



# THE COURIER

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**OBSERVATIONS.****Plain Women.**

A young woman committed suicide in New York the other day, not because she was hungry or deserted or friendless, but because, as she said in her explanatory note of farewell, she was so homely no one would marry her. She was one of those young women whom our system of economics condemns to a life of inaction. Her father was a small merchant, whose family was well fed, comfortably housed and adequately clothed. The daughter was one of several children. Her parents considered that her education was complete. Her mother, with the help of a competent maid, had reduced the house work to a system. So the daughter was not indispensable in the house. There was nothing for the girl to do but to wait for some one to marry her. Anyway, she thought there was nothing but that. Of an ungainly, unattractive figure, lacking that special feminine charm that glorifies most women, she was ignored by the men she knew. Ungraceful, homely, without feminine charm, of no obvious use or necessity, a wall-flower from her youth up, and, withal, possessing a heart that glowed with love for all beautiful things, and ardently desiring to

be loved in return, if only for her humanity, this girl knew she was as a weed and could never be tenderly regarded. After a few imitative attempts to propitiate a favor and a notice not to be gained that way, this homely girl killed herself for loneliness and unattained love. Yet as sure as the sun shines in Nebraska, if she had waited but a while longer with wide-open eyes for the first chance of usefulness, she would have found a sphere. She could have gone to work and earned enough to make her presentable, if her mind was fixed on that. If her nose was snub, or crooked, the dermatological surgeons would have turned it down or straightened it, to order. Her complexion, for a price, could have been made shell pink, massage would have improved her figure, and her dress-maker could have done the rest. All this takes money and time, but while she was earning it, she might have enjoyed visions of her prospective loveliness. Suicide showed that she was lacking in grit and resources, or she may not have read Mrs. Harriet Hubbard Ayer on how the homeliest may be transformed into a houri.

There are hundreds of young women who are *ennuyée* of life because they have not yet found their place and function in it, and nobody seems to care to help them. They get moody and contemplate suicide with increasing favor. For a day then their world must submit to their occupying the center of the stage, and yield a prominence to the dead, the living longed for and never received.

The antidote for ennui is work. The worker makes her own market and her own niche. She takes her place at the centre of confluent interests as by right. She has the same conceit of herself as a man, and by right ought to have. Whoever heard of a man's killing himself because he was homely and lacked grace and masculine charm. The most grotesquely ugly man I ever knew is adored of women, because he is unconscious of his ugliness, because his spirit is wholesome, and because he has made himself the centre of his world. The ugly woman, with a difference, has the same opportunity, if she only possessed sense and logic enough to recognize it.

**Child-Study.**

Dr. G. Stanley Hall patiently points out, in a recent number of the Forum, to heretical mothers who do not believe in the science of child-study, that children are not little adults, with all the faculties of maturity on a large scale, but unique and very different creatures. He says: "The proportions are so very different that if head, body and limbs were each to grow in its original proportions until they reach adult stature, they would be monsters. Adaptable as children are, their ways and thoughts are not ours; and the adult can no more get

back into the child's soul by introspection than he can pass the flaming sword and reclaim his lost Eden. The recollections of our childhood are the mere floatsam and jetsam of a wrecked stage of development; and the lost points of psychogenesis must be slowly wrought out with toil." The child who is continually watched and intruded upon by his bungling mother is worse off than the neglected child, who may go to bed and to meals unwashed, but whose gossamer web of imagination is untorn by ignorant fingers.

**Mother Joseph.**

The Ursuline convent, in Galveston, was a refuge for the drowning, terrified people, swept by the wind, the waves and their fears to the tallest and strongest building in the neighborhood. The wail and shriek of a frightened negro is indistinguishable—the two are one; the sound begins a shriek and ends a wail. If there were no sound of wave, wind and falling walls to frighten one, that African shriek, that half human, half animal howl, would freeze the blood. Mother Joseph suddenly found herself the head of a convent and buildings filled with panic-stricken negroes, who were momentarily increasing their hysteria by yelling. She ordered the convent bell rung, and the howling stopped long enough for her words to be heard.

"You must stop your wailing," she told them. "If it is God's will that we shall perish, we must die like Christians. Pray to God like Christians. Resign yourselves to God. To those who will, we will administer the holy sacrament." To the awe-struck, half-naked crowd of men, women and children—white and black—while the tempest boomed and the waters beat against the walls, the sisters, in the dim light, administered the rites of the church, while others tied up wounds, and others dragged fugitives through the windows.

The horror of the scenes at Galveston, the most overwhelming disaster which has befallen a city since Pompeii was destroyed, is mitigated by the unselfishness, and heroism of men and women who forgot their own terror in trying to save and encourage others.

**The Lincoln Hoodlum.**

In the license of carnival week the small boy has enjoyed himself without restriction. Lincoln is the paradise of hoodlums, who are not, by any means, restricted to poor families. Accompanying the bands and various processions throughout the week were bands of boys. Wriggling in and out, between the legs of the players of wind instruments, whose eyes, fixed on the music, were blinded to the foot-way, the boys maddened the musicians, who stumbled helplessly over their tormentors, and anon clubbed their instruments as weapons against them. Young thieves watched the

booths on the street for something they might grab, and stole the bags of rosin left by the trapeze performers hanging to the ropes. They loosened the guy-ropes, and did their best to make existence uncomfortable for everybody. When these boys get to be men their parents will be surprised to find that they have no fear of the law and no regard for the rights of others, and they will wonder when they learned to steal. The pilfering boys, who steal fruit from grocers and fruit stands, and put everything loose and unwatched in their pockets, are the clerks of ten years later who forge, steal from their employers, and land in the penitentiary. The mother's tears might have been spared, if she had repressed, with old-fashioned severity, the tendency in her son, years before, to take some small article that did not belong to him. The vandalism, which is later expressed by painting signs on buildings and destroying property, is also cultivated by the apathy of the Lincoln police in regard to the thievery of the small boys, who are allowed to torment the merchants.

**Elizabeth and Her German Garden.**

Whether the Princess Pless or some other princess wrote "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" it does not matter. The publishers of the penny dreadful series have long known that if they wished to be popular in their audience of cooks, house-maids and char-women, their heroes must be lords and ladies, dressed in ermine and the stiffest of silks. They must be fed on the costliest of dainties, and always approached with ceremonious observance. Otherwise the audience is bored with its commonplace and undistinguished heroes and heroines. Humble men and women do not want to be despoiled of their belief that the queen always wears a crown, and that "gooks" are always haughty and unreasonable. But Elizabeth and her husband, "The Man of Wrath," ignore our passion for associating, if only in a book, with the blooded great. It is only casually that the watchful reader discovers that Elizabeth and her man live in a castle, and that they are the Princess and Prince in a German principality, and that there are baby Elizabeths and "little men of wrath," all over town, infant god-children of the prince and princess in the castle. Elizabeth's love of her garden and her translation of nature into a book is the most successful attempt I know of. Nature without the human element is hard reading. The sight of clouds, sea, forests, mountains, flowers, awakens enthusiasm, but to read of them is stupid. A book of sky and mountains is all well enough for an edition *de luxe*, a book that, so far as reading is concerned, need have only covers and an illustration or two. By the subtle literary sense that Elizabeth possesses, she knows this and restrains her allusions to the growing things in her garden. The charm of