

## SIXTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SCIENCE AND ART

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Ten years ago Dr. Weygandt and I were the speakers for the 50th Anniversary meeting, and now on this 60th Anniversary, in the parlance of the stage, he and I are to "put on a show." Thus the two performers, living and working among and on the "Wissahickon Hills," make their second joint appearance. Since that date ten years ago, my erstwhile partner has gone far with his industry and ability and he has followed the scriptural injunction: "I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my strength." We have had from him, of which the following are only a part: "The Red Hills," "The Wissahickon Hills," "The Blue Hills," "The White Hills," each one more interesting than the last, and now the latest, the "Dutch Country," which is the "Red Hills" revisited. All are the product of his keen observation, his sense of humor, his genial philosophy of life and his literary skill.

Usually in every performance there is a curtain-raiser, a prelude to the main and important part of the program, the *piece de resistance*. The first part is usually light and frothy, the second the real substance. My contribution is mainly in lighter vein and lighter verse.

Of all the meetings of the Science and Art, with their varied and interesting programs, two stand out in memory with keen enjoyment. The first was the appearance of Alfred Noyes, at the home of Henry L. Davis, in March of 1915, when the English poet read from his poems. I will never forget the delightful voice, his expert reading and the pathos of the "Highwayman" and its galloping lines:

"The wind was a torrent of darkness among the gusty trees,  
The moon was a ghostly galleon, tossed upon cloudy seas,  
The road was a ribbon of moonlight, over the purple moor,  
And the Highwayman came riding—  
Riding—riding  
The highwayman came riding, up to the old Inn door."

Then, too, he read the lilting lines and music of the barrel organ in "Come Down to Kew in Lilac Time." Whenever lilacs bloom the invitation is happily pressing. Later, we had Robert Frost, our New England poet, at neighbor Weygandt's when we had the thrill of making fence with him and experiencing a choking throat as we listened to the master read the sad story of the "Hired Man," and other Frostian favorites.

I have a cherished book of poems which has stamped in gold on the cover the following lines:

"Sing from some humbler poet,  
Whose songs gushed from his heart,  
Like rain from the clouds of summer  
And tears from the eyelids start,"

And so I have ventured, one of the humbler ones, to bring to you some verses tonight as my contribution to the Sixtieth Anniversary. One of these relates to a young lady who played the piano for the Science and Art at Howard Cooper Johnson's in November, 1919. I went home that evening and recorded my feelings in these stanzas. They are entitled:

A very French maiden came over from France,  
To pound the piano, her fortunes advance.  
She was small and petite and wore a green suit  
But her skill was immense and her muscle to boot.  
She created more noise with her fingers and wrists  
Than a strong man could make with his feet and both fists.  
Sometimes it flowed softly, like brooklets that splash,  
But mostly I thought my ear-drums would crash.  
The poor old piano ('twas brand new this night,)  
Came out of the fray in a terrible plight.  
The marvel of all, none of us could see,  
Where she hid all her muscle, this maid of Páree.

I have strong convictions as to anniversaries. Just so long as we adhere to the decimal system, nations, states, cities and even social organizations like this should have no serious celebration between the 50th and 100th milestones. Our Centennial Exposition in 1876, the first great one of its kind in this country, was a marvelous success, with its immense intellectual stimulus, its artistic awakening, its great industrial repercussions and its world-wide prominence. Our Sesqui-Centennial of 1926 was a dismal and mortifying flop, and the fact we were trying to stir up enthusiasm for only 150 years of the Nation's life was one of the reasons. No, the 100th year is the *annus mirabilis!* And so, in lighter vein should be these minor observances of the 60th and 65th, the 70th and 80th and 90th years until you, of a younger generation and your successors, have a grand commemoration, when Science and Art attains its honored 100 years. Refusing therefore to treat your 60th birthday party as a too solemn and august occasion I venture the following description of its history since it was started in 1880:

Sixty years of winter's meetings,  
Sixty years of friendly greetings,  
Sixty years of how-de-doing,  
Sixty years new costumes viewing,  
Sixty years tuxedos wearing,  
Sixty years kind gossip sharing,  
Sixty years of Science chasing,  
Sixty years of Art embracing,  
Sixty years with music ringing  
Sixty years of wit and singing.  
Sixty years of wisdom tapping,  
Sixty years of furtive napping,  
Sixty years of sandwich eating,  
Sixty years thus breakfast cheating,  
Sixty years of cafe—frapping,  
Sixty years of learning lapping,  
Sixty years of coffee pouring,  
Sixty years youth's vim restoring,  
Sixty years of late leave-taking,  
Sixty years of exits making.

Forty more will soon be fleeting  
You must have a gorgeous meeting!

Among the members of the Science and Art for many years, beloved and esteemed by all, was our dear friend, Dr. Walter Mendelson, who three weeks ago passed to the great beyond. Dr. Mendelson, as some of you may know, besides being a great physician, a scholar and scientist, was a horologist. He found enjoyment and recreation in making and repairing clocks. When he sent them home, ready to go again, he would paste a poem, original or otherwise, in his characteristic handwriting inside the door so that every time you would wind it, the message was there to remind you of him and his careful work. Here is one I would like to share with you:

"Time flies they say,  
Alas it is not so,  
Time does not fly,  
'Tis only we who go."

Standing in the hall of a so-called Pennsylvania farmhouse in the Wissahickon Hills is an old grandfather's clock, with a case made of inlaid butternut, a set of pipes that play eight different ancient tunes, a moon that rises and sets and engraven on its face is an old and distinguished Germantown name, "Jacob Gorgas," the maker,—with the date "1774." Jacob is wound by pulling up two heavy weights on chains and unfortunately this must be done every five days, so, as in modern times clocks are wound once a week, Jacob often is forgotten and runs down. But there was a time when Jacob would not go at all so Doctor Mendelson, the horologer, was consulted and in a short time the following message was received:

TO — JACOB GORGAS — 1774

Yes, Jacob, it indeed is rough,  
I may say, most uncommon tough—  
To stand with hands before thy face  
As though thou wert in sore disgrace.

Thou! who didst warble as a bird!  
Thy mellow pipes no longer heard,  
Thy bell, that once rang loud and clear,  
No longer charms the family's ear.

But listen, Jacob! I will come,  
And thou no longer shalt be dumb,  
I'll take thee to my loving heart,  
And on thee spend my noble art.

Each arbor, pinion, stud and rack  
With sober zeal I will attack  
And oil, not castor, thou shalt sip,  
Three drops upon each pivot tip.

I feel an itching—joy betides!  
To rummage in thy old insides,  
Hunt for thy troubles so profound  
And see thy ancient wheels go round.

So, when the oak's first leaves appear  
And catbirds whistle in thy ear,  
And sounds of spring fill all the air,  
Look for me, Jake! I'll sure be there.

And then beneath the spreading oaks,  
With thee and Charles and neighbor Stokes,  
We'll have a learned consultation  
And mend thy present situation.

Jan. 22, '30.

W. M.

From January to May, Jacob remained in the clock hospital and on the next to last day of that month he was returned to his accustomed corner, accompanied by the following lines of dismissal by the surgeon:

L'ENVOI JACOB GORGAS

Dear Charles, I'm happy to inform thee,  
That after labors most stupendous,  
Friend Jaky now—as thou wilt see—  
Is going well, and looks quite splendidous.

The moons that in his skies now shine,  
I knew that I could surely fix right  
Shed smiles both radiant and benign,  
One Orthodox, and t'other Hicksite.—

Now note the organ's solemn peal!  
The anthem's ring, the dirge's moan  
Responding to the rolling wheel  
With Wedding March of Mendelsohn!

I hope that Jacob—now restored—  
Will flourish long to soothe and cheer thee,  
Wreath music round thy friendly board  
While time flows by, thy loved ones near thee.

May 30, '30.

Walter Mendelson.

Speaking of clocks and time, two hundred years ago my kinsman, the President of Science and Art, and I had a common ancestor, who lived out Church Lane where a little stream, which eventually found the Wingohocking Creek, ran an old mill, the first to be erected in Philadelphia County. His ancestor's home stood on the hill above the mill and on the next hill was the farmhouse of my Spencer ancestors. With the Spencers lived Thomas Godfrey, a mathematical genius, who invented a quadrant for sailors' use. During the summer of 1798, when yellow fever drove the officers of the Government from Philadelphia, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, boarded with the Spencers and one summer afternoon President and Mrs. Washington drove out to call upon him. In the garden was an old marble sundial with the motto, "Time waits for no man," and a bronze gnomon pointing straight to the North Star as all true gnomons should do. The sundial now stands in a garden sharing the sunshine of the "Wissahickon Hills" and while it brings us perfect celestial time, we wish that it might also tell us what it has witnessed through the centuries. So these questions have been addressed to the old dial.

QUESTIONING THE SUNDIAL

Did Godfrey, he of quadrant fame,  
Etch deep those lines and hours?  
Did shadows race across your face  
Mid pinks and gillyflowers?  
Perhaps you heard the muskets roll  
The year that you were made?  
Did Germantown, all up and down,  
Echo with cannonade?

In later years when peace had come  
Was there a stately call?  
With slow approach, in swaying coach  
Pray, did you note it all?

The President and his good wife  
 Roll up unto the door,  
 Both ushered in, to parlor prim,  
 And was it after four?  
 Did Washington go mark the time  
 By your white marble dial?  
 And did he stand, with watch in hand,  
 And did he really smile,  
 To note the pun your motto hides  
 On gnomon, where it states  
 The saying old, so often told,  
 That "Time for no man waits."  
 Did Martha, too, betray a smile  
 She tried to hide in vain,  
 Four faces there, with tousled hair  
 All peeping through the pane?  
 And did she note small Hephziba,  
 Contemptuous turn away,  
 "She's but a woman after all,"  
 Heard you the maiden say?  
 You now have timed three centuries,  
 One full, and parts of two,  
 The moments fly, the hours speed by,  
 Do they seem short to you?  
 Will this old noisy, hurried world,  
 Which has scant use for rhymes,  
 Ever again, and how and when,  
 Return to sundial times?

Every bird-loving family on the Wissahickon Hills has its bird-feeding station, and there is rivalry to see which home can list the greatest number of varieties of feathered friends. Not far from the sundial, which we have been questioning, is the birds' breakfast table where as many as seven varieties have been noted at one time on a winter's morning. Among these none are so welcome as the Kentucky Cardinals, and these verses were written particularly for them.

#### FAR COUNTRY CARDINALS

With you, rare scarlet Prince and dun brown Maid  
 Comes sunshine in the gloom,  
 Your sunflower seed we quickly place  
 In sheltered spot where you may grace  
 A leafy dining-room.  
 You are so shy! Oh, do not be afraid!  
 He whistles "sweetheart," "sweetheart," all day long,  
 Or so it seems to me,  
 To her so dainty and demure  
 While he so brilliant and so sure,  
 High in his cedar tree,  
 Will lilt away, in ecstasy of song.  
 Her dress as rich as his, but more sedate,  
 In tawny browns and red;  
 She sits upon her hidden nest,  
 Its color mingling with her breast,  
 Nor moves her crested head,  
 Not even for the love notes of her mate.  
 'Tis not indifference keeps him afar,  
 For hear his constant call.  
 He snatched the sunset from the sky,  
 She chose the sunrise shaded by  
 The dun-brown leaves of fall;  
 And danger lurks where flame and tinder are.

Messengers are you from realms supernal,  
Bide with us now, — alway,  
The sundial casts, a shadow where,  
Your wings go flashing through the air,  
You light the darkest day!  
Your love and beauty will abide,—eternal!

Leading from the sundial in this garden on the Wissahickon Hills to an old stone bench, is a garden walk of stepping stones which have been gathered from near and far. There are eighteen of them representing a regular hodge-podge of historical events and localities. The stones have been mostly gathered in trips abroad; a few have been brought to the garden by interested friends. One of the first of these garden stones came from nearby "Grumblethorpe," the old Wister house on the Main Street. This was where General Agnew, the British general of highest rank, was carried, mortally wounded, during the Battle of Germantown. Perhaps some of you may have read the discussion in two late issues of "Life" as to the proper spelling of the name of the climbing vine that has brought world-wide distinction to this old Germantown family's name. To this discussion, which was partly in verse, the following contribution is made:

Please do not make a row, or go into hysteria,  
What difference does it make, if it's Wistar or Wisteria?  
As it clambers o'er the trellis, or drapes an old pine tree,  
With its wondrous, purple clusters, 'tis a glorious sight to see!  
So spell it any way you like, with "a's" or "e's" to please,  
For you cannot spoil its beauty, even spelled with x y z's.

A now famous young friend, Nora Waln, the author of "Larsen Duke of Mongolia," "The House of Exile," and "Reaching for the Stars," which some of you may have been reading lately, was coming to America and brought a stone from the Great Wall of China with her to be placed in the garden. She and her husband, while living in China, dispatched a Chinese servant by train up to the Great Wall to get the stone. It was a day and a half's journey. He had instructions to have a photograph taken of his securing the stone from the wall and he was also to obtain a certificate from the station master at the Great Wall station to this effect. All this he did and was seated in the train for the return journey when the conductor demanded \$1.56 for the stone as excess baggage. The Chinaman retorted he had never seen a stone worth \$1.56 so he dumped it out on the platform and proceeded home without it. The Osland-Hills, for Nora Waln is a maiden and pen name, were so provoked they made him turn around and go back a day and a half's journey for it. The stone was on the platform where he had thrown it, he secured it, returned home and Nora carried it in an especially made rattan hamper all the way to the Wissahickon Hills.

Each stone is ambitious to be crowned with an appropriate sonnet and an invitation is hereby extended for aid in this direction. So far seven have been completed, leaving eleven stones unadorned. There is time this evening to read but one of the seven:

#### THE GREAT WALL

This small gray stone, part of a crumbling span  
From China's Wall, that still stands bold and clear  
Like some huge creeping serpent, climbing sheer  
The mountain top and precipice, it ran  
Unnumbered leagues, more than the eye can scan,  
From Pechili, to distant deserts drear;

Measured by human toil and human fear,  
 The greatest single structure reared by man.  
 High walls are useless things these modern times,  
 Dark relics they of darker ages past,  
 Man's vigilance alone will make them last,  
 They crumble with the winds and winter's rimes.  
 The world moves on, this wandering stone recalls,  
 That Truth will overflow the highest walls.

The "Wissahickon Hills" are the native habitat of the hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis*, one of nature's masterpieces, the "State" tree of Pennsylvania. Everyone is entitled to his or her opinion as to which is the most beautiful evergreen tree; the following little verse will show how some of the hill-dwellers feel about it:

The pine is crowned the "kingly" tree;  
 It well deserves full royalty.  
 The hemlock's called the "princely" tree,  
 This lower rank is not for me!  
 Right here and now,—Oh hemlock tree!  
 A royal crown is given thee!  
 Not prince, but equal,—"queenly" tree,  
 In beauty, grace and symmetry.  
 Full honor his, great honor hers  
 The King and Queen of conifers.

And among this species there is none more beautiful than Sargent's Weeping hemlock, named by Dr. Charles S. Sargent for a Sargent cousin. Dr. Sargent, of Boston, was the author of the "Silva of North America," a monumental work of fourteen volumes, the great authority on our native trees. This sonnet was written as a tribute to his memory and to one of his favorite varieties:

I do not know where Sargent's body lies,  
 If shaft or urn may mark that sylvan spot,  
 I do know that he builded to the skies,  
 With "Silva" he will never be forgot.  
 Twice fortunate was he, whose ardent task  
 Added each day new luster to his fame,  
 And greater monument no one need ask,  
 Than the low,—weeping hemlock with his name.  
 In green cascades around its lowly girth,  
 Its branches graceful as green waterfalls;  
 With soft caress they stoke old mother earth,  
 It Sargent's calm and dignity recalls.  
 A monument, which time will not destroy,  
 A vernal fountain of perpetual joy.

One of sure signs of advancing years is to hear someone continually saying, "Now when I was a boy." Yes, "when I was a boy" my father made me learn as a recitation for the regular Friday afternoon school exercises, "Ossian's Address to the Sun." It was a great effort on the part of both of us; I was afraid the boys would laugh at it and me and ridicule, as you know, is a deadly weapon. It was so different from the conventional "Horatius at the Bridge" or "Paul Revere's Ride" or "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight." However, it was committed to memory and delivered, rather evoking admiration from the rest of the class for the temerity of the speaker. The result was, learned under stress and difficulties, for it is poetical prose, it remains clear and vivid after three-score years. There is one passage applicable to an occasion such as this:

"Age is dark and unlovely. It is like the glimmering light of the moon as it shines through broken clouds. And the mist is on the hill. The traveler pauses in the midst of his journey."

It was not until "age" had come that I realized how frequently false was the sentiment the Gaelic warrior and bard was declaiming, just as false as James McPherson's claim to the authenticity of Ossian's existence. Age need not be dark and unlovely. Walter Mendelson was leading a happy busy life after 80; Edison at more than 80 was still using his inventive faculties. Franklin went abroad as our Ambassador to France and was signing the Treaty of Peace in his 77th year. Titian, one of the greatest painters of all time, was still working at 99 and died in 1576, almost literally with the palette and brushes in his hands.

But I must draw my collection of trivia to a close, and in doing so I will read the ending of what has always seemed to me one of the greatest poems of Longfellow. It was written for an anniversary—the 50th reunion of his class at Bowdoin College.

"But why, you ask me, should this tale be told  
To men grown old, or who are growing old?  
It is too late! Ah, nothing is too late  
Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.  
Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles  
Wrote his grand *Œdipus* and *Simonides*  
Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,  
When each had numbered more than four-score years,

"And *Theophrastus*, at fourscore and ten,  
Had but begun his 'Characters of Men.'  
Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingales,  
At sixty wrote the *Canterbury Tales*;  
Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,  
Completed *Faust* when eighty years were past.  
These are indeed exceptions; but they show  
How far the gulf-stream of our youth may flow  
Into the arctic regions of our lives,  
Where little else than life itself survives.

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What then? Shall we sit idly down and say  
The night hath come; it is no longer day?  
The night has not yet come; we are not quite  
Cut off from labor by the failing light.  
Something remains for us to do or dare;  
Even the oldest tree some fruit may bear;  
For age is opportunity no less  
Than youth itself, though in another dress,  
*And as the evening twilight fades away*  
*The sky is filled with stars, invisible by day."*

And now as a final closing sentiment, suitable for this or any other anniversary observance that has to do with time and age and the fleeting years, I offer a stanza by one of the greatest poets of the world, Robert Browning:

"Grow old along with me,  
The best is yet to be,  
The last of life for which the first was made;  
Our times are in his hand  
Who saith! A whole I planned,  
Youth shows but half, trust God, see all nor be afraid!"