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EDITORIAL

FROM MONTAIGNE TO MURPHY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

EDWARD D. MURPHY, a candidate for Park Commissioner at the March town meeting of Milford, Mass., has set up his platform with a neatness and preciseness that has taken the very breath from his adversaries.

It is explained in the reports that the one time dim and shaded town park has been illumined with electric lights, and, to use the language of the report literally, “to make matters worse, the town fathers had the settees lugged out of the shadow of the big elm trees and stuck right under the glare of the electric lights.” An incidental sentence in the report assists in understanding the frame of mind that these “improvements” threw a considerable portion of the villagers into: “If a chap hugged his girl in the park the whole town knew it the next day.” The incidental sentence incidentally also explains the jealousy with which Candidate Murphy’s opposing candidates view the hit his platform has made—“No electric lights in the town park.”

Measureless is the distance that separates Montaigne from Murphy.

The great philosopher who fathomed all the deeps and shallows of Nature and of Nature’s creature, Man, expressed his amazement at the instinct that guides so many people to seek the most secluded, the dingiest, murkiest, dimmest places for the expansion of sentiments, which, carrying as they do with them the Promethean spark of Life, should seek the open, sunniest, brightest spot for their indulgence. Murphy thinks otherwise. Nor can it be denied that Murphy is, just now, more responsive to material surroundings.

As with Institutions, Standards of Morality and the like, Daily Conduct reflects a material state. In a social system where marriages are on the decline as a natural consequence of a declining standard of well-being, it can be no otherwise but that the approaches to marriage should sink in loftiness and become more and more akin

to the approaches to burglary and other forbidden acts.

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