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## The Normal Red Letter

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# The Normal Red Letter, volume 5, number 4, January (1904)

Moorhead Normal School

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# The Normal Red Letter

VOLUME V.

State Normal School, Moorhead, Minnesota, January, 1904.

No. 4.

## IS THERE A VITAL DEMAND FOR REFORM IN SPELLING ?

#### BY EDWIN T. REED.

The organized movement for reformed English spelling has now been in progress, according to its own supporters, since 1840. In over half a century of active campaigning it has accomplished almost nothing in the actual modification of the way the people spell. It has induced the National Education Association to employ in its published reports a modified spelling of 12 words; it has enlisted several newspapers and periodicals in the employment of these words; it has secured a few mild reresolutions of approval from state teachers' associations (such as it is seeking to secure here today), and it has contrived a new alphabet, rational enough in itself, but almost utterly unknown to the general public, and by means of which our simplest English words appear to be most fearfully and wonderfully made. It has not secured the endorsement or practical co-operation of any one of the Universities-Minnesota, Chicago, great Michigan, Yale, Harvard ;---its reforms have not been adopted by any of the great public school systems, or any of the great publishing houses; and not one of the great American literary magazines-the noblest and most immediate expression of our national life-is employing its reforms in even the slightest degree. It has not passed a single bill of consequence through the national congress.

Now what is the cause of this astonishing lack of progress? Prejudice, we are told by the reformers. Prejudice hardens the people's hearts,—or sentiment softens them,—and tradition blinds their eyes. And yet the very institutions I have just named are the ones freest from prejudice, the most open minded, the most far-sighted; they are the institutions that are having the widest influence in shaping the literature, the laws, the tastes and the very lives of the American people. They have been quick to adopt the laboratory method, to teach the modern languages, to further manual training and to endorse the kindergarten; but they do not spell the article "the" d-h-i.

#### PRESENT SYSTEM EFFECTIVE.

Now what is the real reason for this? One of the most fundamental reasons is the fact that the present system has existed, without essential change, since the middle of the 15th century. It has proved marvelously effective for communicating the thought and recording the life of the most ascendant race the world has ever seen. It has proved adequate to the astonishing development of that race-to its conquests, its commerce, its industries, its expanding energies, its noble attainments in science, art and government; its lofty meditations on ethics, humanity and religion. In its whole splendid career from Shakespear's time till today it has not changed (I am still speaking of the spelling) as radically as the present reformers propose to change it. Except for obsolete terms (which have nothing to do with spelling) one can read with greater ease, and comprehend at a glance, the words that Shakespeare wrote in 1600 than those that are printed today in the new reformed alphabet. The system we have been using, then, however defective it may be in details, is a vast practical success. It is conservative, but not inflexible. It has changed from time to time, in response to vital needs. It will continue to change hereafter-not in accordance with a mechanical system, but only as a living language can change-gradually and naturally like the growth of a tree. The fact that the system exists, then; that it is a practical success, is a strong conservative argument against change.

#### THE REFORMERS NOT AGREED.

Another significant reason why the results of the reform have been so meager is the fact that the reformers are not agreed among themselves, either as to the basic principles underlying the reform or as to the datails of bringing it about. On the one hand there are the pure phonetics, who, in the eyes of the less radical, are poor fanatics. They are going to make things plain and easy. They are going to get rid of this atrocious, irrational rigamarole now in use, this heterogeneous barbaric bug-bear that old Sam Johnson invented all by himself out of whole cloth. They are going to have a brand new alphabet of 40 odd characters, with brand new names and old English values, and Anglo Saxon accents, and Middle English modifications and Modern European pronunciation and—and general simplicity. And they're just going to let this alphabet speak for itself. And there is no doubt that it will stand alone.

Then there are the Simplified Spellers, who explain that simplified spelling is a form of amended or improved spelling. It is in the direction of phonetic spelling, but it stops just a little short of the institution. And here the philologists and etymologists are lined up solid. with their grub hoes and pick-axes. Phonetic spelling is not for them: it is much too easyas plain as paint and anybody's invention. Josh Billings, A. Ward and Petrolium V. Nasby have already reaped great glory in this field and the harvest is pretty well in. No: better by far the present spelling than one based on an alphabet with the so-called Eng-The old Roman values are the lish values. thing-"ah," "ay," "ee," "oh," "oo"-and the philologists all cheerfully rattle their hoes and picks and go at the reform with great gusto. It is their business to work with words; to expound the new and the old; to confirm, disenchant, and discover. Just as the soldier, being trained to fight, desires to fight, and therefore welcomes war; so the philologists welcome the reform. But they are to be the doctors, mind you; no other doctors will do.

#### THE ALPHABETS AND THE INDIVIDUAL EFFORT.

And there are two or three other classes of reformers, with alphabets and without. Of alphabets there have been a plenty, many of which went glimmering years ago. There was Franklin's, and Pittman's and Leighsand 43 others-in America alone, and in England there were others still, while today we have the standard phonetic alphabet of circular number 8. Franklin's alphabet consisted of 26 letters; Dr. Thornton's of 32; Pittman's of 40; Dr. Comstock's of 44; Bell's of 44 and Leigh's of 75. And thus it is that the classes of reformers range all the way from those who want every thing changed and nothing fixed, to those who would change the spelling

of only a specified list of words. And the views of many of these classes are not only different but radically opposed to one another. And they differ not only in the principles underlying the reform, but in the methods of carrying it out. Mr. Scott, etymological editor of the Century dictionary, who addressed the N. E. A. at Minneapolis in 1902, is a strong advocate of individual effort and practice. It is by individual effort and example that reforms have already been effected in spelling. The individual changes something; his neighbors pronounce it good and straightway go and do likewise. And thus have various changes been brought about,-by Holland, Bell, Noah Webster, Pittman and Ellis. And thus are the believers in simplified spelling to do today. And thus arises the carnival of chaos!

#### THE ORGANIZED EFFORT.

And another company of reformers, of which Mr. Brewster is a leader, utterly despair of individual effort. Even when organized, they exclaim, it is powerless to change the great current of established custom. "All such efforts have been failures." What is needed, they declare, to sweep this reform to a triumphant conclusion, is a vast weight of authority-the power of the government, of the learned society, of the University, of the school, the press. Once this authority is secured, the reform can be accomplished, all along the line, at the blowing of a trump, and in the twinkling of an eye. They regret that we have in this country no such official as the Cultus Minister of Germany, who, as by a royal fiat, might inaugurate the reform; or such an institution as the French Academy of Paris, whose authority is supreme and final in matters of language and learning. But they seem to overlook the fact that such institutions are contrary to the genius of the American nation. In France, power flows from a central bureau, as from an inexhaustible fountain, out upon the people. In America, power must first be deposited in the bureau by the people themselves, before it can be issued to the world. And hence, it seems to me, the reformers who look first to individual effort are taking wiser recognition of the field they have to work. "If I really believed in the principle of spelling by sound," wrote Mr. Spofford,

librarian of Congress, "I would spell by sound, even though it made the hair of the Anthropological Society stand on end."

## ALLEGED ADVANTAGES OF REFORM.

And now let us consider for a moment some of the advantages claimed for the reformed system. I. It is more rational. Let this be granted; but let us remember that nothing in all language is so irrational as English idiom, and yet, once learned, nothing is so easy to use, nothing so effective. II. It is more uniform. But things having a human function may readily become so uniform as to lose all capacity for either adaptation or suggestion. An alphabet in actual use is something more than a mechanical invention; it partakes of the living essence of nature. And the law of nature, everywhere apparent, is not uniformity but endless variety. III. It is easier for foreigners. But the mother tongue is not for the foreigner but for the native born, and springs from the genius of the race. Since English was formed for the English, there is little occasion for reforming it for the Philippino. IV. It is more consistent. And as evidence of this, the reformers present long lists of inconsistencies and anomalies in the established spelling. These never fail to amuse an audience; they sometimes even convince the unthinking. But the evidence is negative; it does not prove the consistency of even the limited list of words already issued by the Philological Society. Nothing can. If you write "deth" for "death," and "breth" for "breath," and "thuro" for "thorough," why not "side" for "sighed?" Is it to avoid confusing this form with another good English word? Then what can you say for "ward" in place of "warred," "hole" instead of "whole," "ruf" for both "rough" and "ruff?" If you write "roze," and "rize" and "rizn," why should you write "cissors' for "scissors?" And finally, in the name of the much berated silent "e," what principle leads you to write "holely" instead of "wholly?"

These are only a very few of the obvious inconsistencies found in the authorized list of Circular Number 8. If you are interested to observe other inconsistencies in the reform, an article by Prof. Johnson of Princeton in this month's issue of the Educational Review will prove very suggestive. It will convince you, I believe, that at this particular stage of the reform the armor of Consistency is no adequate protection for the advocates of the new spelling.

V. Finally it is insisted that English, in order to hold its own against other tongues, must be made phonetic. But we are emphatically reminded by the reformers that the Italian and Spanish languages are phonetic in spelling and fairly regular in grammatical inflections. They should therefore have an immense advantage over English, which is not only complex in spelling but abundantly irregular in idiom and grammar. But are these languages growing and expanding? Are they displacing English? Not at all. They never have in the past and at present the situation is precisely the reverse. For every student of literature knows, that the Spanish language, so far as the world at large is concerned, is all condensed into Cervantes, and the Italian into Dante and Boccaccio. We are told that it takes twice as long to learn English as Italian; but English is four times as valuable as an instrument of communication. We are told that the boy or girl in France saves two years over the American boy or girl in learning to read and write. And it is assumed that phonetic spelling is responsible for the gain. But I protest that the assumption is unwarranted. The gain is due, so far as it is a fact at all, (and I remind you that it is not easy to reduce so broad a question to exact figures)-it is due almost exclusively to the improved methods of teaching the vernacular in the French schools. For the French began some fifty years ago to perfect the teaching of the mother tongue in their schools, from the bottom up. They have succeeded in doing so; so that the teaching of the native language, which with us is still haphazard, and generally indecisive, is with them complete and fairly scientific. They devote nearly twice as much time as we do in the first five years to the actual study of the native language, and they get through proportionately early, with the added advantages that spring from scientific teaching. The same situation prevails in Germany, where a still higher linguistic ideal makes the training in German very thorough, systematic and continuous. This is a consummation that teachers of English are devoutly striving to realize in

this country and when they do, there will be fewer differences in the teaching of the mother tongue in this country, France and Germany, and there will be fewer complaints against the established spelling.

#### DOES THE CHILD GAIN?

We are urgently assured that this reform is in the interests of the child. The present generation is to sacrifice itself for the good of posterity. The important material interests of publishers, printers, type-makers, typewriter manufacturers, and libraries, are to be heroically subjected to the convenience of the child of the future. But even if this sacrifice were made, let us see if the child is the gainer. For it is an accepted principle of education that what the child actually learns in school is of little importance compared to his capacity for acquiring culture in after life. The child, then, has learned in school an easy alphabet and an easy method of reading. He has saved, let us say, two years' time. He enters on life, and discovers that the vast wealth of English literature-the recorded life of his raceis printed in a written language-a spellingforeign to his training. He must either learn the established spelling-the spelling of Bacon, Browning, Lowell and Howells-or console himself with the cheering thought that his great, great grandchildren may perhaps be admitted to a kingdom from which he is essentially an exile. For as I stood in the St. Paul public library this morning. I could not help speculating how long a time it would require, for even the enterprise of the American publisher, to convert these hundreds of thousands of volumes-rich with the vitality of the race and fragrant with its sentiment-into the straight jacket of phonetic spelling.

There is little occasion for wasting so much sympathy on the child who is learning to spell. He usually learns to spell with the same readiness that he learns to do anything else the dull child even balks at the multiplication table. Moreover, the very young child seldom exercises reason in his study. Hence the boy or girl, between the ages of 8 and 14, who is vigorously and intelligently drilled in spelling, usually becomes a successful speller and in addition gains undoubted profit from the discipline.

THE EXPANSION ARGUMENT. A fresh argument of the reformers, spring-

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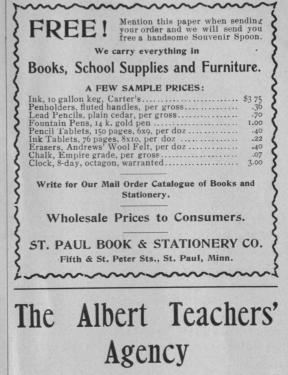
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## THE NORMAL RED LETTER.

ing from the recent expansion of the American nation, and now generally employed as a climax, reads something in this strain: "Behold, the Lord hath given us 'the heathen for our inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for our possession;' let us lead these people into the paths of righteousness and prosperity; let us reform our spelling that we may instruct them; let us dilute and sweeten the written language that they may find it, not as a bitter pill to their palates, but as honey from the honey comb." A very pretty doctrine. But it instantly occurs to you that the Anglo Saxons have come into this inheritance not because of their plausibility or smoothness, their transparency or ease, but because of their nobility and power. And this is precisely why the language has prevailed, spelling and all, and why it will continue to prevail hereafter. And you have not forgotten, either, that Great Britain, imperial possessor of four continents and queen mother of colonies, has found no occasion, in all her varied experience in civilizing rude peoples, to adopt so radical a step in order to introduce the language. Not in 300 years.

But some of you are objecting that I am taking an extreme view, and that the reforms contemplated by the resolutions introduced here, stop far short of this. I reply that my view is taken directly from the literature issued by the organized reform for the past twenty-five years. No reformer who is actively engaged in this movement proposes to stop short of a new alphabet and phonetic spelling. Not long ago the attitude of the reform was very positive and aggressive; it has now become almost apologetic. The vigorous exploitation of its aims and methods did not meet with the response expected. Some of the newspapers that at first employed the reformsnotably the New York Tribune and the Chicago Tribune-soon abandoned them. Today the reformers are content to secure the endorsement of a few revised spellings, a little money, and a standing committee to further the reforms. The resolutions introduced in this convention are distinctly weaker than those adopted last year in Illinois and Wisconsin. The objectionable fifth article, containing a reference to the phonetic alphabet, has been omitted. But it is expected, of course, that the standing committee, all of whose

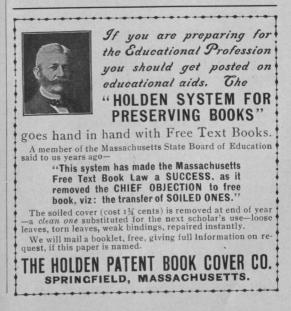


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members are to be in sympathy with the reform, will do what it can for the alphabet.

#### OPINIONS OF SCHOLARS.

Great stress is laid by the reformers on the opinions of scholars and educators. It is well known, however, that the great weight of general scholarship (outside the limited circle of certain philologists) utterly discredits the theory that the language would gain by the reform. Any number of opinions could be quoted here, opposing both the aims and the methods of phonetic spelling. I must content myself with two. The first is by Prof. Lounsbury of Yale, who says:

"The final decision as to propriety of usage rests not with individuals-neither with men of letters, however eminent, nor with scholars, however learned. It is in the hands of the whole body of the cultivated users of speech. They have unerring instinct as to its necessities. They are a great deal wiser than any of their self-constituted advisers, however prominent."

The second is by Mr. A. R. Spofford, late librarian of Congress, who pointed out many fallacies in the proposed reforms. With his words I conclude my discussion:

"As all written language consists of an assemblage of arbitrary characters, it is reasonable to conclude that that particular assemblage of characters which has been rendered familiar by centuries of use and by books printed in it, amounting now to millions, will remain in possession of the field. The attempt to introduce a new system by report and resolution, appears too impracticable for argument. Men accept perforce the objectionable features of the present system of spelling because it has two immense advantages over any innovation: It is established, and it is understood."

## THE ELKS MEMORIAL.

An exceedingly symmetrical and inspiring program was that of the Elks' Memorial Service held on Sunday afternoon, December sixth, in the Fargo Opera House. In point of ceremonial, addresses, music and spiritual significance, it left nothing to be desired, and created a profound impression. The Imperial Quartette of Moorhead gave several selections with exquisite harmony and feeling. Rupert's orchestra played, and Maude Adams

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Watterman, of Mineapolis, appeared twice on the program in contralto solos. Rev. J. F. Dudley, of Fargo, offered the prayer and pronounced the benediction, and the officers of the lodge rendered the usual speeches with rare dignity. Pres. Weld gave the annual address. His subject, "Our Ideals," gave him occasion to unfold the principles of the order with a loftiness of conception, an elegance of workmanship, and a refinement of expression that were eminently worthy of the audience and the occasion. Many grateful acknowledgements from all sides betokened very clearly

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how deep and genuine was the worth of his thought, and how effective the charm of his manner. Perhaps not less impressive, though in a different way, was the tender and intimate memorial address of Rev. F. V. Hawley of Jackson, Michigan, who spoke feelingly of the members of the order who had died within the year, concluding with the beautiful sentiment:

"The faults of our brothers we write upon the sand;

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Columbia University is not to have a monopoly in the matter of establishing a school of journalism. The University of Kansas has announced the establishment of such a school, and has chosen the well known journalist and author, William Allen White, as its first dean. Under such a master of the art the success of the school is assured.

In this issue of the Red Letter will be found an able article from the pen of Mr. Reed. This address was prepared for the state educational convention which recently convened in St. Paul, but through an unfortunate combination of circumstances Mr. Reed did not have an opportunity to present it. The address should have had a place in the discussion on Reform in Spelling opened by E. O. Vaile, of Chicago. We commend it to the readers of the Red Letter as being worthy of careful reading and study.

Another great scholar is called upon to answer for having dared to exercise the power of original thought. This time it is Professor Borden P. Bowne, the well-known metaphysician of Boston University, who must meet the charge of heresy, for teaching his views about Deity, the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures, etc., which are "contrary to the teaching of those Scriptures and contrary to the recognized standards of doctrine in the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Now that the meeting of the M. E. A. is past Minnesota teachers who are interested in the broader aspects of our national education will turn their attention forward to the meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the N. E. A. to be held at Atlanta, Georgia, February 23, 24 and 25. The Red Letter in an earlier number, has expressed disapproval of the plan of changing the place of this meeting each year, but cannot fail to appreciate, in the present instance, the pleasure to be received from a mid-winter trip to a city so far south and so pleasantly located. The usual reduction of fares has been conceded by the railroads and a large attendance is anticipated.

A feature of the Prussian educational exhibit at the St. Louis Exposition which promises to be of great interest will be a book, specially prepared for that purpose, containing a complete description of Prussian education in all grades and departments, and giving an historical survey of the development of education in that country. The book is being edited by over one hundred specialists under the direction of Professor Paulsen who will write the introduction.

A plan has been worked out, and awaits the approval of the board of trustees of the University of Chicago for the opening of a school for the instruction of young people as household servants. It is only through some such training as this that the position of a domestic servant may be raised to the plane of respectability which it deserves, and the reproach removed which deters many a capable person from accepting the service for which he is best fitted by nature. In Appleton, Wis., a number of prominent women are attempting a solution of the servant girl problem, by bringing Indian girls from the reservations and teaching them the fundamentals of housekeeping.

A recent decision of the Supreme Court of Nebraska with reference to the reading of the Bible in the public schools of that state is of interest to all who are concerned in matters of religious instruction. The substance of this decision is that the Bible may not be read in the schools as a part of any religious exercise, that is in connection with song and prayer. There is apparently no objection to its being read as literature or for purposes of ethical or historical instruction. To one who believes in the efficacy of religion in human life, this decision seems rather sweeping. Has the court not failed to distinguish between that which is sectarian (and therefore objectionable in a school supported by public taxation) and that which is purely religious, and, therefore, certainly commendable in any kind of education?

The schools of the village of Batavia, N. Y., are attracting much attention on account of the successful operation of a system of individual instruction introduced by Superintendent Kennedy two or three years ago. The system differs from others only in the fact that each room has two teachers instead of one, one of whom conducts class recitations while the other devotes all her time to the individual instruction, guidance, or personal help of delinquents, dull or otherwise backward pupils in whatever subject they exhibit a deficiency. The results are said to be truly wonderful, not only as regards progress and discipline, but especially in the air of industry and the whole attitude of the pupils toward their school. The system is conducted with fewer schools rooms and the same number of teachers as any ordinary system embracing the same number of pupils.

President Harper's plan which aims to have all good high schools and small colleges do the work of the first two years of the present college course and then send their students to the university-preferably Chicago, of course -for the last two years and for the graduate and professional work, seems to be gaining favor. A meeting of more than two hundred superintendents and principals, held at the University of Chicago on November 15th, voted a unanimous endorsement of the plan. \* \*

Minnesota is not alone in suffering a dearth of teachers. Reports from Ontario, Canada, indicate that a condition even more serious exists there. Many rural schools are without teachers, and in order to increase the supply of teachers, students are being admitted to the normal schools without the usual requirement of one year of successful teaching experience.

\*

Among the distinguished educators of Europe who will visit our country to attend the St. Louis Exposition next summer is Professor Wilhelm Rein of the University at Jena. Professor Rein has affected the educational theory of the United States more than most Europeans of equal eminence, not through any original contributions but chiefly as an interpreter of Herbart. The Herbartian movement in this country was started by young American scholars returning from Jena where they had sat at the feet of this sage

philosopher. All our Herbartian literature was indirectly inspired by him. But for his mediating service the name of Herbart mght be almost unknown where now it is proverbial among all classes of teachers. Professor Rein will certainly receive a warm welcome to the United States, and it is to be hoped that he may also receive some profit from observations in the schools which he has done so much to rejuvenate.

Probably no system of schools in the United States has gone further toward the realization of the ideals set up by recent investigations in child study, school hygiene, and genetic and experimental psychology, than that of the little city of Passaic, N. J. Professor Albert Leonard, formerly president of the Michigan System of Normal Schools and editor of the Journal of Pedagogy, exclaimed on visiting these schools, "This has been my ideal for years, but I had not dared dream that it could be accomplished." Dr. F. E. Spaulding, the superintendent who has developed this system, has begun the publication of a quarterly magazine, "The Individual Child and His Education," in which the principles and methods according to which instruction in his schools is conducted are to be set forth. The first number appeared under date of September, 1903, and is full of good things for any superintendent or teacher who is ambitious to know and practice what is best in education. The magazine is published by the F. A. Owen Publishing Company, Dansville, N. Y., and costs only twenty-five cents a number or eightycents a year.

The death of Herbert Spencer on December 8 removed the last of the great thinkers of the Victorian era. A man of magnificent intellectual attainments, of wonderful intuition, of unexcelled love of truth, and of untiring perseverance in the face of great bodily infirmity, he is of those whose influence reaches wherever civilization penetrates. While essentially English, Mr. Spencer owes more of his fortune, and more of his reputation to American appreciation than to that of his countrymen. It was in this country that his theories first took root, and here his books have always had the largest sale. The evolution theory of which Spencer was the most

popular expounder, with the possible exception of John Fiske, fitted nicely into the conditions of this new country, and has affected every Spencer early phase of our national life. called attention to the wasteful and dwarfing features of the old education and placed due emphasis on the physical and moral sides and on the more utilitarian aspects of intellectual training. While his greatest honors were won in the field of pure science and philosophy, he will always be great in the estimation of teachers for his contribution to their particular field. His book on "Education" will always remain a classic. It will be many a day before we can get a truer or a clearer conception of the aim of education than Herbert Spencer gave us when he wrote: "To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of any educational course is, to judge in what degree it discharges such function."

Some years ago Princeton University established the first chair of politics and called ex-President Grover Cleveland to be the first to occupy it. Several years later, on his relinguishing the department, a keen young scholar, Dr. John H. Finley, was chosen as Cleveland's successor. On September 20th, of this year Dr. Finley was inaugurated president of the College of the City of New York, thus leaving this important chair vacant a second time. Announcement has just been made of the selection of Harry A. Garfield, eldest son of President Garfield, to undertake the conduct of the department. Mr. Garfield is an able and energetic young lawyer, forty years of age, educated in both American and European institutions, further equipped by a successful law practice of fifteen years and a service of three years as a professor in the Western Reserve Law School of Cleveland. Mr. Garfield has already declined a call to the law faculty of the University of Michigan. He has been a sturdy champion of municipal reform and various forms of philanthropic work and has frequently been called to leadership in those fields of conflict. He has occupied a prominent place in every phase of public life, and is confidently regarded by those who know him as a man destined to figure prominently in the affairs of national life.

It is evident that no better choice could have been made to render the instruction in politics at Princeton thorough and practical, as it should be. But it is to be hoped that the duties of his new position may not necessitate the withdrawal of one who gives promise of such great things for the nation at large from the exercise of his influence in that wider sphere.

#### ----NEWS COMMENT.

Saturday evening, January 3d, Moselle Weld entertained at her home in a delightful manner. Progressive flinch was the game of the evening. At eleven o'clock the prizes were awarded, Blanche Loudon winning the ladies' first prize and Margaret Walker the ladies' booby. Ben Tillotson won the gentlemen's first prize, (which he generously shared with George Comstock) and Wallace Butler was awarded the gentlemen's booby. Dainty refreshments were served, and as a fitting close to the delightful evening the guests, led by Miss Watts, all joined in a parting song.

One of the attractive features of holiday week was the illumination of the Peterson home on Eighth street, Christmas eve.

\*

Tuesday evening December 22d the musical cantata, "The Holy Infant," was given at the Detroit opera house. The chorus was strong and rendered the sacred music with much feeling and expression. The soloists were Miss Bessie Van Houten, Miss Jennie Champine, Mr. Penniman and Mr. Pope.

\*

President Weld favored the English Literature class with a reading of Milton's "Paradise, Lost" on the evening of December 5th. The reading was greatly enjoyed, and the effect of the forceful rendering was heightened by the use of stereopticon views of Dore's drawings of the chief scenes of the great epic. A profound impression was thus produced which will remain with the members of the class as one of the most noteworthy results of their work in English literature.

\* \* Christmas exercises were held in Miss Bickell's room Dec. 22. The room was tastefully and appropriately decorated for the occasion with pictures of the Madonnas and Xmas,

\*

scenes, with draperies of colored paper, while in the farther corner shone the bright star of Bethlehem. After a well rendered program consisting of songs and recitations, the children repaired to the adjoining room where games and a "treat" added much to the enjoyment of the occasion.

#### \* \* \*

On January 6th, the following members of the Augustine and Livingston Literary Societies were elected to take part in the annual cup-contest which will be given later in the year.

Augustine: Debate—Clara A. Nelson, George Barnes, and Wallace Butler; vocal solo, Elsie Adler; essay, Eugenie Kellogg; declamation, Sibyl Tillotson; instrumental music, Eleanor Rushfeldt; oration, Julius Skaug.

Livingston: Debate—Alice Flaherty, Conrad Hovden, Casper Bergh; vocal solo, Irene Adler; essay, Margaret Elliott; declamation, Emma Lincoln; instrumental music, Olive Sullivan; oration, Harry Babst.

\* \* \*

Several of the members of Wheeler Hall entertained a few of their friends in the gymnasium, December 22d, from eight until ten o'clock.

#### \* \*

The pupils of Miss Simmon's room tendered her a pleasant surprise on Dec. 22. A Christmas program had been carefully prepared by her pupils and was rendered during the afternoon. The pupils should be commended for their enterprise and for the success with which they carried out their program.

#### \* \* \*

During the past few weeks Pres. Weld has been reading at morning exercises "The Call of the Wild," by Jack London. The story is an account of a noble dog, Buck, taken from his home of luxury and ease in California to the wilds and hardships of Alaska. Many of the incidents related in the book were suggested by Mr. London's own experiences. He describes the scenes with great vividness, and Buck has the sympathy of the reader from the time he is captured in California to the time when he answers "The Call of the Wild" and joins the wolf pack.

#### \* \*

Prof. Dudley, of the Platteville Normal, extension lecturer to Chicago University, gave

an exceptionally interesting and entertaining lecture in the Auditorium on December fifth. His subject, Color in Nature, was illustrated by 150 hand-painted views, and unfolded, in a lively and pleasing fashion, an astonishing variety of curious facts illustrating the purposefulness of color in protecting animals and plants against their foes, or in enabling them to fulfill their function in life. He brought distinctly home to his audience an appreciation of the lesson of how wonderfully nature is harmonized in color; how perfectly every weed and insect and bird is adjusted to the world about it.

#### \* \* \* \*

To treat so broad an event as the State Educational Association, is beyond the province of the news department of the Red Letter, but it will be of interest to the normal community to note here the work of members of the faculty at the meetings. Pres. Weld, as chairman of the General Conference, conducted one of the most unique and significant meetings of the session. It occurred Monday evening at the rooms of the Commercial Club, and included, in addition to attractive social features, brief addresses of exceptional interest. Miss Watts sang on this occasion, and her charming solos were received with pronounced enthusiasm. At the General Session of Thursday, Mr. Ballard addressed the association in an admirable paper on "Waste Lessons in Science." Mrs. Smith was one of the judges appointed by Pres. McIntire to select, from the extensive school exhibits displayed at the capitol, the prize specimens that are to represent the state at the St. Louis Exposition.

#### \* \* \*

The members of the faculty of Fargo College gave a reception in the parlors of the college on Monday evening, January 11th, that was rich in good cheer and social refreshment.

Miss Toinette C. Peterson, principal of the Central School in Fargo, and a young woman of gracious and high-minded attainments, was one of the unhappy victims of the Iroquois fire in Chicago.

The public is to enjoy a rare treat at the hands of the University Club on the 25th of January, when President Northrup will lecture under their auspices at the Auditorium. The public is invited, admission being entirely complimentary. At the conclusion of the lecture, the University Club will enjoy a banquet in the dining room of Wheeler Hall at which Pres. Northrup will be the guest of honor.

\* \* \*

On Saturday, December 12th, the senior class was handsomely entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Ballard at the home of President and Mrs. Weld. Part of the evening was merrily spent in the exchange of discarded gifts which each member of the class was requested to bring. The gifts ranged all the way from a fine-toothed comb to a diamond pin. No one was forgotten, each receiving his particular token, which he protested was to become an eternal treasure. One of the striking features of the evening was the rendering of a grand opera by a graphaphone, the adept operator obligingly responding to repeated encores. Perhaps the most noteworthy number of the opera was the singing by a quartet of "On a Saturday Night," which so intoxicated the seniors that they came well nigh prolonging the "Saturday Night" into Sunday morning, listening to the cheerful strains of the ditty. During the evening a dainty repast was served. On departing, the guests were very hearty in their salutations to the host and hostess, who had provided so abundantly for their entertainment.

\* \*

The teachers of Becker and Otter Tail counties held a joint meeting at Frazee, Dec. 12. Among the contributions to the program was an address by State Supt. J. W. Olsen, a paper on "Educational Wastes" by Supt. Schutz of Perham; a paper on "From a Rural School Standpoint," by Miss Goetzinger, supcrintendent of Otter Tail county; a paper on "How Words Get their Meaning," by Mr. Chambers. A brief musical program added much to the enjoyment of the meeting.

\* \* \*

On the morning of Dec. 5th the students of the Normal were favored with two excellent mandolin solos rendered by Prof. Narhaugen, of Fargo.

Get a business of your own and the activities of others wont bother you.

#### PERSONALS.

Miss Kirk spent her vacation at her home in Faribault.

Miss Donaldson spent the holidays at her home in Minneapolis.

Miss Dow spent part of her vacation in Chicago where she visited with Miss Osden.

George Comstock, a student at the Hill School, Pottsdam, spent the holidays at his home in Moorhead.

Douglas Walker and James Elliot both students at the North Dakota University, spent the holidays at the Walker home.

Miss Deans celebrated Christmas at her home in River Falls, Wis., while Miss Mears sought diversion and refreshment in far off Nebraska.

Wayne May, president of the junior class last year and now a medical student at the State University, visited the Normal December 21st and 22d.

Mrs. Dilly, the housekeeper at Wheeler Hall, was called to her home in Minneapolis December 20th, by the serious illness of her father. She may not be able to return before the close of the term.

#### ALUMNI NOTES.

Alice Hendrickson, '03, visited the Normal December 22d.

Mary Tillotson, 'or, is pursuing the literary course at the State University.

Manda Bergh, '01, is studying art at the Twin City School of Fine Arts.

Olga Bjorkquist, '01, is teaching at Montevidio. She spent her holiday vacation at her home in Moorhead.

Rose Frankoviz, '03, is teaching at Red Lake Falls. During the holiday intermission she visited her brother in Fargo.

Henry Mackall, '02, who is taking the classical course at the State U., spent two days at the Normal while home for the holidays.

Lulu Wagner, '02, rendered a delightful vocal solo at the Presbyterian church Christmas Day. Miss Wagner is studying music in Chicago.

#### SENIOR CLASS PLAY.

The class of '04 will render a class play. The production will occur, however, during the winter term and not as has been the custom, as a part of the annual commencement program.

The class this year is an exceptionally large

one, numbering almost one hundred members. among whom are found an abundance of dramatic and musical talent. This fact, and a laudable ambition to eclipse other classes. prompted the class to select a play of unusual power and scope, "Ivanhoe or The Jew's Daughter," a romantic drama in three acts by Thomas Dibdin. This play is a classic among English dramas and has been performed at all the leading English and American theatres by actors of world-wide fame. The play is not often attempted by amateurs, but the resources of the class and the complete stage equipment which the school now possesses, make it possible for the class to do justice to this difficult production.

Miss Remmele and Miss Watts will have charge of the presentation.

#### CHRISTMAS RHETORICALS.

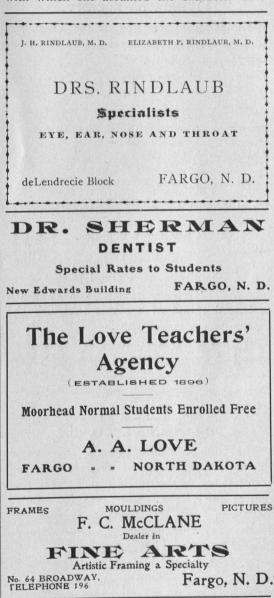
A thronged house greeted the performers in the Christmas Rhetorical exercises, and generously applauded their efforts. The program opened with a noble chorus "The Heavens are Telling," beautifully sung by fifty voices.

Vera Mabry read "The Birth of Christ" from Ben Hur, finely interpreting the sacred mystery of Lew Wallace's masterpiece. Both her voice and her manner were singularly apt, and helped to lift her hearers into the lofty spirit of the theme.

A bit of Christmas humor followed this, "The Ruggles Family" furnishing the fun. Josephine Stringham's freedom of delivery and her evident appreciation of the humor in the situation, kept her audience in ripples of laughter throughout her recital. Eugene Field's "The First Christmas Tree" was read by Elizabeth Lincoln with a simplicity of manner and sympathy of tone that nicely suited the selection and expressed its quiet beauty and pathos.

After a vocal solo by Charlotte Williamson —a gem of delicate purity—Harry Babst read "What Christmas Brought the Wigginses," interpreting the homely sentiment of Riley's poem with an ease of manner and an insight into human nature that made it a capital performance. Eleanora Norby read with much spirit and energy the story of a boy's heroism, entitled "Christmas in a Mining Camp," that provoked the most absorbing interest and left many eyes a-sparkle with tears.

Alice Flaherty took the house by storm in her reading "The Ice Pitcher." The ease with which she assumed the character of a



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The "Gloria Chorus" from the Messiah by a double quartet charmingly closed this happy program, typical of a happy season, and full of its mystery, its song and joy. Miss Watts and Miss Remmele achieved another distinct success.

#### LIVINGSTON SOCIETY.

The program rendered by the Livingston Literary Society Monday evening, December 14th, was as follows: Piano Duet-"Snowballs".....Behr Margaret McKenzie and Mary Curran. Music ..... Normal Orchestra. Theme-Introduction to Alaskan Life.... Erick Allstrom. Reading-"A Country Courtship" ..... Emma Perley Lincoln. Vocal Solo-"He was a Prince"..... Dinah Benson. Vocal Solo-"Where did you come from?" The Robin ..... Charlotte Williamson. Music .....

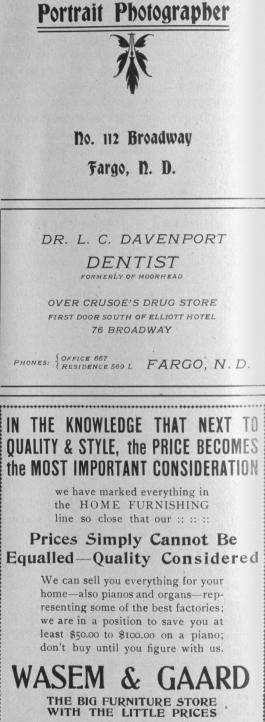
.....Normal Orchestra The whole program was bright and interesting. The reading by Miss Lincoln won a prolonged round of applause to which she graciously responded with "Our Hired Girl." The vocal solos were given in a delightful way, and Erick Allstrom's theme proved to be an effective bit of realism. The Normal Orchestra, as usual, was enthusiastically received.

#### DR. JOHN'S LECTURE.

The audience which greeted Dr. John in the auditorium on the evening of December 16th was one of the largest that has been present at any of the lectures thus far. Judge Pollock of Fargo introduced the speaker with a brief review of his former service as president of De Pauw University.

Dr. John treated his subject, "The Worth of Man," in a very able manner and soon won his audience by the breadth of his thought and the quiet charm of his native humor. Man, he said, could be viewed in two ways; either through the large or the small end of the telescope. Viewed, on the one hand, through the large end of the telescope, man appears as but an atom in the great universe, comparatively





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insignificant. Viewed, on the other hand, through the small end of the telescope, man appears as the greatest and most perfect work of God, endowed with a mind so wonderful that he almost approaches the supernatural. The lecturer also spoke of the evils which tend to undermine the mental, moral and physical strength of man.

#### KODAKS.

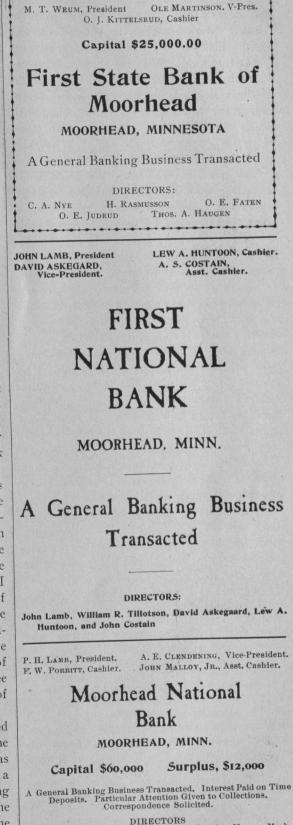
#### A Storm in the Woods.

#### BY EUGENIE KELLOGG, '05.

It was one sultry August afternoon that my cousin Roger and I set off for wild plums in the woods two miles from home. It was oppressively warm, and a smoky, blue haze shrouded the horizon in the west. Now, Roger was fourteen and I was twelve and when one is fourteen or twelve, heat does not enter into his considerations when he decides to go for plums. Perhaps it would have been different if mother had asked us to go on an errandan errand would be warmer somehow. The plums were scarce, as usual, and we went on and on until it seemed that we were miles from home. Climbing to a little clearing on the top of a hill where one could look for miles around, we saw something that the thick woods had shut out from our sight before.

In the west a blue-black storm bank was rising rapidly, with that ragged appearance and greenish hue around the edge that betokened wind. Roger grabbed me by the arm and pointed toward the west. "Goin' to have a storm, Kid." (Roger always called me Kid; he was two years older than I and I meekly acknowledged his right). "Now if you was a boy, we could get home. Jes' the way with girls, always in the way. You'd liable as not get stuck in the marsh and I'd have to come back and get you," and with an air of resignation he made for the nearest oak tree while I meekly followed, only too conscious of my weakness.

The storm was coming up rapidly; ragged clouds covered the blue overhead and the wind raised steadily. Now, the storm was not as black as it was before but it had a greener, uglier look and long jagged lightning cut it through and through. Overhead the birds flew swiftly before the wind, and the limbs of the trees rubbed together and sighed



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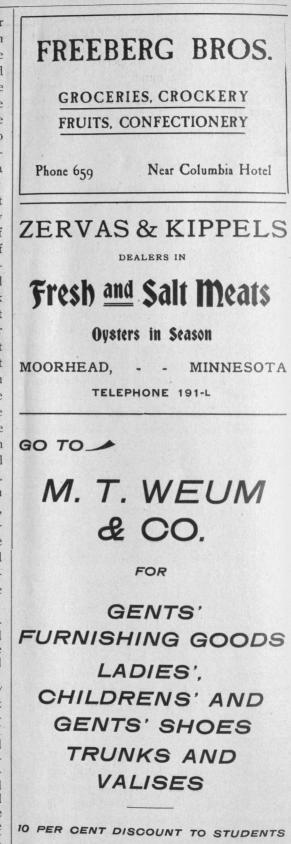
# THE NORMAL RED LETTER.

only as they do in a storm. It grew darker and Roger's face looked small and white in the half light. Somehow the flying birds, the weird whistle of the wind, the darkness and the awfulness of the storm sounds, filled me with fright. Over on the hill at the other side of the valley I could see our white house among the trees, and I crept up nearer to Roger and ran my arm through his. He looked at me contemptuously but said never a word, for which I was thankful.

And then the rain came. We could see it strike the opposite hills and blow rapidly across the valley, shutting off the view of home. Then came a lull when it seemed as if everything on earth, stood suddenly motionless and silent. I glanced timidly at Roger and moved a little closer to him as the rain struck us. Both of us crowded nearer the tree but the wind blew in a slanting fashion and our clothes were wet miserably. It rained in great sheets, "witch sheets," Roger called them, that flapped and waved as the wind blew them into our faces with a force that stung. The air was filled with leaves and hay from the meadow below. The wind would lift these high into the air and the rain dash them down again. Below at the foot of the hill we could see the tamaracks being swept over one by one. Their tall straight lengths fell, knocking each other over like dominoes and their long roots, covered with black marsh dirt, stuck up aimlessly into the air. The tree under which we stood creaked and swayed; the rain rushed down its sides in steady and rather uncomfortable streams, and the wind blew so that we were afraid to stir.

I had hold of Roger's hand and was squeezing it tightly, but he looked at me savagely and drew it away. Just then a bird, driven by the wind, dashed blindly against our tree and dropped dead at our feet.

"You needn't whimper," said Roger. Now I wasn't whimpering; whenever I cried it was with a good round howl. I hated whimpering and Roger knew that I did. Besides I could see that he was as frightened as I, and he knew that I saw it. I laughed and he rereached out his hand to slap me. Then a terrible clap of thunder sent me stumbling toward him, and I buried my face in his coat and stood there trembling and crying until he told me it was all over, and I could hear the thunder rolling away off to the east. Then I looked at Roger and he at me, and he said just a little shakily, "Say kid, ain't you glad



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you ain't an Injun." We both laughed and started off toward the white house on the hill opposite.

#### CHRONICLE.

Dec. 1.—Skaug is serenaded at six o'clock in the morning.

Dec. 2.—Meeting of Red Letter Board.— Supt. Olsen visits.—58 students in Geom. class.

Dec. 3.—Blizzard—Mr. Comstock and Supt. Olsen at chapel—Supt. Olsen addresses school.

Dec. 4.—Still a blizzard.

Dec. 5—Prof. Nearhaugen of A. C. entertains on mandolin during chapel.—Junior meeting.—Athletic meeting.—Miss Watts ill. —Prof. Dudley lectures.

Dec. 7.—Red Letter banquet.—New chairs for library.—Bilsborrow shows up with powder on his coat.

Dec. 8.—Invitations for senior party out.— Debate in civics: "Resolved, That Wisconsin is a greater state than Minn." Minn. wins.— Regular work in gym. begins.

Dec. 9.—Bad weather.—Some of the girls have a spread.

Dec. 10.—Skating rink flooded. High School boys unusually industrious.

Dec. 11.—Senior meeting.—Irene Norby walks in her sleep.—Literature class meets at Pres. Weld's residence.—Girls get their skates out.—Asst. business mgr. collects 25c for Red Letter. He's doing well.

Dec. 12.—Seniors have a party and take occasion to get rid of some of their old trash. Babst finds a chill wind 'round the hall. Balmy weather next day.

Dec. 14.-Livingston society gives program.

Dec. 15.—Wandering minstrel at Chapel.— Skaug coughs 27 times while giving a topic in His. of Ed.; Askegaard keeps count.— More improvements in library and biological laboratory.—Miss Watts returns.—Boys practice for chorus work. Can they sing? Well!— Strenuous strife at Wheeler Hall; for particulars inquire at Room 24.

Dec. 16.-Dr. John's lecture.

Dec. 17.—Chorus rehearsal in evening.

Dec. 18.—Fish at the "Home." No games.

Dec. 19.—Visitors galore.

Dec. 21.—Livingston and Augustine society meet to discuss contest.

Dec. 22.—Last day. Pres. Weld finishes "The Call of the Wild."—Hall girls give an informal.

Dec. 25.—Lulu Wagner sings at Presbyterian church.

Dec. 30.—Bessie Van Houten hears Patti at Mpls.—Club dance.

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