

speare. It is said that it is doubtful whether in all his life he read a novel. The stern realities of life had more charm to him than common fiction. The unparalleled achievements of the seventeenth President of the United States can be better appreciated when his early struggle for intellectual advancement is kept in view.

As the picture of Abraham Lincoln now stands forth on the pages of history, it reveals the statesman steering with steady hand and consummate skill the ship of state through untold dangers, away from destruction and to safety; it shows the masterly orator, the powerful logician, the upright citizen, excelling in honesty and simplicity as in statesmanship; but above all, it presents to our view the firm believer in God as the supreme Ruler of the world, who controls the events of nations and the destiny of men. Would he have been what he was, had his youthful mental faculties been moulded in the high schools of the world instead of in the school of nature? What influence would the study of the philosophy and oratory of the ancients, guided by the stereotyped forms of modern perception, have had upon him? In what way would his character have been different from that formed by thoughtful attention to the philosophy embodied in Aesop's simple fables, the ethics of Bunyan's Pilgrim and the solemn teachings of the Bible? It may be impossible to form a true reply to these questions, but there can be no doubt that Lincoln, as he was, was the man needed in the place he occupied at the time. He was the instrument of the Almighty formed for a purpose. As he was, he became a savior of the country, whose fame will increase as time rolls on and the work he accomplished is better understood and appreciated.

The life work of men like Lincoln should for ever silence the critics who bestow sneers upon the mission of Joseph, the Prophet, or his great successor, because of their so-called illiteracy, or the humble beginnings of their career. They are in select company in this regard, and the criticism of scholarly ignorance exhausts itself against the marvelous fact that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." For special purposes, in the history of the world, the elect, those whose destiny is to make epochs, very often belong to the class regarded as "despised," so that the glory of things accomplished may be ascribed to Him to whom alone it belongs.

It is well to remember Abraham Lincoln as an instrument in the hands of the Almighty. In his life and in his death he is a lesson to old and young that cannot be too much contemplated, as long as the cause for which he gave his life is dear to human hearts.

ALABASTER BOXES.

During a conversation in the "News" editorial room about relieving the distressed, which occurred a day or two ago, a gentleman who participated took from his pocket book a card, which he said he had carried for years, and on which were printed the following words, by an unknown author:

"Friend:

"Have you any alabaster boxes of love and tenderness to break over the coffins of your friends when they are dead? Please don't wait. Break them now. Speak kind words while their ears can hear them, and while their hearts can be thrilled and made happy."

"Let us not criticise others until we have faithfully performed our own duty. The flowers you meant to send for their coffins, send to their homes

before their eyes are closed forever—say your kind words to living people."

"If my friends have any alabaster boxes laid away, full of fragrant perfumes of sympathy and affection which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them that I may be refreshed and cheered while I need them. I would rather have a plain coffin, a funeral without a eulogy, and an unmarked grave, than to live without the sympathy and friendship of those around me."

"Let us anoint our friends beforehand for their burial. Let us cheer the burdened spirits now. Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward over life's weary way."

In the midst of the rush for money, and for power, and for other forms of self-aggrandizement, which so pre-eminently characterizes the closing years of the nineteenth century, such sentiments as these bear a refreshing sweetness like that of a cool and fragrant breeze sweeping over a desert. It is a good thing to carry in the pocket book along with one's bank notes, a card on which they are printed.

It is well to speak kindly of the dead, but it is better to speak kindly to the living. There is a probability that the dead have a means of ascertaining in what tone we talk of them; but there is a certainty that the living will be cheered if we will talk cheerfully to them. The age is sordid, and its tendencies are selfish, heartless and merciless. If our spiritual natures are to escape its contamination, we must cultivate love and sympathy for our kind, and the virtue of charity, which, more nearly than any other, is the essence of Christianity.

THE VALENTINE.

It would be both unprofitable and unnecessary to attempt to account for the origin of the valentine, in order to show its gravity as an infliction upon civilization. Like divorce, the saloon and the political boss, the valentine, in all its enormity, is with us. To know when or whence it came would hardly alleviate its baneful effects.

There is some likelihood that the valentine, in its original form, was all right; but in the form which it mostly wears now-a-days, it is all wrong. When it used to appear as a dainty and delicately worded missive, timidly yet hopefully expressive of the tender passion, it probably didn't do a great amount of harm; sometimes it perhaps did good by enhancing the sum total of happiness in the life of both sender and recipient. But in its modern "comic" character it is only fit for execration.

In fact, it is a misnomer to call it "comic;" for it is too serious a nuisance to be regarded as at all funny. It is low, coarse and often indecent; its humor is of a gross and debased sort that ought to be universally condemned. It is a convenient vehicle for insult when used by persons older than children, and its tendencies among the latter are the opposite of elevating or refining.

It has become the custom in this State, and especially in this city, during recent years, for children to go from house in the evening, lay "comic" valentines on the doorsteps, pound thunderously on the door, and then scamper away. This sort of "amusement" is kept up until a late hour at night, for a week or two, including St. Valentine's day proper, and its extensive prevalence is deemed a justification by refined and well-bred children for engaging in it. But such a practice can never be otherwise than reprehensible, no matter how widely it may prevail. Parents should exert

their influence and authority to stop it.

In regard to the sending, by mail or otherwise, of so-called "sentimental" valentines, there are certain rules of propriety that ought to be observed; and one of these forbids any anonymous correspondence between young people of opposite sexes, on any pretense whatever. A "sentimental" valentine is often a very beautiful thing, and most appropriate to be kept and prized as a souvenir; but no really honorable young man will send such a token to a young lady unless the acquaintance and relations of friendship between them justify such an act on his part; and he should enclose his card, or in some manner indicate his identity. No young lady ought to prize such a gift from an unknown giver. In so doing she may be incurring serious risk. There are various phases of the valentine question that demand the consideration of parents and other advisers of the young.

THE ELISTEDDFO.

The "News" is pleased to learn that arrangements have been perfected for a grand Elisteddfo to be given in this city "conference time." The population of this State embraces natives of many countries, and as a rule all national traits and prejudices that tend to perpetuate narrowness or clanishness, or that exert an influence to prevent the people of the State from becoming a homogeneous and solidified body of patriotic citizens, ought to be discouraged.

But the Elisteddfo, though peculiarly a Welsh institution, comes under no valid objection. In its very nature, it is calculated to stimulate the noblest impulses of any people. Song, music, poetry, eloquence, patriotism, human sympathy and the universal brotherhood of man, are all promoted by this ancient feature of Celtic civilization; and every nationality and every creed in the State will do well to lend it a hearty endorsement, participate in its delights, and drink in of its influence.

The Elisteddfo which was held in this city in October, 1895, spread a most wholesome effect, not alone over all Utah, but over a number of other states in the Union, notably Colorado, Ohio and Pennsylvania; and thousands of people in various parts of the Union saw a new light in Deseret, and experienced a shaking up of their former opinions of its people, in consequence of that feast of music and flow of good fellowship. Much good, a great deal of innocent pleasure for the masses, and no harm at all would come of making the Elisteddfo a permanent institution in this commonwealth.

SINGULAR CAMPAIGN METHOD.

A Boston shoe manufacturer, who does not believe in a tariff on hides, and wants to see it removed, has adopted a novel method for crystallizing public opinion in that direction. In each case of shoes he sends out is enclosed a circular addressed to the retail dealer, reading as follows:

"In each pair contained in this case will be found a protest against the hide tariff which has increased the cost of footwear. None of your neighbors, friends, and customers can, I believe, ascribe any larger return for their cat-tle to the enactment of this hide tariff, while you have no recourse but to pass along the increased cost of your shoes, and this increased cost works most seriously upon the common low-priced grades, which are sold to the great majority of working people."

Inclosed also is a petition to Con-