

THE COURIER

VOL. 9. No. 23.

LINCOLN, NEB., SATURDAY, MAY 19, 1894.

PRICE FIVE CENTS.



Those persons who remember the sudden disappearance of Judge Clarkson, of Omaha, a year or so ago will find in "Witherle's Freedom," by Cornelia Atwood Pratt, a sketch in the May number of the *Century*, some more or less striking points of

resemblance to certain features of the Omaha lawyer's exit. Witherle was a minister. Why he sought "freedom" and how he found it may be gathered from the following extracts from the story:

"Either you do the things you want to do in this world, or else you don't," said Witherle. "I had never done what I wanted until I left home. I didn't mean to hurt anybody by coming away, and I don't think I did. I'd rather not be selfish, but life got so dull. I couldn't stand it. I had to have a change. I had to come. The things you have to do, you do. There was a Frenchman once who committed suicide, and left a note that said, 'Tired of this eternal buttoning and unbuttoning.' I know how he felt. I don't know how other men manage to live. Perhaps their work means more to them than mine had come to mean to me. It was just dull, that was all, and I had to come.

"When I was twenty-one I was in love; the girl married somebody else. Before I met my wife she had cared for a man who married another woman. You see how it was. We were going to save the pieces together. As a business arrangement this sort of thing is all right. I haven't a word to say against it. She is a good woman, and we got on as well as most people, only life was not ecstasy to either of us. Can't you see us tied together, sneaking our way along through existence as if it were some grey desert, and we crawling on and on over the sand, always with our faces bent to it, and nothing showing itself in our way but the white bones of the men and women who had traveled along there before us, grinning skulls mostly?

"And my work was only another long desert to be toiled through—with the sphinx at the end. I wasn't a successful preacher, and you know it. I hadn't any grip on men. I couldn't see any use or any meaning or any joy in it. The whole thing choked me. I wanted a simpler, more elemental life. I wanted to go up and down the earth, and try new forms of living, new ways of doing things, new people. Life—that was what I wanted—to feel the pulse of the world throb under my touch, to be in the stir, to be doing something. I was always haunted by the conviction that life was tremendous if only you once got at it. I couldn't get at it where I was. I was rotting away."

"And you like it?"

The man's eyes flamed. "Like it? It's great. It's the only thing there is. I've been from Maine to California this year. I wintered in a Michigan lumber camp—that was hell. I was a boat hand on the Columbia last summer—that was heaven. I worked in a coal mine two months—a scab workman, you understand, and now I am at this, [shoveling coal.] I tell you it is fine to get rid of endyeling your brains for ideas that aren't there, and of pretending to teach people something you don't know, and take to working with your hands nine hours a day and sleeping like a log all night. I hadn't slept for months, you know. These people tell me about themselves. I'm seeing what life is like. I'm getting down to the foundations. I've learned more about humanity in the last six months than I ever knew in all my life. I believe I've learned more about religion. I'm getting hold of things. It's like getting out on the open sea after that desert I was talking about—don't you see? And it all tastes so good to me."

Judge Clarkson may have entertained ideas somewhat similar to those expressed by Witherle; but in his case his "freedom" was the result of a state of mind brought about by overwork and worry. His experience after flight was not unlike that of Witherle. He was away from home several months, a portion of which time he spent in a lumber yard in an Iowa town as a laborer. Judge Clarkson, it is said, was soon restored to his former condition upon his return.

Whatever may be the cause many men feel at times the impulse that caused Witherle and Clarkson to escape the involved responsibilities of a position in society. There are so many ties, so much respectability to be maintained, so much care for appearances, so much responsibility, so many conventionalities to be observed, that sometimes there are moments when the life that we lead seems irksome, and there is a desire for a new and untrammelled existence, an existence in which one could lead a perfectly free and selfish life, coming and going, working and playing, as one is inclined, without consulting anybody's wishes.

Mr. Bryan's letter may be viewed in many lights. Following close upon the announcement of Judge Field's candidacy it may be considered as an unconditional surrender to Lancaster county's republican candidate. It has been an open secret that Bryan did not want to meet Field again. The democrats of the First district will probably take the congressman at his word, and though there are remote possibilities of a gubernatorial or senatorial boom, the trend of Nebraska politics seems to foreshadow the retirement of Mr. Bryan to private life at the expiration of his present term.

Follow the procession and order your Sunday ice cream and fruit ices of Sisler. Phone 630, 133 south 12 St.

The time and place to buy fine stylish footwear is next week at
LE GRANDE M. BALDWIN'S, 1129 O St