



Everything



BY AL FAIRBROTHER

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1917

ON SALE AT THE NEWS STANDS AND ON TRAINS

ESTABLISHED MAY, 1902

THE RAVEN IN THE MOVIES

We note that the movies have finally put Edgar Allen Poe and The Raven on the screen. We had hoped it would never come to this. The Raven has been kicked and cuffed and pulled through more different places than most any other piece of verse ever written in any language. The movies wound about the plot a lot of soft pedal dope; explained that he was drunk and all this and all that—not a bit of it being the real thing.

True, it makes a good human interest story—but The Raven is a masterpiece—a work of Art which was perhaps as patiently constructed as any bit of literature the world has known. Poe took his readers into his confidence in his magazine and told how the chore was done. There was no likker in it. There was no sadness; no remorse—but it was a cold blooded proposition. There was nothing in it but method and no madness with the method. Poe was a genius and it wasn't whiskey that produced his wonderful creations because the Virginia likker was drunk by many other writers at the same time and no one of them produced a Raven which still is sitting and never fitting just above the pallid bust of Pallas. It transpires, as a matter of fact, that Poe put in a whole summer with a friend, and the poem wasn't written at Fordham cottage. But had it been in his matchless essay on the "poetic Principle" Poe shows that his Art was not likker.

The Raven has been one of the birds that has had its tail feathers pulled out by more electioneers; by more people who thought they could recite than any other bird in the burryard. The plot is strong; the setting one calculated to make a man look back and think of his lost loves, and forget the board bills he may have jumped in other years—but if a man really wants to fathom Poe, to get down into his heart and feel with him, he will find in "Lenore" where he wonders if Guy De Vere has no tear, more than in The Raven. Then if he will go on and take Utaume and go with the down-by-the-dark turn of Amber, in the ghost-haunted woodland of Weir, he will get a heart thrill that he can't forget. While Bret Harte wrote his wonderful parody, "The Willows" on Poe's immortal offering it was never possible to laugh it out. The Willows and the Nightingale conducted by one Shier was very clever—but when a man gets to walking with Psyche, his soul, and talking it over, you've got a thrill coming that you will never forget.

We are glad that even the movies are not forgetting the wonderful genius who lived, and loved and died in anguish. We are glad that the screen is holding his name and memory green—but we do think that those who wrote the plots should get the dope in accord with the facts.

They have built monuments to Poe. His critics have long been dead and forgotten, but he will live, always. A man with no strength of character—indeed a "rapt poet in a headless crowd"—irresponsible so far as money matters were concerned; addicted to the wine cup; a genius, in a word, who saw things that ordinary mortals didn't see—he had a hard road to hoe. Poe couldn't get down to the idea of the man who counts dollars. If a slab of bacon cost seven times seven cents it didn't interest Poe—he was thinking about poetry—about his Art which has had no equal. The trouble in this world has been that genius must be measured by the yard sticks of men who have no genius—and when that is attempted the impossible of course does not materialize.

Edgar Allen Poe wrote stuff that will live as long as books are printed. In his strange poetry or his weird short stories he exhibited an absolute originality; he proved that he was a master in his profession—and while it may be of human interest to weave around his life's story a thread of romance and fiction, it doesn't really do justice to one of our greatest immortals. While we can never forgive him for writing "The Bells," it wasn't his fault that every young man and every young lady has tried to "elocute" them to the pain, mortification and misery of an audience that had better manners than to leave. And while the movies have tried to make it appear that The Raven was the outpouring of a soul stained with sadness, it is not true. The Raven was constructed on poetic principle. The last verse was first written, and the bird with its black plumes introduced because it stood for something. A rooster wouldn't have looked well on the pallid bust of Pallas, nor would a jay bird. So Poe tells us that he figured out the most gruesome bird he could think of—a raven with its black plumes and its dirty beak in the heart of the man who was thrilled with the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain—was the kind of a feathered character he wanted. So he took the raven and then worked out the refrain of "nevermore."

But the world has always accepted the theory that Poe was on a jag; that he hurriedly sat down and threw off the most remarkable poems written in this country between drinks. And the world would rather have it that way. It would like to think that Phydias did most of his sculpting while on a jag; that Mike Angelo took three or four drinks before he mixed his points or sharpened his chisel. It likes to be-

DIVORCE LAW STEP FORWARD

Not having to do with the sawdust below the dam, the legislature is doing something in the divorce law. It is claimed that the new bills make divorce business easier and more respectable—but it puts man and woman on the same level.

States have long monkeyed with divorce laws and we note that the divorce mill still grinds increased grists. In these days it is only a matter of form to get a divorce. In fact, it seems that not to have been divorced suggests something lacking. It has long been our contention that the church should not bother the divorce question; the state should leave it alone, and a National law should be made governing the situation. There are perhaps reasons why divorces should be granted, but those reasons should be worth while. The mere fact that some fool man or some fool woman concludes that a divorce is the thing should not constitute a reason. There should be a real reason, and those who marry and bring into the world innocent and helpless children against their will and knowledge should be made to live together unless there was a real reason for separating. The reason these days is generally that another marriage on one side or the other is all in sight. If the National government would pass a uniform divorce law this would perhaps be a happier vale of tears.

Mr. Bryan is trying his best to stop the war—but Mr. Bryan is only a private citizen and he can't do much more than Henry Ford—a great man who made a few million dollars and undertook to stop the works of a whole world.

Germany Sincere?
It appears that Germany doesn't want to break with the United States and it also appears that the United States is in no hurry to break with Germany. Wilson knows that this country gave him a majority of votes in November because he "had kept it out of war," and he is going to do all he can, honorably, to keep out. Germany isn't inviting such a great Nation to join with the allies to help put her off the map. She is making a fight for her life—and if, in her desperation, it happens that her submarines blow up an American ship, she will suffer. The chances are that we will not be at war with Germany as soon as many people thought a week ago when we severed diplomatic relations.

The news print situation grows no better, and the Federal Trade commission has waited a lot of white paper and done nothing. It may be that the department of justice will proceed. But nothing has as yet been accomplished.

Proverbially True.
The Oxford Ledger in an editorial paragraph says:

Know lots of men, but we don't think we ever ran across one who doesn't do more work than any other man on the face of the earth.

True—true as preaching of the right sort. We all have more to do than the other fellow—we think we do. The man engaged in one kind of business threatens to quit and go into the kind that has wearied the other fellow. Every man you meet has more troubles than his neighbor—he tells you if you only knew what he has gone through or has to go through. He makes himself believe that he is a blessed, if not a bloomin', martyr, and that his road alone is hard.

But it is Old Human Nature—always on dress parade. We have seen men who apparently had nothing to do telling their tale of woe, of hardship. We have seen other men in business and worry up to their neck complaining no more than the idler. Guess each one of us has an imaginary cross—a yoke on the neck—and we complain as a matter of habit rather than as a matter of fact.

For instance, who does more work than the newspaper man?

The next thing we hear will be that Captain Coenig has come again. Or did he get knocked out in one of his underpasses?

The Daylight Scheme.

The proposition to set all the watches ahead one hour, so that instead of going to work at 8 o'clock you would really go to work at 7, and quit at 4 instead of 5, is all right for the summer, but 8 o'clock comes all too soon these winter mornings. In the long pleasant days of the good old summer time the idea would work to perfection. The laboring man could get up early and make his garden, work eight hours and go to the ball game every afternoon, or to the parks, or to the country. The man who works more than eight hours would, in no way be disturbed, and the hope is that the nation will agree on this and set the clocks accordingly.

lieve that Shakespeare was a vagabond and didn't write his own plays, and that Harry Thaw is insane. And it may be observed that the world in its desires generally gets what it wants.

PENAL SYSTEM IS ALL WRONG

The report on the conditions in the penitentiary is said to be unprintable. It is alleged that there have been things happening which were better not told. Just how far the report will be heeded is unknown. That the legislature will do something is a matter of course, but what can it do? So long as we run penal institutions for profit; so long as we think we can chase down unfortunates and work them to death on half rations, just that long will prison conditions be horrible and unspeakable.

There is no reason why prisoners cannot be well fed, well housed, and have around them influences for good. Our idea seems—we speak now of a people—to catch a man mixed in crime and then send him to a place where he proceeds to go deeper into the slough of degradation. When we have a mental cripple we should treat him. If he is vicious beyond ordinary control, he is diseased. If he persists in doing things unlawful, doubtless it is not his fault. Men measure men by their own yardsticks, forgetting that no two natures are alike. Our convicts should be taken care of in a way that will assist in uplifting them rather than in degrading them.

We are not surprised at the report or its contents, because since prisons have been known the horrors of them have been related. The old world and the new world furnish shocking and terrible revelations.

Let us hope that the men who buy the court house site—the old one now—will be forced to build. And Chairman Boren, as we understand, wants to see taxable property erected. The Jefferson Standard has in the only bid, and it promises a building to cost a quarter of a million dollars. Say, fellows, there is something doing.

The Brighter Picture.

The North Carolina Christian Advocate sees in the great world war the dawning of a brighter day. It takes the ground that

Let us not be discouraged, then, for Jesus said "I came not to send peace on earth but a sword." If any form of civilization exists today without being built upon the teachings of Jesus—in harmony with the spirit and teachings of the Sermon on the Mount—that civilization is just as certain to be destroyed as that it exists. This is the reason why Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Eventually, Christ's coming is to bring peace on earth; incidentally, it is to bring the sword which will strike down and destroy every form of political, social or religious organization which stands in the way of the coming of His kingdom.

To most of the world the way seems dark today, and men's hearts are failing them for fear; but out of this social and political chaos is coming a brighter day for all the world. Even now the morning of a new day breaketh.

To the man who believes in a just God—and most of us do—what other view can we take of this terrible war which has so long been on? There must be in it the hand of God—because there seems no other way. Those who look back on the war between the states can now see that it was a necessary war—that while it cost its millions of treasure and its seas of blood—while homes were ruined and the flower and manhood of the south shot down—yet there arose on those graves of glory a grander and greater republic than the world has ever known. Human slavery in this country became a thing of the past—and it took a most terrible scourge to bring about what was for the best. If the present forms of government—the present conditions stand in the way of God's Kingdom, perhaps, as the Advocate says, in what is happening is God's hand. And yet it seems to us, blind as we are, a fearful price to pay. Let us hope that no matter how dark the cloud, the light is coming.

The chances are that Teddy is now happy—except he would like to have been the fellow who handed Bernstein his passport.

The Legislature Up to Date.

In all candor the legislature up to this sad hour has done nothing worth while. Presumably it was relieved of a lot of little bills, but its big bills have been nothing worth while.

Why not a constitutional amendment that the legislature meets only upon the call of the governor, and why all this expense, all this idiosyncrasy? Take it and read it. Take it and look it over, and every two years the taxpayers are mulcted; there is no good done. And there is no use to monkey about the proposition; it remains and is a fact.

Congratulations.

It certainly is a matter for congratulation that those college students sleeping in the dormitory that burned Friday night made their escape. But the girls these days do not lose their heads. That their belongings were totally destroyed is bad business, but that no lives were lost makes it better.

RED CROSS GETTING READY

And all is war! Grim visaged war they call it, and war, they have told us, is hell. The Red Cross has been advised. Of what? Of war. It is told—let us quote from our Sunday extra—"to make arrangements for preparations of hospital garments, surgical supplies suggesting nurses," and this means that the United States soldiers are to be put up to be shot down. That is what the grim strategists of war see—surgical supplies to take care of the wounded; hospital garments to see that the maimed are cared for, the dying to be provided for with the facilities which the Red Cross furnish.

War unrestricted, war to the knife, to the hilt, and this in the twentieth century and we a nation of peace.

The chances are that ninety-nine per cent of the American people have been wanting Wilson to declare war, to sever his diplomatic relations with Germany, and yet today a large percentage of those impulsive men and women regret that the fatal step has been taken.

Roosevelt has had much to do with this. He has been eating them alive so long that people wondered what Wilson meant: If we had kept out for such a long period we could have continued to keep out, but that would not please the belligerent spirit of America. She always wants to fight; she was happiest when we declared war against Spain, and those who are warriors, those who think we ought to whip somebody, are happiest today.

But when it happens that the toll must be paid, when the blood and treasure are counted, perhaps it would have been better, aye, ten thousand times better, had Woodrow continued to keep us out of war. But we are all with him; we are all back of him; if his judgment is good or ill it makes no difference. The United States is in for it, and whole-souled to a man it will fight to a finish.

There is this consolation to the county commissioners: They didn't ask a city planner for advice and they didn't help pay for what was given.

How Come?

Once in a while it is worth the trouble to look ahead just a few feet, and this from the Henderson Gold Leaf is a pippin:

If the people in a primary won't vote against a man who has held office more than two years, what would there be to cause them to vote for a constitutional amendment to kick the same man out after he has had it twice?

That is the milk in the lard can. We have been very unfortunate, or fortunate, with constitutional amendments, the last four going through because people didn't vote either way. But if men can year after year hold office and the voter makes it possible, how can you get men to vote for the amendment to put them out? And who will be interested in seeing that the amendment is defeated? Naturally the old-time politician—the fellow who is gray in the office holding service; the man who points with pride to the fact that he has been for twenty years in one office. He will go out and see that the amendment is defeated, while the aspiring office seeker, with that modesty always so characteristic of such men, will fail to have the nerve to push the amendment's claim. However, the Ins always are ag'in the Outs, and vice versa—especially in the office holding world.

The beautiful snow hasn't been much in evidence—but water pipes have been.

Pretty Soon.

They say the depot question isn't dead, but that pretty soon, when all this court house excitement is over, it will come to the front again, and that we may reasonably look for something to be done before summer. It would be a fine thing to get that end going at the same time the hotel and court house construction starts. Just when the court house work will begin is problematical. All those houses must be taken away; people must have time; the old building is to be sold; but bless you, my fellow citizen, there is much doing in the old town.

Because of the general freeze that went from Greenland's icy mountains to India's coral strand we note that the citrus fruit crop has been damaged to the extent of a million and a half of dollars in Florida. This means that the high cost of grape fruiting it will soar again. The grape fruit is quite an institution, but if the price advances perhaps our physician will inform us that it does not agree with our system. That often happens when things are beyond our financial reach.

Not Long Yet.

By the way, are you aware that the legislature has been running over a month; that the time is now growing short, and it will all be over for two years. There are yet several important measures to get through, but with no little business in the way, just mighty problems of state, the lawmakers are making haste.

W. J. BRYAN IS NOT MEDDLER

One of our exchanges, recognized for its ability on the editorial page, goes out of its way to designate Mr. Bryan as "A Mischievous Meddler" and roasts him to the Queen's taste. But that will not do. Mr. Bryan has taken a part in the present crisis; he has said what he thinks—and he is for Peace. Mr. Bryan is one of the big men of America—a world-wide character who has the respect of as many people as any man before the public.

He may be mistaken at times; he may be an extremist; he may be living a little ahead of the times—but he is essentially great, and he is not a meddler. Every American citizen has a right, and not only a right but it should be his duty, to express himself. The position Bryan has taken is simply in accord with his past history. He isn't a Jingo; he isn't a sensationalist—but a plain man who believes in Peace with honor—and with him will be found the majority of the American people.

No, Bryan is not a meddler. He is a great force in this country and to have him express his views is always worth while.

It might be said that Henry Page, who came into the suffrage camp, came in to lose his vote, but he is to be congratulated on seeing the light.

The Antique Dealers.

Recently in Baltimore there was sold a desk, said once to have been the property of Marie Antoinette, for \$5,000, and the price was cheap. Perhaps so. We have a desk once the property of a second-hand furniture dealer and we paid six dollars for it, and thought that was also cheap. This desk we have is certainly as useful as the desk Marie used to own, and where the difference of four thousand nine hundred and ninety-four dollars comes in we cannot imagine.

True, the hand-writing of some celebrity, his own autograph; a picture, a book with marginal notes or something like that might appeal to the gatherer of antiques, but why an ordinary desk would sell for five thousand dollars when it isn't worth five shows that some people have money who need guardians. Might as well dig up the earth's surface and say here is the sacred soil on which some notable walked; we will sell it for ten thousand dollars. Might as well get an old coin and say here is a coin that Shakespeare laid down in the Boar's Head for a glass of ale; we will sell it for five hundred dollars. The inanimate wood expresses nothing. Marie Antoinette may have had a dozen desks or she may not have owned this particular one. We are not an iconoclast. We would not shake the mantle and knock down the plaster of Paris bust of a departed shade, but we do object to putting up the price of second-hand furniture to such alarming figures.

Of course Adam didn't have any court house site troubles, but he had an excellent chance to have been a landscape gardener if he hadn't listened to his wife.

Let's Walk.

Those contemplating a trip to Europe had better walk. The Germans will sink every ship in sight, and why a man insists on taking the chance we cannot imagine. The spirit of adventure is strong in the average American citizen; had it not been there would have been no wild west subdued. In the old days men from North Carolina, from every eastern state, insisted on going to the far west, to fight Indians, to run the risk of being killed. That settled the west. In that sort of madness there was some method. But why one should want to walk "through an open slaughter house into the grave" we are at a loss to know. There is no real necessity to make the trip across the pond. Nothing in it unless dollars, and we can get along without them. But if the ships sail, you will find the list of passengers large—men and women apparently courting death. Maybe it is a way some folk have of trying to commit suicide. If we go to Europe in the next few weeks we will walk.

Now that Noah has pulled his flood, what about this snowstorm that came ushered in by a thunder storm? An investigation is in order.

A Suggestion.

The more we think about it the more we are inclined to favor a City Planner, and suggest that the Board of County Commissioners be retained in this capacity. The board has shown beyond any doubt that it is the greatest collective city planner recently operating in these parts. Therefore we suggest in all seriousness to the City Commissioners that they employ the Board of County Commissioners as City Planners with power to act.

Have It Understood.

If the Jefferson Standard gets the old court house, we move that it be in the bargain that it at once remove the old clock. That old machine has lighted more men the way to dusty defeat than anything we know. It has caused them to miss trains, to cuss out loud and regret the day they were born. If the court house changes hands, let the clock come down at once.