"Should public opinion affect our individuality?"

Mary E. Lyman.
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2. How it originates

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Study first before accepting Popular Sentiment
"Opinion," says Dr.ross Brown, "rides upon the nest of reason; and men are happy, wise, or learned according as that opinion shall set them down in the register of reputation. However, weigh not thyself in the scales of thine own judgement but let the opinion of the judicious be the standard of thy merit."

This is a question that comes before us in every relation of life, and it is always within our own choosing whether or not we will do certain things, that are according to or against "Public Opinion."

It has been truly said that "Men may encounter instant fear the danger of the sea, the horrors of war, the pestilence that walketh at noonday, but the opinion of all men he cannot face so easily," and why? Because he desires to be well thought of by others as one of the most deep rooted of all sentiments that belong to the human heart."

We are by nature imitative creatures, fearing to do a single uncommon thing, for the reason that it might make us ridiculedly conspicuous and if perseverance, we do reject the regular standards it is generally thought that all standards are rejected. Boldness, therefore an
our part is frequently very essential, in order
that the wrong might be righted. This deter-
mining the right or wrong of a popular senti-
ment is very hard sometimes for says Bishop
Pelham "Time wears out the fiction of opin-
ion and does by degrees discover and un-
mack that fable of ungrounded pronouncement
and confirms the dictates and sentiments of
nature." It is shown by this that Public
Opinion cannot be wholly relied upon for
everything. This results mainly from the fact
that the thoughts advocated have not origi-
nated or grown from the masses, sponta-
neously but from prominent individuals in
whom the people generally have confidence.

The procedure is similar to a volcanic erup-
tion beneath the ocean. The greatest or move-
ment is at first within comparatively small
capacities but this commotion cannot be con-
gined to that one locality but it gradually
spreads in every direction in immense
waves, the greater the upheaval the more
rapidly and forcibly will it move, as it sweeps
over the whole ocean. Its real
depth, however, will be known only when
it has met some strong opposing force, as
the same line for instance. It is just as true
that, as the great naval motion was caused
by a single eruption so with the origin of the
great questions they are started by our compar-
atively few men, who, indeed, possess great executive
ability, in whom the people place much confi-
dence. This has been demonstrated many times
in history, as in war times, slavery cause, & at
present in Casey's Army.

So closely interwoven are the three departments
of national life, social, political & religious, it is
difficult to say that Opinion favors the move-
ment which may be political in its nature &
objects to that one that is more religious, for
questions greatly enter into all three departments.

In the earlier times it was the prevailing
custom, as we learn by many foms descriptive
of moral life, when the

"gray-haired sires, and their sweet wives,

The youth & maid met on the green

whether for a jolly social tone, for the adoption
for some law or to listen to the gospel call,

they all went together to the place of meeting act-
ed as one body, believed heartily that in them
there is strength & greatly enjoyed the purity
and simplicity of careless freedom. But later
we find sociability is found not to consist of all but of the more humble classes, who believe in this method, while the courts of nobility keep aloof and indulge in their feasts and gaiety in its wildest, no longer in the formal, cool and perfumed air, but in the hot and gaseous atmosphere of closed halls. This latter is what we find prevalent at the present time. It seems indeed that the further apart the wealthy and poorer classes get the better are the upper classes united. This is due usually to the fact that the poorer classes realize the superior advantages of the others. So give up to this feeling of the same time neglecting to "insist upon themselves and not to imitate." Sometimes the ideas advocated are perfectly right & legitimate, & are for the upbuilding of more interest, but again it is very dangerous to take up the customs are sport by the party in favor. For example, take the fashions. As a general thing we find them in their as pictured in the fashion plates adorning tall, slender figures with extremely small waists, &c. &c., but at the same time we have the height recommended & least costumes. As it rests with the people which of these should be adopted—what which would
tend to make the figure attractive or that which will insure health. I find, I believe that rester are taken as the originalless ad-

vocate far more persons favor, at present, a comfortlly-fitting gown made after the first style.

So it is in many things connected with so-
ciety and its ways that make us slaves to habits that are sometimes very harmful and degrading.

The distant feelings that exist between the family & the hired help are very prevalent. The
girl is required to do alone the whole wash-
ing and mowing for the large family; wash,

wipe a part in place all the dishes, after each meal prepared by herself; and at the same time
teast every apartment in a neat and orderly
condition after all this at a late hour. She

steals away for the night next. But where? There in that small & ill finished

bath room up in the attic is this night?

Doesn't this look like we were cherishing

an element of slavery? It is true that she is

not bought and sold but her very life is being

exchanged for a very minute sum as compensa-
tion for the hard labor that rightfully de-
mands more. As the result of such treatment she naturally becomes cross, disinterested, dissatisfied with life in any form and this is the average type who are now employed or who come to our homes for trial. How if these feelings of discouragement and slight are seen once in a while should we continue these girls severely? Our work along this line should be done with care. The first thing inquired into being the cause of this indifferent

Not only can this degradation be noted in the homes to their shame, but also on a more scale in the factories where many men and women are employed for a mere distance and when we hear and read so much of this, although perhaps we haven't witnessed it, we are inclined to believe that brutality and atmo

However, this quality is not so prominent a feat as it was but advancement hasn't gone any too far yet. This has been accomplished so far by the determination of the leaders of these places because they found that in order to real
ize the most in a given time. The laborer requires plenty of food, good air and light, plenty of room. Pub-
lic opinion partly sanctions this movement as a
moral guide along the road to forever blotting such inhuman treatment of yellow
skins out of our midst.

One writer says, "Our lance keeping, art, occupation, marriage, and religion we have
not chosen, but society has chosen for us," and few times it is when we come to look at these
things in this light. It has not been long
since the mothers and daughters were em-
ployed only in such work as was best suited
to women, as weaving, knitting, mending,
the making of the clothes for the family use.
But when the more ambitious ones ventured
into occupations (aside from those mentioned)
and found that by standing firmly they could
hold their ground, progress was made. This
broke the less bold ones and it dared to venture into
the cold world to become business women who
are alive to the world and its commercial inter-
ests. Today so diversified is woman's work
that it saves time and space to name what she
doesn't do, rather than what she does. In this
connection we may mention those who have be-
brave enough to introduce for their sisters, dresses which imitate that of a man thinking. I presume, that wish it would come on added dignity and that all this would be far better suited to her various duties. Public Opinion however, objects seriously to any such dressing worn by the women; the newspapers are full of it. The magazines have column after column rating it as the originators hear it on the street corners, in the homes, until the woman cries, 'it is too much and say: "We will do it now our I spite." Having in mind what Elizabeth Harland has said, "Then you have chosen your part aside by it do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world." How should they proceed with their plans in the face of this strong opposition? What does Society give as a reason for thinking thus? It says: "No dress which tends to imitate that of man will keep woman in that light unless she is the type of grace, purity, and holiness." Is not this thin sufficient for any clear minded person? Yet it must be the ruling sentiment.

Our housekeeping is governed greatly by what people say. Some homes will perhaps be furnished entirely or in part after the English.
style or perhaps Japanese or Chinese. There may be scattered through the house many "curios" of various origin that are both interesting and educating. All these Society recommends but when at home is found in which the furnishings are far too costly than is right to rightly correspond to the earnings of the owner, it begins to question, and it rightfully should, for it is said that its eyes are turned ultimately to its own wrongfull demands in making this weak-minded person feel that he must make the section to appear well before the public.

Furthermore our ways and methods in the home correspond greatly to those around us. While callers are being entertained in the afternoon a dainty little lunch of chocolate (or tea) - a wafer or cake is a pleasant feature (until it becomes an expected part of the visit, then it becomes a work of competition). If the callers are not admitted they hear the servant girl say "not at home" or receive cards to that effect while at the same time the hostess may be reclining on the couch interested in either some fancy work or a fascinating novel. Again you may be unaware
If the presence of any one very near you, on turning quickly around (of necessity) you came a collision. Immediately, turn are exchanged as: “Excuse me, I'm sorry I hurt you.” You receive his answer as don't mention it, it didn't hurt in the least” while you know that it did from your own feelings. Many are the evasions needed that are sanctioned by society as a means to lubricate its wheels.

Good training received in the home is very essential to life when out in the world. To do this in the best and proper way requires the soundest judgment, a wide range of reading and conscientiousness on the part of the admiring person.

Society recognizes as the highest types of good breeding those who have a good supply of unselfish kindness, unselfishness, cheerfulness, selflessness, earnestness. If there be the fables of those sent out from the home then society would be far more noble. But this is not always the case. As rules are established that these persons may have a schedule to direct them. The question with us is, should these persons adopt such rules when
They cannot naturally conform to them? An answer in the negative would be very unjust for although an examined and, most generally affected way, are not to be advocated, yet it is a plan by which they have a chance to become more at ease when in company. A gentleman, admiring highly the whole presence in company is greatly appreciated, will read diligently all the latest treatises on etiquette. He becomes enthusiastic as regards the many useful and pleasing requirements which he imagines himself putting into practice. One point, in particular he says he will keep in mind which is that when calling on a family of several ladies it is his place to arise & speak to each one that enters the room. He has no intent on making a complete success that by the time one of the ladies has the third time (or necessity) entered the room, he has arisen and bowed to her a corresponding number of times. Thus it is that the text is taken without the due amount of common sense along with it. Now by taking what society said did it help this person? No, for it brought out the last of independence on his part to act...
for himself. As Carlyle has said, "Welcome
evermore to gods & men is the self-helping
man." Yes, what we need greatly are men
and women who possess enough of common
"sense and" to judge rightly the way to be
perform certain things.

Society in general calls for reasonable in-
dividuality in all things & this is the final
result if having been trained when young
to observe such principles, there will be
shown test in the naturalness of every little
act under any circum stance, as acting to
be excused if the back is turned to one of the
company, or when a gentleman accompan-
ies a lady through a crowd or up stairs
he should precede, but at other times as pass-
ing into a door or out of it or descending
stairs the lady should go before. These are
but the natural & just requirements. But in
in special cases as with the wealthy, almost
exclusively, we witness sometimes the most
absurd regulations. This is due principally
to their financial standing. This provision
seems to take away the in some cases the
power to deal reasonably with requirements
forced on upon him by what "people say"
Take for instance our barbarous mourning customs which are well enumerated by Dr. Palgrave. "Christian burial," falsely so called, is barbarous, irrational, gloomy, chilly, & depressing. The wearing of grape upon the door knob, the darkened windows, the body shrouded and coffined in the color of gloom; women and children veiled and draped in hideous black; men's hats bandaged with grape in ribbons blue; what-like clothes; all these things express. In some places grape-covered pet dogs—grape mounted drives are used to further emphasize the negation of Christian truth. Many young women I have heard complain that they had to go into mourning whose only compensation was, that it was becoming to them. We have "full mourning," "mourning jewelry," "mourning visiting cards," "mourning stationary," but the ghastly humor of this custom reaches its climax in "second mourning" followed by the full blossom of gorgeous colors, for the time appointed by the inerrable decree of fashionable society, has passed and now sorrow & weeping may be laid aside with the funeral garments." All this carried on for vary-
ing lengths of time, until in the end it is found
that is more expensive to die than to live. OK!
That standards were set first by the wealthy
class that would prove an obstacle to ob-
tain the means to use for noble purposes.
But we need not look long at such customs
for they are not characteristic of "American
Life" Bryce accounts for this in the fact
that the citizens of this country believe heartily
in a popular government - consequently
when this is secured we have government
by public opinion because wherever all power
is lodged in issues from the people, then it is
that we find fewer and meaner and less
degraded government. Again the national
characteristics need public sentiment
very greatly - they are as follows: "The Amer-
icans are good-natured, humorou, hopeful,
educated, moral, well conducted, religious,
testy, commercial, unsettled, associative
because sympathetic, changeful, and lastly
they are a conservative people." These traits
All give rise to the high grade of opinion
existing in the United States. Especially is
this true in the national life. On no country
is true voluntary patriotism so strong...
A common chord is touched when it is known
that a devotee home is made glad by the
return of the poor, weak, and famished
soldier. So dear to the hearts of the American
people is this land I urge that every effort
put forth for its welfare is highly appreci-
ated, especially in trying to carry to the
highest degree the freedom of speech it
enjoys.

Our forefathers thought that the best way
to preserve a democratic form of govern-
ment was to have mass meetings where the
elections would be held. In fact this may
have been the best method for that
time and grand but as the population
greatly increased it was found that the ex-
citement which created great enthusiasm and
this in turn must clamor and turmoil, such
a state of confusion existed where the tyranny
of the majority was felt and the minority not
heard. That the Public Voice said we must
have better a quieter work done. A plan was
then resorted to which brings into the real polit-
cal life only representatives of the people who
are elected by the masses. We are now enjoying
the fruits of this change. But as every rose has
its them as does the national especially the political life of this nation. Several things along this line may be given that will go to show the failure of Public Opinion in this respect viz. that the representatives are made to act not for the whole nation at large but for the particular section from which they come. In many cases they are bribed to such acts; the money or gifts being made before them that action will be in the direction of procuring the personal benefit. Their audible "yes" are in reality "nays." Oh, these false pretensions! If this be the characteristic of many of our representatives what will be the condition and outcome of the work of such? If they do not stand boldly by their own dictates, insofar as they are for the good of the people, destruction will be the outcome. Emerson says: "I cannot see my road to perfect peace which a man can walk but after the council of his own bosom, let him quit too much association; let him go home much and stablish himself in the channel he approves." When this is made the guide for actions then, we will have a form of government and a type of people our more noble and strong our good join-
ciples. This however can be accomplished only when popular sentiment is strong enough to overbalance the present existing things. At present, however, it has not succeeded in preventing the congressmen fixing their own salaries but it has gained control in this respect with the State Legislature.

Another thing in regard to congressmen is what custom requires for them to live in the first place to have gained this place of honor he is usually one who has sound mental powers and more especially he is in a thriving financial condition. By coming from a distance he sometimes moves his family to Washington and while there he must go into a large well furnished house have all the modern conveniences, his family must have correspondingly good clothes they must have their table well spread & there must also be hired help in the house. Evening parties must be entertained and attended and many other things that might be mentioned that if a necessity, according to society, are required accompaniments of this public life. This is understood, it is true custom is compelling.
that we can hardly turn our backs on, but
to fulfill these demands is not what he was
sent for but to represent his section of the country.
the best work, then, will be accomplished
when they fare just enough of social inter-
course that will afford them a pleasant
stay at a reasonable cost.

To say that public opinion extends no
further would be a great snub to the
life of a single individual free from its
influences in innumerable ways, more than
he ever realizes? Especially in this strongly
felt in his religious relations. This may
be shown best by the way the houses of
worship are built and furnished. The most
refined will have the church a little heaven
here on earth. The not only a perfect beauty to
dowers of the harmony of colors. The scene
within is most of a room white walls, doors,
railings, and curtain poles, the decorating and
hangings of a pale green, light upon. The alter
back of the minister is the great pipe-organ
in front of which is the paid choir. all the
pews are richly upholstered. the floor heavily
carpeted, all this together make it truly a
dream "a place." But judge to yourself.
a little church in a western town where
money is seldom need for luxury: here, the
church to the stranger is not one that has
rich hangings nor is it decorated with a
beautiful blending of colors, indeed it has
had no paint added more than the prime coat.
On the bright sunshine mornings in Spring
the broken violin's girdle tune come together
700 great chair nor the mellow tones from a
gold organ great their ears, no cushioned seats
but the simplest and sometimes the rudest
of their kind are their best. Comparing now
these two foretimes the things we find in com-
mon are the ministers. The first case
she is but a secondary part, perhaps he isn't
seen until it is time for the sermon; in the
other, the preacher has the first place in his
congregation's eyes and thoughts, for there are
no other things to take their attention. Now
can it be supposed that in the well furnished
church as soon as the sermon is commenced
the whole congregation will give their undiv-
ided attention to it? No, we cannot truly
say this? all & Him, for Sunday morning is
generally such a tired morning that it is
much easier to look around at the beauti-
ful things than to follow closely for forty or fifty minutes a line or deep thought; besides, neither in fact is demanded of the members but to come and when a person feels no responsibility resting on him, his is not apt to look around for it; there are the ushers to seat the persons, the janitor to keep fires and ventilation in good order, and also deacons at the door to greet those who come. But look at the other church; there are no attractions for those people except perhaps a strong new pastor, but this holds the attention for only a short time for the words from their dear pastor are, by experience, the building up of their characters each time they hear him. What is more they realize that they are responsible for their success; I each meeting, in the evening the first one who come, lights the lamp, builds the fires etc, each makes himself a committee to heartily greet every one. Decide for yourself which of these two congregations do the most work for their Father. It is quite evident from this that Public Opinion varies with the financial condition of the community. But should it be as strong in the upper classes to make
They entirely lose sight of the reasonableness of things. Should it not rather make them better able to be more thorough and gain a deeper insight into religious truths and teachings? So much satisfaction with one's surroundings makes one become moral.

Many, many other things could be mentioned that would prove to us more than ever that to follow strictly the dictates of Public Opinion is in most cases dangerous for this reason that if a person gives up completely to its control he is sure to exchange his own individuality for the sake of escaping regular criticism. O she has one soul to give up. Think of living. The life we now see the patrician of all the sons of earth is no idle dream but a solemn reality. It is shy own it is all though last to face Eternity with work then don't all they lead given power

"Like a star insainting yet unwrasting"