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## OBSERVATIONS.

## Church Tardiness.

The difference between the attitude of a protestant minister towards his congregation and a priest towards his parishioners has never been more sharply defined than by the sermons and hortations delivered by Father Reed who succeeded Father Nugent at the pro cathedral. In every church in this town the minister year after year ineffectually urges the congregation to arrive at the time when the services are supposed to begin. Most of the services are advertised to begin at half past ten Sunday morning. If the number present at that exact time, not five minutes or ten minutes later, were counted on a morning of the most favorable weather, the total would be something under fifteen not counting the ministers or the minister's wives, the choirs or the ushers. Yet all these years the indefatigable, patient preachers, richly endowed with faith and hope have politely called the attention of their congregations to the fact that the organ voluntary, the hymn and the opening prayer are parts of the services and of the weekly offering of worship, ignored by the larger part of the parish. Little children when they first begin to take notice of what the preacher says hear him reminding their fathers and mothers and the neighbors, of their tardiness. These same children may have a spotless school record without a single tardy mark for the years they have attended school and it seems a trifle queer to them when they first begin to listen, that their fathers and mothers cannot keep up with their own chil-

dren, especially when they are only obliged to try once a week.

Discarding the patient, meek remonstrances of his predecessors against the irreverent tardinesses Father Reed announced to his congregation several weeks ago that if they were not in their seats when the services at the pro cathedral began they would not be able to get into them at all that morning. Like the protestant congregations this one was so used to reproaches for tardiness, that the next Sunday morning the parishioners began to arrive five, ten and fifteen minutes late. But they stayed outside and listened to the services participated in by those who had noted the firm lines in this priest's face. His example is a worthy one and if all the protestant ministers would follow it, it might, at first reduce the size of the congregations, but it would be the beginning of a reformation we are in great need of. Lincoln is late at church, late at weddings, late at funerals, late at card parties, late in reaching the theatre, late in keeping all appointments both in public places and with private parties. Father Reed accustomed to a better trained congregation, is endeavoring to teach a part of the population the irreverence of coming to church after the services have begun and if he succeed in correcting the incorrigibles of one church there is reason to believe that the protestant ministers, if they had the nerve, might teach their parishioners the same lesson in the same way.

Of course there is a difference in the two congregations. Catholics bend the knee and bow the head when they enter the church. The man who speaks to them is clothed with authority. He is set apart from common men and he has no hesitation in using the authority which his renunciations and the discipline and traditions of the church confer upon him. The protestant congregation, enters the church in quite a different manner. Most western congregations do not even bow the head during prayer. I think the western man considers it too humble an attitude. Being just as good as anybody, he is afraid the bowed head is an admission of humility that might be remembered against him sometime. And most of the congregation listen to the minister critically and with no pretense of extraordinary respect. As a matter of fact, most ministers are spiritually far in advance of their froward and obstinate congregations, but their very goodness and humility deter them from impressing their superiority on their audiences. Thus it will be a more difficult matter for the protestant ministers to enforce promptness in church attendance, but considering the very slough into which Lincoln has fallen in matters social, commercial and political as well as sacredotal, I think the ministers should undertake the crusade,

heartened by Father Reed's persistent courage and convictions.

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## Newspaper English.

This title has been suggested for discussion at the meeting of the Nebraska state federation of women's clubs to be held at Hastings next month. Newspaper English invites criticism by its looseness, the limited vocabulary of some of those who write for the papers, their frequent self-consciousness and the unskillful use of many words to express one idea. But bad as it is, there is something worse and that is the stuff that critics produce when they send a contribution to the newspapers themselves. The ordinary professional newspaper writer or reporter overworks a slender vocabulary. He makes one adjective do the work of the many, getting pedantically stiff in the dictionary, for lack of exercise. The vocabulary of the ordinary man consists of only a few hundred words. The emotions and situations which human beings daily experience and endeavor to describe are of infinite variety and can not be reproduced except by the use of the words which describe them. There is nothing new under the sun and all these accidents and incidents have happened before and have been named by the language makers. To call them by other names is to miscall them and distort the truth, which it is the effort of all newspaper writers to convey without distortion. But when the work of the newspaper hack is compared with the occasional contributor, then and only then is the former's skillfulness apparent. On the other hand when our work is compared with the really skilled workmen who write books and good stories its faults of construction and style discourage the most complacent.

Still there are a few rules of grammar and rhetoric even the most unlettered writer should study, if not for the older readers, then for the children's sake. Miss Fairbrother of Omaha, for instance, should study an elementary work on grammar and after she has memorized a few rules concerning the use of a plural verb with a plural subject etc., and especially the directions governing the use of pronouns and adverbs it would be of advantage to her to study any standard and very elementary work on rhetoric. In the prosecution of her second year's work in rhetoric, one of her fellow craftsmen may perhaps be allowed to suggest that she devote particular attention to the rules concerning the use of metaphors and the confusion caused by mixing them.

In the Woman's Weekly, of July 29, Miss Fairbrother, the editor, contributes a remarkable paragraph. I know it for Miss Fairbrother's work by the faults of construction and by the blinding rage which destroys her aim, a rage which in personal converse reduces her to a state of sputtering

vulgarity. After alluding to a "black crime committed by this Lincoln paper from which it escaped without having its neck wrung" she advises Mrs. Draper Smith, the able and gracious president of the woman's club "to request such publications to keep out of town."

The article in The Courier which aroused Miss Fairbrother was sent this paper by an Omaha correspondent who was disgusted by the drunken and lewd Omaha midway. Several of the best people in Omaha have spoken of the coarseness and license of the midway and regretted that such sights and sounds should be allowed where it is impossible to keep their children from the contamination. Miss Fairbrother is one of the most radical of W. C. T. U. members, yet when it suits her purpose to praise an immoral and repulsive show she has no scruples which the managers of the exposition can not convert into advertisements for the show.

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## Slow Pay and R. C.

In every city of consequence in this country there is a book called by different names but whose value depends upon its frankness and accuracy. In Lincoln it is called the Blue Book and it records the names of those who make no bills they do not pay promptly, of those who order goods here and there lightly and gracefully with no intention of paying for them, of those who pay slowly and of those from whom cash must be required before they are allowed to walk off with goods.

Such a compilation must needs be brutally frank and it is. The compilers pay no attention to the society standing or to the ancestral purity of the blood which flows through the veins of the men and women they rate. Their point of view is a single one and is confined to considerations of the ability to, and habit of paying bills. There is a large number of people who can pay but will not every where, and against the names of these people in the Lincoln blue book is written R. C. which degree, being interpreted means, "require cash." Many of these R. C.'s can pay but won't. Like the whist player who would rather keep his trumps than take tricks with them, the confirmed dead beat regards the liquidation of a bill as so much money thrown away, which might have been used to buy things with from a merchant who will not trust him, or saved to look at and exult over. In the meantime his credit is ruined and that far more delicate factor in commerce—the confidence and respect of one's fellow tradesmen—is irreparably injured.

The stubborn disinclination of the rich to pay their bills embarrasses the tradesmen, who, of course, do not wish to lose a customer nor offend an influential rich woman. If it were not for the people of straightened means who go without necessities