

greaves, the chain-mail of the old warriors who fought the battles of the middle ages made up of single handed combats between man and man. Precocious nine-year olds gaze with scorn upon pictures of ancient warriors fighting with their antiquated weapons. "Just give me a good revolver and I would finish that fellow in a minute," is what the little boy said while examining a piece of sculpture representing two Greek warriors engaged in a fight with short swords.

The love of ancient times, of remote ancestors comes with maturity when we begin to realize the strenuousness of the struggle and that the breath comes short and muscles ache whether we fight with the weapons of modern warfare or with ancient arms. The frame of man is exactly the same now as when, clothed in the skins of animals, he fought man and beast with sharpened flint.

"Four Old Greeks," by Miss Jennie Hall, instructor in history in the Chicago Normal School, is a collection of biographies subtly calculated to awaken a deeper love for the heroic in conduct and character. The story of Hercules and how he killed the lion and the hydra and established the Olympian games is more stimulating than tales of old Sleuth. Only the former is ancient, and modern boys are afraid of being "kidded" with stories that are not true. Achilles, Dionysos and Alkestis are the three other heroes whose exploits Miss Hall recites so spiritedly. The only way to find out whether boys' books will accomplish their object is to try them on a boy. If he ties himself into the contortionist position boys assume when they read a dime novel, the book is a success. "Four Old Greeks," to a grown person who has forgotten what Dionysos did to attain immortality, is an interesting book. It is illustrated by pictures taken from exhumed vases, funeral urns and sarcophagi, contains a pronouncing vocabulary and directions to teachers who wish to make the old Greeks real to their pupils by constructing armor and arms.

The last two books of the series which the publishers have named "Lights of Literature" contain short biographies of the men and women who have made English literature, with a few of their shorter poems or essays or stories. At the back of each book there are explanatory notes and questions directing the reader's attention to the more subtle meanings. The five books of the series are admirably calculated to provide youngsters with high ideals and a taste for literature. They are published by Rand, McNally and Company, and all are exquisitely illustrated and neatly bound.

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#### Diplomas for Vocal Teachers

During a meeting of the vocal department of the New York Musical League on January 2, the subject of compelling vocal teachers to take a state examination was discussed. The question announced was: "Resolved, that legislation is as important in the musical profession as in law or medicine." To cripple or destroy a noble voice is an overwhelming misfortune to the singer and a distinct and irreparable loss to humanity. Yet there is no law to prevent any one who chooses to do so from teaching singing. Dentists, doctors and lawyers for their own protection and for the protection of the teeth and flesh and bones and property of the community have induced legislatures to pass laws restricting the practice of law or medicine to individuals holding a diploma from some reputable school or from the bar.

The American student colony of Berlin is agitated by the revelations in the cases of two Chicago young women who came to Berlin for the purpose of cultivating their voices. A well-known, but not reputable singing teacher told them that the tone and quality of their voices would be improved if two or three times a day they would thrust a steel cylinder down their throats. They followed his advice and doctors have found that their vocal cords are severed and bleeding. All chance of singing is dissipated. The Germans allege that two-thirds of the 150,000 mu-

sic teachers who support themselves by giving Americans vocal lessons are incompetent and do not know the mechanism of the delicate instruments which their owners pay a large price to learn how to use. To maintain the prestige of Berlin as the musical centre and to protect the reputations and incomes of those teachers who have had the conscience to learn and who possess the talent to teach music, as well as for the benefit of the unsophisticated strangers who go to Germany to study music, it is proposed to bring a bill before the Reichstag compelling all teachers of singing to pass a state examination and be able to display a diploma stating their competency.

Herr Leonard Liebling, a Berlin critic, says: "American students will take the liveliest interest in the proposed legislation, because they are the most numerous and obliged to pay the highest prices for education. In Berlin alone American students spend 3,000,000 marks, or \$750,000 a year for music lessons. A large percentage of the teachers not only fail to teach anything, but often spoil talent."

The reform proposed by the New York Musical League and by the best teachers of Berlin is a measure which cries out for accomplishment. There are large obstacles in the way of getting a few hundred legislators, whether they are members of the Reichstag or of the New York legislature, to pass such a bill. Musicians are not apt to be politicians. They are men ignored by the man of affairs. Long-haired, with dreamy eyes and often eccentrically dressed, they are ignored by the procession of square-shouldered, pushing men who get elected to the legislature and make laws for dreamers and everybody else. There is one exception, the bandmaster of San Francisco, who is now the mayor. He has the peculiar appearance of the musician, but he was able to attract the serious consideration of firemen, janitors, street-hawkers, draymen and of all other sturdy laborers in the work of a great city by the same organizing ability that made him a successful bandmaster. The singularity of his success demonstrates the isolation of most musicians. The very ideal qualities which contribute to their success as musicians unfit them for finance, legislation and politics. It is therefore doubtful if a body of musicians can succeed in inducing a legislature or a Reichstag to pass a law whose provisions will deprive some of their constituents of the means of livelihood.

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#### State Historical Society

Last week was signalized in Nebraska by the annual meeting of the Historical society. Farmers, lawyers, editors, teachers, artisans, merchants, civil engineers—all sorts and conditions of men are members of this society. Papers are read by college men and by men who never went further than the high-school. But scholarship, judging by the work of the representative men who read papers before the society, has permeated all classes. Carefully, with a scholar's large patience, the members of the society are gathering together the records of Nebraska. Mr. Blackman, the archaeologist of the society, says that the standard works on archaeology announce that this state has no archaeological remains. This is error. Mr. Blackman has examined the excavations of several square miles of the state and has found pottery, flints and a small sculptured head. He says that there is no state in the Union which has a greater number of remains hidden by the sod.

A remarkable and exceedingly valuable set of maps of Nebraska, showing the changes in the boundaries of the state and the internal county changes that have taken place since it was first organized, have been prepared and presented to the society by Mr. E. L. Sayre. Mr. Sayre said his attention was first directed to the subject of which he afterwards made an exhaustive study, by reading the proclamation of Territorial Governor Cummings. Mr. Sayre noticed that Governor Cummings' location of two counties did not agree with their modern geographical location. In the course of his investigations he found a map of 1855 which from its correspondence with the gov-

ernor's definition Mr. Sayre concluded was the map used by that official in locating the counties referred to. From the reports of the territorial legislatures Mr. Sayre then drew and colored a series of maps representing the state and counties in every phase of the changes created by the federal government and by the legislature. The bills changing the boundaries of the counties and describing their location by their relation to rivers or other natural boundaries are occasionally very much mixed topographically. Where there is a conflict between the actual topography and the geography of the legislators, an irreconcilable discrepancy, Mr. Sayre marked it "conflict," and went on to the next confusing phase of county reorganization. In the original territory set aside as Nebraska by the federal government two counties were first organized and named Morton and Wilson counties respectively. This was when the territory of Nebraska included large slices of the states which now bound it on the west, north and south. The magnificent area called Morton county, in honor of Mr. J. Sterling Morton was lost to the state of Nebraska by being apportioned by congress to another state in order to make the states of uniform size. Mr. Sayre's last map showed the counties as the last territorial legislature left them. Since the territory was made into a state, the county changes have continued. The western counties are still large and their settlement and agricultural development will produce further changes. But surveys have been made and maps are fairly accurate. It is not likely that any future legislative body after the fashion of past legislatures will ignore topography and counties already named and located. Mr. Sayre's maps from the period of statehood to date will involve less critical choice of conflicting testimony. The maps are large, neatly lettered, and of great value to the historical records of the state.

The same impulse which led the aborigine to cut a runic history of his tribe on rock and bits of horn or bone, induced Mr. Sayre to make this long series of maps, some of which record only slight changes in the political boundaries. For love of his race and that his children and his children's children should have definite records of the changes effected in the state, the expert engineer made these maps. The aborigine and the map-maker receive the same reward: the consciousness of extra duty done. No one would have blamed either aborigine or the modern man for ignoring his impulse to complete a record, but posterity would have been the poorer. It is a far cry between the aborigine's pictures and Mr. Sayre's work, the difference between crudeness and the finished product of a scientific mind. But the historical impulse, the willingness to search imperfect records for jewels of truth, to labor without recompense or chance of fame is the same in aborigine and scientist.

The reverence a man has for the heaps of stones piled up by his ancestors to mark historical crises is what separates him from the brute and is a sign of his high calling. In the days of old when a man wanted to be extra good he went off into a cave and said several hundred prayers a day. Solitude has its uses, and if more men and women went into retreat and reflected on their mistakes and strengthened themselves for new efforts the world would be better. The most perfect man that ever lived felt the need of isolation. Sometimes He sought it on the sea, sometimes on the mountain tops, anon in a desert. But His work was done in the midst of the multitude, for the multitude. The hermit fashion is gone. Only cranks isolate themselves completely and permanently. Man's work is more and more done in concert with countless other hands that chisel, weigh and measure. Associations and churches are doing the work of evangelists. Steadily the idea of combination is growing and spreading. Anything which makes more obvious the connection of man with man and the relation of one decade to another strengthens the ties that bind.

The papers contributed by Mr.

Lomax of the Union Pacific in regard to the early impetus given to the settlement of Nebraska by the Union Pacific railroad, and by Mr. Ager of the Burlington concerning the methods and reason for a railroad's participation in politics, serve to emphasize the agreement between the people and the roads, their mutual dependence and simultaneous development.

One of the most useful institutions in the state is the historical society. The valuable collections which the officers and members of the society have made are crowded into the basement of the university library. The movement to provide a separate building should receive the encouragement of every one. A knowledge of what the society is accomplishing and an inspection of the records and archaeological remains preserved in the crowded rooms convince the incredulous of the need of fireproof and more commodious rooms for the society.

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#### A Bad Way

When editors desire to find fault with the Omaha Excelsior, they call the editor, Mr. Clement C. Chase, Clementina, and apply a feminine pronoun to his paper. Mr. Morton, editor of the Conservative, was rebuked by Mr. Chase for mentioning that the credit of the city of Omaha was not gilt-edged. Mr. Morton replied, not by proving his statement, but by calling The Excelsior "she," which reminds me of the procedure between two darkies who disagree; instead of proving his case the one who gets mad first calls the other "a black nigger." Then they are both mad and truth perches afar off. Of the two contestants Mr. Chase does not call irrelevant names, but with dignity asks Mr. Morton to prove what he says about Omaha's credit or retract an unsubstantiated assertion. Anyone can call names, human eccentricity is so common and the most eccentric person is so unconscious of how funny he is that it is not safe to call names or make faces in public. The sex of an editor has nothing whatever to do with the logic or the "nervousness" of the editorials. If it had the public would expect from the editor of the "Conservative" a temperate, logical, virile discussion of public matters, a discussion not peppered with epithets and insinuations. As it is—but the bears ate up the scoffers who laughed at the prophet, and this department is edited by a timid woman who is afraid of bears.

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#### The Strollers

Color, laughter, catchy song, dancing light as elf, lovely scenery, charming costumes—this is The Strollers. It is probably the translation of a German play, because it is funny without coarseness. American farces are laughed at only by the men and boys

# J. F. Harris

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