Boston as a Poetry Mill.

To write poetry is merely considered, in Boston, as an elegant accomplishment suitable to the litterateur, and less a special gift than the natural and expected result of scholarship and culture. The charming assumption with which a society or meeting of any description designates its members to write a poem on such and such an occasion is infinitely amusing. "Why did you not come to the literary coterie?" questioned a friend the other day. "Mrs. Dias and Mrs. Anagnos wrote poems for the evening, and we had a philosophical paper and tableaux." This was an illustration of the Boston nonchalance regarding "writing poems." It is discussed in a matter-of-fact way, as an affair quite of industry rather than of inspiration. If the birthday or wedding anniversary of a prominent person is to be celebrated, a fair gotten up, an exhibition opened, or the "Old South" receive another contribution toward saving it from the destructive march of trade, the instigators of the affair all write poems—as a natural feature of the entertainment. Though the so-called "poems" are numerous, the poets are few, yet these rhymers and versifiers all enroll themselves under that banner, and enjoy the felicity of their belief. The genuine poets of Boston are almost as few as of any other city. Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Emerson, Louise Chandler Moulton, who has a gift of the almost perfect lyric verse; John Boyle O'Reilly, Dr. Holmes, and Mrs. Howe, in her "Battle Hymn of the Republic" and her "Sealed Orders," make up all that I now recall who seem to have any claim to poetic immortality. Yet the people who grind out their poems to, on, and for every occasion, are as numerous as the prose writers. Volume after volume is published here of mere prosaic prose that rhymes, and is labeled—I came near saying libeled—poetry. What becomes of it is a mystery I cannot fathom. Where do all the dull books go to, any way? one wonders. The number of volumes of "poems" that contain, perhaps, one that really merits the name and retains the whole, is a signal advance over those that have nothing in them but mechanical rhyme. It is singular that in a city which may, perhaps, not unaptly be designated as the literary capital of the country, there is so marked a lack of fine literary discrimination. Form more than spirit, quantity more than quality, appears to take precedence. To "publish a volume of poems" is as much the part of the natural expectation as to read the current literature and attend the symphony concerts. Whether the poems are worth publishing is a consideration that does not seem to present itself.—*Boston Cor. Cleveland Leader.*

A Boston Girl in Chicago.

I feel that I am very far from Boston. I realize that I am many miles nearer the line that separates civilization from the land of savages. And into these Western solitudes I have brought a volume of Herbert Spencer to refresh and cheer my mind. He always fascinates; and the fact of his being still unmarried has something to do with it, for you know there is a halo surrounding the celibate which marriage utterly destroys. As in most philosophical questions, it is useless to ask why this is so. We can only observe the working of the phenomena, but not its cause. But truly, of Spencer I never tire. His ideas of the higher life are so consoling—the development from an "indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity." What could be truer or more conclusive? Perhaps the illiterate mind might be staggered by the unusual combination of polysyllables, but we who are cultivated can appreciate the subtle significance of a definite, coherent heterogeneity. His ideas of love, however, are not extravagantly tinged with romance. Suppose that a man with tender eyes and raven-hued mustache, having seated himself by your side, should tenderly take your hand in his, and then assure in fervent tones that he is conscious of a molecular change in the vesicular nerve matter of his system whose concomitant is love, and that you are the external object which has caused the change. Would an ice bath be more chilling? An hysterical woman would certainly lift up her voice and shriek aloud. No wonder that Herbert Spencer has lived to the age of sixty without marrying.

A Group of Queens.

The queens in Southern Europe are a remarkably interesting group of women. The Queen of Roumania, or Carmen Sylva, is not only a poetess, and full of picturesque romance, but she lately underwent examination for a diploma that might give her a right to do certain teaching in the schools. Everybody knows of the skillful manner in which Christina, the Queen of Spain, performs her unwonted duties. And now Margaret of Savoy, the Queen of Italy, is to appear as an author, with her stories founded on the legends of the middle ages. Among the various languages spoken fluently by this queen is English, in which she reads every new book of importance, keeping herself posted on English politics and gossip. In religious matters she is neither too liberal nor too devote, and she is a passionate patriot. In person she is lovely, fair, and bright, more graceful than majestic, with a feminine sweetness very attractive in a royal personage. Her family relations are perfect; she is the intimate friend of her young son, the Prince of Naples; and, often seen on the streets and among the shops, she is idolized by the Roman people.—*Harper's B*

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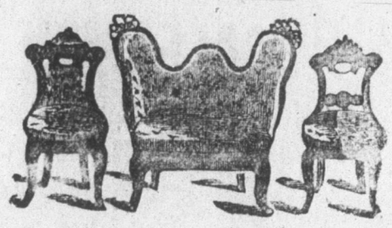

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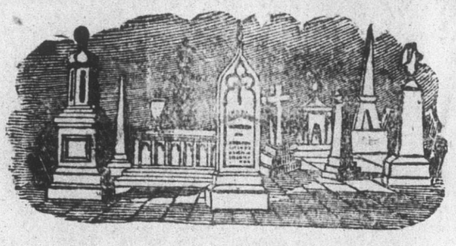

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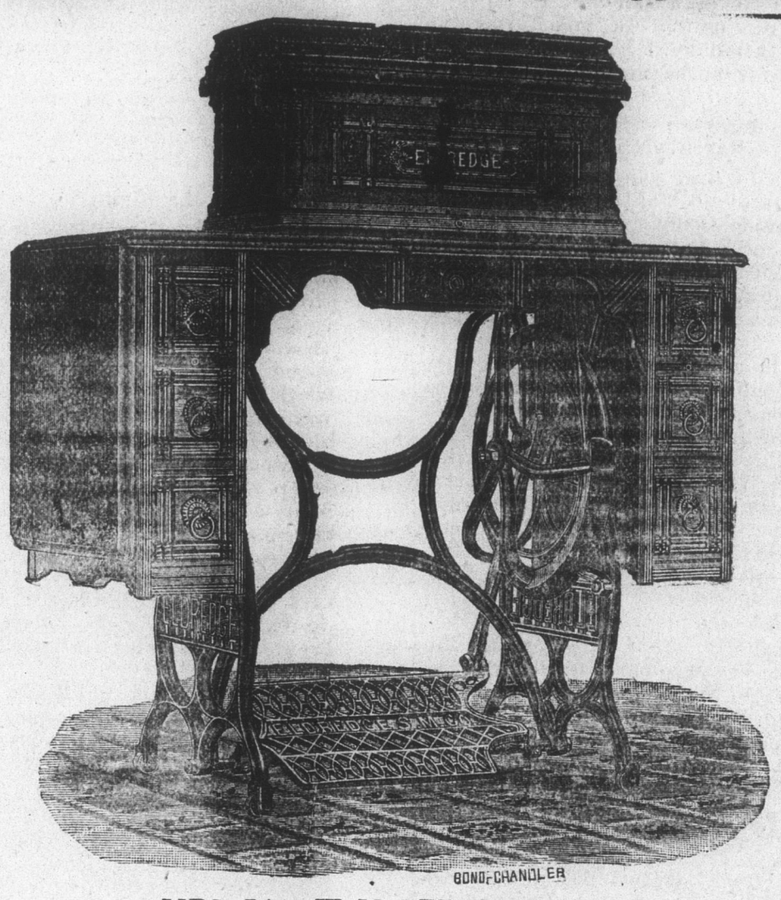

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