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St. Johnsburg Caledonian.

St. Johnsburg, Vt., Friday, Dec. 1, 1871.

ST. JOHNSBURY ATHENÆUM.

LECTURES PREPARATORY TO ITS OPENING.

IT IS PRESENTED TO THE TOWN BY MR. HORACE FAIRBANKS.

STATING OF THE OPENING, ETC.

The present week has been a grand one for St. Johnsbury. The long-cherished plot of one of our honored citizens, of erecting a Free Public Library and presenting it to his native town, has this week been consummated. Richer or more endeared to the hearts of the readers of Ranghirt with interest to all our citizens, in the order in which they occurred.

As announced in the last *Caledonian*, a short course of lectures was commenced at Athenæum Hall, on Thursday evening, Nov. 23d, preparatory to the opening of the library to the public. At the hour appointed the hall was filled to solid full with an audience of about six hundred of our citizens, attracted together with the noble thought of beating the lecture, seeing the new hall, and doing honor to the giver. The audience was surprised at the outset by a little joke, after which Mr. Horace Fairbanks welcomed those assembled in a few choice words, expressing his gratification at their attendance, and introduced the lecturer for the evening, Mr. A. L. Rankin.

LECTURE BY MR. A. L. RANKIN.

Mr. Rankin began by saying that the Arabs had a proverb, "Plant a tree, dig a well, write a book, and get to heaven." A true book is the embalment of a living soul. He who founds and furnishes a library erects the noblest and most primely monument in the world's history. Through the singular misfortunes of a fellow-countryman this great gift has come to us. It is becoming in us to consider some of the relations we sustain to this new institution. The speaker divided literature into two classes, that of knowledge and that of culture. The end of all reading is education of some sort. Popular ignorance was compared to Hugo's "devil fish." Experience has demonstrated that education is the open thin standing armor or a police force. The library supplements the school. It is not only the storeroom of culture and intelligence, but an army and annual also. This was shown in the late Franco-German war, when educated Germany decimated ignorant France. In the other nations men may read a lesson. One non-dangerous nation is from ignorance by a foreign population, ignorance is gaining upon us. In 1860, only one tenth of our population could neither read nor write. Now, with a million and a half more of foreigners added to our population, one-tenth can neither read nor write.

The lecturer said it was an erroneous impression that education should stop with school days, or that simply men of leisure could be educated. Men of leisure are not the bees in the world's economy. He brought out forcibly the difference between educated and uneducated labor, and dwelt at length upon imaginative literature, especially poetry. He brought out strikingly the effect on the world of the art of printing, the inventing of the telegraph and utilizing of steam. We attempt no analyzes of the lecture, but give some heads and hints as we recall them. The lecture was choice in language, vigorous in thought, and was listened to with close attention.

LECTURE BY REV. L. O. BROCKETT.

The second lecture in the Athenæum course was given on Saturday evening, to a full house. Before the lecture commenced the audience were favored with a very pleasant piece of music by a few members of the choir band, after which Mr. Fairbanks introduced the lecturer for the evening, Rev. L. O. Brockett.

Mr. Brockett began by saying that a book was the most characteristic thing of modern times. Ideas rule the moral world. Without books we have no popular literature, no popular education, no popular civilization. Literature was born when Gutenberg invented his printing press. A popular literature was unknown to the ancients. When Dante wrote his Inferno the popular language of Italy. Gutenberg, Faust and Scheffer modernized literature, and to-day the printing press is the great civilizer of the world. The lecturer here gave some history of modern literature. He said this Republic, with its public schools, public press and public libraries, ought to be the republic of letters. He here divided his lecture into two heads: 1st, the object (?), the method of reading; and gave the ordinary way in which people read, and the way they should read. Where one reads for recreation alone, he likes to read superficially; besides it he read solely for recreation he will lose taste for the better works. He reads Mark Twain and Charles Reade, which the lecturer evidently thought worse than no reading at all.

One who is not habituated to reading loses one of the choicest luxuries of life. When books were few the people flocked to the drama-shop for recreation. For one he gloried in this library as a recreation for our hard-worked people. It will not do however to make reading a drudgery, hence the necessity for cultivating a taste for reading while young. The lecturer here censured severely the passion peculiar to Americans of reading everything, the valuables and vicious as well as the good; and showed up the foolishness of our times for reading after every new thing, and spilting up into different political, social and ecclesiastical bodies. What would Luther say of the Paris Commune and of the New York woman suffrage society? He would call them children of the devil, and not yet for one of the sex either. Modern Rationalism is Atheism.

The lecturer then dwelt upon the importance of a cultivated moral taste. Vicious food, Painting, sculpture, good books, developed culture. This library is in itself an embodiment of culture. It is culture that obtains our comfortable homes. There are cultured men who never studied Greek roots, and there are foolish Greek scholars who are fools. The Greeks put their libraries in the churches, as if they would put them under the protection of the gods. So we should prize that which has so much to do with culture and refinement. Beauty is divine evil is sulphur. Much evil is every where abroad. Man has but to see the moral debauchery even in the beautiful ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii, to learn why God hid them. In our methods of attaining knowledge, the lecturer had some excellent hints, which were, in the main, to cultivate our weak side—select according to our wants. In passing, he paid a handsome tribute to Dickens, and deplored the productions of Reade. He spoke feelingly of the moral bondage that were passed off upon the people under the garb of literature, and felicitated himself that one of the enjoyments of this new library would be in the utter rout of all such pedlers. The processes method of reading to the best advantage was discussed, which was in short to devote a certain time to it, and write out a synopsis. In closing, the lecturer paid a beautiful tribute to the institution, now about to be opened to the public, and to its founder. The lecture was one of Mr. Brockett's best efforts—terse, clean cut, logical, characteristic and was listened to with evident and much pleasure.

LECTURE BY REV. EDWARD C. FARNSWORTH.

Athenæum Hall was again filled on Monday evening to hear the third and last lecture of the course, which was given by Rev. Edward C. Farnsworth of St. Johnsbury Center. Like the previous ones, the lecture was preceded by some beautiful selections of music, after which the speaker was introduced to the audience by Mr. Horace Fairbanks. We can give no abstract of the lecture, and but a faint idea of what it was, to those who did not hear it. The subject might perhaps be given as "A Walk among the Abovers." It was a sort of allegory, in which two imaginative persons, together with the speaker, spent an hour and ten minutes in viewing a choice and beautiful library, and talking over its treasures laid away upon the shelves of its alcoves. Of course this library which they visited was the St. Johnsbury Athenæum, and their conversation was about real works which can now be found upon its shelves. These three classmates first passed through the vestibule into the reading room, which was described as they went along. They soon reached the library room, however, and were absorbed in its treasures of biography, theology, history, travels, poetry, etc. The lecturer then described the library in alcoves, in detail, giving here the characteristics of one author, and in another keeping the audience interested by the ingenuity with which he wove his word story, or enriched with the most delicious tales of those dwellers of yo olden time. The lecture was a sort of "bill of fare" of the rich repast offered to our town; and while it showed great knowledge of authors and familiarity with literature of a wide range, it also showed the wonderful culture, ingenuity and quaintness of the author. His description of the building and its contents was most accurate, minute and full.

At the close of the lecture Mr. Horace Fairbanks said it was eminently fitting that we seek Divine favor at this time, and called upon Rev. C. M. Southgate to offer prayer.

Mr. Fairbanks then arose and spoke substantially as follows:

REMARKS BY MR. HORACE FAIRBANKS.

Fellow Citizens: It was early a much cherished purpose of mine, to place at the disposal of the citizens of this town in my life time, a Free Public Library. A little more than three years ago the work was commenced the foundations of this building were laid. We now see it completed.

Some of you have been made aware of the tedious and vexatious delays experienced in securing the complement of books American and Foreign for this Library, and the great labor in arranging and classifying them. For your patient waiting you have my thanks.

The advantages to be derived from this Institution have been truthfully and forcibly set forth in the able lectures which have been delivered, and I hope take great pleasure in expressing to these gentlemen my most hearty thanks, and appreciation of their labor of love, and in expressing my own gratitude and obligation I am sure it is shared by all who had the pleasure of listening to these lectures.

In the practical working of an Institution of this kind, it is obvious that it will be necessary to have a few rules and regulations, providing for the proper protection and preservation of the building and its contents. These regulations have been printed in pamphlet form and will be furnished to all desiring to share in the privileges of the Library. I doubt not we shall have the hearty co-operation of all our citizens in efforts to secure a strict observance of the established regulations of the Athenæum.

The following persons have kindly consented to be associated with me as Trustees of the Institution: Messrs. William W. Thayer, Edward T. Fairbanks, Andrew E. Rankin, Franklin Fairbanks.

In seeming for Librarian such a man as Mr. Thayer seems who has so well at heart the elevation of the public mind and taste—in connection with this Institution, my cities are to be congratulated.

I should do injustice to myself if I did not here make mention of the faithfulness and professional skill shown by an Architect and Master Builder, and all who have had part in the erection, construction and fitting up of the building, to the end of the work.

Our word of explanation in regard to the Reading-Room. The newspapers of the day, with the exception of a few leading standard dailies and weeklies, will not be found there, but a full line of periodical literature, and this is offered an introduction to something higher in the adjoining rooms.

And now fellow citizens and townsmen, I give into your hands, confidently and sincere pleasure to present to you and your children, and to all who may come after you, the free use of this building and its contents. My highest ambition will be satisfied and fullest expectations realized, if now, and in the coming years, the people's rooms—rooms of the Athenæum a favorite place of resort for patient research, reading and study."

The audience received this announcement with the most hearty applause. Rev. W. W. Thayer, the Librarian, then made some announcements, and the regulations which were to govern the building, drawing of books, etc., and just as the audience was about to go out, Hon. L. P. Poland mount upon the platform.

REMARKS BY HON. L. P. POLAND.

Judge Poland said he had been requested on behalf of some of the citizens of St. Johnsbury, to express their gratitude for this magnificent gift. Should he express his own feelings in this matter, he knew he should say things that would seem to the donor fulsome and adulatory. The gift was one of singular munificence. By it the giver had planted a tree of knowledge and opened a fountain of learning, whose stream should flow on down through all time. The people should celebrate the gift. It came so gradually, and quietly, to them that they have been no opportunity becomes of manifesting great enthusiasm, yet they feel in their hearts the value of what is the night given them. Although our people are a hard-working community, very generally earning their bread in the sweat of their hands, they are also a reading people. The only reward which they can offer for the gift is reading, to use it well. This they promise. It is said in the good Book that it is more blessed to give than to receive. It is true in this case, as he had no doubt, great will be the reward of him through whose munificence we receive this gift.

Judge Poland spoke in a most felicitous manner, and his remarks were warmly applauded. He said he had been invited to pass through the Library and lower rooms of the building, and inspect its contents, which they were pleased to do, and he was unanimitly in favor of making those selections.

AN AFTERNOON WITH THE CHILDREN.

The exercises connected with the opening of the Athenæum seem to have been complete without recognizing the children. They were invited on Tuesday afternoon, when brief remarks were made to them by Messrs. Horace Fairbanks, and E. C. Redington, and Revs. L. O. Brockett, C. M. Southgate, E. C. Sheldon and Henry Fairbanks. The hand of six pieces was in attendance, and played frequent selections, which added much to the entertainment. Afterwards the children were invited to a tumble through the building, to which they were quick to respond.

This ended all the preliminary exercises connected with the opening of the St. Johnsbury Athenæum; and on and after to-day, the Library and Reading Room will be open to the public, day and evening, the Sabbath, holidays, and Wednesday evenings excepted.

It is hardly necessary to add that this occasion has been one of rare interest and enjoyment to our citizens—a feast of fat things. The event marks an epoch in the history of this town upon which generations to come will look back with pride and joy. Well may the gift be far-off future only can disclose.

WEEK MENTION.

The political cauldron in New Hampshire begins to seethe. The same question is going to come into largely in the canvass, and we are sorry to see some Republicans as well as most Democrats, counting the time power. Among the Republican candidates for governor, which may be, are E. A. Straw of Manchester, D. A. Cate of Lake Village, H. D. Walker of Portsmouth, S. W. Hale, Keene, etc. The Democrats and labor reformers will probably nominate Gen. Weston. There will be livelier times in New Hampshire next spring than have been seen for a long while.

The Canada thistle may seem a barren topic, uninteresting, but we can tell our readers, on our table. It is perfectly delight to the little sons, boxes, being an unrivaled source of joy and fun family where there is a child should think for a moment of doing without it. Every number is filled with choice pieces, and we know the best and most attractive style, and for the next year are and a series attractive one promised. Send fifteen cents and get the December number, you that don't now have it, and you will be sure to want it for next year. It is but $1.50 a year, or five copies for $6. Address, Orson Sheney, 36 Bromfield Street, Boston, Mass.

An Ohio man has offered the government $50,000 for the privilege of advertising on the backs of the postage stamps.

The latest notion is a music-box inclosed in an album, which starts off as soon as the book is opened, and is calculated to arouse a belief in spirits in any one not acquainted with the secret.

It looks as though the advocates of woman suffrage were to lose their best hold. The House of Representatives in Wyoming has voted to repeal the woman suffrage law. The Republicans, however, opposed the repeal, while the Democrats voted for it in a body. The Council has not yet acted upon the bill.

The steamer City of New London, of the Norwich and New York Line, was burned the 22d inst., about five miles below Norwich. The steamer was on her way down, but it was deemed safe to scuttle the flames, and access to the boats being cut off there was no alternative but the passengers and crew to throw themselves into the chilling water and seize any means of support which came to hand. Several were lost.

A despatch from Salt Lake states that Brigham Young has notified his friends there that he shall return next Monday, if the weather is favorable.

It has been terribly cold and stormy in the more northern sections of the country. Accounts from Utah complain bitterly of the cold and storms, and the snow in Colorado is deep. Many of our local lines have been laid by the storms and cold.

Grand Duke Alexis and his party are about New York again. On Monday they visited the Navy Yard and in the evening heard Nilsson sing. After a review of the fire department and a ball, the party visit Philadelphia.

ENGLISH OPINION. One of the peculiar customs of England is the dedication of one's business to some member of the royal family, or some prince high in rank. Some of the newspapers, which are usually plastered in the form of a sign, are very ridiculous. The following is a specimen of a sign seen in London: "Smithfield Jones, Sausage-maker to Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent."

THE SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN. The prospectus of this paper appears in a column to-day. As a composition of New England news, for independence of action, vigor of thought, and a sharp way of putting things, long the *Republican* without a equal.

THE WIDE GLOBE.

The December *Globe* is one of the best of recent numbers, and has enter-a-shell page in it, which must be a paper, sense and views are of high excellence. The views are all by Longfellow and Whittier, and seem as good as our readers have seen. The sort of poetry, the sort of the kind of poetry, the sort of the kind of poetry, the sort of the kind