

OBSERVATIONS

BY SARAH B. HARRIS

Delphic

In a recent newspaper article, Rainmaker Wright intimates that he has "clearly stated the theory of the magnetic ellipse around Lincoln." Nevertheless the uninitiated do not as yet understand what the salt basin northwest of the city has to do with the rainfall. To still further explain the matter to those densely ignorant of the process of artificial rainmaking, the professor says: "One year ago the planets of our solar system were in a position to each other and to the earth in which they had not been for hundreds of years, and in which they will not be again for the same length of time. These planets, being all relatively on one side of the sun and approaching the earth nearly in a line, were every moment hurling into our atmosphere their positive magnetic forces. This condition, under the influences of which the earth and its atmosphere was beginning to become more intense up to the time of conjunction in November and was not dissipated throughout the winter and is not yet, resulted in a worldwide drouth, Nebraska and Lincoln feeling it along with the rest. From May to the last of November, the earth's crust, center and atmosphere were absorbing this avalanche of etheric magnetic force. At conjunction the planets commenced to recede from the earth and as they receded the positive forces which had been absorbed began to take on a negative type and began to rush out from the earth into space. As this has been going on from month to month since the conjunction, the forces have become more and more intensely negative and their outstretching power stronger, the pressure had to give way, and, as a consequence, the weakest spots of the earth's crust are centers of volcanic action and we are now beholding the operation of this terrific force in the Carribean islands and earlier the earthquakes in Alaska and other portions of the earth. Around Lincoln and vicinity we know how intensely dry it has been all winter up to the time of the volcanic eruptions, and that all last summer the conditions were intensified so that the drouth was more severe in this vicinity."

The Rainmaker is evidently a product of our public school system. At any rate, his explanation, which he says is perfectly clear, resembles the examination papers in English affected by the pupils in the public schools and the university undergraduates' style. More periods and a more generous use of commas might clarify a muddled subject.

It may be because of Professor Wright's mysterious English that he has been unable to convince farmers, during a drouth, that he possesses the secret and the means of abundant precipitation. Should a native of Thibet station himself on the postoffice square and deliver the most important and enriching secrets in Thibetan, it is likely that the people would laugh at him. There is something about the mysterious that is funny. People laugh at it without knowing why. If the Rainmaker has something useful to communicate he must first acquire a literary style that will give dignity to what he has to say, and at the same time serve as a medium for the graphic exhibition of a new idea.

Planets cannot be relatively on one side of the sun. Most of them may be on one side or the other. "For hundreds of years" and "the same length of time" (viz. an indefinite number of hundreds), is not exact, and men who pretend to be discoverers of a new and revolutionary truth are indefinite only at the risk of being ridiculed, and, as a consequence, disbelieved. An "in-

tense" earth is inconceivable. The Professor's nouns and verbs do not match. It is as if he said "a fish runs or a reindeer swims." We have words to express the two motions, and if he transposes them he is absurd unconsciously, or at best obscure.

The communication of the Rainmaker is an example of a man with an idea or of a man who thinks he has an idea, trying to communicate it to an audience not familiar with his medium of communication. There may be youthful inventors and rainmakers in the schools now who will sometime wish to convince an unbelieving world of a great discovery. If they can not speak plain, clear English, they must convince by a demonstration. It is frequently necessary for the inventor to convince one or several men of the value of his invention in order that he may be provided with means to materialize his idea and furnish the world a demonstration. With such English as the Professor's, Benjamin Franklin would not have been entrusted with the means to demonstrate his discovery of the copper-plate press, stove or lightning rod. And he never would have been sent as an emissary from the colonies to England or to France. Many an inventor has died impoverished because his native language was a maze of nouns, verbs, adjectives and conjunctions that he could not put together so they would carry his ideas of rods, chains, belts and cogs to the people whose help he needed. It does not yet appear, but it is not impossible that the Rainmaker has an idea. It is certain, however, that if he has one it will be forever hidden from the public.

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The Baccalaureate

The test of a preacher or a teacher is the effect he has upon his audience. I do not mean the momentary effect which some orators have upon the people who listen to their speeches; an effect emotional and immediately forgotten. The power of a great and life-relevant truth adequately expressed is impressive; and the preacher who selects from a large number of truths those most helpful to his auditors and expresses them in noble English so that every individual who hears him is convinced and inspired, is a great preacher.

The university sermon delivered by Chancellor Andrews to the class which the institution has just graduated, was surely an inspiration to the class and to all others who heard it. To live every day as though it were the most important and complete of one's life, never to be willing to slight the present for what has been or may be, to drink the cup that life holds to our lips every day and be thankful for it, to take every period of our present life as a whole, is to maintain the integrity of life, and is the way to accomplish the most in the summary when the time for the summary is at hand. This was the sermon, only delivered in delectable style and with catholic quotation from the poets.

A youth is prone to consider, sometimes aided thereto by the indifference and snubs of the mature, that his actions and opinions are immaterial and of no special effect upon his future. The ideals and action of every period are integral. The chancellor said: "To manage children and youth from the point of view of what they are to be, not from the point of view of what they actually are, is to abort all you do for them. He who can not appreciate child joy, child sorrow, child reasoning, may go square circles, but he can not teach.... Only a fool could ever mistake a boy for a dwarf or a manikin."

It is by such addresses and by his

daily administration of the affairs of the university and by his attitude toward the students, an attitude of a man doing his duty and living a life of present accomplishment and expecting the same conduct and response from his associates, that the Chancellor is gradually raising the moral tone of the most important institution in the state.

* * *

Letter and Spirit

What difference does it make to us whether a man named Job ever lived or not? The vine and the fig tree of the new Testament, Job, Jonah and a few other heroes of the old Testament serve to point a moral. They furnish the concrete object in a lesson. It is immaterial to us whether there was any particular fig tree, or vine, or any man named Job who was afflicted by cumulative sorrows, or any man named Jonah who was swallowed by a whale. There may have been such men known to their neighbors as Job and Jonah in their respective centuries and countries, but whether there were or not it does not affect the spiritual truth which the stories teach.

Professor Charles P. Kent, who holds the chair of Biblical literature in Yale university, in speaking about the story of Adam and Eve, says:

"The pathetic fact in connection with the present discussion is that the fundamental spiritual truths that the narrative seeks to teach are lost sight of in the contention of its historical accuracy, which was entirely secondary with the authors."

Historical accuracy is one thing and teaching spiritual truth is another. Unless Job be received as a type of the modern man, tempted like as we are and liable to self-righteousness as we are, his actual embodiment in the flesh is irrelevant and immaterial. "The narrative of Adam and Eve deals with the origin of sin, the essence of sin and the consequence of sin." The early peoples were not impressed by abstract truths. Even as late as the first years of the Christian era Christ was obliged to teach his disciples and the multitudes by parables, and only the most philosophical and purely mathematical minds of the present day can escape from the thralldom of matter, and reason and conclude without objects or signs of objects.

Let X represent Adam, a man, an unknown, and the story of man's fall and departure from the garden of Eden, which is the same thing as the rupture of his harmonious relations with God, applies immediately to our own willful exile from beauty, and the perfect adjustment of life in accordance with spiritual and physical law. The man Adam, the thrilling story of the temptation, the scenery of the garden, the perfect zoological collection it contained, the beauty of the heroine and the tragic climax hinder us from applying the sin and the inevitable punishment of Adam to ourselves. We are neither a primitive nor a fully sophisticated people, and we therefore insist upon the historical truth of the Adam and Eve story and miss its spiritual significance which might help to keep us in the paths of righteousness.

Professor Kent says: "Within the compass of two brief chapters, the author effectively presents Jehovah's purpose for mankind, the necessity of man's moral culture, that sin is the result of man's deliberate choice, and that the failures of life are the result of man's failure to realize the Divine ideal."

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Shirt Waists

A few weeks ago Principal Waterhouse, of the Omaha high school, sent home a few of the cadets who ventured to appear at the school in shirt waists. The Omaha high school boys wear a semi-military uniform, and one of the most valuable things they learn at school is a standard of personal neatness. They are inspected and marked, though not so rigidly as at a specifically military school, for their neatness and the condition of their uniforms and their general appearance, which includes coiffure and shoes.

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