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THE

Voice

— OF THE —

PHI SIGMA.

Vol. 3

No. 14

Wm. Austin, EDITOR.

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Don Peaslee
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Note: This has been an attempt to transcribe the exact words as written by the authors, therefore you will find occasional misspellings, run-on sentences and both a lack and overuse of punctuation.

The accompanying computer disk contains this same material. It is recorded as a Microsoft document (.doc) on a Windows XP operating system.

May 24, 1881
The Voice of the Phi Sigma
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Editorials

We have prepared this issue of the "Voice" under great difficulties, just as we were moving our office from the old quarters to the present spacious apartments. Moving under any circumstances is very trying but in changing the effects of so large a concern as the "Voice Publishing Company", we have been peculiarly harassed. It was after great difficulty that we succeeded in getting anything into its proper place and we were afraid at first that the present issue would have to be delayed for a week, a thing which has rarely if ever occurred. Resolved however to "do or die" we allowed ourselves little time for such extras as sleep et cetera and have the "Voice" here tonight in as good a shape as it was possible to have it under the circumstances. We will detail something of our hardships that the members may have a slight idea of the difficulties which lay in our path. The office-boy after a long and wearisome search resurrected the ink bottle half emptied from a basket in the entry-way, the pens from a box in the counting-room, while our paper and partially written notes after opening various packages he discovered in the press-room. As soon as writing materials were collected we seated ourselves on a large file of old papers and turned(?) to use as

a desk an imposing table which by mistake had been left in the office, and tried to make the best of circumstances while filling our position as editor extraordinary to their royal highnesses the members of the Phi Sigma.

What we have said, let the class note, applies equally to our valuable assistant Mr. H. B. Wilson who has had to prepare his manuscript by the aid of a stenographer, who collected such fragments as Mr. Wilson could give him from time to time while he was overseeing the arrangements of his apartments.

Such as it is, we offer the paper to the class asking that they will be as lenient as possible in their criticism of the evident haste it shows in its preparation.

This should have been the paper of all papers, which should have contained an article on the future of the class, its prospects and the course for it to pursue after this year's work was completed and we have adjourned for the summer, but our correspondents and contributors generally have sent us nothing and we are forced to say a few words ourselves. In the first place then let us state that we do not approve of the Phi Sigma giving up its meetings so entirely as to have one only every six months or a year. We are sorry that we will not have enough members left next term who can continue with us in our regular sessions every Tuesday night but are glad to see that we have a sufficient number who can meet once every month to enjoy an evening in participating in our time honored customs of literary labor. If the class was to meet but once or twice in the course of a year we would be practically no class at all. It is true a few large bodies such as alumni associations do come together only annually and yet maintain a certain pleasant relationship, but any organization composed of so few members as is the Phi Sigma would probably if left to this fate, never see its third reunion if it were so far successful as to enjoy its second. There need be no reason, so far as we can now see, why if the members desire to continue their labors as "*sapientiam diligentes*" they cannot do so without much inconvenience, if this method of

monthly meetings proposed by Mr. Wilson, is carried out. Our exercises need not be increased, in fact if it was deemed desirable they might be diminished and yet prove of very great interest and profit to all concerned. The very fact of our coming together with the end in view of the advancement of our understanding by the interchange of thoughts and opinions is sufficient in itself to insure the success of the undertaking. Nor by our thus holding our sessions every fourth week do we all preclude a great annual or semi annual meeting in which our college members just fresh from Amherst can take part and pour forth their stores of love to our simple and so of course astonished ears. No! Messrs. Sawyer and Whitman can count on preparing two Phi "Sigmatical" orations every twelve months although the rest of us do meet somewhat oftener. Why then, since what was said last Tuesday in regard to having a meeting every month was so encouraging from the fact that such a proportion of the class seemed to consider themselves able to participate at least that often so far as they expressed their opinions, why then, we say not adopt that course and keep the Phi Sigma what it has ever been in the past, a prosperous and enjoyable society. We hope that the committee appointed last week, which report tonight will advocate this change.

Mr. H. B. Wilson has furnished us with what outside aid we have had on this paper in the shape of a very interesting article on Hugh Miller. He has been able to give us only a small fragment of the biography but what we have of it is very well written. Mr. Wilson has stated in his introduction that he hoped the few facts he should mention about the man would lead the members to the further study of his life and works. This certainly should be the great aim of such work for the "Voice". Although the paper does not allow space for the full discussion of many subjects yet it can be the means of inducing study in special lines of useful thought. Mr. Wilson has written his article in a very agreeable style and we are only sorry that we could not have more to present to the Phi Sigma in this issue.

We have some Life Insurance circulars with us tonight which we would be pleased to give to any who would like them. This is certainly the time for our

members to get their lives insured for the benefit of their respective families or friends since we have begun to feel the ravages of that terrible malady German Measles in our very midst.

Editor

Photography

The earliest observations on the chemical change produced by light were undoubtedly those of the fading of certain colors. Some tints are so sensitive to light that a momentary exposure is sufficient to effect them, while other endure the action for longer periods. The early alchemists, it is supposed somewhere in the 12th century, discovered that the chloride of silver blackens when acted upon by the sun-light, though it be perfectly white when first prepared. As experiments in Chemistry became more and more numerous a score of other substances were found to be affected in the same manner.

The arts we are now acquainted with had their rude beginnings. Photography is no exception to the rule. The first "gem", as one author has termed it, of photography, is perhaps the experiment performed by Priestly, who coated the side of a glass bottle with some chloride of silver and then placed around the bottle black paper out of which by the aid of a pen knife he cut various letters. He discovered that when the light fell upon the silver through the apertures in the paper it was blackened and that the remainder was unaffected. Other experiments were made by Sir William Herschel the great astronomer and by Scheeley, the latter by dispensing a beam of light by means of a prism, was the first to learn that this influence of the sunlight was not caused by all the rays but on the contrary that the green, yellow, orange and red had no kind of effect; to the rays of the indigo and violet region which produced the blackening action were then first given the name of chemical rays. Attempts at applying the then known facts to the delineation of external objects were undertaken by Wedgwood and Sir Humphry Davy, both of whose names are doubtless familiar to us all. To Wedgwood

belongs the honor of obtaining the first negative. He covered a piece of leather with a solution of nitrate of silver and by exposing it under the images of a magic lantern slide produced a negative copy of the same, that is the shadows and lights corresponded respectively to the lights and shadows of the slides, while in a positive copy the lights corresponded to the lights and the shadows to the shadows.

All these varied experiments had as yet accomplished nothing in practical photography; they had been but steps up to a higher development. The year 1839 may be called the era of photographic art. In that year Daguerre, whose name is always closely connected with this subject attained what Wedgwood had been unable to, namely the permanent fixing of the images produced. Daguerre's process is as follows: A piece of silver plated copper is very carefully cleaned by means of pumice-stone or other material until it becomes a perfect reflecting surface, the success of further operations depending upon the perfection to which the surface is brought. This is then placed under the influence of vapor of iodine, which tints it, beginning with a light yellow up to a dark, clear metallic color; then again commencing with yellow and proceeding as before. The yellow is most sensitive to the action of light and therefore as soon as the silver surface is tinted this shade it is placed in the camera, provided with its condensing lenses, ready to receive the image. Here it is allowed to remain for a time, dependent upon the intensity of the light, the length of which the operator soon learns to determine. Covered with a black cloth it is next removed from the camera. Should it then be examined in a dark room, by means of a feeble light, not the slightest change from its appearance when it was introduced into the camera is perceptible. However, exposed to the vapor of the mercury, at a high temperature, 170° F., the image is brought forth. Then being dipped in a solution and afterwards washed and dried, the photograph is thereafter insensible to the light.

We have often doubtless, been made acquainted with the fact that many great inventions or discoveries in the same line of study have been made

simultaneously. This is the case with Photography. At the same time Daguerre in France, made the result of his experiments known to the world, Talbot, in England, published his invention of the calotype, which is simply the production of a negative by covering a sheet of paper with a changeable salt of silver, exposing it in the camera and bringing out or as it is termed "developing" the image by means of a solution of gallic acid. It had this marked advantage over Daguerre's method, namely that from the negative could be taken numerous positive copies by exposing it face downwards on sheets of sensitive paper, to the action of the sun. The daguerreotype nevertheless had an excellence, which by the way let me add, is not attained by other processes even now, in that its images were so sharply and delicately defined.

At first photography was employed only in artificial scenes and interior views, for it was found that the green of the landscape produced but little effect on the silvered tablets of the daguerreotype. This failure caused Daguerre himself to give the invention up as being impracticable. To an American Dr. Draper, of New York City, is due the credit of applying the process to the taking of portraits from life.

Further improvements were made by Fizeau and others; first, in more perfectly fixing the picture and deepening the shades, this by the use of a salt of gold, second in the use of a much more sensitive preparation, namely silver bromide, by which pictures could be taken in one thirtieth of the time required by the old process.

So far as we have discussed the subject we have not spoken of the methods used at present in this art. Modern Photography may be said to date from the great discovery of F. Scott Archer, an Englishman, of the collodion process, which has almost entirely done away with the old daguerreotype and collotype process. It consists in the coating of a glass plate with a solution called collodion, which is made by dissolving gun-cotton in alcohol and ether and containing a

little iodine. The plate is next placed in a bath of silver-nitrate. Thus prepared the glass is ready for the camera and the negative is developed by much the same means as us used in the daguerreotype process. From this can now be taken negative proofs on paper. If the materials used have been very weak a positive is produced in the first place, on the glass instead of a negative and this positive when cemented to another glass plate and viewed against a dark ground forms what we are familiar with under the name of "ambrotype." In printing from the collodion negative, paper is prepared in a nitrate of silver bath and exposed to the sun face downwards on the glass negative. Where the light passes through the glass in the transparent parts, it produces blackness on the paper and those places dark in the negative remain white in the copy, while shades varying between the light and dark are correspondingly copied, the lighter ones producing a dark shade and conversely.

Thus as briefly as possible, but we fear not too great a length for the patience of the class we have tried to explain something of the most important points in the history of this art. A much fuller account might be given of the different processes now in common use, but as has been stated it would doubtless be wearying and of no special interest to one not practically concerned in the matter. A number of "toning" baths as they are called have been invented for making the copies of a delicate brown color, called sepia, and other inventions for preserving and sharpening the outlines of the photograph have been made; lately also rapid processes are in use for taking pictures especially those of children or of changing scenes, such as moving processions or natural phenomena, by the use of electricity, but an account of these cannot now be given.

The uses of the photograph are many and very important. Besides those already mentioned it is used in picturing eclipses, the outlines of the planets and even distant stars; in 1874 it was employed at the transit of Venus to present the scenes which then transpired not only for that time but for all future time. Great success has been attained in using it in connection with the microscope and

correctly showing the enormously magnified images which the instrument presents; very important questions in physiology have thus been permanently settled. Exceedingly minute pictures can also be taken which can be seen by means of the microscope only. We had the pleasure of viewing, sometime ago, what to the naked eye appeared to be a mere speck, but brought under the lenses of a compound microscope developed into a fine portrait. In the year 1870 and 1871 while Paris was besieged, letters were in this manner reduced and transmitted by carrier pigeons.

The albertype and photo-lithographic processes have added greatly to the value of photography. The method of preparing the negatives in this branch of the art is very interesting, but is too complicated to be detailed here. Substantially, however, it is the substitution of a copy taken from a photograph and transferred to a lithographic stone instead of etching the same upon the stone which is a long, difficult and therefore expensive process. In this way drawings and sketches have been multiplied in fac-simile, indefinitely with an exactness which is wholly beyond the power of the engraver. Tischendorf's noted edition of the Codex Sinaiticus contains many such pages which are exact copies of that most valuable manuscript of the bible. There is still a great future for photography in this line of its application and as Dr. Draper has said "should the progress of photography keep pace with its past achievements, many of the laborious and expensive enterprises of engraving on steel and copper will soon be entirely superseded."

Editor

Clippings

A tall man having sallied a friend on the shortness of his legs, the friend replied: "My legs reach the ground – what more can you do?"

Probably some of our wicked poker-players will see, as it were, the pinnacle of this: It is reported that an able statesman who built a house out of poker winnings said his residence was built on a bluff.

A good child complained that her catechism was too hard, and seriously inquired if there were not some kittenchisms for very little girls.

One of those men who cheat others on mining shares and make their living by swindling was shot dead in Leadville. This would seem to us to indicate that Death loves a mining shark as well as a shining mark.

A man who takes a drink too many is often denounced as a fool, but nothing is said of a woman who gets three sheets in the wind on wash day.

Don't mention this to our English friends, but it is said that over in England when anybody had a complaint which puzzles the Doctors they lay it to American beef.

An Irishman says he can see no earthly reason why women should not be allowed to become medical men.

Paper is worth about six cents a pound in Peni until it is made into money. Then it depreciates about fifty percent.

The honest sausage maker never fails to make both ends meet.

Of course women can keep a secret – but it takes a good many of them to do it.

It is said that a baby will cry no harder if a pin is stuck into him than he will if the cat won't let him pull her tail. It is therefore cheaper to pin him.

Baton Rouge has lately increased her police force to two men and a dog. The dog is depended on to stand guard over the officers while they sleep.

An old couple from Oshkosh were walking down Broadway the other day reading signs, when they ran across one which the old man read: "Johnson's Shirt Store." "Well, I declare!" said the old lady. "I wonder who tore it."

I smell soffin a burnin', remarked an aged negro who sat at the camp-fire toasting his extremities. "Gosh!" he added in a moment, with a wild yell, "it's de niggah's own foot."

A youngster was sent by his parent to take a letter to the post office and pay the postage on it. The boy returned highly elated and said, "Father, I seed a lot of men putting letters in a little place, and when no one was looking, I slipped yours in for nothing."

A soldier of a cavalry regiment was arraigned for stealing his comrad's liquor ration. He was an Irishman and his defence was unique. "I'd be sorry, indade, surr, to be called a thief. I put the liquor in the same bottle with mine, and mine was at the bottom, and sure I was obliged to drink his to get my own."

Editor

Hugh Miller

Speaking of biography, its purpose and end, Carlyle has said, "Our notions upon this subject may perhaps appear extravagant, but if an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of the opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. How did the world and man's life from his particular position, represent themselves to his mind? How did existing circumstances modify him from without? How did he modify these from within? With what endeavors and with what efficacy rule over them! With what resistance and what suffering sink under them? In one word, what and how produced was the effect of society on him; what and how produced was his effect on society? He who should answer these questions in regard to any individual, would as we believe furnish a model of perfection in biography. Few individuals indeed can deserve such study, and many lives will be written and for the gratification of innocent curiosity ought to be written, and read and forgotten, which are not in the sense biographies." From the above rather lengthy quotation, it is evident, that this eminent author, so recently deceased, held the writing of a real biography to be no mean task, and would require the writer to be a person of no ordinary abilities. Moreover, he holds that few persons are deserving of being thus written about. And now our desire being merely to show by these words of this able writer what true biography is, we need hardly add that this article possesses none of the said qualities – You will soon discover that for yourselves – but we would say on behalf of our subject, that we think he is one of the few men whose lives Carlyle would deem worthy of study. And we trust that by relating a few facts and incidents connected with the humble birth, the noble life, and the tragic end, of this true man, we may lead some of the Phi Sigmities to a better acquaintance with, and greater interest in him and his works. Hugh Miller was of Scotch origin and was born in the town of Cromarty Scotland in the year 1802.

His father was a fisherman whose death at sea when Hugh was five years old, left the latter dependent, in his childhood and youth upon his mother, who diligently plied the needle to support herself and family. It seems the boy had a large, and somewhat peculiarly shaped head, and on that account, the woman in attendance upon his mother, predicted that he would be an idiot. As to whether she was right or not we will refer you to his life, after the fashion of David Copperfield, who tells us in his first chapter, that the old women of his neighborhood, said that because he was born about midnight of a Friday, he would be unlucky all through his life, and then intimates to us that when we have read the rest of the book, we will be able to judge for ourselves. – Hugh's father, honest and upright, was possessed of great bravery, yet was tender hearted, and considerate towards others, capable of enduring wrong himself, but not of injuring others, or silently beholding them illtreated, and these qualities were inherited by the son in whom in addition were developed great mental and intellectual powers and a very retentive memory, the last being taken from his mother whose power of remembering was remarkably good. From his earliest boyhood Miller took great pleasure and interest in roaming through the woods along the beech and among the rocks and caves of his native shore, and his eyes were always busy observing nature in her varied forms. His imagination also was very vivid; in his childhood he delighted to listen to the stories told him by his uncles, honest Scotch peasants, whose influence upon his character was great and good and lasting. And as soon as he could read he filled his mind with story after story. His power of composing also showed itself very early, even before he could write, he would often go down to the seashore alone, and pour forth in blank verse, stories of heroes and sea fights, and adventures, which would be forgotten as soon as they were finished. And he disturbed the discipline and labors of the school which he attended by relating to the boys the stories which he had read and also ones of his own making, which of course took their minds and thoughts from their books and studies. Although bright and observant out of school, where his imagination had full sway, he almost seemed a dunce in it; the dry matter of fact studies being rather distasteful to him. When about fourteen years old he seemed determined

not to learn at all, for he played the truant, staying away from school a large part of the time. He spent most of his days, at this season, as the leader of a crowd of boys who lived largely in and around one of the caves on the neighboring shore, cooking their own meals and in the intermediate times acting theatrical plays of Miller's devising, and engaging in hardy boyish sports. In all of these Hugh was foremost and at this time he could run, jump, wrestle and swim better than any other boy of his age and size in the place. Such waywardness and willfulness did not promise the development of a very good character in Miller, but it was perhaps the outgrowth of a great desire for freedom from all restraint and on account of the peculiar bent of his mind. Certain it is that after a few years at work many of his faults had disappeared and many noble traits had been added and his character had become more noble and manly. And now for a time we shall have to leave him just as he is entering upon his three years apprenticeship as a stonemason. His mother and his uncles thinking him to be fitted or rather capable of being fitted to fill a much higher position than that of a manual laborer, desired him to prepare for and go to college at their expense. But Hugh was probably too independent to do this and besides he had not as yet come to appreciate the worth of such education, and did not perhaps think that he could succeed in a strictly literary calling so he declined their offer. And yet having a great desire to read much and to improve in composition he decided to learn the stonecutter's trade because at that he could work in the summer and would have leisure for study during the winter. What results came of his work and his studies we trust you will all know at no very distant time; if not through the words of the "Voice" of the Phi Sigma", then by your own reading and research.

Henry B. Wilson