

The *Reporter*, Iowa University, is much improved both in appearance and literary merit.

The *Illini* is a little prosy, but filled with substantial material, all the same.

The *Trinity Tablet* talks well about American humor vs. English. It claims that though we have "no great organ of fun, such as *Punch* is to England, and *Charivari* to France," we are not therefore inferior or deficient in this respect. Our whole literature, especially our periodicals, is replete with veins of natural, fresh wit and humor. This appears to us to be according to nature. As in life, so in literature, we do not want all the fun and spice, set apart for a separate meal at a given hour, but want it to permeate and give relish to the whole at all times.

A Glance at Our Country's Past.

More than ninety-nine years ago, in the continental congress at Philadelphia, the Declaration of Independence was read, and the question was, "shall it be adopted?" and the ayes had it. That vote changed the political character of this western world; it secured for us not only the sympathy, but the admiration of the best men in all ages; it roused into action those energies that have caused the wilderness to blossom as the rose, covered our seas with commerce, filled our land with happiness and industry; it gave to us freedom as well as independence, and just here is the great stronghold of her greatness, for if a man would be great he must be free, for he can never have in his soul either poetry or eloquence, or patriotism, without the light and glow of liberty. God has made him so.

"Tis liberty alone
That gives the flower of fleeting life
Its luster and perfume,
And we are weeds without it."

Let us, then, (as we enjoy her freedom, and admire the greatness to which she has attained) not forget the many struggles through which our country has passed.

Her first conflict was with the wildness of nature. Nature clad in her wildest array, sheathed in glittering snow, and gathering up the awe of the grand mysterious solitude, she blew upon those pilgrim fathers the chill of those December winds and sought to pierce their hearts with its icy spear. But they were no faint hearted men, the wilderness was to bow before their strong arms and stout hearts. The conflict has joined, it has gone on until forest and prairie, valley and hillside, have yielded before it, and in its bloodless track, shoots up the green blade of corn, rise the walls of cities and villages bloom and smile—the garden of happy homes. But the conflict with wild nature was supplanted by the struggle with savage men. For fifty years the treaty formed by our forefathers with Massasoit, the great sachem of the Wampanoag, continued inviolate, but at length the flames of warfare were kindled. The hatchet, it seems, was to be buried only by the arm that wielded it. But the white man was the victor and the red men have melted away. "Slowly and sadly they climb the mountain and read their doom in the setting sun. They are passing before the wave of the mighty tide that shall wash over them forever." Let us hope that a peaceful evening may close the historical day (if close it must) of this doomed and dying race.

Then came the conflict the memory of which clusters closely around our hearts,

and the heart of every true American. Long our fathers sought redress rather than revolution, sacred ties bound them to the land of their birth, England's soil England's fame and England's renown were theirs. It was only when the conviction fastened itself upon them that there was no security but in independence, that they threw to the breeze the flag of their solemn and daring adventure, and having taken the step, they went forward with iron nerve and heroic valor and victory crowned their efforts. And we their children, would honor them for this noble step of heroism. Had not our fathers, as it were, turned from the parental roof, burst from the galling yoke of bondage that she would with skillful hands have fettered them, where would we as a nation, as a people have been? Did not our fathers purchase this liberty, this independence? Did they not sacrifice their almost every comfort, laying all upon their country's altar? And she smiled as she accepted the offering and gave them in return freedom and independence. How welcome to those war-scarred veterans were the years of peace that followed the close of this long conflict! How sweet to them was the folding of the wings of Peace as she hovered over them.

But again did Britain deign to insult her glorious offspring, and by numerous insults provoked into action the feelings of revenge and defense. And again did our noble forests echo and re-echo the roar of cannon, the clash of musketry and the groans of soldiers dying far from home and friends. But I need not tell you ours was not the defeated but the victorious; you are all conversant with the history of our loved country. But again in forty-six came the trouble with Mexico. This was another victory, another triumph achieved which added another gem to the crown, another laurel to the wreath of our nation.

Sweet Peace again hovered o'er us, and resting upon the thought that, as a nation, our trials were over, no more should she be forced to leave us. But soon we saw she was again preparing for flight and soaring away she left us amid our foes. This may be called *our* struggle, for where is the one that is here to-night, that had no interest in the last national conflict. Did we not see our loved ones leave for the hardships of soldier life? Did we not see our fathers and brothers and friends gird on the armor and go to the front? We can almost feel the pressure of their hands as they bade us farewell and marched away. They loved their home, but they loved their country; they were brave in battle; true through trouble; un murmuring in pain; patient in sorrow, and loyal in death.

Shall we forget the soldier, now we are enjoying peace, peace that was purchased by the sufferings of all and the life-blood of many of our dear soldier boys? How many of them have returned maimed! Here is a brother with an armless sleeve. That little hand I held so often in childhood, strengthened with his strength and matured with his might until it was able to strike a blow for his country; that hand and arm was, then and there, left upon the bloody field of Spotsylvania, and he maimed for life. How many a little foot that has run so quickly at the mother's bidding, now lies perishing far from its owner! Such men are all among us—our duty is too plain to be mistaken.

Well do we remember the joyous meeting when this conflict ceased and we were folded in the arms of a dear father, and

welcomed home our many friends. But there were dear faces that we bade adieu when they went to the front, that were not met by the "home welcome." Let us not forget the widows and orphans who had no joyful meeting, when this war was over, but her loneliness, one continued night. Her husband sleeps upon some far off battle field, or his bones lie bleaching beneath the scorching sun, or not even his resting place known.

Were we now to go south, we should not hear the roar of cannon, the flash of musketry, the clash of sabers, the neighing of the war horse, the bugle's blast and the moans of dying soldiers, who had fought, bled and died for our country. The dear old flag that floats so proudly in the breeze, that under its blessed folds we feel such safety and protection, came out of the contest, like silver from the furnace, purified. No longer that barbarous word *slavery* pollutes its folds, but is inscribed instead, "A race set free, a nation redeemed, and freedom vindicated." But the times that tried men's souls, is not merely *historic* but *present*. Grave questions of the entire problem of American destiny await its solution. We are in danger from those evils that sap the life-blood of a nation.

Oh God! hasten the time when we as a nation shall be free from all the evils of political life, from intemperance, monied aristocracy and catholicism; and may peace and harmony dwell together, so that from the counting house of the millionaire watching his complicated web of enterprise, to the hillside plowboy whistling an echo to the lark in the clouds.

To thee,

Our Country, seeing thou art free.

ARA C. G. WILLIAMS.

An oration delivered before Palladian Society, Oct. 29, 1875.

Tourmaline.

The stones were smooth and oblong, of the size of a robin's egg, fifteen in number, and strung on a thin silver cord without setting of any sort. Their color was a pale pink, but no words can describe how resplendent. No diamond, no milk-white pearl, no dew drop was ever so luminous, so clear. So intense was the light, so much did they reflect light, that away down the passage so dark I could not see Jezebel's alabaster throat, I could see them glow rosily as though they themselves were a tiny source of light, yet, in the strong sunlight, they were almost white and colorless and dazzled the eyes so that on turning from them, other objects were not visible for the glory that still lingered.

More than one had turned to look at Jezebel that evening as we entered the thronged rooms of Madame C. "Look at Miss Lorne," said Will Layard to me as we stood watching the changing scenes which shifted through the wide halls. "Does she not make you think of Undine and Lucrezia in one? Ugh, it makes me shiver. What spell is on her to-night?" I turned my eyes where Jezebel stood ready to join the waltz. The small head drooped slightly as weighed down by the red-gold masses of wavy hair which crowned it. The long lashes were half lowered upon the rounded cheek leaving only a gleam of the brilliant dark eyes beneath their white lids. The dead white silk of her dress fell in clinging folds around her swaying form as she followed unconsciously the rhythm of the dreamy Strauss waltz music. Statuesque yet breathing life, simple yet severe, passionless yet passionate, nowhere was an atom

of color visible save in the circle of wonderful gems which cast a pale pink radiance on her naked throat and softly moulded chin. Now and then, as the gas light fell full upon them, dazzling jets of light seemed to dart to and fro around them. As I gazed and gazed in fascination, I seemed to lose consciousness of all personality and everything around me to grow dim. Lights, flowers, decorations and the moving forms joined indiscriminately in the mad whirl of the dances and all objects were but one confused mass of indistinguishable shapes. Only, everywhere distinct before my eyes, gleamed that circle of pink fire swaying to the rhythm of the "Wine, Woman and Song" measure which filled the flower-scented air. What spell was indeed upon her?

The starlight fell around us that night as I stood to hear the last rustle of her silken gown sweeping through the doorway of the old Hall. Something fell with a strange muffled sound to the marble pavement, but she did not notice. Nor did I, till I turned to go. The clasp of the necklace had parted and the stones had fallen. I held them up in the moonlight, half covered with frost, for they seemed to attract everything they touched, and they looked like the glowing coals of a wood fire with the side from the heat turning grey with ashes. I had never seen them so full of color. The waves of fiery light seemed to come and go, to burn and fade, like living coals. Was it the moonlight that made them so marvelously beautiful, or had the things life? A sharp pricking sensation went up through my palm to my arm and yet another all over my frame. That was all for though I shifted them from one hand to the other and all around I could not feel the sensation again. Just then Jezebel came anxiously back and I handed them to her saying, "Do you feel it?" "They are electric," she eagerly said. "I never could for my nerves are too strong. Sara says they affect her—I believe they do." "Is it the moonlight?" she asked, presently looking up into my face inquiringly as she poured them into a little heap in the palm of her hand.

"They're devilish, Jezebel," I said, "throw them away," and I tossed them down the dark passage and heard them slide along the floor quite a distance after they fell, just as though they did have life as the old Indian croak had said. Jezebel looked frightened. "Good God, what if you have broken them," she said, as she ran towards them as they lay in a glowing heap upon the floor. Their curious tinkling sound as she gathered them up, mingled with the purling of the brook among the rocks below as I leaned over the balustrade of the bridge to listen. But I put my hands over my ears and walked on. Everything that looked or sounded beautiful that night seemed like the fateful tourmalines. They had cast a spell over me. A.

—Great curiosity and excitement exist here at present to know whether the Chancellor is going to commence boarding himself in the University building. A distributor of merchandise was noticed in the hall recently with a sack of flour. He seemed anxious to find the Chancellor, in order to learn whether he should leave said flour at the college building or at the Doctor's dwelling. Those students who have been refused rooms in which to keep back in the third story are jealous, and an insurrection is imminent.