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OBSERVATIONS.

Truth.

A recent letter to the editor of The Courier reads: "From the plague of Bryanism; from the burden of Herronism, and Rossism and Howardism and college professorism and from the disgrace of Lincoln and Omaha bossism in the U. S. Senate may the good Lord and The Courier deliver us!" By college professorism, I think my correspondent means that peculiar attitude which some professors are assured that they stand in relation to the Truth. Like some professors of religion who exhort as naturally as they draw breath and who assume that they are confident of Jehovah in a peculiar, in a specially selected way, some college professors take it for granted that they are much more apt to discover truth than any other man. It is not easy to understand just why the president of a large manufacturing plant or of a railroad or business men who have entered the sharp competition of business life and succeeded, who have worked with their hands and their heads, and who are not supported by this or that patron or institution, are not able to distinguish truth from falsehood and fairness from unfairness. Paper truth, oratorical truth, smooth, faultless syllogisms worked out in a lecture room or in an oration is not always valuable to the world. The man who has worked with all kinds of men, who meets in the stock exchange hundreds of opponents trying to outwit him is in training all the time. He knows there is no quarter if he fail, that success or failure depends upon the keenness of his faculties and intuition, and the struggle makes a strong self-reliant man of him. Between theory and practice there is a

space so large that the former, frequently does not fit. The theorist frequently leaves out essential terms, because not using them for his bread and butter he does not see their necessity. What irritates the American business man is the professorial assumption that his own motives are purer, his advantages superior, and his love of humanity and liberty far greater; that moreover he, the professor, is looking for truth and in his search should be beyond criticism, advice or even remonstrance.

Lucretius said of truth, that "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and see the ships tossed upon the sea: A pleasure to stand in the window of a castle and see a battle and the adventures thereof, below. But no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth, and to see the errors and wanderings and mists and tempests in the vale below." And Lord Bacon adds, "So always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride" as though he alone of all earth's creatures had climbed that eminence and beheld that view. Purse-proud or book-proud, arrogance is arrogance and an impartial Providence has not made an exclusive path to truth for the feet of professors. It is in the earth for the digger, in the daily summaries of men, methods and markets that the broker makes. It is even nearer the humble than the haughty and men of all professions and trades have a right to join the hunt for it and one man is quite as likely to discover it as another.

The Lincoln Public Schools.

Pioneers are men who care more for novelty than for the comforts and luxuries of an old civilization. The men and women whose children and grandchildren are now in the Lincoln public schools possess the spirit which sent the Puritans across the ocean to an unknown, savage shore. They elected to bring up their children far away from those educational advantages which they themselves had enjoyed. It is said in poetry and history that the Pilgrims and Puritans came to America on purpose and for no other purpose than to seek religious liberty, but some of their descendants suspect that these pioneers, like later ones, left home, because they enjoyed traveling and the novelty of being in a remote unknown land. They wanted to found families in America whose descendants would refer to the Mayflower passengers as the English count time and men from William the Conqueror. They are our most revered ancestors, but nobody supposes that all earthly dross was purged away by the long ocean trip in the Mayflower. The passengers were the most adventurous, and the most obstinate of King James' subjects. Exactly the same sort of people, albeit with less of religious fervor and ostensible religious purpose settled Nebraska.

Impatient of the deep grooves of convention, bored with tradition and the fixed customs of New England, American immigrants to Nebraska, have transmitted their love of adventure and their impatience of control to their offspring whose children are now the public school children of this city and state. Nebraska is no longer a pioneer state, but in the third generation from the pioneers the temperament is still undiluted. Without considering the kind of people who voluntarily leave settled circumstances to try new ones in a new country, it is easy to do an injustice to the manners and morals of their children. The pioneers themselves had tried a jejune civilization, tired of it and hoped to create something better by starting the thing anew. But the pioneers were, in spite of themselves, influenced by the traditions they had grown tired of and by the education they had received. Their children are influenced by hearsay conditions, and their grand-children, except as they have traveled, exhibit the naturally barbaric traits of children with the added barbarism of new countries. Psychologists announce that a child progresses from barbarism to civilization, exactly as the race has. That when boys dance around some comrade or animal they are torturing it is because they are still savage. Then they progress through the barbaric, and semi-civilized periods to civilization; the altruistic virtues being the last to develop. To civilize a tribe is a very slow process. To civilize individuals whose strongest tendencies are imitative is not such a problem. The effect of environment, of tradition, of convention, of predecessors is incalculable. Lacking a long succession of predecessors and of tradition is one strong reason why Nebraska school children occasionally demonstrate the small effect their training has had upon them. I doubt not that the boys in the Boston Latin School have worn a rut fifty years or more deep and that very few leap out of the rut or do what is unexpected. Nebraska school history is like the unbroken prairie of twenty-five years ago. The scholars have not the landmarks of tradition. It is almost as easy to go in one direction as another. What would be incredible conduct in a Massachusetts high school boy is not out of the usual here. It is therefore unreasonable to compare a western with an eastern school.

Last week's Courier contained some strictures on the unsportsmanlike conduct of the high-school boys when watching a match game. The indignation which the critics aroused in some members of the junior class indicates that quite a different code has been accepted by them and that a new spirit has begun to influence them. Something which in time will change the cry of "anything to beat Omaha," to "For the Lincoln High School." *Esprit du corps* has made many a soldier fight, when if it were only his

own honor he had run away. The regimental spirit makes men honest and truthful, reinforces their own self-respect by the reflection that each individual can add to the lustre of or stain the "Regiment." This pride in the good name of the high-school excited indignation against The Courier's criticism and it is the regimental feeling which will finally demand the expulsion of a boy who hisses a teacher, or in any way disgraces the high-school. No personal pride is comparable to the pride which soldiers feel who belong to a regiment which for a hundred years has made a record of intrepidity in battle and good conduct in camp. Men come and go, commandants change, but the personality of the regiment remains as its first heroic members defined it.

All the match-games that the Lincoln high-school honorably wins will form an important element of its history and character, which succeeding classes will inherit and hand down to their successors. Rowdiness and unsportsmanlike actions destroys the inheritance and the legacy.

An Invocation.

Chaplain Presson of the Nebraska house of representatives makes unconventional prayers, if the use of irony from a creature to the creator may be called unconventional. Since the committee on "Ugly Rumors" has failed to find a member who paid his fare in his weekly trips to and from his home, the pass question has been freely discussed. On a recent morning the chaplain, in a prayer addressed as usual, but evidently intended more for the legislators than the Lord, thanked the Almighty Power because the people's representatives were able to spend their short vacations at home, going and returning with so little expense to themselves. He also hoped that the Lord would help all "to render unto Caesar the things which rightfully belong to Caesar," meaning the railroads. This is a solitary instance of the kind of prayers ministers and substitute deacons used to make. But theological form has long since adopted a code which forbids jokes, irony, or any sort of device not intended for the Lord but inserted for effect upon the people who are supposed to be listening to the appeal. The impropriety of the use in a prayer of various forms of rhetorical devices is apparent.

Law and Order.

Where five open gambling houses were run night and day so openly that only to policemen's ears was the click of the balls inaudible, there is now in Lincoln not one such place. With a town filled with young men subjecting themselves to the processes of education the comparatively complete suppression of gambling is a desirable condition. The laws against gambling are just the same as they were