especial attempt at concealment. In the Hotel Thatcher at Biddeford, where the approach was a blind on account of the corridors, there were sign in succession: "It's This Way," "You're Right. Keep On." "Only a Little Ways Farther." "This Is It." In hotel bars stocks of liquors were displayed and decorated in the usual manner. In the permitted saloons in cities the same rule prevailed. Many such saloons opened off the streets without concealment. Others piled empty cigar boxes in the windows. In those days of nullification the system was practically low license by the county; rumsellers were indicted, and came up and paid a hundred-dollar fine two or three times a year.

The radical prohibitionist is fond of stating that the prohibitory law makes a rumseller a social pariah. This has not been true in Maine during the times of toleration. Men who ran the best places and made the most money were given political and other preferment, and their communities did not fail in respect shown toward them.

In the free-and-easy days in Maine, when the prohibitory law was regularly nullified, men paid their liquor fines regularly, "fixed" the officers of the law, and subscribed to the party fund. The system tickled outsiders immeasurably, and they went away and made fun of the prohibitory law of Maine, and wrote funny pieces for the papers about its hypocrisy and the "howling farce"—that was their favorite expression—of the thing. We, in Maine, did not see any humor in such writing. The radical prohibitionists were insulted and would never admit that there were any open bars in Maine. The liberals, who knew of the bars, allowed that we were running the thing in the best manner that human nature would let us run it.

VII—Prohibition Does Not Prohibit.

But at irregular intervals there have come "tight times" in the Maine liquor traffic. Then it is that thirsty Maine becomes really picturesque. We are just at the end of four years of tight times in our state, following nearly a decade of open and brazen nullification, during which many counties paid off their debts and built new courthouses out of fines, and some Sheriffs got rich. These tight times were brought on us by a Governor who took his platform and his party protestations seriously, and insisted on our trying enforced prohibition in place of merely declared prohibition. Never in her history has Maine seen prohibition so thoroughly enforced as it has been during these past four years—and now the politicians are going to repeal that obnoxious enforcement law, discharge the enforcement commission, and, by "loosening up" try to save the party whose Governor took his platform too seriously.

VIII—Smuggling, Extortion, Adulteration.

The first effect of the work of the new enforcement commission was to close practically all the hotel bars—for reputable hotel men could not afford to buck against the Governor's authority exerted through his enforcement deputies. Many hotels continued to sell secretly out of closets in some guest's room.

Practically all the saloons on the prominent streets of cities and large towns closed. Defying such a law as the enforcement statute, administered from the State House, meant that jail sentences would follow conviction. It is for this reason that the present situation in Maine is too significent to need much comment. If Maine had really made up its mind that prohibition prohibited and ought to prohibit, the Legislature would not be repealing the enforcement act. But when pluralities drop out from under enforcement Governors, and juries fail to stand behind judges who are administering jail sentences, it is time to consider policy a bit.

With this general closing of the better-grade places, the average Maine man who felt the need of a nip sent in his order for liquor to be expressed to him from outside the state. It is not often that "private packages" are disturbed by the officers.

But there seems to be abuse connected by fatality with any phase of the liquor question, whether high license, low license, nullification or prohibition. As soon as the tight times began, hundreds of "phony express companies" came into being. At first they were simply "errand boys" to buy liquor in Boston and deliver it from door to door in Maine cities and towns.

But an improvement on a 24 hours' wait promptly suggested itself. The express company carried an "on hand" stock in its Maine offices, and filled orders immediately. The law has dealt some pretty severe blows to the more daring of these fake companies. The regular companies are, of course, bringing liquor into Maine daily in immense quantities, but they act simply as carriers, and are not disguised rumshops.

However, notwithstanding the advantages of the express companies, and though the mails are loaded daily with "liquor circulars" offering great bargains, this way of getting liquor is too tame for the average Maine tippler. Men whose appetite for the stuff is not especially acute will hunt for liquor when they strike town as men hunt for game. And another bitter fact is this: when the liquor has been found, sometimes after difficulties, the seeker usually "stays by it" until he is thoroughly intoxicated. Like the camel at an oasis, he loads his stomach, anticipating another stretch of parched desert.

A strong point urged by prohibitionists is that by driving the liquor traffic out of the highways into the byways the temptation to drink is removed from many. This is true, but, on the other hand, few men in Maine who desire to obtain liquor are obliged to go without it, and the stuff that they do secure in the dives is almost always such horrible poison that its victims are reduced to a pitiable condition.

Once a Boston Society Leader.

Julia Ward Howe in Harper's.

Mrs. Harrison Gray Otis, widow of the eldest son of the first bearer of that name, was a somewhat conspicuous figure in the old Boston. She had been considered a great beauty in her youth and had resided much in Europe, whence she had brought back with her the notion of the salon. Her income was not large, and her house was quite unpretending in aspect and dimensions, but it will be remembered as for many years the only one at which weekly receptions were held. The invitations to these were conveyed in a billet of triangular form, and the receptions themselves somewhat corresponded to the rather informal character of these missives. Exclusiveness formed no part of Mrs. Otis' social ideal, and at her Saturday evenings were to be met not only the fashionable, but many literary people, officers of the Army and Navy, and the friends of her youth.

THE LYCEUM.

Did you ever in the schoolhouse go
Upon a Winter's night,
When the sky was dark with gathering clouds,
Or the moon was shining bright?

And when you were there did you listen well
To all the speakers said?
To the first warm words of the earnest youth,
Or the lore of the hoary head?

Some tell us of things of ancient date,
Some yesterday's experience;
Some point their arguments with wit,
Some draw from wells of science.

Or read from history's noble page
Of warrior great or mighty King,
And from all stores within their ken
Their illustrations bring.

Count not the hours as wasted here
Though great their value be;
Those hours, if well improved, shall yield
A rich return to thee.

Perchance some soul may here receive
Its best for coming days,
Or gain a light his steps to speed
In wisdom's pleasant ways.

Perchance these narrow walls contain
A statesman, or a sage,
Whose name shall sound through coming years,
The glory of the age.

Let the politeness of your speech
Be felt in soul and heart.
Search wide, dig deep, bring all your stores
And each to all impart.

For honor, truth and wisdom, strive,
But not for mastery,
And each his neighbor's efforts view
With heartfelt charity.

So shall these hours pass pleasantly,
Nor leave a thing of pain;
So each his brother shall enrich,
And each true wisdom gain.

—F. E. B.

Six Generations in One Family

MRS. ANNA PASS AND A DIRECT LINE OF DESCENDANTS.

THE record grandmother of America is Mrs. Anna Pass, of Wilmington, Del., who recently celebrated her 100th birthday.

On the occasion when she attained this notable age, was taken a photograph which will be historic among those who study vital statistics, for it is one of the few that shows six generations.

Seated on the arm of the old lady's chair is Gletas Finnan, 15 months old, her great-great-great-grandchild.

To the right of the youngster is Mrs. Elizabeth David, daughter of the centenarian. To the left of the old lady is Mrs. Anna Sayers, the granddaughter.

Standing in the rear is Mrs. Lucy McDade, a great-granddaughter, and behind the baby is Mrs. Gletas Finnan, a great-great-granddaughter.

Mrs. Pass has retained to most remarkable degree her memory, and can recall incidents which happened in the first quarter of the last century.

She remembers the visit of Lafayette to the United States in 1824, which is not surprising, considering that at that time she was a girl of 17, and the great rejoicing in honor of the eminent Frenchman, who had been the friend of the colonies in the midst of their struggle for freedom, was of a kind calculated to make a deep impression on any mind.

Mrs. Pass also recalls vividly the trial of the first steam railroad that ever ran in the new world, and can tell about the inauguration to the Presidency of John Quincy Adams, an event which she saw.