

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

### A Convict's Testimony.

A convict just discharged from the Nebraska penitentiary has testified that the deputy warden of the prison was in the daily habit of swearing at the helpless, dumb prisoners whom the state has entrusted to him during their time of punishment. Wardens and deputy wardens are apt to be more brutal than the men in their care. Count Tolstoi believes that our penal system brutalizes the wardens and develops the tendency to crime in the prisoners. The only theory that justifies society in incarcerating certain of its members, is self protection. The warden of the prison is stationed there to keep the doors fast, to see that the prisoners do not escape, to provide for their comfort and to protect each convict from bodily harm either from an outside mob or from skulking brutality and cruelty in the prison. The warden is not supposed to punish the prisoners nor oppress them. He should have no personal animosities to wreak upon the men whom the state has disarmed, clothed in rough, ugly clothes, upon whom it imposes dumbness, a rigidly, coarse and monotonous fare which measures out a very few cubic feet of air to each one and sets men with guns to enforce

the prison regulations. The warden, and in his absence, his deputy represents to the culprits, who have broken the rules of the game that society is playing, the state that is punishing them. The warden is the state, to the men in the penitentiary. He holds the key to the broad fields of corn. They must pass him to get to Omaha, Lincoln or Grand Island. He is the judge, the hangman, the state university, the governor, the legislature. He is the law, he is Nebraska.\* But the convicts say he curses and uses obscene language, when the frightened, dumb beasts who have been driven into a cage, falter and break one of the many rules he has imposed upon them. When such a man represents the state it is not surprising that the convicts decide that as soon as they are free they will have it out again with law and order.

The warden of the penitentiary in nearly every state is not a criminologist, or philanthropist. He is selected for his services to the party in power. He is generally a petty politician, ready just as soon as he is given absolute power over several hundred human beings, to become a profane tyrant, loving cruelty for its demonstration of his power.

If the warden or the deputy warden of the state penitentiary is the sort of man who will curse a prisoner and his shabby old mother visiting him, he should be removed at once. Governor Poynter should satisfy himself about the truth or falsity of this charge. This man whom the released convict accuses of a brutality inconsistent with the dignity and neutrality of the state whom he represents, should be required to prove his fitness for the place he holds. The Governor, as the head of the state, owes it to the malefactors whom the state has estranged of their liberty, that no man who has earned the name of brute should have any authority at the penitentiary.

### A Moving Instrument.

Doctor Ignace Paderewski says that the piano is the most excellent, the most flexible, the most expressive of musical instruments. The master of any instrument always believes that the one he has selected as his medium of expression is that perfect instrument compared to which all others are inadequate. Each member of an orchestra believes that his instrument is singing the song or conveying the real meaning of the composer to the audience. The piano has a wide range; from lowest bass to highest treble is a continent of tone. But the human velvet-steel fingers do not strike the strings. Between them and the maestro's fingers there is a layer of ivory, a long wooden stick with a little felt hammer on the end of it and this it is which strikes the twisted wire of the horizontal harp. Genius must flow a long distance and

it loses some of the holy energy before the sound reaches the ear of the most silent and devout audience. With his violin strings breath-near, the violinist's instrument is humanized. There is no length of wood, felt and ivory between the tone and him. The cuddled violin is a part of him and the tone a virtuoso makes no body else can make on the same violin. To a degree this is true of the piano, also, which is a more intellectual medium than the violin.

A comparison of the effects of the two instruments was afforded by the recent concert of Maestros Hamburg and Petschnikoff in this city. The strength and sureness of Mr. Hamburg's wonderful fingers, wrist and arm delighted and dazzled the audience and received vociferous applause. When Mr. Petschnikoff and the poet who plays the piano accompaniment ceased playing, there were ten seconds of silence before the audience remembered the convention of clapping and noise. The round, mellow tone of the old violin made by Italian hands that were dust a century ago had absorbed all the sounds the men who owned it from generation to generation drew from it. The violin is an ever ripening, sweetening vintage miraculously renewed by every bow-stroke a genius draws across its body. Petschnikoff's violin has a voice that makes the flesh creep and stimulates the imagination. I believe the language of the violin is understood by many more people than that of any other instrument. It is so nearly a voice and kind speaks to kind when the master draws his bow across the strings.

### A City Ambulance.

When a man falls on the streets of Lincoln the patrol wagon carries him home; the patrol wagon driven like the fire engine rumbling like doom and followed by the curious who chase it, hoping to be in time to see the policemen club a drunk or arrest a shrieking, maddened woman. The crowd is always disappointed when it is only an aged, withered postman finally stricken by death, or some fainting woman overcome by the heat or fatigue. The patrol wagon gives misfortune the look of misdemeanor.

### Woman's Mind and Sphere.

Dr. Oscar Chrisman of Emporia, Kansas, has the courage of his antiquated and undemonstrable opinions. Before the Mothers' congress at Des Moines Tuesday, May twenty-fourth, Dr. Chrisman asserted that the college was almost altogether for the young man, that man is reason and that college courses are for the training of this reason, that the vast majority of women do not enter colleges, that mothers and fathers furnish their parlors handsomely and dress their daughters neatly and becomingly only for the purpose of attracting young men, that, therefore, girls should be

taught and trained exclusively in the duties of wifehood and motherhood, that the father should be entirely relieved from the rearing and instruction of his young, that in point of fact man does not really love his wife or his children, but that reason teaches him that the mother must be well nourished and comfortably housed while she is bearing and rearing children, and that man supports her for this reason and endures her society for animal reasons alone. Dr. Chrisman was violently hissed, but the poor emotional beings for whom he had written the address could not appreciate the limitations of their sex and he intimated that he had not come prepared for popularity.

Dr. Chrisman contends that children are only entitled to the attention of one parent, and that one the mother.

If man does not love his wife and children, Shakspeare had no insight and all dramas, novels and poetry are the maunderings of minds distraught and of no value as studies of human nature.

If the society of Phi Beta Kappa does nothing more than provide statistics for the refutation of such scandal-mongers as Chrisman, it has accomplished a purpose worthy enough to make the charge of pedantry of little consequence. From co educational schools the accepted candidates for membership in this society are almost entirely women. The Phi Beta Kappa board has admitted twenty-one students of the Nebraska State University this year. Nineteen of those students are women and two are men.

Dr. Chrisman may be acceptable to a Kansas Normal school. He could not hold a Nebraska job. He uses unscientific, loose phrasing, such as "the vast majority of women do not enter colleges." The majority of men do not enter colleges, either. The proportion of female under-graduates in state coeducational institutions may be ascertained by a consultation of catalogues or college statistical compilations. But the man who is in the habit of verifying a general statement before he publishes it, never uses such terms as "vast majority." There are also the colleges for women to be taken into account when comparing the number of young men and women seeking a college education. The fact that a college education for women is a new ambition and that there is still prejudice against it is to be considered in the summary.

Supposing that Chrisman's assertions are true, for the sake of looking at the subject from his standpoint, such an address before a congress of women who had asked him to address them, shows Chrisman's lack of tact, lack of courtesy, lack of all those qualities which a teacher or a lecturer needs in his vocation. Unfit to engage in active life in competition with sturdy men, this man, whose address was a flippant insult to both men and