

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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FRIDAY, MAY 15, 1925

ISABEL E. CURTIS: SCHOOLTEACHER (An Appreciation)

The shutters of the house around the corner, were flung wide, the doors stood open, the gate unfastened for only a few brief hours, revealing completely the life of Miss Isabel E. Curtis, who passed away here April 29. Only small-minded people would say that she had lived a life of seclusion here in her old home on Hamilton street. Seclusion is selfishness; and it is not selfishness to spend one's best years educating hundreds of minds, not a few of which today hold important places in the life of Detroit and the state of Michigan. Birmingham has slipped from 1825 log cabins and Piety Hill down through hoop-skirt and rubber-bire buggy days to find itself pell mell into the nervous year of 1925; but during all the stir and change Miss Curtis had gone quietly through the winters about her task of teaching other women's children. Nor were the summer months spent behind the picket fence on Hamilton street lived any less in seclusion. The house stands as testament to her part in the affairs of the world.

"People have told strange tales of Cousin, living here quietly with her reading," explained W. H. Bassett of Pierce street, who has tended her fires in the old Franklin stoves, still standing, and kept her garden for many years. "It is surprising to find so many current books in her collection."

Miss Curtis with her many interests no doubt lived a thousand years while the rest of us existed for twenty-four hours.

Popular English novelists, "My Unknown Chum," Henry Van Dyke, a recent critic of Rembrandt and dozens of copies of World's Work keep company with Balzac and even more ancient men. With the exception of two small portraits of Miss Curtis' parents, the walls of the low-ceilinged parlor are hung with a variety of more or less modern paintings. Two pale still-life water colors by Frances Curtis, a close relative, hang over the enormous old grand piano. On opposite walls are steel engravings and an unsigned oil of boats poised in mid-ocean. In the sitting room, Savonarola, dark framed, is on the mantle near the silent clock. Embroidered cushion tops and numerous crocheted doormats stand as further evidence of her busy life. Hanging on the quaint old hall tree is a faded blue rain cape and a weather beaten umbrella.

There are, of course, many nooks and corners filled with things common half a century ago. An elegant black mohair suite and a Victorian what-not filled with vases and pictures of children adorn the parlor. The floors are covered with tacked down rag carpets made by the famous Uphur Ann Cushing of Southfield. Blue home spun is thrown over the lounge. A large red shawl, flannel of paxley, is used for a table cover, upon which still stands a little glass kerosene lamp. Close by is a stiff-backed rush-bottomed chair.

Towards evening the doors were shut, the fires in the old stoves died out, the shutters were locked, leaving the house again to itself under the apple blossoms, awaiting the judgment of lawyers who will find it to be not a museum of curios especially but the home of one Isabel Curtis, who, like her friends, Miss Baldwin and Miss Utter, give us treasures of intrinsic value.

PROGRESS IN 150 YEARS

One hundred and fifty years seems a very long time to the schoolboy. Yet if you ask one of our oldest citizens here in Birmingham how long it is since the battles of the American revolution were fought 150 years ago, he will say it is not very long.

If such a man is 90 years of age, he can look back to his boyhood, and remember the old timers of his day. He can recall how they told him their experiences in the Revolutionary army, and how the country felt during those fateful years when they were fighting for liberty.

It would seem as if the world had made far more rapid progress in these 150 years than it did in all the previous time since the Christian era began. Just think of the primitive conditions that prevailed upon those Revolutionary battles were being fought. No railroads, no telegraphs, no telephones, no electricity, no wireless communication, hardly any machinery, and almost no newspapers. It took six days for the news of the Battle of Lexington to get down to Philadelphia. People were getting along in the most primitive way, factories did not exist, save on a very small scale.

It sometimes seems, when we look ahead, as if no similar progress were possible in the next 150 years. Yet there is a field of progress which is far more essential than anything in material gains.

We have harnessed the water and conquered the air, and made electricity to be our humble servant. Yet we have not trained the human spirit and made it do the work of the world as it ought to. Men and women are almost as selfish as they used to be back in those old days, and within 10 years they have broken loose in the most cruel war the world ever knew. The progress of the future must be predominantly moral. Material gains only touch the outer fringe of the problems of humanity.

NATIONAL UNITY

President Coolidge, speaking at the dedication of a Jewish community center, appealed for a forward movement that shall unite all factions and races and sections in the common effort to realize American ideals.

Our people come from all over the globe, with the most varied traditions and capacities. How can we unite all these people whose interests on the surface are often different, and who have been trained in such various ways?

And yet when you compare America with the countries of Europe, it will be seen that we have already

achieved a high level of unity. While our various elements snarl among themselves to some extent, yet in most cases they get along comfortably. Meanwhile the racial elements of Europe are often on the verge of actual war.

When you pay out money here in Michigan for a school with a good American for a teacher, you soften the old asperities that make conditions in many lands so constantly menacing.

STUDYING THE HOME MARKET

It is often noted that many families can get along on amounts that seem pitifully small to their neighbors, while there are many who have what seem to be quite lavish incomes, who are hard up all the time.

This difference is largely created by the differing degrees of thrift in various cases. But one large element in this difference is the fact that certain families study their expenditure carefully, while others just spend as they happen to want things, without regard to whether they are getting good values.

The buyer for a business concern is supposed to spend a good deal of his time and money in the study of his market. A New England grain dealer once remarked that he had made it his practice to telephone to Chicago about every day to get the latest news of conditions in those markets. This cost him something of course, but he felt he was well rewarded by obtaining the latest and most reliable information. Such buyers must usually spend considerable time in reading market reports covering the various lines they have to handle.

The making of purchases for a home is also a business, and to do it well calls for considerable study of the market. The ordinary home buyer does not have to take much time or spend much money to get this information. She can obtain it at a very slight expense, merely by reading the business news in her newspaper.

A person who reads the newspaper advertising thoroughly and constantly ought to be able to save a considerable share of the expense of financing a family. Such a one should have a clearer idea of the goods that are being sold, of the prices that prevail at the time, and of the places that are reaching out the most actively and efficiently to save the public.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF WEALTH

A criticism of the way in which many people spend their money was made by Dean W. R. Inge of England, a noted clergyman now in America, in his lectures at Yale Divinity school. He complained of the vulgar and unsocial way in which many of these people act.

The people of great wealth bear a great deal of such criticism from their own countrymen, and one of those critics would be just as selfish if they had the same money themselves. We too often overlook the fact that many of the millionaires have a keen sense of responsibility for the way their money is used. They have founded and are maintaining institutions that are steadily relieving poverty, helping to keep young people from going astray, and mitigating suffering.

But Dean Inge is right in feeling that there are many who seem to feel no obligation to use their money in a way helpful to the community. Some may truly say, of course, that their money is usefully employed by being invested in new enterprises, so that they can put people to work who were idle before. Of course those who do that do perform a very helpful service.

Yet conditions could be enormously improved if money could be had more freely for certain remedial purposes. If more of the wealthy people could give generously to such objects, the pride and interest they would take in these efforts would be worth infinitely more than the kick they get out of mere pleasures.

Those who waste their money in foolish extravagance are doing a thoughtless thing that creates class bitterness, and threatens the security of our institutions. Their failure to co-operate, and make some return for the benefits they have received from their country, must tend to create class consciousness, and help the bolshevistic element to promote their propaganda.

FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS—of Long Ago

Just Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up the Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

Forty-three Years Ago. You just ought to have seen Julie Runder rushing through town last Sunday; himself, horse, buggy, two dogs and four men looking for fifteen head of cattle that were quiet chawing their cud in the lot where Julie himself had turned them.

Mrs. J. A. Bigelow brought back a large silver set from Brayton Place, Friday where she had been visiting. The animal was 27 inches long and weighed ten pounds. It for the farm-corn crib can hear of such of this off-tachment (?) for her. Mr. William Campbell, Mr. Horace East, Esq., Boytre, fifteen head of cattle that were quiet chawing their cud in the lot where Julie himself had turned them.

Seeing that Decoration Day is not to be observed wouldn't it be better to observe the day by repairing the monument which at present is still offensive to the public sight?

Everyone is invited to the cemetery Sunday afternoon to remove a very troublesome weed. Every body lend a hand at one o'clock! Many hands make light work!

The B. H. S. Lyceum on Monday discussed the question: Resolved, that nature has done more for the evolution of character than education. Several questions for next Monday will be discussed: that girls have more sport than boys. Chief disputants C. A. Bigelow, H. T. Randall and C. E. Smith. The debate: J. R. Goodwin and E. R.

Detroit Markets. (Retail prices) Butter—24 cents, eggs—11 1/2 cents, potatoes—19.30, hagg—18 cents, and bacon 15 cents. There are 24 rooms in the hotel, each containing a stove so that in case the mornings or evenings there could a fire can be quickly lighted. Besides these a parlor and sitting room are attractions. In the rear there is a bath and a kitchen in the form of a bath room. The building is also furnished with fine acetylene gas and gas lights and telephones.

I desire through your paper to ex-

Walsh, James & Wasey Developments Typical... Variety? Yes! When you tell your friends about Birmingham you can assure them that they can secure any type of building site they wish—from us. We have the widest variety of any developments in Oakland County. Tell your friends to buy before prices go higher. And be sure to have them look over our delightful properties.

WALSH, JAMES & WASEY CO., REALTORS... 217 South Woodward Avenue PHONE 78. WANTED: Local Sales Representatives Walsh, James & Wasey Co., Realtors

MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE... Grahm, called on Pontiac friends on Friday. Mrs. William Gullyford and Mrs. Ella M. Hoar, former residents of Houghton, Michigan, were guests of Mrs. Mary F. Cooper one day last week. Dan Campbell and Fred Crawford attended the graduating exercises at the Detroit Medical College last Thursday evening.

FIRE COMPENSATION BURGLARY AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE AND BONDS. Oakland Realty Co. T. D. LYNCH, Manager LEVINSON BLDG. Phone 143-W. SIGNS. Fred L. Tucker, Dentist FIRST NAT'L BANK BLDG. PHONE 150

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MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE SALE... T. P. HERRERY given that on Monday afternoon...

David C. Bliesath Blacksmith and General Woodworker ALL KINDS OF WOODWORKING AND BANDBANDING Horse-Shoeing and Repair Work a Specialty 208 FOREST ST. Harper Method Shop QUARTON BLDG., W. MAPLE AVE. Scalp Treatments - \$1.00

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