



THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1900.

THE COURIER,
Official Organ of the Nebraska State
Federation of Women's Clubs.

ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS
SECOND CLASS MATTER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

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

THE COURIER will not be responsible for voluntary communications unless accompanied by return postage. Communications, to receive attention, must be signed by the full name of the writer, not merely as a guarantee of good faith, but for publication if advisable.

OBSERVATIONS.

Time's Majority.

Last week was the twenty-sixth of the year. The year is at maturity—a period which is never celebrated. On the last day of an expiring year the periodicals contain pictures of what are known as the "Old year" and the "New year." The old year in the picture papers is an old man with straggling, long white locks, such a type as eighty years of living, loving, hating, working, and shirking will produce. The new year is a Puck of six years, a dandy of eighteen or twenty or a baby of eight months. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever made a picture of a year six months old, for the reason that we memorialize only the beginning and end of things. The middle of the day and of the year when we are most vigorous, when we have lost the inspiration of beginning and haven't the desperation and regret of the ending, is ignored by the artists and poets. If indeed these should think the back bent to labor and the hands and the head to commerce, worthy a song or a picture then might the back straighten and the hands strengthen for that they are being recorded in the history of man. To bestow all our symbolic pictures on the beginning or end of years and days, encourages the *mañana* tendency. The middle of the day, the middle of the year, is the best time to stop smoking, drinking, or swearing if it happens to be the present time. Time is a circle anyhow with only artificial starting and stopping places. As the year whirls us along we can make it

satisfactory and epochal in July as easily as in January whether the poets and symbolists are willing or not. Besides, there is only one beginning and one ending every year. The commonplace, undesigned, wet days of April, the hot days of July and August, and the dust-windy days of autumn, and early Nebraska winter invite us the rest of the year to make resolutions and keep them in all seasons. The first day of the year was selected as the only suitable time for renunciation of favorite, deadly vices because it occurs only once in 365 days. The masculine shrewdness of the selection is undeniable, but there are a few women whose importunate entreaties to chastity and temperance pay no heed to the calendar date of repentance and baptism.

A Sketch of Mr. Bryan

Mr. William Allen White, of Boyville, Kansas, has a black and white impression of Mr. Bryan in the current McClure's. While giving his model's wonderful voice, his enthusiasm, and his cleverness in striking the chords that both soothe and arouse the discontented, Mr. White quite apparently does not believe Mr. Bryan a reformer who can reform.

Before he was nominated for congressman, Mr. Bryan was a young lawyer not overburdened with business. But as in other cases the young man whom private parties and corporations with disputes to settle do not select was considered just the man to debate and legislate upon the nation's affairs. While not old enough, not wise enough, not practical enough to get his share of the law business of this district, hundreds who heard him speak voted for him for six reasons. (1.) They could hear him. (2.) He was apparently ready to sacrifice his time, labor and mind to freeing the common people from an oppression, a disgraceful servitude which he told them was choking freedom and happiness out of their lives. (3.) He is a good colorist and a draughtsman like Dante; he can draw horrible looking devils and monsters and give them a likeness to Mark Hanaa. (4.) He is a master of the tricks of oratory and the still undeveloped resources of a sympathetic, human voice crying in the wilderness. (5.) Some of the abuses he complains of and offers to right, are abuses. (6.) The people do suffer from oppressive combinations like the ice trust formed through the aid and by the connivance of mayors and other representatives whom the people have elected to guard their interests and not to betray them.

Mr. Bryan may be an inchoate Moses, but in the minds of all thoughtful democrats, who know the worth of oratory and the value of a pose, there is a constant demand that he say something, to show that he has pondered upon the problems of today as Lincoln, Adams or Washington

pondered upon the problems of 1860, of 1787, of 1797. The crown of thorns and cross of gold speech is insufficient evidence of his ability to guide the nation through the impending four years which even to the minor prophets are portentous.

Mr. Bryan uses his oratorical talents to enrage his hearers, whom he assumes are his friends, against the mistakes and corruption of republicans. His charges are not groundless. We have laid a tariff for the rich man against the poor man, we have been too lenient with combinations like the ice trust which is plainly a conspiracy against the poor. The party is an old one, its history is a story of patriots struggling for larger constitutional liberty. Washington, Grant, Adams, Lincoln were republicans and exemplified and established democracy more completely than any modern democrat. Nevertheless, if it were not for a vigorous opposition, forever calling attention to the abuse of power any dominant party degenerates. Because he makes his charges effectively and because he has been able to convince so many people that he has Moses' commission and Moses' devotion to a country that he is not in the habit of saying a good word for, Mr. Bryan may do the whole country a service though not in the capacity he anticipates.

The Snap Shot Highwayman.

Governor Roosevelt said, "Take it away! Take that away!" when a man with a camera, stationed himself in front of him just as he was about to make a speech at the Philadelphia convention. The man with a camera does not trouble most of us. Blessed be obscurity. She can walk up and down the highway, to and from a meal of mush and milk, or of truffles and champaign and nobody cares which, her figure may be awkwardly angular or hopelessly squat, she may favor to the indifference of the public a simple reaffirmation of the Chicago platform or a reiteration of it, giving the words sixteen to one without waiting for the consent of any other nation or David B. Hill, the place of honor in the platform as the invention of Mr. Bryan himself. A humble unit of the millions that live in America is not invested by cameras. And this is really a blessing, no less so because it is a negative one. Governor Roosevelt does not object to having his picture taken when he has dressed for the part or to a snap shot at the head of his rough riders but he was disconcerted by the man without humor just in front of him ready, not to listen to his speech, which to every man who delivers one is the event of the hour, but to take his picture while making it. The sergeant at arms, in response to the Governor's horrified exclamation, hustled the man and his camera out of range, but not before, for the first recorded instance, Governor Roosevelt showed

that he was startled. It may have been a ruse of the democrats to spoil a good speech and blot a dauntless record. At any rate the time has come for the courts to decide whether a man, in the photographic sense controls his own features.

Governor Roosevelt's quick appreciation of the undignified and ridiculous is in direct contrast with Mr. Bryan's pose on the first page of last Sunday's New York World. The candidate for the presidency of 75,000,000 people, lawyers, doctors, college professors and ministers, as well as laborers, had his picture taken with his back to the camera, in his shirt sleeves with his trousers stuffed into boots.

Tsi An.

Tigerish, determined, brave, resourceful, bigoted, unhampered by affections, scruples or feminine vanity as it is usually displayed, Tsi An is the mistress of China and if she hold the ambassadors as hostages, as it is said she does, for the time being she frightens Europe and the horde that waits at her gates for a division of territory. It is expedient that she be deposed, but while she reigns and confuses the occidental Teuton, Gaul, and Briton with her oriental tactics it is not easy to repress an occasional expression of gratification at the keenness of her feminine intellect. She must be conquered for all China and all the powers are against her, but her reign has been an example of the power of mind over custom, tradition, over military power, over matter, over everything we have been accustomed to yield the throne to. Custom, which is supposed to be unbreakable in China Tsi An conforms to when it suits her plans and overlooks when obedience would defeat them. It has always been said that the Empress would jar Chinese loyalty loose from her if she broke the peculiar conveniences hampering China women, and especially a Chinese empress, but she thought it advisable to give an audience to the wives of the ambassadors in Pekin. Just as coolly as a Colorado woman goes to the poles or rides a diamond frame bicycle, Tsi An issued invitations to her reception, the ladies came, and, after all, not a Chinaman dropped. The common people would make bash of her if they could catch her for Chinese laundrymen say among her various and admirable gifts, patriotism does not seem to have a place. Patriotism is an emotion. Tsi An has no use for emotions. If to make her power more absolute it was necessary to give away a slice of China and a few million Chinamen, she gave it without consulting the inhabitants and without any sentimental regrets. She has all the indifference to blood-letting that characterized Boadicea, Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth of England, or the Empress Katharine of Russia and Catharine di Medici of