

HESPERIAN STUDENT.

LINCOLN, SEPTEMBER, 1872.

THE HESPERIAN STUDENT, a College organ, published monthly by the students of the Nebraska State University. Terms—75 cents per year, in advance. Subscriptions will be received at J. F. Adams' News Stand, next door north of Post Office. Communications are solicited from all the students and our friends in general. Address the Hesperian Student, P. O. Box—Lincoln, Nebraska. W. H. SNELL, Editor-in-Chief. GRACE E. BENTON, { Associates. LUTHER KUHLMAN, }

THAT GREAT DESERT.

"The University of the Desert was opened last fall and now has in attendance 130 students.—*Lafayette Monthly*.

The foregoing paragraph is taken from the journal published by the college in Eaton, Pa., and no doubt has reference to our State University. Where that great desert is found is a conundrum we are unable to solve. The University of Nebraska was opened last fall with as favorable prospects as any of our leading institutions. It has a rich endowment of over one million dollars, and is composed of six departments, viz.: A College of Ancient and Modern Languages, Mathematics and Natural Sciences; a College of Law; a College of Medicine; a College of Practical Science, Mechanics and Civil Engineering; a College of Fine Arts; and a College of Agriculture. The first department has been opened and now is in a flourishing condition, and even in this desert we have opened the Department of Agriculture this fall. At present we have a Faculty composed of old and experienced teachers from many of our leading institutions, who are putting forth their united efforts to establish a college interior in no respect to any. Several thousand dollars have already been expended for a library, which, year by year, will be increased. Of the Cabinet, Laboratory, etc., we need not speak; but will only say additions are being daily made to this department, and the former has already become an attraction to many.

We are aware that the older geographers described this country as the Great American Desert, and by the ignorant is still supposed to be a vast sandy plain, whose scorching sun bleaches the bones of men and animals that have perished of thirst and starvation. For such gross ignorance we have but little sympathy. In an age with such great advantages as this, where one extreme east and west are united by an unbroken iron band, where the magnetic wire is spread from State to State, when the substance of periodicals is so easily mastered, we see no excuse for making so ridiculous a blunder as that we have quoted above.

The chemist has pronounced our soil to be the richest in the land, equal in every respect to that of the Rhine valley. As a fruit climate we have but few superiors, having borne off the palm at the last National Fair. Our broad prairies have already become celebrated as the richest for grazing in the Union. The statistics have proven this to be as good a corn-growing State as Illinois; our wheat crop, on the average, being far superior. From many a hillside bubbles forth the clear living spring of water, while our valleys are made picturesque by winding streams, along whose banks are often seen forest trees of all varieties.

It has been our lot to be a resident of Pennsylvania for several years. Well do

we remember the short and withered corn that was raised there. When plowing how often we were compelled to reverse the horses to draw the plow from under some of those large and troublesome rocks so numerous in that region. In recalling these past events, we must conclude the State University of Nebraska is located in the great Oasis of the American Continent.

IN MEMORIAM.

With bright anticipations did we enter upon the first term of the second session. While the halls of the University resounded with greetings and joy; while the sunshine was dispelling the clouds, and the Goddess of Pleasure held indomitable sway; misfortune hung over us as we received the sad intelligence of the death of our former fellow-student, Owen G. Whipple. Never again shall we hear his voice mingled with ours; for the icy hand of Death has led him over the cold and stormy Jordan. And ere he had entered upon the work of his Master, for which he was preparing himself with so arduous a spirit, he heard the mandate, "It is enough; come up higher."

Mr. Whipple has been a contributor to the STUDENT from the time it was founded, and was elected an associate editor at the last election, but his health failing was compelled to resign the position and return home.

When the University opened he was one of its first students. In the Lyceum he was an active member and added much to the interest and spirit of the discussions. As a gentleman we respected him highly. As a scholar he was lucid and thorough. As a school-mate, all the students loved him. As a Christian, by a loving example, he exemplified the truth and reality of his profession. Though we miss him yet we rejoice that he has passed from the labors and cares of life to a glorious haven beyond.

GEOLOGY.

Geology may be defined to be an inquiry into the natural history of the earth, extending through the animal and vegetable kingdoms, from the beginning to the end, from the azoic to the age of man. It gives us the past and present, by means of which we may forecast the future. It may be defined, in fine, as the investigation of the structure of the earth, and of the animals and vegetables that have existed thereon.

From the above definition it will be perceived that geology is no isolated department of knowledge but rather a union of all those sciences which pertain to natural history, or which have for their object the study of nature.

The social condition as well as commercial prosperity of our people is, in a great measure due to the geological structure of the earth they inhabit. England's prosperity is not due, alone, to the enterprise of her citizens, but to her geological formation. If instead of the present extent of the granite hills of the Scottish mountains they had extended as far as the South-Down of Kent, and Sussex; or if the chalk regions of the southern shore had reached to the hills of the north, their country would indeed be one of the most picturesque. But what would be the products? What could they raise in those fields, on those granite rocks, those

chalk beds, those deep canons, which of necessity result from such formations? Why! it would be almost impossible to raise beans! And if they undertook to plant them, they would have to spilt them and plant them edgeways, then carry the soil from some ravine or creek bottom a half mile off for covering. The Highland cattle would starve to death on such pasture. Even the goat which has lived on the rocky crag would cease to be. Still less would be the chances for man, however enterprising he might be. The same is true of this continent. If the deposits of the Rocky Mountains extended over the entire extent of the country, or if the mountains of the west were on the east, then would the whole be as bare and desert as that on the western slope of the rocky crag is to-day.

Mining, which at this day is carried on very extensively in this country, has its basis and foundation on geology, for through it we have discovered that gold, silver, etc., lie in veins instead of strata. Furthermore, taking the deposits which have been thrown out from volcanoes which we find filled with precious metals, and from the fact that heavy bodies surround the center of gravity, we come to the conclusion, that the inner portion of the earth is filled with a melted mass of precious metals.

To the Civil Engineer it is of vast importance. I might say he could not get along without this science, for through it he can tell whether his line is converse with strata of solid rock or if it be loose sand bed.

In the fine arts it is also of equal value. The Sculptor can determine what material he is using. Often our best statues are lost through the ignorance of the person making them, in consequence of employment bad stone.

The same is true of the architect, who by the use of bad material loses weeks, months, and even years of toil. For instance a great amount of the stone of our State is useless because it contains so much soda and potash that when put into a building it will not stand.

Often have we seen pictures on which the lines were drawn without reference to the geological construction, losing half if not all its beauty to the scientific eye. Nor is it of less importance to the Agriculturalist. He knows or should know that the elements necessary to the soil for the best production of crops, are clay, flint, and lime. Then he must learn what the soil lacks of these substances, and by means of crops, manure, and top dressing, supply what nature has left out.

Geology has a great influence on the health of a locality. What a difference between the health of Nebraska and western Ohio. Here the soil as well as the air is dry; there, wet, and the miasma arising from the stagnant pools, contain all the elements necessary to the ague.

BAD PUNCTUATION.

The art of punctuation is becoming sadly demoralized by the loose and careless habits of our best writers. The fear is that after while all the old, reliable landmarks will be swept away, and that important part of every written language become so uncertain, vague and variable as to cause great damage to literature. Cant words, by dint of long and general use, become solidly fixed in a language, and are finally employed by authors of taste and erudition. Languages grow

constantly but not always systematically or correctly. A revolution is needed. Teachers and youth should begin at the beginning. When they do this we will not see many of our most learned men, esteemed scholars and authors of reputation, violating grossly the elementary rules of punctuation. A market woman of Athens was able to detect the nationality of a Greek philosopher by his mispronunciation of a common Greek word. It is to be regretted that this race of market-women has run out and that we now use their humble calling as the symbol of vulgarity and illiterateness. The remedy for this is in the hands of the teachers of our primary schools and in their hands alone. When they rigidly and inflexibly apply it our boys and girls will learn to write good English before they attempt to speak bad French;—will be able to express themselves correctly in their mother tongue before they astonish native Germans by their amazing rendering of the language of Schiller.

PHILOLOGY AND THE TYPES.

The most interesting and curious of the latter day sciences is that known as Comparative Philology. How wonderful the fact that in those old languages, forgotten before Rome was a village, there yet lies a hidden germ of life, like the grain of wheat in the hand of a mummy. It needed but the sunlight of modern science to wake the dormant principle of vitality, and, behold, great ripe fields await the hand of the student and scholar of to-day. A comparison of the shape of rude characters on the bricks of Babylon with others as rude, has, under the eye of scholarship, produced most surprising results—has established relationship between languages, and hence between peoples long since to be in no way connected;—has corrected the history of the oldest nations in the world;—has cleared up doubts and solved problems long the puzzle of historians and antiquarians;—has made the history of the oldest nations the newest history written;—has opened a field for modern thought and investigation, which for thousands of years has been supposed sterile and dead. The arrow-shaped characters, the queer cuneiform inscriptions have become intelligible, and now daily European savans are transcribing the thoughts of men who lived before Sennacherib or were contemporary with Sesostris. We have actually now a cuneiform grammar. The clue to history and literature of the days of Balshazzar is in the hands of modern philologists, and with most wonderful and praiseworthy persistence they are following it up to results which astonish the world.

The time is not far distance when our typographic specimen sheets will exhibit to the eyes of our patrons the exact form and shape of the letters used when the Zenda Vesta was new. It is hinted that though thousands of years have past, something may be learned from these exhausted magazines of ancient learning, and that type foundry and printers will find that after all some things they think new under the sun were old when that luminary was worshipped by Zoroaster and millions of his followers thousands of years ago.

If you go up in the world like a balloon you may come down like a chunk.

Emerson says a man is a fool to study Greek and Latin when he can secure translations of ancient authors' works.