

Polk County Observer

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BY LEW CATES

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Office.....517-519 Court Street
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WHAT INDEPENDENCE DAY DID FOR ENGLAND.

Immediately, the Fourth of July is noisily observed to celebrate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Essentially, the celebration has a deeper significance and one which the Americans ought to know more about than they do. It recalls not only our own independence, but the triumph of the English people over the crown and the relegation of the king to his true place in the English system of government. By the English system of government we mean not only the system in England, but the system obtaining in the United States, the systems of Canada, of Australia, of all the truly independent powers which have grown up as a result of the great English movements of adventure and of colonization which from time to time expressed English energy, or the English spirit of revolt, or that of unrest, from the days of Elizabeth to the days of Victoria.

To those who know the development of English popular government the Fourth of July marks the time since when no English monarch has dared to demand the right to tax English people at home or in distant colonies without their consent. The struggle was long, and the crown fought hard for its prerogative, but despite this the principle of English liberty survived under what were apparently most untoward circumstances, the crown became what it is, and a republic was established which has become the strongest nation in the world.

The Fourth of July is the day on which we celebrate the rule of the people here and abroad, the growth of individual liberty and the absolute dependence of the crown in English lands.—Harper's Weekly.

ART FOR ART'S SAKE.

One of The Observer's most valued contemporaries complains of the intellectual life of its community and thinks it is in a decidedly bad state, all because a lecture delivered by an able orator and distinguished educator was attended by only forty persons. From the news columns of this same publication it is learned that the theme upon which the lecturer discoursed was "The Artist and His Ideals," and The Observer rises to remark that if more than forty people of that community are interested in this subject it is a most extraordinary town.

Why the plain citizen should be interested in the artist and his ideals more than in the miner and his methods, or the tinsmith and his tricks, is a social puzzle that has never been solved. The artist serves a useful purpose in the commonwealth, but why should he be more highly esteemed than the tailor, the carpenter, the blacksmith or the printer does not appear from the records. Many persons deem it intellectual and quite superior to profess an understanding of matters outside of the daily struggle for bread.

The history of Italy, the home of the artist and his ideals, shows that when art was at its highest state, those that cultivated it the most enthusiastically were like the Borgias, men sunk in the most frightful depths of vice and crime. There is nothing in art, per se, to make a man better than his neighbor, notwithstanding the evident contrary opinions of our esteemed contemporary.

Art is the minister of luxury, and while all mankind loves luxury it is not the highest praise of an honest citizen that he is extravagant in his food, that he is fond of purple and fine linen and that he covets fine paintings and statuary and costly jewels. It is the cant of the times that these are the things that culture strains after, but they are only to be obtained by the depression of the masses; it was only in Egypt that a nation labored for an age to build a tomb, and the annals of mediaeval Italy show too truly the result of a national possession of art.

THE MAN WHO KNOWS.

The Observer not infrequently comes in contact with the man who knows it cannot be done; who shrinks

before he thinks, quits before he hits, succumbs to fright before he makes his fight; the man whose hand is always on the reverse lever. His imagination digs ditches along the road and builds barriers at every stage of the way. You have met him. He belongs to no particular class; the world has known him at every evolution. His ancestors pitted Archimedes and derided his promise to detect the adulteration in the king's crown. His grandfather would have condemned Fulton to a padded cell; eight years ago no man could sail the air, and he's the same who smiled knowingly when Bell proposed to send his words a hundred miles.

Don't let him worry you. If he cannot be kept in the line of progress shove him to the rear; the path of do-something cannot be obstructed by him who cries failure before the start is made.

FREE ADVICE.

The maternal ancestor who permits her sixteen-year-old daughter to float about nights with a sport with a weak jaw and weak morals merely opens the front door to grief and disgrace. If you are not cognizant of the character of the company your daughter keeps, or what time of night she turns in, your rear when the gossips get busy will sound about as pathetic as a wheeze from a Jew-harp. The girl who insists on spooning with every sport within the corporation limits should be relieved of her overflow of affections with a number ten slipper laid fearlessly across the hips. We would sooner see a girl osculate with a blind shout through a barbed wire fence than to have her change partners six nights a week in the family parlor with the lights turned low. It is sometimes a more difficult proposition to marry off a girl who has been pawed over by every yap in the balliwick than it is to fatten sheep on pineapple ice. You can't gold-brick a sharp-eyed suitor with second-hand goods any more than you can make a bathrobe fit a goat. There are weak-minded parents who are going up against the judgment day with about as much chance as a cross-eyed damsel at a beautiful show. Their children will raise up and call them blessed, with the enthusiasm of a one-legged man at a club dance.

THE FORMAL OPENING.

The formal opening of the Panama canal will be a matter of interest and importance to the American people as a whole, and it therefore is fitting and appropriate that it be observed by an official ceremony worthy of the occasion. This, we are told, will be done, and the president himself is planning to visit the canal in an official capacity and participate in the exercises of dedication. Another feature of the program already agreed on will be a magnificent marine parade of warships from Hampton Roads to Colon, and thence through the canal and up the Pacific coast to San Francisco. The president intends to board the superdreadnought New York at Hampton Roads, with his official family, and proceed to Colon conveyed by the greatest armada the world has ever seen. Vessels from practically all maritime nations will be present in this remarkable procession, which will be many miles long. With the president will be all of the highest government officials and heads of the army and navy, and distinguished guests.

At Colon the president will leave the New York temporarily and raise his flag on the battered old Oregon, which will lead the pageant through the canal to the Pacific side. How splendidly appropriate it is that this historic vessel is to be given the honor of leading the procession, and what a fitting thing it is that Rear Admiral Charles E. Clark, retired, who piloted the old ship in its sensational voyage around South America in the Spanish-American war, should be again on the bridge, with the head of the nation. This probably will be the last official appearance of the Oregon, to which millions of Americans pinned their hope and faith at a time when so much seemed to depend upon its successful circumnavigation of the South American continent.

That the president is to attend the great exposition in San Francisco is a matter of unusual interest. But that he is officially to open the Panama canal to the trade of the world at that time is of much greater moment. For this engineering feat has never been surpassed, and it is eminently appropriate that it be inaugurated with suitable ceremonies. We are, all of us,

SENSIBLE HINTS FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY

Enact the signing of the Declaration. If there are chimes have "America" played. Keep piano music going all over town. Fifers and drummers to march in Continental costume. Print patriotic songs on cards for free distribution. Sing these songs at all the band concerts. Have strings of lanterns across the streets. Make it a homecoming day, a family reunion day. Let the boys have a campfire and cook their dinner. An automobile parade at night would be a pretty picture. Send up small balloons with "reward" postcards attached. Have an athletic contest between Uncle Sam and John Bull. Free entertainments in halls would go far to make children happy. A porch may be used as a stage and little folks give an entertainment there. Exhibit war relics in the town hall—swords, flags, pictures, letters, etc. Each one of thirteen houses to represent one of the original states. Use red, white and blue or blue and yellow candles for lights in the evening. Children like to put on uniforms and march. Let them if they will go without fireworks.

At the sunrise flag raising have a lot of little flags rolled up to drop out of the big one.

Wherever there is water have a water fete—canoes decorated, swimming matches and other aquatic sports; lanterns, torches, music; bridges and rafts illuminated.

Good subjects for tableaux are: Washington taking command of the American army, Betsy Ross making the American flag, the Boston tea party, signing the Declaration and Washington's farewell to his officers.—Ladies' Home Journal.

down deep in our hearts, rather fond of the pomp and circumstance of official display, nor should we be ashamed of it. For certainly if ever the American people had good cause for patriotic pride, it will be when the great canal is declared officially finished and ready for business. It was built with American money, by American engineers and its conception came from American brains. It will draw the nation closer together and will change the map of the world. Surely President Wilson will not belittle his high office if he follows the program as outlined for the formal dedication of the Panama canal.

FRANCE TAKES OUR GOLD.

Exports of gold from this country to France continue, and further engagements for next week are reported. The reason for this movement of gold is explained as follows: France is a great creditor nation, though industrially it is a debtor nation. Just at this time, owing to the kaleidoscopic shifts in politics and ministries, France's financial affairs are in nervous plight. The inability of any ministry to push through the annual financial provisions for the government does not signify that France has suddenly lost its financial resources or capacity; it merely indicates that some political horse-play is going on, that would not take place if the country were not in a strong enough posture to stand the strain.

France, then, is in momentary need of our gold; and the fact that the semi-annual dividend payments are coming on at the very moment when government business is in such anomalous state, adds to the complexity. It is probable that the drafting of gold to Paris will slacken or cease when the dividend-payment period is past. It is very sure that with that period past, with the political tangles straightened out, and with the unprecedented American crop beginning to move, this country will shortly be in position to reclaim the metal that has gone away from it. And it is because American bankers understand this quite well that they are showing no uneasiness over the continued shipments of gold to Paris.

"THE CALL OF THE WILD."

These words have been used to define that primal instinct in man, which has been the moving force in the world's conquest and civilization. The ancient Greeks heard this magic call and pushed out from the towns and cities they had builded to form colonies on hitherto unknown shores. The tradition runs that it drove Enes and his followers from the ruins of Troy to journey over distant seas to the banks of the Tiber and there found the Roman nation. Later it urged on the Romans to the conquest of the wilds of Germany, Britain and Gaul. It was in answer to this call that Columbus made his perilous voyage across the broad Atlantic. It led his followers, who colonized these savage shores, to push on over the Western prairies and the Pacific slope and create an empire destined to be the greatest in the world.

The tide of empire which has so long been flowing to the Occident is now turning toward the Orient. The savage islands of the Pacific and Indian oceans have sent forth this call and civilized man is answering it. It has sounded from the jungles of darkest Africa, the icebound regions of the Arctic, and the unexplored Antarctic, and there will soon be no more wilds. There are always adventurous spirits who feel caged, cribbed, and confined in the cities civilization has builded, who flee from their luxurious life and obey with alacrity this imperative call. They go forth to explore pathless forests and untrodden

deserts, to scale rugged mountains and plow uncharted seas in search of new worlds to conquer.

When all these worlds have yielded to human progress, the spirit of conquest will no longer sway the hearts of men, and that ancient prophecy that "The nations shall learn war no more," will be fulfilled. Then and then only will the redeemed and rejuvenated earth become a fitting abode for aspiring and enlightening man. Then the triumphs he seeks will be those of art, science and philanthropy, and human life will have a value and contentment never known when the "Call of the Wild" was the impelling motive of mankind.

NEW MILITARY LAW.

Military men agree that the recent adoption by congress of an act to bring about the co-ordination of the regular soldiers and volunteers in time of war was a step of vast importance and one that will greatly assist the authorities of this government if the time ever again comes when it is found necessary to organize an army of considerable size for active operations in the field. Under the new law militia regiments will enlist in a body, and they will be in for three years "or the war." They will maintain their separate existence, and will be recruited to make up losses, and so will live as regiments with their honors and their records. In the federal service they will be under the control of the president, who may displace old officers for inefficiency and appoint new. Provision is made for the transfer or regular army officers to the militia, and so the old scandal of "political generals" will be minimized. Volunteers cannot be called for until the state militia has gone to the front. But volunteers for the state militia may be called for in any regiment that has been depleted by passing into the federal service.

Many good things are expected from this new law, such as obviating the payment of bounties, doing away with the short-term service and the creation of a superior esprit de corps. State militia officers will become United States officers, with all of the attaching prestige and advantages. There may be other volunteer regiments, such as we had during the Spanish war, but they would be outside the state militia and would be United States soldiers with no state connection.

At this time the regular service consists of 65,000 men, besides 13,000 in the coast artillery. The paper strength of the state militia, or National Guard, is about 112,000. If both regulars and militia were brought up to full war strength they would aggregate about 350,000.

THE POOR TYPISTS.

It is now announced that Col. Roosevelt probably will be prevented from taking a speaking part in the coming political campaign in this country, it being explained that his voice has failed him as a result of his trying experiences during his recent South American trip. Eminent physicians, after a careful examination of the ex-president, have advised him his throat is seriously affected and that it will be necessary for him to exercise the greatest care for some months to come. Especially has he been warned against open-air speaking, or strenuous vocal exertions of any kind.

Undoubtedly it will be a severe disappointment to Mr. Roosevelt to have his plans spoiled in this matter, for it was his announced intention to take an active part in the pending political campaign, and he even had promised to make an extended speaking tour of the country, commencing

as soon as he returned from his European trip. However, Roosevelt is no less handy with the pen and the type-writer than with his tongue, and he therefore will probably utilize these other means to reach the public, now that he is to be deprived of the opportunity to speak directly to the people.

In fact, it is safe to say the public will hear a good deal from Roosevelt during the coming campaign, even though his physical disability will prevent him from carrying out his plan for a speaking tour of the country. It is not the Roosevelt way to sit down in idleness, simply because the doctors have ordered him not to talk. It is a foregone conclusion, in fact, that it will be a very busy summer for the typists who will be employed by the colonel to work out the political messages and advice which he planned to deliver personally.

ARE WE BETTER?

An editorial in the Biblical World, a publication by the University of Chicago and edited by the faculty of the Divinity school there, has set up a large-sized theological controversy by frankly questioning the value of the scriptures in ethical teaching. Christ's use of wine is cited as an example of matter that controverts the ideas of total abstinence. It points out that the effect of the traditional use of the bible as a compendium of ethics was the presence in the church of vast numbers of conscientious Christians who are "entirely devoid of sensitiveness to those moral issues which are most real in our modern industrial and social life."

The Observer steadfastly maintains that the average man of today is far superior to the man of biblical times. The average Christian of today has the elements of morality, virtue and sobriety far more thoroughly established within him than had the men who established the church and carried forward its divine mission in the apostolic age.

If this be true what has been the fruit of all these centuries of preaching and teaching? The standard of morality was never so high as now. Things were tolerated and regarded as quite proper during the last fifty years that would be wholly out of place now. The world is moving forward. We are living in the brightest and best day of the world's history. The men who taught and wrought in bible times were superior when measured by the standards of that day, but they would be wonderfully deficient if living now.

There is a gradual and continuous drift from other occupations to farming, dairying and fruit growing, and the demand for small tracts of land suitable for family support and a profit is increasing. Were some of the large ranches of this county, many acres of which are practically idle under the ownership of single individuals, subdivided into small farms, each with its building improvements and intense methods of agriculture, it would mean addition to population and increased production.

If you wish to "air your views" on any subject pertaining to municipal improvement send them to The Observer. Sign your communications, not necessarily for publication, but as an evidence of good faith. An honest discussion of local affairs will have a tendency for good.

NOTICE TO ICE CONSUMERS

Those persons desiring ice in the residence districts are requested to display their "Ice Wanted" card the first thing in the morning, as only forenoon delivery is made in this territory.

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