

NOTCHES ON THE STICK.

PATERFEX TELLS OF HIS VISIT TO
OLDTOWN, MAINE.

The Indian Citizens are Very Interesting and Prosperous—The Authors Guild and the Home of Poe—Some Exquisite Little German Translations.

Ministers Week—or the period of an annual Methodist Conference—quite deranged our small literary belongings, reducing to *nil* our scribbling propensity, so that our customary notches were not cut into the door-post of PROGRESS last week. It may be a relief to the public to understand that we shed few "leathers from a flying wing," and that, if some plan can be devised to keep us on the move, the seekers after sensible things in this paper will not then be bothered with our paragraphs. We are now, however, settling down in our annual closet, and the usual variety of things new and old may be hereafter ventilated; unless the spirit of restlessness, or the mandate of authority shall detach us, and give command again to wander.

Episodes worthy of record, were our visit to Indian Island, and to the Maine State College at Orono, during the session of our Conference at Oldtown, Me., Having been ferried over this branch of the now full-swinging Penobscot, by an Indian in his bateau, you seem to have traversed several hundreds of miles, and to have entered a new region, and to have mingled with another race. French Canada seems to have reached down here, and touched this part of Maine, which evidently smacks as much of the *habitant* as of the Indian. Here are the homes, in a certain degree indicative of comfort and prosperity, if not of luxury and taste, though neatness and spick-span cleanliness are not, in modern times at least peculiar virtues of the Indian. A plank side-walk runs the length of the village,—past the chapel, school house, hall and cemetery, and decent frame houses,—amid which we decry never a wigwam, but or hovel,—some well kept, and of ample proportions, and surrounded by shade and fruit trees. The people we meet are civil, if shy, and the children are modest, well-mannered, some of them having pleasant faces and sweet voices. Questions put to them were candidly, if somewhat hesitatingly answered. If kindly and courteous you can generally gain access to the homes of the people, and to their friendly confidence, as well. From the hill-top, overlooking the river, with its canoes and bateaux gliding by, we read tributes to departing governors of the tribe of Penobscots, inscribed on monuments of white marble. The Indian is possessed of his honest pride and grateful memory, and takes pleasure in recording the special virtues of his tribal leader.

The members of the literary guild in New York city have recently been warmly exercised over the threatened destruction of the Poe cottage, on Kingsbridge road, at the top of Fordham hill. This quaint little Dutch building, specimens of which are becoming scarce in the land, was the residence of Edgar Allan Poe, and of Virginia Clemm, his wife—the "Lenore," and "Annabel Lee" of his poems—and of her mother, concerning whom he wrote:

"My mother—my own mother, who died early
Was but the mother of my life; but you
Are mother to me I love so dearly,
And thus a dearer than the mother I knew,
By that affinity which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul life."

In this little low-roofed place, then shaded with trees, and with its veranda running the whole length of the cottage, the poet knew some of his most prosperous days, and performed his most important work, while as the assistant of C. F. Briggs he edited the "Broadway Journal." Here he came in social and literary contact with Willis and others of the Gotham literary of that time. The cottage was then removed at some distance from the city, in the rural environs of Westchester, but with the extension of that growing metropolis, it has now been brought within its limits, and has like many a relic of the kind, been made liable to disappearance.

A bill of the City Council, providing for the creation of a park at 192nd street, and the Grand Boulevard, and the widening of Kingsbridge road, has put into sudden peril this choice shrine of the lovers of genius, and involves the destruction or the removal of the cottage. This demolition, or alteration of the site of the building, has justly been regarded as a piece of vandalism which must hereafter be repented of, when such regret is too late. Just now the literary societies of Massachusetts are busy with purchasing the Longfellow, Lowell and Whittier houses, and converting them into repositories of relics, and shrines for the visitation of pilgrims; and this is surely the fit time to redeem the cottage of Poe from the violence of axe and crow-bar, and make it what it ought to be, an object sacred to his memory who is, perhaps, the sweetest and most finely-artistic of all our lyrist. So Tennyson thought of him, and so think all the French and many English and German.

For its rescue the Authors Guild is alert, and, as is now usual in all such movements, the ladies are at the very front. They are not satisfied with the intention of the City Authorities to "remove the cottage to another site, within the proposed park," but "they desire to have the limits of the park extended so as to take in the

Poe cottage, which can then be preserved on its present site."

To effect this a delegation of lady authors, accompanied by General James Grant Wilson, President of the Authors' Guild, and General James R. O'Beirne, whose father-in-law was the owner of a cottage on what is now Eighty-fourth st., where Poe lived for a time, waited on the Mayor, and presented their plea and petition. This committee of the Poe Memorial Association, headed by Mrs. Fay Pierce, included Mrs. Harriet Maxwell Converse, Mrs. Ellen Hardin Walworth, Mrs. E. H. Alexander, Mrs. E. A. Greeley and Mrs. Almon Hensley. The case was opened by General Wilson, who "saw no public necessity for the bill in its present form. There was no objection to a park, but in its creation the Poe house should not be desecrated."

Mrs. Pierce spoke with much warmth—or read from her manuscript—and so forcibly as to impress the Mayor. Indignantly she exclaimed: "I would rather that the cottage was burned up, than have it removed from its present site!" To do such a deed was inexcusable barbarism and vandalism," only to be accounted for by the supposition that the authorities were "unaware of Poe's position among the great poets of the world." She supported her plea by extracts read from letters written by John Sherman, Theodore Roosevelt, Rev. Dr. Rainsford, Senator George F. Hoar, Cardinal Gibbons, Henry Cabot Lodge, Chauncey Depew, and others, who commended the efforts being made to preserve the Poe cottage on its present site.

Mrs. Hensley said, among other things: "The genius of every poet, no matter how virile his work may be a reason why the life and work of a poet are particularly dear and sacred to us, woman; but it is a more special reason why a powerful man should stretch out his hand to aid its cause. . . . Any one can destroy, but no mortal can restore life, or make of a demolished structure the thing it once was. Cities may rise and fall; political organizations will last just until their work is accomplished; but, so long as there are wives and mothers and daughters in the world, so long will endure the fame of Edgar Poe; and we would have our Mayor figure in history as the man who, with his genius for reform and his power to sweep away abuses, saved to the American nation the home of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of American poets."

It is to be regretted that the full concession was not made to these noble and eloquent pleaders, who regarded the most precious and sacred interests of the nation. They fought hard for the preservation of the cottage on its present site, but it was not granted them; it must be removed sixty-two feet, and will be kept within the park. It will be seen, however, that, with this removal, and the alteration of the country around it, how greatly the value of the relic must be diminished, as the cottage at Alloway, or of Stratford, would be, if brought thus within the limits of a great and widening city.

We read with interest, the other day, a timely article in "The Review of Reviews," on Poe Cottage, followed by a symposium of letters from a large circle of literary people, all expressing a desire for its preservation, as a shrine for the relics of the poet of "Ulalume" and "The Raven."

We owe to several translators a love of German balladry and the fruit of the minor lyric muse of the Fatherland. Emma Lazarus helped us to an understanding of Heine, and to the relish of his brilliant musical songs. Carlyle gave us a guess at what the gracious Goethe may be, when singing at his best,—as in Mignon's song. Longfellow gave us our most intimate, as our earliest acquaintance, with Muller, Uhland, and Salis—peculiar favorites of ours. But our wildest survey of the German minor muse came with the book of our friend, Lewis Frederick Starrett, whose "Poems and Translations," we have stored among the choicest of our treasures. Now comes the latest additions, in "Wind Flowers" [Charles H. Kerr & Co. Chicago 1887] and "Flowers From Foreign Fields," [The Peter Paul Book Co., Buffalo.] by Luella Dowd Smith, of Hudson, N. Y. The first named volume contains original poems as well as translations; the second presents translations wholly, and we have a body of simple and beautiful songs under the names of Bodensiedt, Bottger, Freiligrath, Geibel, Grun, Hartmann, Hensel, Korner, Lenau, Luvater, Ruckert, Sturm, Vogl, and others. Mrs. Smith, as truly as Mr. Starrett, seems to have found her enchanted garden of song among the hills that slope to the Rhine, and the blossoms she has culled and arranged for us have not lost all of color and fragrance, if some of the dew may have been shaken off in the plucking. Both of these translators have the impulse to original song, and have by considerable practice acquired the art of the translator. Both have that clearness and simplicity of mind and style, and that gentleness and affectionateness of spirit, that truthfulness to "the kindred points of heaven and home," essential in students of the German minor muse, if they would render such productions with fidelity. This is why we like so well this poetry; it seems to us as with the softest tone of a mother or a sister, and concerns so frequently those intimate things of the heart—those common sentiments, such as

love of country and the domestic circle—where all peoples are at one, and at home. Little of violent and distracting passion breathes here; but that soothing healing and consoling tone and temper so potent in the verse of Wordsworth, is felt to be present; and you rise from the tonic sweetness in a happier mood, and in fuller fellowship with your fellow men, and this lovely world of God, in which it is your exalted privilege to live.

Refraining from further comment, we will present some specimens of Mrs. Smith's versification. The poem we now give is, in the original, the work of Kayser-Langerhans, a lady poet of the Fatherland:

The Coming Home.

I came from weary journey
Unto my home one day:
I could not see for weeping,
The graves along my way.
Ah, then I learned the stranger
So homelike cannot be,
As he who is forgotten
Near his own roof-tree.

Here is Goethe's "Rosebud of the Heather," which is a sweet and graceful song, if we may judge from the translation:

Once there bloomed a rosebud sweet,
Rose bud of the heather:
Came a boy with flying feet,
Must the lovely rose bud greet
In the sunny weather.
Rosebud, Rosebud, rosebud red—
Rosebud of the heather!
Said the boy—"I'll gather thee,
Rosebud of the heather!"
Said the rosebud—"I am free—
I have thorns to punish thee
In the fickle weather."
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red—
Rosebud of the heather!
Foolish boy to break apart
Rosebud from the heather!
Now he suffers endless smart,
Naught can heal his aching heart,
All is cloudy weather.
Rosebud, rosebud, rosebud red
Rosebud of the heather!

Here is a strain of patriotism, from C. H. Schnauffer. It lifts along like a brook hurrying to meet the river it celebrates:

How Fair is the Rhine.

Though praise the Tyrol His Tyrol so well,
To me is left only the Rhine-land to tell:
O splendid and noble the mountain peaks shine;
But friendly and loving and fair is the Rhine.

The torrent there washes the earth from the flowers;
Here waters the vineyards, and blesses the bowers;
Where gushes so sparkling a river as mine?
How friendly and loving and fair is the Rhine!

Though you'er with cattle the mountain-maidens roam;
Yet here are the maidens of love and of home:
Here sweetly Love whispers—"I always am
Thine!"

How friendly and loving and fair is the Rhine!
The herdsman is singing afar on the hill;
Here freedom's ringing, inspiring us still:
The people are learning, at liberty's shrine,
How friendly and loving and fair is the Rhine!

For me, I love only the Rhine-land so well,
I have to the Tyrol its praises to tell:
For splendid and noble its mountain peaks shine;
But friendly and loving and fair is the Rhine.

Lenau is one of the tenderest in his touch and most gentle-hearted of all the German poets. Here is a bit of his, brief, and of excellent quality:

Refuge.

Stricken deer in woodland heine,
Wounded by the arrow flying;
Seek the place amid the rushes,
Where the crystal river gushes.
It will save thy heart from breaking,
Calm its terrors, cure its aching.
Man, when struck by sorrow's dart,
Seek the kindest hand's caressing:
Seek the purest fount of blessing:
Flee unto the mother heart.
Soon the weary mother sleep—
Sleeps thy mother without waking:
While thy stricken heart is breaking,
Fly unto the woods and weep.

The old legend of the swan's death-song, so familiar and clear to poetry, reappears in the dress of Grun:

How comes it when my heart was breaking
I sang of Love's sweet joy and rest?
How comes it words of merry-making
Flow'd from my heart when sore distressed?
There saileth not where waves are gleaming
The snowy swan as fair as day:
Without a song, where all is beaming,
In silent joy he takes his way.
In morning's glow; in moon's pale shining
He sailed on, glad and free—and still:
Upon the bank the roses twining:
He sailed on joyfully—and still.
Now when the cruel arrow, clanging,
Has pierced his breast with painful dart,
He, who in joy poured forth no singing,
In death, sings sweet, with broken heart.

Here is a bit of encouragement for the musical interpreters of sorrow, and an indication that they may still expect an audience. This translation is from Ruckert:

The Human Heart.

If thou would'st all human heart strings
Move unto thy harmony:
Seek to touch the saddest soul springs.
Shun the joyful melody.
Many have within their keeping,
Nothing glad upon the earth;
None but wake betimes to weeping;
All have sorrow; few have mirth.

The original poetry of Mrs. Smith we have not here space to consider; but we expect to devote some attention to that in a subsequent paper.

You are here, friend Martin, this morning, with your warmest hand clasp, and your voice of heartiest cheer! I take it that the ice and snow has begun to thaw about Mount Royal, and that a robbin and bluebird or two, have passed the boundry of the St. Lawrence. Welcome! thou true and tried! Inside the door that holds my latch-string, sit down and let us disburden. A word of encouragement will not come amiss to us, when you give it, in whose candor we so thoroughly believe. We have not then, it appears, 'been as without speech' to you and yours, during your long silence, for you say: "We read PROGRESS, and the 'Notches' are always

looked for and eagerly perused." But, lo! gentle defamer! how have you nick-named us—spattered us with labels,—epithets, we never supposed applicable before! We call in Mrs. Paterfex, ask her to rub her spectacles, and assure us if our eyes have been playing us a spunkie game; but, to be sure, she makes out the same lingo, to wit: "What a persistent, wriggling, racing, jumping, irrepressible bookworm you are! You voracious ca'erpillar! you moth! you grasshopper! you butterfly! is there no limit to your appetite? How you devour, and digest, and reproduce, in finer form, the substance on which you feed! In your predatory habits of life, you often light upon some obscure poet or poetling, fan his fevered brow with your translucent wings, and forthwith drag him from darkness to light, wherein his carol is heard,—cheery, musical, and not without merit. You are the Paul Pry of contemporary authorship, no less than the antiquarian of neglected or forsaken toms,—the toms of dead poets, long o'ergrown with the moss of many years—the tender and charitable moss whose soft and green beneficence covers the grave of the pauper, as well as that of the prince, and weeps over the resting place of the sinner as over that of the saint." Well! Well! We rub our small contributory eyes, and profess: We, too, have found our vocation, the highest to which a common scribbling can hope to attain. So far goeth the weekly recreation of "The Notches!"

The fine artistic, poetic and literary tastes of the poet-publisher and editor, Ralph H. Shaw of Lowell, Mass. must impress all who read the "Middlesex Heartstone," for April; so much more attractive to the lover of rare things in its new (magazine) form. There is a modest beauty in its outward attire greatly in contrast with the flaring gaudiness of some covers to current magazines. Picturesque scenes throughout Middlesex County are given in its pages, such as the "View of the Merrimack River From Andover St. Lowell," the lore of places and old houses, such as "The Royal Mansion, Medford," written by Oliver W. Rogers, whose pen is well skilled in such matters,—with its accompanying full-page illustration. The Pawtucket Falls, of the Merrimack, are given as a frontispiece. The following poem by the editor is given, with an illustration,—a charming bit of scenery to match the sweetness of the verse:

Association.

Last year when I was here before,
And looked this quiet landscape o'er,
Through which without a murmur pour
The waters of the Concord,
I did not say what now I say—
How beautiful what I survey!
How lovely, as they wind away
The waters of the Concord!
Ah! then the lass that charms my eye,
The lass so simple, sweet and shy,
Had not been here, a wanderer by
The waters of the Concord;
She had not lefter me; here,
A glamour in this atmosphere,
Nor looking once on them, made dear
The waters of the Concord.

Poems of as sweet a tone and delicate in color are Isaac Basset Choate's "Waiting For Spring," and "Trust," by Benj. F. Leggett. The magazine is only cheap in one particular, namely its price,—being five cents a copy, or fifty cents per annum.

The most notable names in the "Magazine of poetry and Literary Review," for April are, Lord Byron, John Davidson, John Hunter Duvar, A. T. Quiller-Couch, Louise Houghton, and Frank Walcott Hutt. The sketch of Byron is inadequate, and such examples as "Euthanasia," and the "Fare Thee Well," to be given as characteristic of their author, are in poor judgement, we should think. As to this publication, we can but think what it might be. It is a thing of excellent possibility, pitifully marred; and the instrumental injurers are mammon on the one hand, and vanity on the other. There are things of worth and things of no worth, and the reader is left to be the judge. The doggerel-vendor elbows the true poet, hoping to derive a beam of consequence from his lustrous neighborhood. On the one side the roost, the swan; on the other the crow. Never were such elegant sites on Parnassus purchased so cheaply before!

The Brooklyn Citizen of recent date contains a highly appreciative article by Dr. John D. Ross, on Hon. Charles H. Collins, of Hillsboro, and his writings. The rather poor newspaper portrait of our friend contrasts strangely with the clear distinct photograph just now before us, with its expression of earnestness, kindness and sagacity,—qualities not wanting in the subject, by any means.

Mrs. Sophie M. Almon Hensley will next month return to her native home for the summer. In the quiet classic haunts of Windsor (N. S.) she may be expected to perform some literary tasks now in mind, which will extend her now rapidly-growing reputation.

We wish to express our thanks to the donors for the following-named books and pamphlets: Mr. Gustav. Roedel, Gallipolis, Ohio. "A Doric Read, by Zitella Cooke; Mr. C. James, Toronto, the Poems and songs of Alexander McLochlan; Hon. C. H. Collins and Geo. W. Barre, Hillsboro Ohio, Copy of Souvenir Edition of The "News-Herald"; Mr. J. A. Collins, Pueblo, Colorado, Fifth Annual Report of the Pueblo Board of Trade. Concerning this rapidly developing centre, in this most rich and wonderful of the American States,—and frequently termed "the Pittsburgh of the West,"—we have acquired considerable enthusiasm, and some astonishing facts, which may be held for future use.

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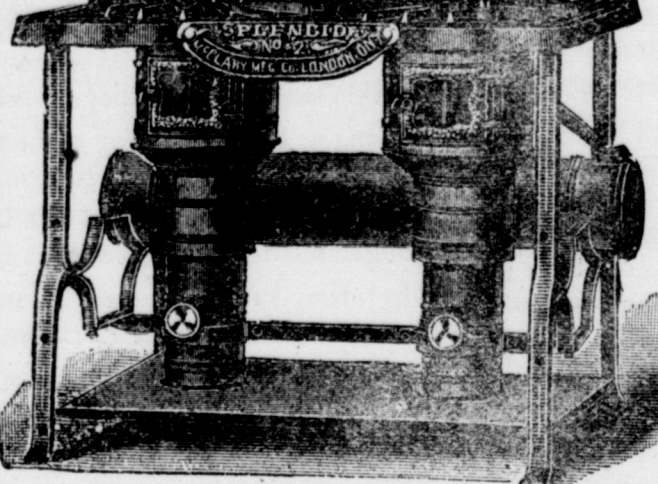
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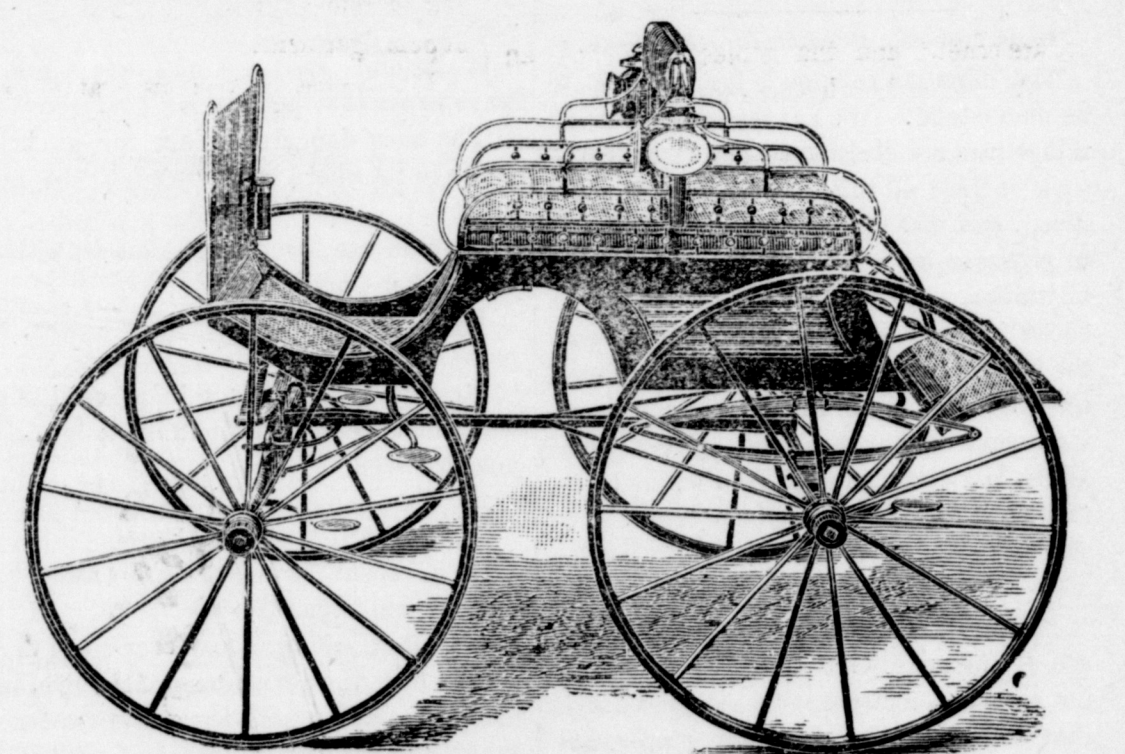
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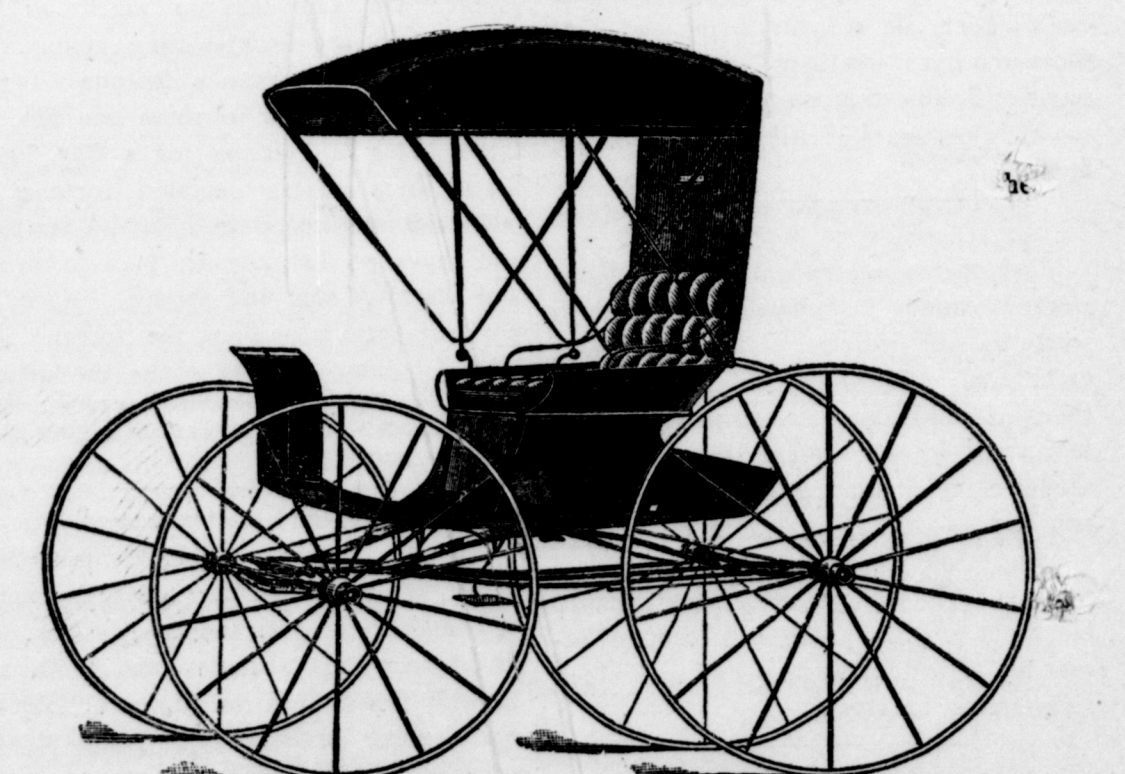
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