



# THE COURIER

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**OBSERVATIONS.****Resortless Lincoln.**

Whatever the advantages of Lincoln in regard to health, commerce and education, it is a dreary place for youth, if youth were ever dreary. There are no streams but muddy ones, and when the little boys go in swimming they come out of the water plastered with a coating of slime and mud, so that after a week of swimming the Saturday night bath is still inevitable and unavoidable. Not that boys object to mud; they like to turn in a moment their sunburned little bodies into octaroons. It is a metamorphosis which delights and surprises them. If boys were more fastidious mud would have no fascinations and Lincoln would no longer be the famous swimming resort they consider it. In the fall there is little or no nutting or fishing and in the winter there are no hills to slide down. Old boys and old girls who were more or less successfully raised in Wisconsin, Michigan, Vermont or Maine, pity the little boys and girls of Nebraska who have no hills, no clear purling streams, no nutting, no berrying, no maple-sugaring to amuse them. No wonder the little boys are driven to pilfering fruit from private grounds; there is so little wild fruit and childhood's demesne of field, forest, and running stream is so scantily furnished. There is less for the girls than for the boys, girls being more fastidious, and having an unconquerable aversion to dirty water. Girls therefore early get into the habit of sauntering the streets, gazing into the shop windows, and at the very uninteresting people on the streets, till mothers are in despair over the difficulties of bringing up nice, home-keeping, modest young women.

But the mothers of Lincoln have not the most excellent tutors for their daughters. A forest, an ocean, a lake or a clear creek, and a mountain or two are inestimably valuable in bringing up the young. Beside a mountain or the ocean, the vulgar, cheap and trivial is thrown into high relief and even a very young and very green young girl sees the difference for herself which is much better and will last longer than if her mother had explained that such and such conduct is ignoble. The sweep of the prairies is inspiring and discourages vulgarity, but interpretation of their real grandeur is possessed only by older and tired eyes. The magnificent, monotonous, round earth, stretching to a distant horizon on four sides is a more subtle experience than a mountain or an ocean bathed in pink, white, purple or blue, but a child, unless he is a poet too, is not quickly or perceptibly affected by the vision.

Recreation is as necessary to youth as rest and contemplation is to old age. Movement, change, noise are indispensable to youth, and the bete noir of old age. In Lincoln in the summer time one can ride, walk, bowl, play croquet, a few can play golf and tennis and billiards, or drink whiskey for amusement. I think I have enumerated all the local possibilities in the way of amusement. Only the comparatively well-to-do play golf, tennis or can own or hire a horse and buggy. So the citizens of this little city are restricted to walking, croquet and whiskey and soda. Whiskey, fortunately is not the resource for youths that it is for older men. Realizing the scanty opportunities for amusement afforded by the surroundings of this region, and the natural longing for green pastures and still waters there is more charity for the pale, spiritless little cigarette boys that loaf all day long on the opera house steps or on the benches which the tobacconists have placed in front of their shops to the discomfiture of every woman who passes them. The streets, where the human comedy is enacted over and over again, are the only popular resort. Any innocent amusement which attracts young men and women away from the streets should be encouraged. The time will come when the city council will realize the municipal need of a green, cool place, decorated with flower beds and fountains where the children and young men and women will find it easier to amuse themselves. Until the time arrives when the council shall have the money and the desire to make beautiful parks the streets will be our only casino.

“Perhaps! PERHAPS!! PERHAPS!!!”

Men who make speeches for a living get into a habit of gesticulating and of mentally posing before an audience even while they are only writing on an insensate, irresponsible typewriter. Mr. Bryan doubtless dictates his edi-

torials to a stenographer whose attention is concentrated upon her dots and dashes while the voice which has electrified and frenzied thousands of his countrymen communicates the direful predictions which later appear in *The Commoner*. To get the effect of a human voice, which is most difficult in print, Mr. Bryan uses repetitions of the same word, and spells them in lower case, small caps, and capitals successively with a sprinkling of exclamation points. This gives the impression of impressive reiteration of the same word, rising from the oratorical pitch to the final eagle scream of which Mr. Bryan is a past master. The device was in use in the emotional literature of the Elizabethan period but I know of no modern writer who employs it. It is a hysterical and childish method of emphasis. A cub reporter on a daily newspaper who persisted in such archaisms would be scornfully dismissed. Mr. Bryan's english is, however, so entirely of a bygone period and contains so many inaccurate colloquialisms that a solecism, like the one referred to, is inconspicuous. Exclamation points are used now-a-days only by school girls. They are still a part of a font, but the exclamation points in the printer's case are bright when the letters and other punctuation marks are dulled and worn by use. Most typewriters are not fitted with the exclamation-point. Ignored by the printer, the scholar and the type-writer manufacturer, the point is certainly out of fashion.

**University Evolution.**

The western students' first grapple with the problems of higher education has marked an uncouth, but a desperately earnest heroic age. It is for Nebraska University students already a past age. Nothing shows this more plainly than the faces of the graduates, as they present the annual class play in the widening commencement stage. In the old days of bread and water and economics social and domestic as well as political, the soaring ambition of the senior found Goethe, Shakspeare, Browning all inadequate expressions of their seething emotion. The clutch of the diploma so long striven for, stirred an ardor that embraced the celestials. The old gods fought on the side of the students in their Trojan days. Heaven and earth were called upon to witness the culmination of their struggles. And earth, at all events, gave heed, in the prairie town where a literary society program was a notable event, and a cane break involved not only the male student body, but a large part of the coeducational minority, together with bystanders and the city council.

No one beside Salt Creek but knows that today this yearly procession of black-robed lads and maidens means more to us than ever before. We have come, happily, to a place where the procession is simply usual and or-

dinary, awakening no special comment. So the class has come to regard itself less solemnly, and even with some humorous sense of its relation to life. The class of 1901 in the annual commencement play touched the highest point yet reached in this particular, “A House Boat on the Styx” adapted from John Kendrick Bangs, was in some respects a descent. But it was a little farce wholly intelligible to any hearer, direct, not without point, and completely without pedantry. It marks a distinct gain in adaptability and genuine common sense, over much more pretentious student work. And if it marks the close of the tragic age of the student Aeschylus, perhaps it is as well.

**Reward for Total Abstinence.**

One of the great life insurance companies has begun an unusual experiment. Influenced by a petition signed by Messrs. John Wanamaker, ex-mayor Hewitt, Doctor Edward Everett, Senator Tillman, and other noted men, the company has agreed to establish a total-abstinence class of policy holders. The petitioners urged that a uniform rate for total-abstinence men and for occasional drinkers is unjust to the former because, of course, the rates are based on the average length of life and the amount of premiums paid in by the average policy-holder. The moderate drinker does not live as long as the total abstainer and therefore pays fewer premiums, to the company, but the drinker shares in the lowered rate that the addition of the total-abstinence policy holders to the whole number of policy holders effects. In agreeing to make the experiment for a given number of years the company exacts an oath from the clients who wish to avail themselves of the total-abstinence rate that they do not drink and a pledge that they will not. As a matter of course the man who drinks and dies vitiates his policy. When the new regime is fully established, men will be heard declining a drink not for the sake of principle, not because of any ethical reason, but because if they do drink it will cost their relatives five, ten or fifty thousand dollars. It is a strange phenomenon that men who are ashamed to plead abstinence on account of principle will do so with perfect sangfroid when the matter at stake is dollars and not earthly and heavenly salvation. The hesitation is not altogether unworthy. While the number of hypocrites who plead greater holiness remains so large, the men who keep the deeds of the right hand concealed from the left are grateful to a bunkoed generation.

It is doubtful if the plan will work because of the rivalry between the companies. A policy with a vitiating clause in it is not an assuring paper even to the total abstainer, who can not be sure, being but a man, that he will not sometime, in an hour of des-