

things if he means to be anything but a most unskilled workman. All railroad employes and all employes in a large and completely organized business must make reports. The division superintendent is human and he concludes that the fireman or brakeman who makes the neatest, most legible, clearest report is the most intelligent, and promotion when his turn comes will not be retarded by doubts of his mental capacity.

Miss Alice Stevens, speaking of the much surer grasp which the French school-boy has of his native tongue, and of the neatness and legibility of the French school-boy's chirography, says: "The children of French public schools, in studying fewer subjects, have the advantage of mastering more completely those they undertake, and memories of long hours spent in teaching American boys of fourteen the difference between a noun and an adjective, and between 'I went' and 'I shall go' made singularly refreshing the quick recognition by French children of nine and ten of every part of speech in each sentence they wrote on the board, and of the tense of every verb they used. Drill of this sort begins with their first lessons in writing and reading, and continues to the last day they spend in school, while exactness in spelling and punctuation is demanded in every written exercise performed whatever the special subject with which it deals. Anyone conversing with cultivated French people, men or women, is quickly struck with their intimate acquaintance with the chefs-d'oeuvre of French literature, and by the ease and enjoyment with which they quote apt passages from their national classics."

All over this country from employers of youth, from mere observers of their unfitness to perform the tasks allotted to them after they leave school, in magazines and in newspapers the criticism is the same, and that is that the educational processes we have evolved do not educate. The smattering of many things makes the pupils superficial, and the employer who takes a youth from the public school has first to correct in the youngster what superficiality the public school has taught him for ten years.

Mr. Hugo Munsterberg, professor of psychology at Harvard college, insists that the primary teacher should be as well educated as the high-school teacher, and that we get such poor results because we think it is unnecessary to pay the primary teacher as much as the teacher in the high-school and hire half-educated women to teach the little people.

Children, or students of any age, can not be inspired by teachers who know only a page or two ahead, and the reverence for learning and aspiration towards the attainment of accuracy and truth is the foundation of the school system. Miss Stevens says that the pupil who leaves school at the age of twelve years, and the large majority do not go to school after that age, should "possess an intense respect for exact truth, a desire to fathom whatever matter he shall lay his hand to, a persistence that will refuse all partial answers to questions of importance, a habit of finding by his own research the answers to such questions, a knowledge of how to use the books in which he may find such answers, if they are to be found in books, and a power to express in simple, accurate, written form the results of his search."

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#### Noblesse Oblige

It is the custom for the senior class of the university of Nebraska to invite a distinguished orator to deliver the commencement oration. At a recent commencement the committee appointed for that purpose presented a list of ten speakers to the class for action. The class approved the list and authorized the chairman of the committee to correspond with the speakers in the order presented. The chairman did so. He wrote to number one, to number two, to number three, to number four, to number five and

six. All responded conventionally to the invitation and regretted, etc., that it was impossible to accept. Number seven was Booker T. Washington, and as he had been instructed by the vote of the class the chairman sent him an invitation to deliver the class oration on commencement day of 1902. After the invitation was sent and accepted some of the southern members of the class announced that they were opposed to listening to a speech from a colored man and threatened not to receive their diplomas if the invitation which had been offered by the authorized representative of the class was not withdrawn.

Now the majority of the class are not afraid of "negro domination." They believe that the stronger race will win and that petty persecution by the white race will not help either race. The class chairman has delivered an invitation to one of the few good speakers in this country to address the graduating class at commencement. The good faith and dignity of the class is involved and the strong members insist that they will take no part in a discourtesy of the kind contemplated by an insignificant fraction who are anxious to advertise their provincialism and lack of a deep-seated respect either for themselves or the university which has erred in attempting to cultivate them.

When we and they are dust and ashes, blowing about the country into places where it is not wanted at all, the name of Booker T. Washington will be enshrined in the hearts of his countrymen and his ashes will repose in a catafalque too massive for meddling time.

It is of no consequence to the university whether the young men and women who now breathe threats against it fulfill them or not. They can take their diplomas or leave them. The university will never know the difference. The university is large and potent. A man might as well threaten to leave the state. Whether he stays or goes is of no consequence to Nebraska. It is a coincidence that the students whose class standing is of so high an average that there is no question of their not receiving a diploma are not objecting to Mr. Washington. It is occasionally convenient to be supplied with another reason for the failure to obtain a diploma.

The men and women of breeding, standing and influence in the senior class are not afraid of derogating their dignity by listening to one of the most enlightened men of his race and of his time deliver an oration.

On the other hand the discussion is hurtful to the black race. Because of the narrowness of our prejudices and our under-bred fear that our insignificance will not be mistaken for importance, we do not lose an opportunity to taunt our black brother with his blackness, poverty, with his past from which he has escaped and in which we bound him, lashed him, and sold his children from him, and with his present condition in the south where he has meekly given up the right to vote rather than claim it with a loaded shot-gun. The black race is not indebted to the white race. Their score against us is deep enough. After having freed the slaves, the north, as the north, can do nothing more for the colored race. Mr. Washington has told the whites so, more or less distinctly, a number of times. They must work out their own salvation, for however willing we are we can only look on at their struggles, which are occasionally heroic. The man who is clean enough, interesting enough, and well-mannered enough to eat dinner with President Roosevelt is surely good enough to speak to a few mongrel white students who have received their education as a charity from the state, but who speak of receiving their diplomas as if the act conferred a benefit on us who have paid their tuition.

Nevertheless it is unfortunate that the discussion has arisen, unfortunate for Nebraska students because it advertises a few at the expense of the whole body; and unfortunate because those who resist recognition of worth if it is covered by a black skin, feel

that in some mysterious way the recognition of one black man is bestowed at the expense of the white race and especially of themselves who were born below the lower half of mediocrity and are doomed by the laws of heredity and their own inertia to remain there for life. Those who like to see fair play and who want the black man to have all he earns and no more, but surely that, can not help him because every time we try there is a sound of braying and that which makes the noise and does the kicking makes us understand that we are trying to cram the black man down his throat.

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#### Pride

The Pharisee in the Bible who was sincerely thankful that he was not as other men, was, in reality, a good man. He kept the law and gave the conventional alms to the poor. He thought he was honest and he considered himself a useful member of the community. To be sure he was fond of standing on the street corner and proclaiming that on a certain day he distributed unleavened bread to the poor and on another day built a temple, and that he had received signs from heaven that justified his confidence that he was a favorite up there and when the time should come that all men need a celestial pull, his was in good order; there was no danger that any of the strands would part and let him down into the hopeless region.

On the other hand the sinner who was appalled by the consciousness of his own sins and the holiness of the altar was undoubtedly tough. He "stood afar off" because temptation had conquered his scruples and he was enslaved and the holiness of the place threw his weakness into strong relief. But we like the sinner better than the Pharisee who is a symbol to us of a type very disagreeable indeed, and to be avoided whenever possible.

The sinner may be generous and humble and merciful because he knows he needs mercy; but the Pharisee is certain to be self-conscious and patronizing and conceited and exclusive and all the other things that human beings hate more than straight sin. Rigid obedience to physiological and human law is good for man. The selfish man knows it. He avoids dissipation for the sake of health. What he gives in alms, he expects to get back in votes or consideration from his fellows, if he is careful to proclaim his generosity from the housetop. His goodness is only incidentally of benefit to the community. And his insufferable pride and tooting of his own horn gets on the nerves of all men. So that "pharisee" is a more obnoxious term than debauchee.

In Boston there are a number of very earnest well-intentioned Christians. But it is certain that phariseism has a stronger hold on the citizens of that place than on the citizens of Chicago or of St. Louis for instance. There are few pious individuals who live in the town, and who, happily, were born there, who do not thank God for that privilege and for the history of Boston. They honestly believe that Bostonians have saved the country twice, once from England and once from the rebellious south. They regard themselves with reverence as the curators of liberty, the original source of culture, the bulwark which prevents this country from slipping back into the ignorance from which their strenuous intelligence has rescued us.

Professor Barret Wendell's history of American literature expresses this point of view and consciousness of distinguished services to the country more boldly than any other modern publication. In the case of Benjamin Franklin Professor Wendell seriously intimates that he did not become the man he might have become if he had not moved away from Boston to Philadelphia at an early age. His career was handicapped in addition by the misfortune of his birth. The professor gravely tells us that Franklin's ancestors were neither professors nor ministers. Such being the case it was just as well that he left Boston at an early age. A social career suited to his tal-

ents was out of the question there. Professor Wendell's book is a distinct achievement: the most interesting, frank, subtle analysis of literature since St. Veuve, but it is marred by a snobbery, naïf, deep-seated, wholly local.

Mr. Charles A. Hanna's new volumes on the Scotch-Irish recognize the we-have-saved-the-country-twice attitude of Boston and it irritates him. In the revolutionary lists of the soldiers contributed by each state by which Massachusetts has proved, since Plymouth Rock was first celebrated, the overwhelming services and patriotism of Massachusetts, Mr. Hanna has found evidences of duplicated names and has extracted a letter from the war department confirming his suspicions of the futility of such testimony. Massachusetts is just as good and great as the other states but no better and no greater.

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#### The United States Is

The difference between a live and a dead language is that the former grows and changes. Neither a constitution nor an assembly of any kind can provide against the changed interpretation of documents written in a living tongue.

When the constitution of the United States was written the union was a paper one, a something accomplished by resolutions, town-meetings, congresses, etc. The union of today is not like the union of yesterday. North and south, east and west and all over we are one people. The constitution says: "the United States are." We say: "the United States is." The emigrants—Irish, German, Scotch, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, Russian—all except the oriental nations, do not retain their distinctive nationalities. In two generations the descendants of the emigrants are fused into Americans. The trace of their origin hardly remains even in the names, which have been changed into surnames easily pronounced by American postmen, expressmen, census agents and all others who refuse to struggle with foreign consonants. Only the genealogist can trace and identify racial characteristics in the descendants of a peasant who eighty years ago could not speak a word of English and whose name was unpronounceable by an American.

The framers of the constitution of the United States would not be so much surprised by the telephone, the trolley, and a railroad speed of sixty miles an hour as by the union of the states, our federal strength coupled with the liberty of the individual states. It is not surprising that they used a plural verb when the subject was the colonies and the people who lived in them. The union was a paper thing and the states agreed to it tentatively. A plural verb was the only one the framers could use. If they had said the "United States is" the phrase would have shocked some of the timid states whose politicians were afraid that they were signing away their liberties. It took long enough to ratify the constitution as it was. So small a word as "is," an insignificant verb of two letters might have frightened them into a longer delay, so much more easily are men frightened by words than by actualities.

The committee of the house of representatives proposes that congress shall make a law to the effect that whenever the word "United States" occurs in a document it shall agree with a singular verb. This action was suggested by the pamphlet written by ex-Secretary of State Foster on this subject. Mr. Foster shows that since the civil war the preponderance of usage favors the singular term. It is curious how grammar, which is only crystallized usage, follows history and is made by it. But unfortunately before documents are written in accordance with grammar and history, in this case there must be a constitutional amendment. A federal statute cannot effect it. The constitution is as nearly stationary and unchangeable as the Philadelphia convention of 1787 could make it.

After the substance of every para-