

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

Noah.

A few months ago the editor of The Courier ascribed the authorship of a book which she had not written, to Mrs. Humphrey Ward. A somewhat less distinguished woman had written the book. But the editor of The Courier received friendly letters from women in Omaha and Lincoln correcting her very stupid error. Since then in club or social gathering the editor has been questioned in regard to her unfortunate statement. Last week in these columns, the most notable of the early deeds of man—the herding of the animals into the ark—was ascribed to Moses. Now everybody should know that Noah, the first great shipbuilder and navigator built the ark and loaded all kinds of animals into it in order that no species should become extinct. Yet out of the ten thousand readers of The Courier in Lincoln, only one young lawyer who does not read with his lips alone, noted the injustice to Noah and reminded The Courier that injustice had been done the manager of the largest and most complete zoological collection ever gathered. The first error was one of literature. The second, is a glaring mistake relating to one of the most noted Bible characters. Yet the first one excited universal criticism among the readers of The Courier and the last one was only discovered by one of the clever-

est and most scholarly of the members of the bar in Lincoln.

It was indeed Noah who established agencies for the collection of wild and domestic animals. He it was who first understood the value of an animal not as meat or as a beast of burden or because it sang or was beautiful or ministered in any way to man. He perceived that every animal was worth preservation as a member of the family and interesting as a zoological specimen. Therefore he commissioned men of the different tribes in his world to capture and send him a single perfect pair of each species of animal whose range was within that of the tribe. His comprehension of the reasons for this scientific preservation of species was not less remarkable in that half-savage age than the building of the ark itself. His control of the animals, so that peace ruled during the long rain deserves more attention than it has ever received. Moses is honored for his meekness for his qualities of leadership and for his codification of the laws. He was not an animal trainer and had no scientific interest in zoology like Noah who made a boat that weathered the longest and strongest gale that ever blew and the most rain that ever fell in one storm. For seeming to take from his well deserved reputation and award his fame to another who has glory enough of his own The Courier is at fault and cheerfully makes restitution to Noah, the gentle shipbuilder, the zoologist, the first and only reliable weather prophet

### English in the Schools.

A member of the Lincoln Sorosis at one of the recent meetings of this club discussed English as it is taught and learned in the public schools of Lincoln. From a number of essays and stories contributed by the pupils of the seventh and eighth grades the lecturer selected some of the poorest and some of the best. The poorest had all the faults of bad spelling, no punctuation, and inaccuracies of grammar and capitalization, usually found in the productions of pupils in the primary grades. Whether it be the fault of the system, of the teachers, of the parents, or of the school-board the evidence is voluminous that graduates from the Lincoln high school who have passed through the successive grades are singularly deficient in English composition. All manuscript readers in the university or those employed by the papers of this city will concur in this criticism of the Lincoln school system product. Most of the graduates can figure and some of them have gathered facts concerning botany and chemistry that will very likely prove useful and interesting in later life, but they have only a casual street acquaintance with the principles and practice of English.

Even arithmetic, the sacred knowl-

edge of numbers and their relations, is not so essential to American young men and women as a knowledge of English grammar and English composition. Yet children are graded by their acquirements in arithmetic. Life will teach them arithmetic. If they do not understand subtraction the first dollar they spend will teach them more than the rules of a term. Multiplication, addition, division and fractions, teach themselves when the pupil is multiplying, adding or dividing something that belongs to him and not the imaginary apples and miles of the school arithmetic.

But like the pianist given to discords and the singer who flats, the men and women who say I seen, who use they in referring to a singular antecedent, or who use should, would and will be, illiterately, are unconscious of the pain they cause others. Theme readers at the university correct by the hundreds mistakes only excusable in primary scholars. The M. S. readers on the newspapers groan at the unskilled, poorly constructed reports of amateur and professional reporters. The business man who dictates letters to highly recommended typewriters is discouraged by the badly spelled, turgidly composed transcripts the high school graduate brings him for his signature. It is humiliating to affix his name to such evidences of illiteracy but time presses and he does it with uncomplimentary reflexions on the school which educated the complacent young man or woman who took the dictation.

From morning to midnight in store, shop, office, in books, newspapers, letters the English language is in constant use, yet the public school scholar is taught that figuring is the study of first and absolute importance. His examination papers on arithmetic, geography, "nature work," physiology, are marked high or low without much reference to the language which he has made use of, to answer questions on those subjects. It is not unnatural, therefore that he has acquired a reverence for assorted knowledge, which is science, and no respect at all for language.

In the schools of our grandmothers old fashioned grammar and rhetoric were taught. "Nature work" biology and chemistry came later, after the students were able to construct sentences correctly and color them naturally with fitting adjectives. In the schools of Lincoln the pupils are studying all sorts of things. The school day is no longer than it used to be, and the little scholar's head is just the same length, breadth and thickness. If the content be not increased while the number of subjects is increased, it follows that the amount of each will be lessened. It is therefore easy to understand why the grandparents spoke with precision and elegance and their descendants who live in a school district wherein "the board" has listened to and been beguiled by the maker of

school books on nature, physiology etcetera, know little about grammar and less about the lucid expression of their own or others' ideas.

### Another Label Rebuked.

Miss Anne Barr, director of the woman's gymnasium at the State university has lifted the reproach of big feet from western girls. Two years ago Miss Barr adopted the system of anthropometrical measurements in use by Dr. Jay W. Seaver of Yale college. She has now the measurements of 1500 western girls. She sent these measurements to Dr. Seaver who has just read a paper before the anthropometrical society of New Haven based on this report.

Dr. Seaver said: "Girls from the east are flatter-chested, flatter-headed, lesser in lung capacity and bigger-footed. One might divide the two types of eastern and western girls into the cutter and schooner builds of heads. The eastern girl—the New York and Boston girl—is the cutter built; the western girl is schooner built. I think this difference is due to the predominance of Teutonic blood in the west. The eastern girl has bigger feet, too. Whatever change in size and physical type may be disclosed by these tables may be properly attributed to methods of life and environment, and not to racial peculiarities. It may be said that the eastern college draws a much larger percentage of its patronage from urban population, while the more western institutions represent types that live more out of doors and are engaged in more active physical employments. We notice, first, that the Wellesley woman is taller and heavier than the typical woman of either of the western groups, while the Oberlin and Nebraska women are about the same size and weight. The increased frequency of the Teutonic element in the western group probably accounts for a taller height sitting, in the western group than in the eastern, the eastern type partaking more of the long-legged and short-trunked type which seems to be characteristic of the tendency in modern development. The symmetry that exists in the length of the upper extremities is remarkable, although there seems to be a greater length of foot in the eastern group than in either of the others. In girths we notice first the records of head circumference, which seems to be larger in the eastern group. In girth of upper arm the eastern group excel, while in girth of forearm they are markedly deficient. This, I think, may be explained if the western type has been more accustomed to physical work, which would tend to reduce any fatty tissue from the upper arm, and would give marked muscular development through the forearm. The breadth of shoulders seems to be the same in all groups, although the broader neck is found where the larger head has to

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