

XLIX. LITERATURE-MUSIC-ORATORY.

While it may be true that Marshall county, or any portion of it, has not produced in the literary, musical or oratorical field of human action anyone, either male or female, whose excellence has attracted the attention and admiration of the world at large, yet it is true that there have risen up from among the people those who have made their mark in the liberal arts and occupy a sphere as high as their surrounding neighbors.

In a work of this kind it will be impossible to give more than a brief reference to those who have done sufficient in the literary field to make them a reputation that will be more or less enduring. The first who wrote to greater purpose than any of his contemporaries, the late Charles H. Reeve, stands easily at the head. During the last two decades of his life he wrote numerous books and pamphlets, mostly on crime and criminals,

and criminal law reform, etc. His most pretentious work was "The Prison Question," a book of 200 pages, which had a large sale both in this and foreign countries among those interested in prison reform. He was a smooth and graceful writer and in descriptive composition had few equals anywhere. From an address of welcome to the Northern Indiana Teachers' Association held at Maxinkuckee lake, June 29, 1886, the following charming description of the "Beautiful Maxinkuckee," by Mr. Reeve, is inserted as a rare literary gem—a classic in its way. Addressing the assembled teachers, he said in part:

"Many years ago, near where we are now located, I came in sight of the lovely lake yonder for the first time. When I first saw it the primeval forest around it was almost untouched. Some settlers were near it but mainly the forest came to the margin. Some rushes grew in the shallow spots, a log canoe rocked on the shore near me as the light waves pulsated to and fro. The sunlight glinted from the surface of the water and the whole space above was filled with a kind of glowing haze I have seen nowhere else. The undulations of the shores and the deep green of the trees were reflected in black shadows from the water below. Near me a robin was caroling his liquid song. The red-winged blackbird flew chirping across the narrow bends, alighting now and then on the limber twig of a bush, or some stout bulrush that bent to the water and allowed him to seize something he saw and wanted. The lazy gulls rose and fell and turned from side to side as they crossed and re-crossed above the water. Here and there in some still spot a fish would spring out and leave a circlet of tiny waves following each other in growing circles, soon broken by others made in like manner near by them. Some wild ducks arose from near the shore with a cry of alarm and winged a rapid flight around the bends to light in some obscure place. A way near the opposite shore a figure sat in a dugout holding a pole that would occasionally rise to the perpendicular and then come down to the horizontal, and it looked as completely alone as if it were the only being in its form alive. These trifling incidents attracted momentary notice only. But the lights and shades, the outlines and the undulations, the glittering and shimmering of sun and water and shadowy reflections, the life and motion and stillness, the strange mellow haze, like an invisible veil, yet obstructing no light, that was above and over it all like a halo, the something indescribable and seen nowhere else, were before me in the fullness of Nature's most perfect work. I reined in my horse and sat still on him, almost entranced by the indescribable feelings created by the scene. There are no words I know to describe it. It could only be felt a glow of pleasure and wonder mingled with awe a sense of beauty with a glow of exaggeration that went beyond words for comparison.

"I had met an Indian only a few moments before seeing the lake, just up yonder on the road coming through the woods. He was bareheaded, had on a calico shirt, deerskin leggings and moccasins, and carried a gun; and he had told me in broken English with short pauses between the words about the road I desired to follow. 'Go so,' he said, pointing the direction; 'see-big-trail. Mabe-go-so,' pointing another direction; 'see-chemoke-man's-wigwam. Yes.' That is, I would soon come to the main wagon road, and following that would come to a white man's house. I followed the first direction, and soon after the weird and beautiful

glamour of the wonderful Max-in-kuck-ee was before me. I shall always. You can never see It as I did then.

"But it has another beauty now that you gaze on. I have them both before me, and year by year have seen the changes as they grew in it and in the country regions round and about it. How many can go back to that lag canoe as, half filled with water, it oscillated upon the shore yonder, and step by step follow the changes down to the graceful hulls and sails that daily skim the surface of the lake, or the shapely little steamers that 'Walk the water like a thing of life,' while the echoes on the shore awake the throbs of their fiery, imprisoned hearts, as the pulsations evolve the forces of their artificial life ?

"To me there is a strange blending of the sights and sounds here now with the memory of those of long ago. The carol of the robin and the bell of the steamer; the whistle of the blackbirds and the scream of the locomotive; the grace of the waterfowl and its rapid flight and the white-sailed yachts; the presence of the lonely fisherman and the silent Indian ; the knowledge of the fewer wants and fewer means of gratifying them then, and the many needs and boundless resources of the present; of the lighter burdens that rested then and the mighty ones that rest now; all pass before me like 'the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces and solemn temples created by the baseless fabric of some weird vision.' "

Judge Albertus C. Capron. Judge Capron was one of Marshall county's most accomplished writers. For many years he owned a cottage on the shore of the beautiful Maxinkuckee lake, and no one enjoyed more than he the delightful breezes and charming scenery that met his view, no matter which way he looked. He was especially fond of fishing, and probably the last article he prepared was on the subject of "Fish and Fishing in Lake Maxinkuckee," published in a history of the lake in 1905, the year he died: The closing paragraphs are reproduced here to show the beauty of his style of composition, and the delightful picture he draws of good and bad fishing days. The judge's peroration is as follows:

"To be even moderately successful one must be fairly well acquainted with the 'lay of the land' in the lake. There are considerable areas that are absolutely barren of fish at all seasons, where one may fish for a week and not get a nibble. Where the water is sixty, seventy or eighty feet deep there are no fish" unless it be a few gars swimming near the surface in a migration from one side of the lake to the other.

" And there are days when the lake appears absolutely without fish of any kind, when the experienced fisherman with both live and artificial bait may search the bars and gullies of the very best fishing grounds, from 'morn 'till dewy eve,' with not a single strike. But even such a day is not without its recompense to the genuine fisherman, for he is always a lover of nature in her various moods. After a fruitless pull of a couple of hours, and he realizes that the fish are hugging the bottom among the lake weeds and grasses and beyond the temptation of his alluring baits, he can drop his oars and drift idly in the summer breeze that brings to him, across the lake, the odor of the woods, the fields or the new mown hay, and watch the changing colors of the lake as the shadows of the fleecy clouds creep slowly over the surface; or, looking shoreward, beyond the line where land and water meet, his eyes will rest upon a sylvan picture of wooded bluff and

Shady beach with their bright tinted cottages nestling among the trees, wordless invitations to the weary to come and find rest therein, and, as the evening comes on and the winds are hushed, and all the west, both sky and water, is painted in gorgeous colors by the glorious sunset, there comes creeping over the glassy lake a tinkling music as of water bells touched by the sparkling streams that gush from the flowing wells and splash upon the margin of the lake. And, as his boat glides to his landing place, the joy and sweetness of life fills up his creel and saunters slowly toward his cottage he feels in his heart more than half glad that it is an empty creel – with nothing dead in it. Surely such a day is not a lost day, not a day to be regretted.

“And there are other days, red-letter days for the fisherman; days when every good-sized fish in the lakes appears to have awakened up hungry from a tow or three days snooze in the grass, and every one of them seems to be hunting the fisherman’s bait; and, wether anchored on the edge of a bar or trolling deep among the gullies, the time between strikes is little more than enough to adjust a new bait, and get the lines well out again. On these days the catch of a couple of hours half fills the creel with three or four varieties of goodly sized fish – all the small ones discarded and thrown into the lake. On these days the fisherman finds no time to watch the shadows on the lake; no matter how gorgeous the sunset, he sees it not. The winds may waft the door of the spices of Araby across the lake – he perceives it not; the music of the rippling streams that gush from the flowing wells is drowned by the chirr of his reel, and the cottage-lined shores are simply a landing place, where he will beach his boat and step proudly upon the shore, holding up to the gaze of family and friends his wonderful catch on this his lucky day. Well, it’s only human nature to enjoy success, and these are the days the fisherman loves to talk and think of – the days he remembers best.”

John S. Bender, who still resides in Plymouth at the age of eighty, is the author of a book entitled : A Hoosier’s Experience in Western Europe,” being a description of scenes and incidents that impressed him while making a tour of western Europe in the winter of 1874-75. He also wrote and published a small book entitled “Money,” from the “Greenback” theory of the financial question.

Elder S. A. Chaplin, during many years’ residence in Marshall County, wrote much on literary and religious subjects. All his writings had a religious tendency and a high moral tone, and were intended to make his readers better, wiser, and happier. The series of articles written by him and published in the Plymouth Democrat shortly before his death, entitled “The Return of the Jews to Jerusalem,” and “Sketches of the Early Settlement of the Northwest Territory,” were of a high order of merit and contained valuable information not elsewhere to be found.

M. A.O. Packard wrote copiously, fluently and well. His articles “From Over the Sea,” published in the Plymouth Democrat while making the tour of Europe on two occasions, and his letters descriptive of a tour across the continent to the Pacific coast, and return by was of the southern states, were models of descriptive writing rarely excelled, and worthy of permanent preservation. His style is smooth and polished, and he has the faculty of taking the reader with him and showing him the beauty and

grandeur of nature almost as vividly as if he were beholding them with his own eyes.

Henry G. Thayer, while on a tour of Europe several years prior to his death, wrote a series of letters, which were published in the Plymouth Democrat, that were more than ordinarily meritorious, containing as they did a vast amount of useful information. From these letters Mr. Thayer compiled a lecture entitled, "Paul's Journey to Rome," which he delivered in most of the towns and cities in northern Indiana.

Le Roy Armstrong was born and reared in Marshall county, a short distance northwest of Pretty lake. His father and mother dying when he was boy in his teens, he drifted into a printing office, and there received the first inspiration that led him to take up the literary part of newspaper work as a calling. It was not a great while until he was employed on the editorial staff of the Chicago Herald, and while thus engaged employed his spare time in writing a novel entitled "An Indiana Man." It was a love story, picturing practical politics as he had observed them in Marshall county, the principal scenes being located at Plymouth, and at the old church and the schoolhouse near his old home, and the country about Pretty lake. To the old settlers it was interesting, as the characters were: all genuine, although they bore fictitious names. Since then he has written several books, none of which, however, have attained to any considerable notoriety.

Music.

Marshall county has had its full share of those who have made for themselves favorable reputations in vocal and instrumental music.

Miss Clare Osborne, born and reared here, now Mrs. Dr. Reed, of Chicago, was the first to graduate from the Chicago Musical College with the honors of her class a score of years ago. She was later employed as one of the faculty of the college, and is at present the owner and manager of the Columbia School of Music, Chicago. She is considered one of the finest pianists in that place.

Miss Stella Packard, now Mrs. C. P. Drummond, of South Bend, who was born and reared in Plymouth, graduated from the Chicago School of Music with the honors of her class many years ago. She is a fine pianist and was the first president of the Plymouth Mozart Musical Club. Miss Helen Elizabeth McDonald, born and reared here, now Mrs. T. W. Gilmore, Chicago, graduated with high honors from the Chicago Musical College, being awarded the Board of Trade gold medal for the best pianist that year. She has been one of the faculty of the Columbia School of Music, and has written several musical compositions that have been published, among which are "Venetian Serenade," "Love's Confidence," "Evening Song," "When Thou Art Nigh," etc. The words to these songs were written by Mrs. Bertha Reynolds-McDonald, wife of Louis McDonald, now of Chicago. The words to an "Evening Song" are as follows:

Over the hilltop a moonbeam peeps,
Over the meadow a dark shadow creeps,
Far in the crimson west daylight is dying,
Through the trees the wind is sighing-
Sighing a soft good-night.

Stars glitter bright in the sky over head,
Birds twitter low in their pretty green bed,
Way over yonder I hear the kine lowing,
Soft the breeze, rare fragrance is blowing
Blowing good-night-good-night.

Oratory.

An orator is one who delivers an oration; or, one who is skilled in public speaking. To a considerable extent it is a gift-the gift of knowing what to say, and-how to say it. The orator must understand thoroughly the science of rhetoric, for, as it has been well said, "it teaches him to speak copiously and fluently on any subject, not merely with propriety alone, but with all the advantages of force and elegance; wisely contriving to captivate the hearer by strength of argument and beauty of expression whether it be to entreat or exhort, to admonish or applaud." Closely allied with this is logic, without a thorough knowledge of which he can never expect to become an accomplished orator, because it "teaches us to guide our reason discretely in the general knowledge of things, and directs our inquiries after truth. It consists of a regular train of argument, whence we infer, deduce and conclude, according to certain premises laid down, admitted or granted; and in it are employed the faculties of conceiving, judging, reasoning and disposing; all of which naturally leads on from one gradation to another until the point in question is finally determined." What constitutes genuine oratory has never yet been definitely determined. Certain it is that it is not frantic gesticulations of the arms, head or body. Marshall county has produced its average share of orators, who have been trained in the courts of justice, in the pulpit, and on the political rostrum. Among those who have made their mark in these lines above their fellows may be mentioned C. H. Reeve, M. A. O. Packard, John G. Osborne, of the older practitioners, and later Samuel Parker, C. P. Drummond, Charles Kellison, and several others who are still with us, who, when warmed up to the subject, are considered more than ordinary speechmakers. Henry G. Thayer) several years before his death, was the first to bring the subject of oratory before the school authorities, by offering \$50 in gold yearly as a reward of merit for the one who should be considered the best orator in a competitive contest. This was continued a number of years, when for various reasons it was discontinued.

About 1903 an oratorical contest between picked pupils of the LaPorte and Plymouth high schools took place in the auditorium of the Plymouth high school building, which stood on the site of what was a beautiful grove in the early times where all the public political meetings of all parties were held, and where many noted orators had made "the welkin ring with their eloquence." The gentleman who was selected to preside over the meeting, on taking the chair, delivered a short address, in part as follows :

"The entertainment provided for in the program of the evening is something new along educational lines here, and in the outset it is hoped that the results of this coming together may be the means of forming an association which shall embrace the northern part of the state. "Right here, on the grounds where this school building now stands, something over forty years ago occurred a series of among the greatest political debates in the history of the United States. Schuyler Colfax, several times elected a member of congress, from this district, also speaker of the United States house of representatives,

and later vice-president of the United States, and David Turpie, afterwards three times elected to the senate of the United States from Indiana, were the contestants for congressional honors. No more brilliant display of forensic oratory was ever heard than was shown in these memorable joint political debates.

“The faint rumbling of the coming storm of the great rebellion was just then beginning to be heard in the southern horizon, and the eyes of the whole country were turned toward these political gladiators, the trend of the discussion being national in its bearing.

“These debates became the most widely known, and have been the longest remembered of any political discussions, excepting, always the never-to-be-forgotten debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas in Illinois in 1858.

“Here, also in these beautiful grounds and in sight of them, have been heard such superb Indiana orators as Gov. Ashbel P. Willard; Senator, Gov. And Vice-Pres. Thomas A. Hendricks; Gov. Isaac P. Gray, Gov. James D. Williams, Senators D. W. Voorhees and Joseph E. McDonald, Senator and Pres. Benjamin Harrison, Stephen A. Douglas, Benj. F. Shively, Gen. And Lieut.-Gov. M.D. Manson, and the most polished orator of them all, William Jennings Bryan.

“All can call to mind sublime oratorical efforts that almost moved the world and became immortal. As illustrations I need only refer to ‘Paul’s Appeal to King Agrippa,’ and in our own time to ‘Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address,’ which stands singly and alone as the oratorical gem of the age.”