

THE DEATH-SONG OF THE HEMLOCK.

Ye say I am old—I am old—and ye threaten to hew me down,
Lest the roof of your puny dwelling should be crushed by my heavy crown;
Ye measure my spreading branches, ye mock me with idle fears—
Ye pygmies that creep at my footstool, what know ye of age or years?

I reckon ye all as shadows! Ye are but as clouds that pass
Over the face of the mountains and over the meadow grass;
Your generations are phantoms; like wraiths they come and go,
Leaving no trace behind them in the paths they used to know!

But I! For six hundred rolling years I have stood like a watchtower, I?
I have counted the slow procession of Centuries circling by!
I have looked at the sun unblenching, I have numbered the midnight stars,
Nor quailed when the fiery serpent leaped from its cloudy bars!

Or ever ye were a nation, or your Commonwealth was born,
I stood on this breezy hill-top, fronting the hills of morn;
In the strength of my prime uplifting my head above meaner things,
Till only the strong winds reached it, or the wild bird's sweeping wings!

It was mine to know when the white man ventured the unknown seas,
And silence fled before him, and the forest mysteries;
I rose, his towers and steeples that pierced the unfathomed sky,
And his proud domes darkened the Heavens—but above them all soared I!

He builded his towns and cities, and his mansions fine and fair,
And slowly his fertile meadows grew wide in the tranquil air;
He stretched his iron pathways from the mountains to the sea,—
But little cared I for his handiwork! 'Twas the One Great God made me!

The Earth and the Sun and the mighty Winds and the Great God over all,
These bade me stand like a sentinel on the hill-top grand and tall.
Know ye that a hundred years ago men called me old and worn!
Yet here I tower above their graves, and laugh them all to scorn!

For what are threescore years and ten, ye creatures of a day?
Ye are to me like the flying notes that in the sunshine play!
Shall I tremble because ye threaten, and whisper that I am old!
I will die of my own free, lordly will, ere the year has shed its gold!

But till then, as I stood or ever the land of your love was born,
I will stand erect on my hill-top, fronting the hills of morn;
In the pride of mine age uplifting my head above meaner things,
Till only the strong winds reach it, or the wild birds' sweeping wings!

—Julia C. R. Dorr, in Bazar.

POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE.

Mr. Louis R. Ehrich, of Colorado Springs, who is well-known to the readers of THE CONSERVATIVE, will, in the near future, contribute an article on "Political Independence."

PIPESTONE.

In the interesting historical article by Mr. Blackman in No. 31 of THE CONSERVATIVE, mention is made of a fragment of red pipestone, which the writer says must have come from the Minnesota quarry, "as it is found in no other place."

It does not interfere with Mr. Blackman's argument to point out that the Indians had other sources of this commodity besides the one mentioned, so long as these were in the same general direction from the point where the object in question was found.

Alexander Mackenzie, who produced a book on the fur trade of the northwest in 1801, speaks of a bay of Rainy Lake, or Lac de la Pluie, as he calls it, which he says "is remarkable for furnishing the natives with a kind of soft, red stone, of which they make their pipes." Rainy Lake is on the northeastern boundary of Minnesota, while the famous pipestone quarry is near the southwestern corner of the state.

In the singular work, some thirty years old, called "The White Chief," to which the name of George P. Belden is attached, the statement is made that the red soapstone used by the Indians for making their pipes is found in nearly every part of the American continent. The author speaks particularly of a deposit on the Iowa bank of the Missouri, which, he says, "makes beautiful pipes."

Mr. Blackman's impression that the quarry in Pipestone county, Minnesota, was the only place where this material was obtained, is, however, that which generally prevails. Dealers in Indian curiosities with whom I have talked, and who usually have a few specimens of this ware in their stock, obtaining it from the manufacturers in Sioux Falls, all seem to believe that there was no other source for it. Catlin, the painter, who went to the famous quarry sometime in the 30's, is very positive also.

"No tribe of Indians that I have yet visited," he says, "have ever apprized me of any other source than this." And again, "I challenge the world to produce anything like it, except it be from the same locality."

And yet Mackenzie's evidence seems conclusive, whatever may be thought of Belden's; for Mackenzie was a great and notable explorer, and the first man to reach either the Arctic or the Pacific ocean by land.

A. T. R.

KANSAS.

The 12th biennial report of the Kansas State Board of Agriculture is useful and instructive literature from the facile pen of F. D. Coburn who is a cogent and interesting writer. He is the master of facts and figures and he makes them slaves to tell the wondrous crops of cereals, cattle, hogs, and sheep that the farms of Kansas are putting on the markets.

Congressman ALWAYS "NEXT." Lentz of Ohio, introducing the perpetual populist presidential candidate at a recent banquet, said:

"The last time I had the pleasure of introducing Mr. Bryan to you I introduced him as the *next* president of the United States. I again introduce him to you as I did then."

It is not often that THE CONSERVATIVE is able to commend, without violence to its conscience, the oral deliverances of populist orators. The speech of Mr. Lentz is however an exception. A large majority of the citizens of this republic will join THE CONSERVATIVE in indorsing the sentiment of this introduction and will joyously and generously accord to the "peerless" in perpetuity the position of *next president*.

PIONEER REMINISCENCES.

With increasing years we are disposed to be more interested in reminiscences and I assure you I have read those in THE CONSERVATIVE with much pleasure for I was one of the pioneers of the Missouri valley myself. In November, 1855, I came from Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to Fort Dodge, Iowa, by stage. From there to "Fort" Des Moines and Council Bluffs (about 250 miles), also by stage. I arrived in Council Bluffs in December, 1855, being 21 years old that month, and was there about ten days, visiting Omaha, etc. Of course you know what both towns were then and also remember the deep snow and cold weather of that season. Again I took stage for Sioux City and after a ride of two days reached my destination on December 26, 1855, and found a town of eight log cabins. I need not remind you that that winter and the following ones of 1856 and 1857 were terribly severe. But we were all young and didn't get cold or mind the privations.

GEO. WEARE.

Sioux City, Ia., Feb. 8, 1901.

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