

## STUDY AND PRACTICE OF ENGLISH

BY SARAH B. HARRIS

To stimulate attention to the details of the English language, to its simple construction, to capitalization, punctuation and spelling, the publishers of The Courier have decided to ask for contributions from individuals between the ages of fifteen and five. Stories, short, original essays on subjects with which the child is familiar, and comment on people and events most interesting to children, will be received. The editor of this department will correct and return the manuscripts to those contributors who enclose stamps.

A prize of five dollars will be awarded to the contributor of the best short story, essay or commentary received before the first day of August, 1902. In the meantime the best contributions will be printed in The Courier.

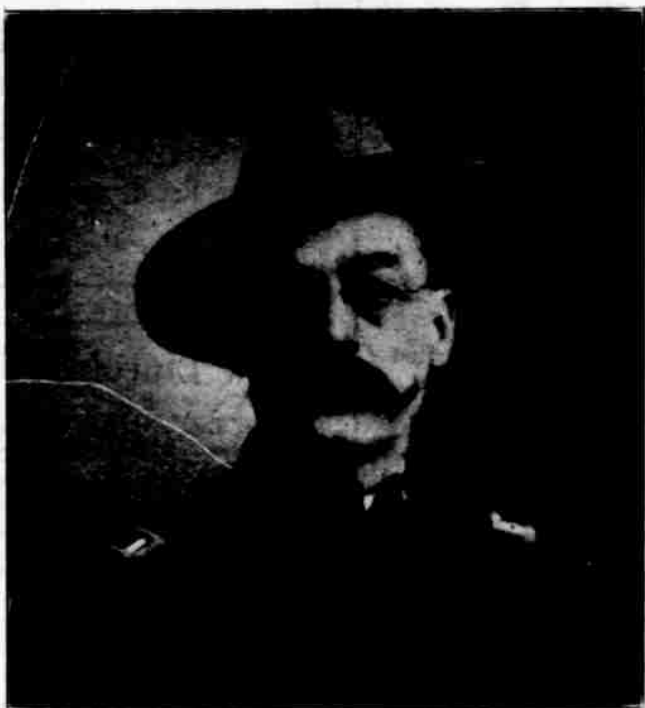
The object of this competition is to direct the attention of the children in vacation time to the subject of English. Naturalness, clearness, definiteness belong to the period of childhood. Artificiality and self-consciousness are the attributes of a later period of life. School-children should be learning the technique of the language, but judging by the written examinations of the pupils in the public schools as well as by the examination papers prepared by the undergraduates in the university, the grade schools have not taught and the scholars have not learned how to write the English language correctly. It is not essential that the pupils should know how to sing, to draw,

or to model; but it is essential to know how to speak and write one's native language correctly, the common use of which binds this country together, the north to the south, the east and the west to the north and the south. The little German lad of ten years speaks and writes his language correctly. And German is a much more complex language. It is burdened by a multiplicity of forms: declensions, tenses, genders, from which we long ago freed the English tongue. It is perhaps easier to learn to spell German words, but that is the only particular in which any other modern language is equal to the English in simplicity and strength. There is then no reason, except in the teaching and the less diversified curriculum, why the German boys and girls should speak so much better German than our boys and girls speak English.

I hope also that in the samples of school English that may appear from week to week in these columns the parents and teachers of the children will recognize the fact that there is something wrong with the public school system of teaching English.

Contributors who desire to compete for the prize must comply with the following rules:

1. Write only on one side of the paper.
2. Leave a margin of three-quarters of an inch on each side of the page.
3. Leave wide space between lines.
4. Sign your own name. State, if you



DR. J. M. BIRKNER.

Only since 1900 has Dr. J. M. Birkner been practicing medicine and surgery in Lincoln, but in that time he has achieved an enviable clientele. Ever since 1883 he has been in the active profession of medicine and surgery, thus possessing all the advantages and prestige of ripe experience.

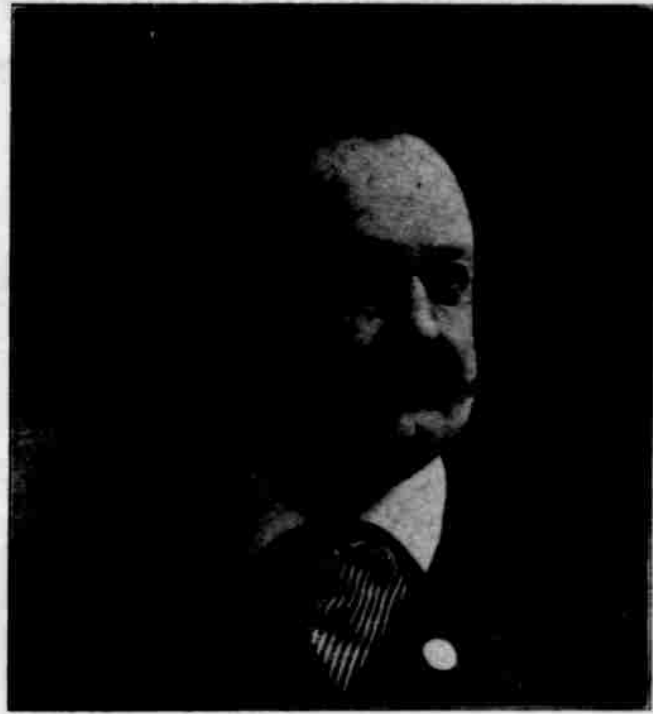
He was born in Nuremberg, Bavaria, May 29th, 1854. His education was thorough, as is that of all Germans who remain in their country long enough. Military service was his portion, and he is a graduate of the military school (Kriegsschule) at Munich, Bavaria. He began his medical course in the university of Erlangen, but left the country after he had studied there three years. St. Louis was his objective point and there he finished his studies with another trio of years, graduating from the Missouri Medical College. At once he began professional life.

In addition to a fair practice in St. Louis he was connected with the railroad hospital there. Until 1896 he lived in that city when he became attracted to Nebraska. Sutton, in Clay county, was his first camping ground in this state and he remained there until 1900, when he removed to Lincoln. Since coming here his offices have been at 329 O street, opposite the postoffice.

The growth of his practice here was rapid. Now he is one of the staff physicians of St. Elizabeth's hospital and is also connected with the military. It has an attraction for him as of old. He is assistant surgeon of the state militia and only two weeks ago was appointed by Governor Savage as a delegate to the convention of military surgeons to be held in Washington, D. C., on June 5th, 6th and 7th.

When in St. Louis, 1883, he married the daughter of Dr. Middleton. They live at 1201 D street, the family comprising two boys and two girls, the eldest of whom attend the high school.

Dr. Birkner is a member of the Masonic order, the Highlanders, Workmen, Maccabees, Red Men, Mystic Legion, Elks and Eagles.



WILBUR F. BRYANT.

The blood of ancient Irish kings flows in the veins of Wilbur F. Bryant, now deputy supreme court recorder. After leaving Ireland the family name was changed from O'Brien to Bryant.

The subject of this sketch was born in Dalton, New Hampshire, in 1851. His education was secured at the Meriden, N. H., academy and Dartmouth college. All his kin were pro-slavery people and states' rights theorists, yet Mr. Bryant's father served in the Union army. The younger Bryant moved south, where most of the Bryants lived, and finally undertook the task of teaching school in Mississippi.

Here during the turmoil of the reconstruction days he encountered no end of trouble. Mr. Bryant did not like to see negroes beaten or mobbed. He said so. In that region a frank avowal of views generally brought strife and Mr. Bryant was gradually forced into the ranks of the radicals.

He removed to Nebraska in 1876. He next studied law in Yankton, S. D., and was admitted to practice in 1877. His tutor was the late John Gamble and his fellow student was the present Senator Gamble. Mr. Bryant lived seven years in Cedar county and was three years postmaster. He also served as district attorney for sixteen counties. He is not in any sense a prohibitionist, yet he prosecuted more saloon keepers during his term of office than any man in the state.

He carried the case to the supreme court that established by precedent that it was an offense to sell liquor on Sunday. He likewise secured a decision establishing the validity of women voting at school elections.

For four years he was county judge of Cuming county. Mr. Bryant was deputy insurance commissioner until this office was abolished by a decision of the supreme court.

He has been state president of the Catholic Knights of America and supreme delegate to three national congresses. In 1896 Mr. Bryant was a delegate to the populist national convention. He presided over the state convention of 1898. In the national convention of 1896 he was one of the two delegates who refused to vote for Tom Watson for vice president on the final ballot.

Mr. Bryant is a member of the K. K. K. society. He was also a delegate to the bimetallic congress at Chicago in 1893 and a member of the committee on rules.

wish your name published should your production be thought worthy of publication.

5. Enclose stamps for return of MS. if you wish it corrected.

6. Contributions should not contain more than 450 words and preferably fewer.

7. Contributors must be under sixteen years of age.

8. Write name and address plainly.

9. Contest is open to all of specified age. There is no other qualification.

10. One contestant may send any number of compositions.

11. Address all contributions to Miss Sarah B. Harris, care of The Courier.

A second and third prize of \$3.00 and \$2.00 will be awarded for the second and third best composition. Contributions from writers who ignore the rules will not be considered.

The appended story from a little girl twelve years of age who asked the editor's advice and criticism, and countless other contributions from children and expositions from parents about the literary performances of their sons and daughters, have led me to inaugurate this summer school of composition.

This story is direct and naive. It is interesting, but it has glaring faults of punctuation and capitalization. The little girl has been in school six years, and she must have heard her teacher say many times, "A sentence must begin with a capital and end with a period." But she forgot all about it when she needed to remember it.

I hope also that the scenes of stories that are sent to this department will

be laid in the place where the child-authors live; that the deep blue skies of Nebraska will color the horizon and that the prairies will fade away into the skies as they do in Nebraska.

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"GENERAL." The Story of a Dog.

Rover was not called Rover after the incident occurred that I am about to relate. Indeed such a common name was not fit for him. Afterward he was called "General."

His master, Mr. Forella, lived with his wife and a little girl of five up in the mountains in Northern Canada. It was in the winter. They were having an extremely cold winter that year; One night the wind blew fiercely and snow and sleet blew in great gusts against the little house nestling at the foot of the great Mt., that towered majestically and protectingly above.

Jean, the little girl had been sent to bed. She was sleeping and suddenly she sat up in bed. It seemed to her that someone clear out on the Mt. was calling "Jean, Jean." "I'll go and see what they want." And slipping on her wrapper and shoes she crept silently out into the snow. She had really only heard the wind, but up she went, not knowing this; on she struggled through the ever-deepening sleet and snow; colder and colder she grew. Ever so slowly now she went, and so tired too, "I guess I'll go and take a little nap on the snow," that little heap of snow," she said.

All this time Rover, at home, was acting strange, indeed, he would lie a minute on the hearth then jump up and run swiftly to the window and