

WE AND OUR NEIGHBORS

The Nebraska Press association enlarged itself by making the wives and daughters of members eligible for membership. A committee, consisting of Mrs. McMurphy, of Beatrice, Mrs. Perkins, of Omaha, and Mrs. Gere, of Lincoln, was appointed to attend to the social features of the next annual meeting which will be held at Grand Island. Not more than ten of the professional newspaper women of the state were present at the meeting. They decided they did not care to organize a separate press association as long as there is no such thing as two kinds of journalism—divided by a sex line—there is no reason why there should be either two state press associations or one and a half, an association and an auxiliary.

The A. P. A. is trying by insidious and demagogic methods to get more members in this city. It has secured a foothold and now it is looking about for a broader and more attractive location—a standing. The American Protective association has nothing American about it but the first word of its designation. It seeks, by calling names and telling stories of what the Catholics and the pope are going to do, to make them objects of horror and detestation to all non-Catholics. When such a feeling enters politics it makes the reasonable settlement of questions impossible. The people's interests are seldom enough considered now. If the point that the Spanish Inquisition gave up trying to settle is destined to intrude itself in municipal politics the republic is a failure and the sooner its members exterminate each other and the last one sets up a monarchy the better. Most Irishmen are good natured, industrious men who enjoy a fight more than any other amusement. All they need is that abused and discriminated against feeling to break all the whole heads within reach. A head is just as irresistible to an aroused Irishman as a whole pane of glass in an empty house is to a boy. The A. P. A. goads him to madness, the stories of Irish Catholic conspiracies which that society publishes, make him believe that all protestant Americans are suspicious and unjust, that the public schools are inimical to his and his children's interests, and that he must, to defend himself, take his children out of the public schools, and that he must join a Fenian society to secure his constitutional rights. It takes no prophet to declare that the pope will never direct American politics, and that the public schools will improve. The one will not be prevented by the A. P. A. nor will the other be strengthened by it.

The personnel of the A. P. A. membership in Lincoln comprises sore heads, disappointed or superseded office seekers, men of small, dark minds, left over from the middle ages. They have no business in a sun-bathed state whose prairies have taught the eye the trick of looking off and away from the dooryard.

Unity church of Omaha has a dramatic club of no mean ability. Last Saturday night it put on the "Bicyclers" and "Rosberry Shrub." The former has been played here by Mrs. Manning's pupils. While "Rosberry Shrub" is still in manuscript form and under the control of its author, Mr. Drake. Mr. Frank Short is a friend of the playwright and secured the play because of personal reasons and for a small money remuneration. "The Bicyclers" is a little farce, scarcely more than a school dialogue or a parlor charade, although very well played. "Rosberry Shrub"

is a piece of work containing one clever dramatic moment of intense interest at the end. The dramatis personae are two old maids, their young niece—"Jinny," and her beau, "Bob Taylor." The old ladies object to the beau because once upon a time he got drunk. However the niece goes buggy riding with Bob, leaving "Aunt Hanner" pretty mad. "Aunt Hanner" and "Aunt Sarah" solace themselves with some dried beef and crackers washed down with something they call "rosberry shrub" presented by a friend of their youthful days whom they call the judge. Of course the shrub is champagne and they get drunk. Their dignified, chaste, rigid descent into averno is very funny. Their horror however, when they realize what that was, is indescribable. Many Lincoln people will remember Mrs. Mathewson who made the stump speech in the Omaha minstrel troupe that played here last winter. She was "Hanner," and she lifted the part entirely out of the commonplace. She played it with discrimination, finish, delicacy. There are very few troupes that visit Lincoln that contain as spirited and as talented an actress. She has real dramatic feeling and might have had a career on the stage, which is not saying that she would be any happier than she is now. She has made a study of negro dialect and her voice has all the mealy softness and insinuating appeal of the dark woman. She would make a great "Roxy" in Pudd'nhead Wilson's troupe, and goodness knows they need a new one. Mrs. Wheeler, who takes the part of the sentimental old maid in "Rosberry Shrub," is a realist and a naturalist. She has studied the part as carefully as Mrs. Mathewson and does very effective work. The two women play up to each other excellently. If they bring the play to Lincoln, which I do not know that they have any intention of doing, everyone who knows the New England spinster ought to go and see it.

Perhaps the interest in acting shown by Omaha is due to Mr. Frank Short, a dramatic teacher. The "Bicyclers" is so colorless a farce that no acting, however good, seems anything but slight. Mr. Short is young, ambitious and time and he himself alone can prove ability. But he has certainly demonstrated his ability to teach acting.

On Monday evening at the Unity church in Omaha I heard the Rev. Miss Gordon, of Sioux City, a bright, interesting dress reform woman. Centuries of masculine supremacy in the pulpit have made it impossible for most men and women to be pleased, instructed or edified in any way by a petticoat prophet. Deborah was all right out under the trees striking a harp, prophesying and exhorting the people. I doubt if the modern woman has either the voice or the figure for the pulpit.

Miss Gordon reviewed Zangwill's "The Master." She read her paper with the admonitory wail that young ladies use when they graduate from the high school, till a higher school teaches them the bad form and the egotism of striking an attitude and a minor key at the same time. People who talk a great deal about truth, honor, art and roll the r in art so that it becomes a trill, are generally devoted but unfortunate apostles. Yet Miss Gordon and Miss Safford, her colleague, have had large audiences in Sioux City until the hard times nearly destroyed the commerce of that place. It is a curious thing that

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the churches are the first to feel the hard times. People will save by cutting off their religious supplies long before they come to the butcher shop or grocery, which is fortunate for the market. It may be that past centuries have taught us wrong, that woman is better than she looks and can reform man by gestures, attitudes and remarks from a pulpit. We must not shut our eyes to the consummation that one thousand years will be able to prepare us for. The world is young, so are we, I repeat it young and crude.

S. B. H.

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