



# THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, JULY 13, 1901.

**THE COURIER,**ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS  
SECOND CLASS MATTER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

—BY—  
**THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO**

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs.

Telephone 384.

SARAH B. HARRIS, : : : EDITOR

## Subscription Rates.

Per annum..... \$1 50  
Six months ..... 1 00  
Rebate of fifty cents on cash payments.  
Single copies ..... 05

THE COURIER will not be responsible for vol-  
untary 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.

John Fiske.

Like Johannes Brahms, John Fiske was a large man, impatient of dietary rules and skeptical of the soundness of admonitions in regard to the danger of drafts and of changing too abruptly flannel for cotton underwear. He was fond of eating, enjoyed his pipe and an occasional glass of beer, and ignored all the fussy rules of prolonging life indefinitely which have so portentously increased in the last decade. When he was thirsty he drank ice water copiously; when he was too warm he found a draft and sat in it, and in warm weather he bought the thinnest clothes in the market and wore them. All this kept his female relatives,—Boston women—in a state of anxiety and constant, audible deprecation and warning. But the big man walked his large way through life easily with a fatalistic consciousness that his time would come sometime and he was always ready. He died at Gloucester July four, of the heat, aged fifty-nine years.

Perhaps of all contemporary historians and philosophical essayists, John Fiske was the most modern. He announced more clearly and positively than any philosophical writer with whom I am familiar, his fixed and immovable conviction in the existence of a creative Goodness. He was a positivist notwithstanding his willingness to sit down and reason from their point of view with all men. His course lay from childhood in the clearest sunlight. Therefore his style: lucid, ambient, simple as sunlight, and as illuminating to the dark corners of the philosophical maze. Born in the days of Spencer and Darwin, he developed the theory of the latter, although his style is Spencerian. His discovery of the causes of the pro-

longed infancy of mankind and of the part played by it in determining human development, is an addition to the Darwinian theory of evolution, and its significant importance was immediately acknowledged by Darwin and Spencer. In summarizing the contributions of the philosophers to the knowledge and reasonable comprehension of the course of life and the gradual blossoming of man, Mr. Fiske's interpretation of the fact that a human infant is the weakest, most helpless and silliest of all babies, occupies an important position. The difference in sense and attention to the danger signals of nature between a day-old calf and a human baby, is as the difference between Shakspeare and a torpid intelligence. Correspondingly the cow forgets her calf if separated from it for a short time, and even when confined in the same pasture, with every callish sign of growing sophistication her tenderness decreases, until when the calf is old enough for veal she can watch him loaded into the butcher's cart with the indifference of no-kinship. The fact of a human baby's inefficiency has often been commented upon; but Mr. Fiske was the first to recognize its influence upon the development of civilization in teaching tenderness and saving to parents. By this single sign of Newtonian ability to recognize the meaning of a familiar phenomenon and its relation to evolution, Mr. Fiske established his rank among philosophers.

Precocity is not always a sign of genius, but genius discovers itself early in the ability of its possessor to get intuitively at a very early age the knowledge which has been slowly accumulating ever since man began to learn anything. The infant genius starts where every one else has left off and therefore he has time and the impetus of youth to learn some new things and add them to the world's treasures. John Fiske entered the sophomore class of Harvard college when he was eighteen and he might as well have entered the senior class. Before he was eight years old he had read all of Shakspeare's plays. Before entering the university he knew Greek, Latin, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian and German as a ripe scholar knows language, and he had a useable knowledge of Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Anglo-Saxon, Icelandic, Gothic, Hebrew, Chaldee and Sanskrit. In college he was especially fond of philosophy, history and comparative philology. If a great library were to burn, a library which contained priceless and unique volumes, the loss to the human race would be universally deplored. In Mr. Fiske there were unique possibilities of service to man. A few men know as much, but no living American has assimilated so much that other men have found out and used in the preparation of an important message to mankind. A great library and a great energy for the making of new

books disappeared when Fiske drew his last breath. It is a cold-blooded way of putting it, but the world cares not much for a man's personality; it cares only for his services to it. This is so unless a man reveals himself as Abraham Lincoln did. Mr. Fiske's works are purely objective. He wrote because a message to men was given him to deliver. He was the medium of communication and we cannot anywhere put our fingers on a sentence of his and say: "This is the man Fiske." His was a transparent medium and transmitted intellectual light without eccentric refraction. Some philosophers start with an ultimate proposition they call self-evident. But it does not appear so to the rest of the world. Mr. Fiske's starting point is universal. He did not have to prove it, because he was careful to start with an undisputed and undebatable proposition. On American history Mr. Fiske has written the most notable works of the last decade. There is no one to take his place.

## Retaliation.

Members of a library board should be men and women of scholarly habit, of wide reading and with a love of learning for its own sake. Most of the members of the present board of the Lincoln public library have demonstrated their fitness to serve on such a board by a long and very faithful service. A modest scholar who has spent thirty years in a library and in creative work of great merit was recently replaced on the library board by a man who is a stranger to literature and science, and whose only claim to represent this people's literary interest is that he is father-in-law to a supporter of D. E. Thompson. Mr. Gere has been president of the library board for a long time, and his services have been of great though unacknowledged value to the reading public. The present council recently appointed a man in his place who might not find it out for years if his library were composed of checker boards with the names of books printed on their deceitful backs. Mr. Gere was not reappointed to serve on the library board by the city council because he would not advocate in the State Journal Mr. Thompson's election to the United States senate. The people of this section are therefore deprived of a ripe scholar's judgment for the sake of wreaking an ignoble revenge upon a citizen who, although he is in the publishing business, does not, like Elbert Hubbard, advertise himself. Last winter at the behest of conscience and for the sake of his own self-respect, Mr. Gere resisted entreaties and threats which might have influenced a less determined and more self-assertive man. This coarse retaliation which the supporters of a vicious candidate are accomplishing is having one good effect. It is uniting and making personal an opposition which otherwise

might disappear in the warm weather and during the absence of the persistent candidates.

## The Portion of Labor.

"Ellen had always had objective points, as it were, in her life and she always would have, no matter how long she lived. She came to places where she stopped, mentally, for retrospection and forethought, where from she could seem to obtain a view of that which lay behind and of the path which was set for her feet in advance. She saw the tracked and the trackless. Once going with Abby Atkins and with Floretta in search of early spring flowers, Ellen had lingered and let them go out of sight, and had sat down on a spring mat of wintergreen leaves under the windy outstretch of a great pine and had remained there quite deaf to shrill halloos. She had sat there with eyes of inward scrutiny like an Eastern sage's, motionless as on a rock of thought, while her daily life eddied around her. Ellen, sitting there, had said to herself: "This I will always remember. No matter how long I live, where I am, and what happens to me, I will always remember how I was a child and sat here this morning in spring under the pine tree, looking backward and forward. I will never forget."

All poets, dumb and creative alike, remember their youth. I suppose all imaginative children are subject to these spells of retrospection and prophetic anticipation, when they look forward into and say to themselves: "I will always remember this time." As every child, grown old, looks back into the path that leads from adolescence, he recognizes that Miss Mary E. Wilkins has remembered and recorded one of the sacred and self-illuminated moments of childhood, moments jealously hidden from playmates and parents. Just why it thrills one so to find out that another little girl was vowing the vows of faithful keeping of the inspired moments of childhood, I do not know. But the author who can recall and tell her secrets, which as a child she never told, is sure of a very large number of fascinated listeners, because her secrets are our secrets that we have never told either, but always remembered. At some period in our lives we move into the grown-up world. We do not know at the time that we are leaving an enchanted palace for a tiresome place, but all at once we are terribly homesick, bored and discontented, and the fear oppresses us that we are forever out of it. That first trial and failure to dream a waking dream, to see the visions we could summon into our field, is a sorrowful experience to every imaginative child. Not until the power of instant transportation is gone does the child realize that it was a fairy gift and that he will always be bankrupt without it.

Seventeen chapters of Miss Wil-