

Flashlight Glimpses of Omaha Night School

Illiteracy is doomed in Omaha. The public school system is throwing light among people whom benighted Europe and Asia condemned to ignorance. Night schools are reaching out for people who cannot attend day sessions. Any man, woman or child in Omaha may secure an education at public expense.

A visit to the night sessions at the Cass school is all that is necessary to convince one that night schools are appreciated. More than 100 persons of high and low degree, old and young, black and white, gather in that building nightly and spend their evenings in securing learning, of which they have hitherto been deprived.

The tales of how Lincoln educated himself by the flickering light of a pineknut and of Garfield's persistent study while following canal horses along Ohio towpaths pale into insignificance when compared with the heroic efforts of unfortunate Omahans are making to secure an education.

Imagine a woman 68 years old, who supports herself by washing and devotes her evenings to mastering the "A B C's." Picture a woman whose hands are palsied from work struggling to fashion the letters which spell her name. Such is Mrs. Jennie McCorkel, a colored woman who has almost reached her three score years and ten, but is unwilling to remain in the darkness with which slavery surrounded her.

"I nevah went to school. When I was young it was a crime for people of my color to be educated, and since the wah I nevah had a chance to go to school till now." The old woman's eyes filled with tears as she spoke. "It seems that I'm pretty old to start, but I'll be so happy if I can learn enough so I can read my bible."

Although Mrs. McCorkel could not read a line and knew nothing about writing when she started to night school in October, she can now write her name and many simple words and has been advanced to the second reader. Her hair is white and age has made it necessary for her to wear eyeglasses, but her mental faculties are as

used with such care in instructing young children. If an old man finds that he cannot study quietly he is put in a remote section of the room and allowed to study out loud. When a reading lesson is in preparation there is a hum of accents which rivals the confusion of the tower of Babel.

Miss Emily Dorn is in charge of the main sessions at Cass school and is assisted by Miss Mary Reid and Mrs. Elizabeth Park.

At the Comenius school the instructors are Miss Jennie Ross, Miss Nora Carrigan and Mrs. Josephine Carroll. The attendance at Comenius school is less than at Cass and most of the pupils are young persons who work in South Omaha.

A more cosmopolitan array of names than is found on the teachers' reports at Cass school cannot be imagined. Ireland, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Bohemia, Russia and Syria are represented in the list. Cass school has frequently been called the school of all nations. The night sessions in that building are attended by even a greater variety of people than the day sessions.

This is a very small world after all. People from all corners of the earth are gathered into every American city of any size and American institutions are moulding men of all nationalities into representative citizens of the United States. Mohammedans, Jews and Christians alike adjust themselves to American institutions. The associations and influence of American schools break down barriers that might otherwise stand between representatives of different nations.

Men and women of all ages become Americans when they select the United States as their home. One will no longer question the ability of the United States to assimilate immigrants from all parts of the world after listening to one of the first reader classes in the Omaha night schools.

One of the favorite lessons in the reader which is used by the beginners tells of a wonderful store conducted by a boy named Frank. "Frank used round pieces of paper



MRS. JENNIE McCORKEL—COLORED WOMAN, 68 YEARS OF AGE, AT NIGHT SCHOOL.



ITALIAN LEARNING THE LANGUAGE OF HIS NEW COUNTRY.

mercantile world, of which their classmate is master. The man first learned to count in a school where the dollar sign was the teacher and he is now taking his number work according to the method prescribed by Fisher.

"My pupils imagine that they will be perfectly contented when they learn to read," one of the teachers in night school remarked. "But they do not realize that their ambition is just kindling their love of learning. After they have mastered reading they will be disappointed because they cannot find time to read all the good things that have been written. Education will not bring to them the complete happiness they imagine."

About Noted People

Booker T. Washington's recent visit to Richmond, Va., to address a notable gathering of white and colored people in the Academy of Music was in dramatic contrast with the first trip to that city, thirty years ago, when as a penniless boy he was making his way from his home in West Virginia to Hampton to get an education, and when he slept under a bridge.

After disposing of all his other property in his will Verdi directed that "two large wooden boxes of great antiquity," which would be found in the dining-room of his villa, St. Agata, should be burned (without having been opened) immediately after his obsequies. It is supposed that the two mysterious boxes contained manuscripts of unpublished operas which Verdi did not wish to see the light.

Colonel Plummer, who won fame in his efforts to relieve Mafeking, invariably wears an eyeglass and gives his orders in the form of requests in the sympathetic tone a dentist uses toward a patient in the chair. The following is given as an illustration of his manner when under fire: "Sergeant! You see that cloud of dust on

members who had known him a dozen years to rub their eyes and look a second time. Nobody in this generation remembers having seen in this disguise the man whom Horace Greeley trained. Cummings has been prostrate six weeks with a bad leg, broken in a bicycle fall on slippery ground. "I couldn't stand it to have a barber making a mess of the bed while I was in it; I just let them grow," is Cummings' explanation.

Andrew Carnegie, in hot speech with the driver of an automobile, entertained a group of people in front of a principal hotel in Washington recently. The man of millions had been to a dinner on Massachusetts avenue. He had ordered an automobile to convey him to his hotel. The

asphalt lake the Lake of Pitch. Its depth is not possible of estimate, for every attempt to sound it by digging fills up from the edges. So far not the slightest impression has been made upon the surface of the lake by all the asphalt which has gone from it into street paving, and the supply appears practically inexhaustible. The area of the lake is five miles in length and three in width. Lying on the island of Trinidad, as it does, it is accessible to vessels of a draft of eighteen or twenty feet by the Gulf of Paria and the San Juan river, to which a railroad about six miles long runs from the bed. Two American and one Venezuelan company have laid claim to the entire lake at present and one of these contesting syndicates plans now to reach the Gulf of



CLASS ROOM SCENES AT CASS STREET SCHOOL.

keen as those of many of the pupils who are less than half her age.

Extremes in Age Meet. Sitting beside this gray-haired grandmother is a little girl scarcely more than 8 years old. The woman who has learned the bitter lessons of life is now exploring the mysteries of figures and letters, together with the child 60 years her junior.

Mrs. Linnie Copeland and B. Jones are two other colored people who have passed the half-century mark, but are not too old to begin the education which was denied them in their Missouri home. Many years ago Mr. Jones learned to write his name and he has always cherished the hope that some day he might be able to read and write. Since October he has mastered the sounds of the alphabet and now reads simple English quite well.

The members of the higher classes in the night school are less interesting than the beginners. The more advanced work is taken by comparatively young boys and girls who have had day school advantages in their earlier years and are finishing their education in the time which they can spare from work. The work in these classes is not unlike that in any well graded school.

Only teachers of wide experience are employed in the night schools. The work is different from that in an ordinary school. The sole purpose of the pupils is work, and the question of discipline is eliminated. From 7:30 until 9:30 each evening the teachers devote their entire energy to giving instruction in such a manner that pupils may acquire in five months what is ordinarily learned in several terms of nine months each.

Teachers in night schools are encroaching upon the hours which their pupils should have for recreation or sleep. No missteps must be taken. Every short cut must be taken advantage of and approved methods must be sacrificed to any system which will enable pupils to grasp quickly the amount of learning necessary to open to them the world which may be known through books and newspapers.

Suit Methods to Pupils.

Little attention is paid in the beginning classes to any of the methods which are

for money" is one of the sentences in the lesson which betrayed clearly the nationality of the different members of the Cass school reading classes. The pupils all understood the sentence and read it, but the simple words took on amusing pronunciations in the mouths of the different readers.

Frank's paper money was told of in the guttural tones of the German, the musical voice of the negro, the soft accent of the native of southern Italy and the drawl of the Scandinavian. The younger members of the class read the sentence in much the same manner any American class would read it, but the mother language cannot easily be rubbed from the tongues of grown-ups and will force itself into English in the most unexpected places.

Michael Angelo was never prouder of one of his masterpieces than the adult pupils of the simple sentences written in exercise books. One woman in the lowest grade of the Cass school brings a little daughter 6 years old to school with her. The child attends day school and is not taking the night work, but amuses herself during the evening by writing the exercises which are given to her mother. When the instructor passes around to inspect the writing it is difficult to tell whether the mother or little daughter is more pleased with the complimentary remarks made concerning the writing.

A middleaged man who has been a successful merchant in Omaha for many years is studying arithmetic with children who have yet to learn of the strife in the com-

the right? Try a little pompom, please. Thank you, that is very nice; just a little more, please—a little to the right. Thank you!"

The widow of General Nathaniel P. Banks, who died a few days ago at Waltham, Mass., aged 81 years, was long known as "the factory girl who danced with the prince of Wales." She and her famous husband both began life in a cotton mill. When the prince visited Boston in 1861 a ball was given in his honor, and Mrs. Banks, then a very beautiful woman, was his partner in a number of dances. Her husband rose to distinction in the civil war, was governor of Massachusetts and speaker of the house of representatives in Washington.

Amos J. Cummings in a full beard, liberally streaked with gray, coming into the house of representatives on crutches caused

driver had asked for \$1. Mr. Carnegie was very certain he ought not to be charged more than 50 cents. Such was the basis of the controversy. Mr. Carnegie upheld his side of it with such vigor in language as to draw a group of late passers. "You wouldn't have thought that of such a rich man," one said when the war of words was over. "Yes, I would," said another. "He made his millions by that principle of sticking out for what was right, even if it didn't involve more than half a dollar." Within the present week the Washington newspaper correspondents followed to the train the body of one of their number, who sat side by side with Andrew Carnegie in an operating room at Altoona when both were railroad telegraphers.

Some thirty or forty years ago two popular songs were "Home Again" and a serenade, "The Lone Starry Hours Give Me Love." Their author, Marshall S. Pike, has just died, aged about 84 years, in Upton, Mass. He wrote both the words and the music of his songs and was himself also a fine singer, with a tenor voice of remarkable range. At the beginning of the civil war he organized a band and went to the front. At Gaines Mill he was captured and sent to Libby prison.

A Lake of Pitch

Venezuela's asphalt wealth is an interesting subject just now and its source still more so. The Venezuelans call their

Pavia by another railway. A peculiar feature of the lake is that, at certain seasons, a tall grass with which it is covered takes fire and burns over the top of the lake, leaving no damage except an inch or so of crust for a time.

No More Heads

Cleveland Plain Dealer: It appears that the imperial directors of affairs in China are unwilling to give up any more heads. They are tired of this allied game of "heads and tails." There is too much of the schoolboy's "heads I win, tails you lose" system about it. They are willing to give up one head, and possibly two, and a third man will be invited to commit suicide. And there the matter rests.

The exact text of the imperial reply to the allies is not at hand, but it may be expected to read like this:

"How do? Pretty well alle samee me. How gettee long? All lilee?"

"We speakee you. We sayee something. What you thinkee we sayee?"

"No guesssee? We sayee no cuttee off no mo' headee."

"How you likee? No likee? Much too badee. Feel so solly. What do?"

"Too mucchee head cut office. No likee. No likee Chinee man got no headee. No look wellee. Savee?"

"No can cuttee off no mo' headee. Catchee? Cuttee off one; may be cuttee two. No halee-kalee—suicide, alle samee. No mo. Savee?"

"Gloot bye. Come againce. We likee you vellee nice. How?"

Some Modern Proverbs

Philadelphia Inquirer: It is a wise father who knows his own son after a return from college.

Sometimes you hear of a perfect woman. She is the woman your husband could have married.

Those who would sacrifice their last drop of blood are mostly very sparing with the first.

It is easy to do right when sin ceases to be a pleasure.