



THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, JANUARY 30, 1900.



ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS
SECOND CLASS MATTER.

THE COURIER,

Official Organ of the Nebraska State
Federation of Women's Clubs.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs.

Telephone 384.

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Subscription Rates—In Advance.

Per annum.....	\$1 00
Six months.....	75
Three months.....	50
One month.....	20
Single copies.....	05

THE COURIER will not be responsible for voluntary communications unless accompanied by return postage.
Communications, to receive attention, must be signed by the full name of the writer, not merely as a guarantee of good faith, but for publication if advisable.

OBSERVATIONS.

The Stovepipe in Architecture.

The galvanized iron trimmings, cornices, and ornamental corner towers that mark the revival of building in Lincoln are ugly, insincere, and untime-worthy. Instead of finishing a building these trimmings disfigure it. The winds play with them as with paper. Of frail and flimsy construction they cannot be securely fastened to roofs and corners which their owners have been told they will ornament. A high wind tears them loose and the streets are littered for days with the impossible "ornaments" which are a libel on architecture. The influence of noble masses and piles of brick and stone is easily demonstrable. A counterfeit cornice crowning a building of honest brick or stone discredits the whole, and has a lanceful influence on those upon whom it casts its unworthy shadow. There are a few blocks in Lincoln, notably the Richards building, the telephone building and the State university library that possess this priceless characteristic of sincerity. There are others also which are equally worthy of respect. There is no real economy in the use of a material so sensitive to wind and time as thin sheets of iron rolled into funnels and cornucopias. There is no economy in using a material for a building that was manufactured for stovepipe. For whatever form the stovepipe is twist-

ed and hammered into, be sure it will always be a stovepipe and nothing else, yielding to a stovepipe's temptations and putting up a stovepipe front. A sod house or the little frame shanties of a new western town are more to be respected because they do not pretend to be anything but a temporary shelter. Nevertheless there are many buildings here finished with this unfortunate material. They have served a good purpose and were erected by good citizens who believed in Lincoln. But I believe it is not too early to discard make-believes and expedients. We are better off without them and their continuous use is a reflection on our taste and good judgment.

Write a Poem!

In "Ghostly Japan," Lafcadio Hearn's new book on that country, Mr. Hearn expatiates upon the intensity and power of the poetry writing habit.

"For centuries poetry has been a universal fashion of emotional utterance in Japan. It is everywhere; sung in the fields and in the streets; engraved on the domestic utensils, even on the toothpicks. 'It were a hopeless effort,' says Mr. Hearn, 'to enumerate a tithe of the articles decorated with poetical texts. * * * You might wander—as I have done—into a settlement so poor that you could not obtain there, for love or money, even a cup of real tea; but I do not believe that you could discover a settlement in which there is nobody capable of making a poem.

"Of the short poem which is the principal subject of his essay, Mr. Hearn notes the curious fact that the writing of this particular form of Japanese verse has been practiced more as a moral duty than as a mere literary art and he quotes an old ethical teaching. 'Are you very angry? Do not say anything unkind, but compose a poem. Is your best beloved dead? Do not yield to useless grief, but try to calm your mind by making a poem. Are you troubled because you are about to die, leaving so many things unfinished? Be brave and write a poem on death! Whatever injustice or misfortune disturbs you, put aside your resentment or your sorrow as soon as possible and write a few lines of sober and elegant verse for a moral exercise.

"The custom of writing verses in times of ill fortune still prevails. 'I have frequently known poems,' says Mr. Hearn, 'to be written under the most trying circumstances of misery or suffering—nay, even upon a bed of death; and if the verses did not display an extraordinary talent they at least afforded extraordinary proof of self-mastery under pain.'

"Another curious fact concerning Japanese poetry is that a poet would be condemned for attempting any completeness of utterance in a short poem, the object being to stir the imagination without satisfying it.

The term 'ittakkiri,' meaning 'all gone,' or 'utterly vanished,' in the sense of 'all told,' is contemptuously applied to the verses in which the verse-maker has uttered his whole thought. 'Like the single stroke of a temple bell, the perfect short poem should set murmuring and undulating in the mind of the hearer many a ghostly aftertone of long duration.' Here are two of Mr. Hearn's translations of short poems, illustrating the power of suggestion:

A Mother's Remembrance.

Sweet and clear in the night, the voice of a boy at study,
Reading out of a book, . . . I also once had a boy!

Happy Poverty.

Wafted into my room, the scent of the flowers of the plum tree
Changes my broken window into a source of delight.

"As showing the ingenuity of the Japanese in composing impromptu short poems Mr. Hearn cites one which is intended to portray the last degree of devil-may-care poverty—perhaps the brave misery of the wandering student. It is translated as follows:

Heavily pours the rain on the hat that I stole from the scarecrow.

The English vs. the Dutch.

The defeat of English arms in the Transvaal would be an interruption to civilization and to progress. Whatever our political sympathies may be, whatever our inheritance, whatever our prejudice, the indisputable effect of English administration is before our eyes and is a matter of history. Whatever is best in law, in literature, in institutions is English. For this reason, if for no other the success of England in the Transvaal was assured with the establishment of the law of the survival of the fittest. The world is under no obligations to Holland, to German, to Italian, to Frenchman, to Spaniard, to Russian, and to no inhabitants of North Europe nor of the Orient. Constitutional law came from the Romans through the English to the world. In literature besides Shakspeare there are only Dante and Homer. In the arts Italy, France and Germany have made notable contributions. The world owes Holland some fine examples of genre painting and some fine laces. The modern impetus to trade and the methods of commerce, nearly everything that made the nineteenth century modern came from England. In the establishment and growth of nations there is no question of right or wrong. A weak nation is broken up and replaced by a strong because the latter is stronger. The Lord is on the side of the strong because, in the long run, the strongest are the most obedient to its laws which are the laws of nature and truth. The defeat of English arms in the Trans-

vaal means temporary loss of prestige to the whole of Anglo Saxondom of which America is an important member. It seems to me that it is both short sighted and unpatriotic to extend our sympathy or help to the Boers. They are fighting against the principle of the representation of tax payers. They precipitated the war; they fired the first shot and made it impossible for England to maintain her self-respect without fighting. The Dutch are subtle, sullen, hard fighters, but they have not developed South Africa. On the contrary, they have been worse than negative and have hindered and obstructed English enterprise there. The Boer's claims of devotion to the Bible and his profession of a servile Christianity have elicited sympathy for him in this particular war that he does not deserve. His profession of religion is only an extra condemnation for refusing representation to that part of the population which pays nine-tenths of the taxes. His religion is a formal verse—committing, queer sort, like no other religion anywhere else. It leaves him as gross and as leathery as it finds him. It does not reach the head and if it touch his heart it does not soften it. It is a religion of the mouth. It has made the speech of the Boer a collection of cant phrases and ill-fitting, archaic parables. Moreover, he parades his religion, as a beggar exhibits his sores, for sympathy. There is no depriving him of it, as there is no way of depriving the beggar of the alms the exhibition of his self-inflicted wounds elicit. Nevertheless it would be better for the beggar better for civilization worse for pauperism and a blow to bigotry if our aims and our sympathy were more worthily bestowed.

Enemies of the English insist that Oom Paul Kruger has a right to deny representation to the English and to oppress them with sumptuary laws, that the English in the Transvaal have the power of locomotion and can move if they do not like it. This is ever the reply of a tyrant to appeals for redress.

Singularly, the wealthiest and worthiest of the English in the Transvaal are Irish. They have been forced in their work of developing the country to conform to rules so tyrannical that were they applied to Irishmen in Ireland, would set Ireland ablaze with insurrection from Belfast to Cork. In her Majesty's army the Irish generals and the duty-bound Irish soldiers are fighting with might and main for England and Irish, English American and all kinds of rights in the Transvaal. All loyal American citizens, all true philosophers, all believers in progress and evolution, all opponents of cant and hypocrisy, all believers in education are, because of these principles, on the side of the English. The insincere and undemonstrable sentimentalism which effects to believe that