



THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEBR., SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1901.

THE COURIER,ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS
SECOND CLASS MATTER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

—BY—

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs.

Telephone 384.

SARAH B. HARRIS, : : : EDITOR

Subscription Rates.

Per annum.....	\$1 50
Six months.....	1 00
Rebate of fifty cents on cash payments.	
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.**"In the Days of Alfred the Great."**

The one-thousandth anniversary of Alfred the Great's death is properly celebrated by England with reverence and gratitude for the life and deeds of a great man. In consequence of this celebration a number of biographies of Alfred are being issued.

He was one of the great men of the earth. No man or boy or girl can read his life without gaining a new idea of what greatness is. To be sure not every one who tries can be what Alfred was, even as not every one who loves a sunset or is deeply stirred by the ocean or life can be a poet. The expression of greatness in deeds or in poems is restricted to a few. But no one can behold the life of a great man, from youth to old age, and not receive an inspiration more or less dynamic.

Many thousands of great men have lived since Alfred lived and died. It is easier to be great now and to be famous the world around than it was then, but through the mists of a thousand years Alfred's name and deeds shine and are not eclipsed. Charlemagne, Washington and Lincoln possessed the same sort of greatness: constructive, intuitive, prophetic, unselfish, conserving all that man had done and making it easier for every one who came after them to create, giving their countrymen a more united and a more distinguished country to be proud of and die for if necessary.

Napoleon was a great man, too; but not as Alfred, Lincoln and Washington were great. If there had been no Waterloo for Napoleon, if the King of Rome had succeeded his father, Napoleon would still have failed. He had no profound influence upon his

time. He left Frenchmen as he found them, only more discontented. The growth of the English spirit during Alfred's time was remarkable. He was like a nucleus or strong magnet whose circle reached far beyond East and West Anglia and united together and to him the inhabitants of England. England does well to celebrate Alfred, for in him the national spirit, which was to drive the Danes out and to survive and conquer the conqueror, William, was born.

Miss (or Mrs.) Eva March Tappan, Ph.D., is the author of a new book on Alfred the Great, which for younger readers, is the most satisfactory, I know of. To a reader used to foot-notes and bibliographical references, there is something missing, but these confuse younger readers. Miss Tappan also decides everything for herself. Many points of Alfred's life are disputed, but there is no hint of conflicting authorities in Miss Tappan's book. "In the Days of Alfred the Great." The mists of antiquity obscure Alfred's life, but with the positivism of a woman the author admits no difficulties. For instance, Alfred's mother was Osburga. When Alfred was a little boy his father sent him to Rome with Bishop Swithin. Historians report there is no further account of Queen Osburga after the little boy leaves for Rome. His father, Ethelwulf, joins him in Rome and on their way back they pay a visit to the king of the Franks, and Albert's elderly father marries Judith, the youngest daughter of the king, and brings her home with him to the West Saxons. Whether Osburga has died or tired of Ethelwulf with a modern ennui, we do not know positively. But the evidence indicates that she died. However, youngsters do not care for the sifting of evidence. To become as a little child is to have faith. Therefore young readers require positive statements, and Miss Tappan is more certain of her facts than the naval captains whose ships were in the fight off Santiago.

The style of the narrative is clear, succinct. It is probably because the book is written for the young that most of the space is devoted to Alfred's youth and so few pages to his literary labors, his codification of the laws and to his nationalization of Mercia and east and west Anglia. Young readers are of course more interested in the prince's first boar hunt, in his journey to Rome, his visit to the robber baron of the Nile, in the more adventurous part of his life before the responsibilities of a king were laid upon him. The young would not have to be urged to finish this biography having once begun it for the interest is sustained and the English is so clear, simple and straightforward that one forgets one is reading and thinks only of Alfred and his valiant needs as a boy and his wisdom as a king. The last paragraph of this

contribution to current literature justly summarizes Alfred's life:

"In 1901 Alfred died and was buried with his father at Winchester. At twenty-two he inherited a land overrun by savage pirates,—a restless, ignorant, defenseless land. The king was not safe in his palace, the priest in his church. There was little opportunity for agriculture; laws were not executed; schools had disappeared, the very wish to learn had disappeared; the whole land was rapidly sinking into ignorance and barbarism. To restore a land in such a condition to peace and quiet and safety and freedom from fear, to establish churches and schools, to make just laws and see to it that they were justly executed—a man might well have been proud to have succeeded in doing any one of these things. To him who, in the midst of all the fighting and the weariness and the anxiety and the temptation and the responsibility, lived a calm, simple, unselfish, blameless life, to him of all the sovereigns of England who have served their country well, may the title 'the Great' most justly be given."

* *

"The Reign of Law."

Mr. James Lane Allen is an outdoor writer. His stories are full of trees, ripening grains, full-blossomed scents and atmosphere of the south. In "The Reign of Law" Mr. Allen treats of denominationalism. Formerly, a treatise was not disguised in the clothes of a novel, but it is growing more and more customary now-a-days. When Milton desired to discuss a topic of public interest he issued a pamphlet and called it by some Greek name that sufficiently disguised the subject from the common people. Few contemporaries would buy, much less read, a book called *Areopagitica*. They would flee from the title and hold a grudge against the book seller for offering such a work. Under the name and aspect of a love story, with a hero and a heroine in love and with the usual trials that love encounters, the novelists of the present discuss the problems of religion and life. And thus the problems that were confined to pamphlets and to readers who find diversion and instruction in pamphlets are now slipped in between love scenes and a hero's trials and lamentations. In this way more people are forced to think of the more serious aspects of life. They stumble over it before they know what to expect, and the cleverer, more facile author who has been thinking about these things gives a name and form to their inarticulate thoughts. But there are a certain number of readers who prefer both romance and pamphlets straight, not that the latter are often served with what they like at the present time.

"The Reign of Law" is a discussion of the effect of denominational in-

terpretation of the Bible on the religious ideas and faith of a youth possessing a deeply religious nature and accustomed to interpret the Bible and nature as Job did—without learning or dogmatism, but just as a refined, introspective savage might interpret man's place in the world with the Bible for his only guide.

When "David," the hero of "The Reign of the Law," goes to college he has made an exhaustive study of the Bible and of nature at first hand, only he has interpreted the latter by the former. He knows nothing and cares nothing for Baptist, Catholic, Presbyterian or Methodist applications of parts of the Bible to prove denominational translations.

Of course the churches which support a Baptist theological school expect and exact that that school shall turn out a certain number of Baptist preachers, well-grounded in the doctrine and polity of the Baptist church. What we pay our money to attain we expect to have delivered. Men and women loyal to this or that denomination deny themselves in order that they may give money to extend its influence and increase the number of people who think as they do. The comfort of a larger and larger number of people agreeing with us and attaining salvation by accepting this or that formula is worth the price; even a heathen soul is worth effort, and there are Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and all kinds of missionaries in heathendom. The sects confuse the heathen. They can never understand them and ask all manner of questions about the lines of demarcation between the denominations of the Christian religion. On this point no missionary has ever been able to satisfy one honest heathen inquirer.

So of course when David's pastor began to try to prove that the Baptists were the chosen people and alone correctly interpreted the Bible, David was puzzled. Instead of quietly accepting dogma, the church that his pastor preached against in the morning, David attended in the evening. His absence was noted and he was interrogated. The pastor, who for some mysterious reason had selected himself for a minister, failed to comprehend the integrity of David's doubts and received his investigations as a personal insult. David, perceiving the lack of ministerial sympathy and comprehension, abandoned his questions, read Darwin and by the light of the "Origin of Species" decided that man was only an incident of creation, the world only one globe in a myriad of spheres that constitute the universe, and that man on the earth was not the reason for all the rest of the universe, or even of the earth. He announced his conclusion to the faculty of the Bible college he was attending, which promptly expelled him, and he returned