

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

### Paternalism of School Boards.

Some members of the Chicago school board have urged that it was a legitimate function of the public schools to preserve the teeth of the scholars by hiring dentists to periodically inspect, fill, clean or pull them. Other members desire to build bath rooms in every ward school. They argue that it is unhealthy to be dirty and that many of the children need a bath for so long, as to seriously threaten their health. The taxes which support the public schools are collected, for the most part, from the industrious poor. These people should not be forced to pay for baths, dentists, and other luxuries for the children of the lazy and intemperate poor. If ninety eight per cent of the children leave school before finishing the eighth grade course, they do so because their parents can no longer afford to keep them in school. Then why should the ninety-eight per cent's fathers who are brick-layers, clerks, and workmen earning less than one thousand dollars a year, be taxed to pay for baths and dentists at schools in which they cannot afford to keep their own children? The frugal poor are the clean poor. The mothers of such families keep their children clean by means of the wash tub. How unjust then to tax them for stationary bathtubs for the chil-

dren of slovens, too lazy to learn the comfort of cleanliness.

It is not to be disputed that many of the children in the public schools would be the better for a bath, but it is not for the school boards to provide the tubs, water, soap and towels.

Paternalism in the public schools of Lincoln began when it was decided that the school board should thereafter buy the books. The system discourages neatness. A fastidious child hates to handle a book handled by a hundred sticky fingers before it was given to him. The books spread diphtheria, scarlet fever and children's diseases. It is doubtful if there is a physician here who approves of the system. It also deprives a child of the sense of ownership and of a lifetime's possession of his own school books. Moreover the system is a manifestation of paternalism that weakens the back bone and develops boys into men who expect to be taken care of and provided with things by the government and which develops girls into helpless dependents on their fathers or brothers.

### English in the Public Schools.

The statement has been made in these columns that only nine per cent of the children attending the public schools of Lincoln are graduated from the high school. Further and more careful investigation shows that less than two per cent are finally graduated from the high school. Judging from the school statistics, it is not safe to conclude that more than two thirds of the children are instructed in the public schools for more than eight years.

The many departments of learning in which the modern pupil is invited to take a peep serve but to confuse him. Those who think he should be taught modeling, drawing, physiology, geology and botany in the eight years the schools are preparing him to take his place in the world, do not admit the rapid flight of time and the very much greater necessity of teaching the child the rules of English and of training him in its practice till at the end of his course he may have the key to all knowledge. It is a popular device of orators to refer to the public schools as the crowning triumph of civilization and the chief hope of the future. This is all very well and answers the purposes of stump speakers. But if sloyd and different kinds of manual training are to be introduced into the schools the hopes of the republic will only grow more and more ignorant of the means of communication between themselves and their fellow workers.

The public schools are designed to teach the children who attend them the basis of all knowledge; to furnish them with the means of continuing, if they like, their own education, by reading and original investigation. The public school is not the place to learn carpentering or joining, black-

smithing, tanning, lacemaking or sewing. Yet there are men and women who insist that the public school should teach the rudiments of all of these trades, so that the child may find his metier sooner.

Only eight years to learn to read, speak, write and cipher, and yet there are theorists who insist that some of this time must be wasted in learning to saw, lay brick or weld iron. The public schools, supported by taxes laid upon all the people should prepare every child to pursue any vocation intelligently. The public school is not to train the hands but to train the mind which is the master of the hands. In considering this subject no one should forget that ninety-eight per cent of the public school children go to school less than eight years. While listening to the dreamer who pleases himself by arguing upon the need of teaching children physiology, of teaching them to model in clay and to use the saw, the chisel, the plane and the hammer in truly workman-like style it may not be impertinent to remind him that the child can learn some of these things when he leaves school, but that unless he learns at school to speak, spell and write the English language correctly, he never will. All subsequent attempts to educate a person neglected in his childhood require double the energy on the part of the instructor and on the part of the student. Thousands of pages of manuscript are handed in every week by the students of the Nebraska State university to the instructors in that noble institution. This M.S. is full of elementary mistakes in grammar. Only a rare student is able to express his meaning concisely and without obscurity. The theme readers spend their time and lavish their red ink correcting mistakes that should have been corrected in the primary grades.

The ninety-eight per cent who barely reach the eighth grade know how to sing a few birdie songs, they can perhaps draw a little, and they can tell a spinal cord from a jaw bone, and they may also be able to mould clay into mussy, muddy shapes, but with all this they do not apprehend clearly nor report with precision and accuracy. Hence they are useless to any employer who needs brains and not a mere beast of burden. I hope that in the future deliberations of the school board it will begin to consider the needs of the ninety-eight per cent of the pupile even if they are opposed to the needs of the two per cent who attend the high school.

### Repealing the Declaration of Independence.

When Mr. Bryan learned that the national convention of the republican party was to be held in Philadelphia he remarked that the republican party would meet to destroy the independence in the city where that declaration was adopted in 1776. Mr.

Bryan is a democrat; Jefferson Davis was a democrat. During the Civil War in 1864 Messrs. Jacks and Gilmore passed through the confederate lines and interviewed Jefferson Davis with a view to ascertain if by some means a cessation of hostilities could not be agreed upon. The president of the Southern Confederacy refused all overtures which did not look to the acknowledgement of the independence of the confederacy. At the close of the interview he said:

"I tried all in my power to avert this war. The north was mad and blind; it would not let us govern ourselves; and so the war came; and now it must go on until the last man of this generation falls in his tracks, and his children sieze his musket and fight our battles, unless you acknowledge our right to self government. We are fighting for independence and that, or extermination we will have." Just what the Boers are saying now.

That protest from the President of the Southern Confederacy against government without the consent of the governed struck a sympathetic chord in the democratic party of 1864. The country will not be very much alarmed at the suggestion of a perpetual candidate for office that the party which accepted the challenge of the executive of the Southern Confederacy and preserved the union, which he and his political followers attempted to destroy, is about to repeal the declaration of independence

### Rights of the English: Rights of all Nations.

Since history was written, or before it was written while the movements wars and governments of races were still only legends, land has been occupied by those who developed it. Palestine, Greece, Rome, the territory of Germany, Poland, England and America have been occupied by races who drove out the first, second or third comers and settled it themselves. The movement of a nation is neither moral nor immoral, it is only inevitable and dependant on a law outside of itself. It is as steady as the revolution of the spheres. Should one part of the occupied earth(occupied—not isolated) decide to leave its diamonds, gold and coal in the ground, the rest of the world is going to push in and do the work of the sulky nation. The world moves and no man or collection of men can make a few acres of it stationary at command. The land is not ours except to use. If the people of the United States ceased to mine, plant and cultivate, ceased to build houses and ships, stopped running railroads and manufactories, ceased to be a producing, progressive people, how long would it be before the Canadians would be upon us from the north, and the Mexicans from the south? If we enslaved the Indians and made them work for us for nothing, if we whip-