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OBSERVATIONS.

A Man's House.

Charles F. Lummis, author, archi-
tect and artisan, is building a house
for himself in Los Angeles, California.
"A man's house," he says, "should be
a part of himself. It should be endur-
ing and fit to endure. Life and death
will hallow it: it mellows with the
generations—if it outlast them.
Something, at least, of the owner's in-
dividuality should inform it. Some
activity of the head, heart and hands
should make it really his—not just
his on the abstract office books and
off the same bolt of calico that his
neighbor buys from as uncarefully, at
the same price per yard. The more of
himself that he can put into it, the
better for it and for him. Every one
knows that the thing he has made is
more genuinely his than the thing he
has bought. The creative thrill is so
fine and keen; it is sheer pitiful to
see a man get a home off the bargain
counter, and miss nearly all the joy
he might just as well have of it."

Mr. Lummis is building the house
himself with the help of an Indian
boy. It is built around a patio, or
open court. All the years of his life
in the west he has been collecting for
the house he has always meant to
build. Original timbers from Cali-
fornia missions, old brass, copper and
iron locks and keys, Indian crockery
and boulders which were left on his

place, thousands of years ago, are used
in the construction and decoration of
this house. His plans are a mixture
of what the Spaniards, Mexicans, Pu-
eblo Indians, Aztecs, Yuncas, Incas,
and Mayas have tried and proved as
most acceptable to the climate that
Mr. Lummis is building his house in.
He is clever and is not above taking
hints from the birds who build their
nests of the material they can get
from nature and man, providing only
that they do the weaving and construc-
tion themselves. Canary bird owners
must have observed the dissatisfac-
tion and disgust that even so small
and yellow a thing as a canary bird
feels towards a department store wire
nest. Mr. Lummis is a man of imagi-
nation, which is the same as saying
that he is primitive, that his pleas-
ures are simple, and mostly consist of
sniffing the air, of listening to the
sounds of water, trees and birds and
of the mountains, sunsets and green
things. He remembers the joy of
childhood in building cubby-holes,
and his house, though large, will have
corners suggesting such things to the
blasé, who have forgotten the thrill
of hiding. Mr. Lummis is building
his house to last. The walls are
eighteen inches thick. The doors are
four inches, and the window sashes
are three inches thick, and the beams
are a foot through. Mr. Lummis has
been five months building the five
rooms which are now complete.
When his house is done it will have
250 feet of porches, a seventy foot
cloister of Roman arches in front and
a veranda around the patio, with
ancient posts and corbels from some
of the oldest portals in North Amer-
ica. Meanwhile the author is not
crowded by the builder, for he is con-
tributing his usual share to current
literature.

English in the Schools.

Complaints of the illiteracy of pub-
lic school scholars are expressed not
only by the newspapers, but by the
professors employed by the colleges
the public schools are supposed to
prepare them for. One of the reasons
why the Union is so indestructible is
that from Florida to California, from
California to Washington, from Wash-
ington to Maine and from Maine to
Florida, the English language is
spoken. In England the Yorkshire
dialect is almost unintelligible to
Englishmen in other shires. In Amer-
ica, dwellers in the Tennessee moun-
tains can understand Bostonese and
the finished product of the century
comprehends, albeit with some scorn,
the mountaineers. It is the price,
not the dialect, which prevents Ne-
braska from conversing over the tele-
phone with Philadelphia, New Or-
leans and Cincinnati. But educators,
school-book publishers and various
kinds of child investigators, have dis-
covered so many things that children
should study that English is given
slight attention. Therefore, when

the seven-eighths of American
children who do not go beyond the
eighth grade, are liberated, their in-
accurate English is a shock to their
employers and a continual stumbling-
block to themselves. Besides, neglect-
ing to provide children with a stand-
ard by which they can separate pure
from muddy English, means a life-
long loss. "The formation of taste, like
the formation of character, should
reach back into the very earliest
years."

Professor Pancoast, whose profes-
sion is the teaching of literature, says
that once he delivered a series of lec-
tures on English literature to a class
of some seventy-five boys, of fourteen,
fifteen and sixteen years old. Their
parents were persons of wealth and of
some social eminence. Yet not one
boy had more than a colloquial
knowledge of English. He asked them
to read "The Lady of the Lake," sup-
posing that the easily flowing verse,
the spirited movement, and romantic
charm of the story would appeal to at
least a few of them. Some of the boys
were studying Greek, Latin, French
and German, but they confessed that
the reading was a bore because they
could not understand the language.
They had done no reading to speak of
and literary English was an unknown
tongue. The meaning of the words
italicized in the stanza which follows
was unknown to the class as a whole:

*Far from the tumult fled the roe,
Close in her covert covered the doe,
The falcon from her cairn on high
Cast on the rout a wondering eye.*

A recent examination into the ac-
tual extent of Boston school children's
vocabulary was surprising. It devel-
oped that not one-half of them knew
what a sheep is. Only one in ten knew
growing wheat. Three-fourths of
them did not know an oak tree, and
seven out of ten did not know beans,
or refused to confess it.

Communication between the differ-
ent localities of the United States is
maintained by politics, newspapers,
commerce, gossip and for more senti-
mental purposes, but without the aid
of literature vocabularies will be re-
stricted by the limitations of com-
merce and newspaper necessities.
Thought, feeling and taste are not
considered by the assessor, but their
restricted cultivation in America dis-
tinguishes us from the Esquimaux
more decidedly than any commercial
superiority.

There are so many pleasant things
to learn and stimulating, too, to the
youthful mind, but the question of
curriculum for a child who can go to
school but eight years, is, above all,
one of selection. If the youth who is
to have only a glimpse of the paths
which lead to specialized knowledge,
is furnished with a generous vocabu-
lary, if his taste be cultivated, if he
get a little idea of the glories of lit-
erature and the power, confidence and
freedom he can acquire by associat-

ing in his leisure hours with the elect
who have written in, or been trans-
lated into English, he can afford not to
know all these other things intruded
upon his attention, and which have
diverted many from their inheritance
of Chaucer, Shakspeare, Coleridge,
Lamb, Shelley, Keats, et al.

There is occasionally a teacher able
to fill the few moments in the school
day allotted to English with so in-
spired an exposition of it that the
youngsters recognize a new joy in life
and forever after they are less sordid
and their vision seeks heights that
they cannot chatter about. This sort
of a teacher is not frequently sought
by school boards and still more infre-
quently recognized when, by chance,
she is engaged. The children know
her then and forever afterward as a
gracious vision which opened a door
shut to others, but which comes not
again for praying.

An army of 20,000,000 American
school children will soon begin their
year's work. About 2,000,000 of these
children are enrolled in private
schools. The other 18,000,000 will be
taught by 500,000 public school teach-
ers, three-fourths of whom are women.
The cost of teaching and housing this
army for one year is \$200,000,000.
These figures increase every year,
more rapidly than the population
itself, for the school expenditure, per
inhabitant, is increasing, and the
teachers' salaries are being slowly
raised. "In the past twenty years
public school expenditures have in-
creased two and one-half times for
property and nearly three times for
salaries and other expenses. It costs
fifty per cent more today to educate
an American boy or girl, than it did
twenty years ago."

The energy and money it costs to
educate the youth are not grudged,
especially in localities where the
school board has considered the short-
ness of time that the overwhelming
majority go to school, how long it
takes to teach a little English, its im-
portance and the comparative, only
comparative, insignificance of music,
drawing, cooking, sewing, sloyd, bot-
any, and all the other subjects which
confiding boards have allowed their
advocates to insinuate into a school
course.

A Contradiction in Terms.

Mr. Albert Shaw, the editor of the
Review of Reviews, admits the con-
tradictory statements in Mr. Bryan's
Filipine creed. "Mr. Bryan's unqual-
ified exposition of the rights of self-
government goes infinitely farther
than the state's rights doctrines en-
tertained by the most extreme of the
Calhoun and Jefferson Davis school
before the war. For Mr. Bryan's
doctrine would allow any group of
men, whether in county, in town, or
in school district to set themselves up
as an independent government. The
state's rights men at least understood
sovereignty had to reside somewhere,