

THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1899.



ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS SECOND CLASS MATTER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

—BY—

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs

Telephone 384.

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Subscription Rates—In Advance.

Per annum.....	\$1 00
Six months.....	75
Three months.....	50
One month.....	20
Single copies.....	05

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OBSERVATIONS.

America or Usona.

It is said that the only objection to Usona is that it is new. That is objection enough. That is everything. America means the Revolution, the civil war, the name is in literature and history. It means the landing of the pilgrims, the Indian wars, the Puritan inheritance and traditions. An American means now everything the Puritans demonstrated, and George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Daniel Webster, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, and Longfellow besides. It means everything we have to be proud of, and by the thrills of pride the exile feels when he sees the American flag or is identified as belonging to it and owing it allegiance, it is a good name. The three consonants and four vowels of which it is made were of no particular significance until they were united to form America, and then, for all time, they became a sign for a great country whose name can no more be changed than can the flag that floats over it. Many an artist can make a prettier flag than the one our soldiers have hugged and cheered in dying, but no other flag but the one first made by that poor old woman will ever be ours.

The proposition to rechristen America emanates from an alchemist like the man who invented volapuk when he might have been planting corn. All there is in a name or language is its history, and it is lucky for the inventive reformers who like to meddle with eternal things that the mass of the people are slow to resign the

habits of a lifetime and follow after new prophets who make strange signs and intimate that everything but their own inventions works badly. Usona is an ingenious anagram and the man who invented it can doubtless get a job in the rebus department of St. Nicholas or of some other juvenile magazine but he cannot rechristen the United States. It has been christened in blood and it will last till the nation is conquered or goes the way of all nations. A rose would be as sweet by any other name, but the new name would not recall to the old lady the brier roses that grew in her mother's dooryard, the roses her lover sent her, bridesroses, the roses that have slipped out of sight and are covered by clouds. The rose itself will recall these other roses to mind but not a new name which some imbecile meddler thinks a more musical and a choicer word. Words do not mean anything until they have been used and mellowed, until generations of men have given them life. The words on this page, if they have any significance at all, receive it from the lovers, mothers, children, heroes, and statesmen who have breathed them and made them live. Mr. Kipling knows this and does not make many words. His lists of the common objects of the machine shop or steamship are carefully chosen, but it is a matter of recognition rather than creation. The words that are shouted in the machine shop or on shipboard smell of oil and sweat, they carry their own atmosphere and the man or woman of experience can not hear them without being transported to the places in which if the words were not born, they were, at least, smoothed and altered into onomatopoeies beyond the power of any deskridden scholar to transform. Kipling knows this better than any other writer of the century and he only puts them down as they are and lets the wonderful composite of souls dead five hundred years work their miracles. Kipling knows enough not to find fault with the sun, moon, and stars or propose to introduce other and shinier ones.

Are Americans Bible Readers?

Mr. William Dean Howells reports a recent dinner of New York literateurs where the question "Do Americans Read the Bible," was discussed. He says the guests decided that the bible was no longer read or studied in America as it was during the puritan regime. There were fewer inhabitants of this country then than now, but granting that and the religious character of the first emigrants to Massachusetts, still the proportion of Americans who read the bible now will compare favorably with those who read it in sixteen sixty something. The Dutch in New York were more given to schnapps than to any kind of reading, and the English who settled in Maryland were Catholics and accustomed to let others do bible reading for them. In these latter days sects have arisen who study the

bible to the exclusion of all other literature and they will raise the average perceptibly. The Christian Scientists and Seventh Day Adventists read it exclusively. The higher criticism has also induced scholars, otherwise indifferent, to study the bible. Then the pledge of the Christian Endeavor societies contains a clause binding a signer to read the bible every day. These are not overlapping groups, and when the army of Christian Endeavorers is added to the scientists, and the adventists and the body of old fashioned church members who read it for no particular reason except it comforts them and they enjoy it, it is their habit and enjoined by the scriptures and the church universal, the millions of men and women who read the bible every day in the United States, cannot be considered as an inconsiderable or diminishing body.

\$30,000 vs. \$5,500.

The wonderful achievements of General Leonard Wood as governor of Santiago have drawn the attention of all the world interested in sanitation and reconstruction after disorganization, to his treatment of problems which more famous men have given up. This quiet soldier doctor, as a military governor has been enabled to make men clean instead of having to urge them to be, as most good doctors have to do. Besides he has that rarest of all gifts and oftenest claimed—executive ability and the sense to use the full authority of his position to accomplish the purposes he was sent to fulfill. Moreover his patriotism is impeccable. Offered \$30,000 a year as the president by the Traction company of Washington which controls, or expects to control, all the electric railroads in and about Washington, General Wood came home from Cuba to inspect the proposition and he was greatly tempted to accept it. His salary as governor of Santiago is \$5,500 and he did not think it worth while to deny that the \$24,500 was an important consideration. But General Wood has gone back to Cuba without making any fanfare about his service to the country or his love for the cause. He has gone back as quietly and unromantically as any christian gentleman steps aboard an ocean steamer for a three months vacation in Europe. The war has brought out many such instances of selfforgetfulness and the effect upon the ideals which a democracy of all governments, must possess, is perhaps worth the blood of the bravest and best which has been poured out so ungrudgingly.

Suspicious Versatility.

When a man applies for a thirty dollar a month job and claims to be an intimate friend and advisor of Henry James, W. D. Howells, Edison, and President McKinley, he is immediately but mentally charged with general debility. Not that the company he keeps is not respectable enough,

but even if he can prove acquaintance with the parties listed, it has nothing to do with his ability to keep accounts, drive horses, run a lawn mower, or wipe an engine clean. Most anybody who devotes his whole time to it can tempt a celebrity into a bowing acquaintance, or to a coerced recognition by letter. The acquaintance does not increase the commercial value of the claimant at all. Regents of the State University are doubtless receiving scores of letters urging the applicants' acquaintance with famous men as a sufficient qualification for the vacant post at the University. The regents are acquainted with the type and there is little fear that the claims of a borrower of greatness will be seriously considered.

Not on the Passenger List.

The story which is reprinted from Harper's Monthly in this week's Courier, is reproduced because it is not merely the best short story of the month in any of the magazines, but according to the requirements of the short story and the taste of the public it is the best story which has appeared for many months. The writer's name is that of a woman, Jessie Van Zile Belden, and although it is not safe to use the personal pronoun indicated by pen names, in spite of James Egbert Craddock, George Eliot, George Sand and George Egerton, most men and women who write, use either their own names or a pen name assigned to the sex of the writer and thus, and from internal evidence I conclude that the author is a woman.

"Not on the Passenger List," is a real short story. It contains about 1,500 words, it gives a tantalizing but effective view of three lives. It is inscrutable, invites speculation, it is subtle with nineteenth century subtlety. The setting is as clever and complete as though Irving had done it himself on the stage of the London Lyceum, and the story occupies less than two pages of Harper's magazine.

Was "Tom" aware that Mrs. DePeyster was wearing the ring of uncut sapphires his dying brother sent back to his sweetheart? Did he tell her the story to wring her heart and out of brotherly championship for brother, or shall we accept the insinuation that Tom told his tale like the ancient mariner whenever he met a woman like Mrs. DePeyster to whom everybody told secrets and who sacredly kept them? There are a number of other questions that will occur to those who read the story. There are as many answers as the length and breadth of the experiences of the readers include. Finally the study of the story is recommended to the contributors of the Klotz, a university of Nebraska magazine, whose short stories hold from 2,500 to 5,000 words of descriptive preparation for a denouement which never occurs and for a plot too tenuous to be unraveled.

The atmosphere, the setting and