

THE COURIER

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OBSERVATIONS

Mrs. Peattie carries the journalistic instinct into literature. When she writes stories she deals largely in local color. She writes of what she knows. If she lived in New England her stories would be permeated by ocean breezes, dotted with protruding rocks, peopled with determined, quiet, resourceful men and women. Living in Nebraska she puts the strong flavor of the soil in nearly all that she writes. The Nebraska prairies are her background; the wind and the heat and the blizzard the material complement of her story. "A Mountain Women," her latest book, was not written for circulation in Nebraska. It will not be popular here. It will be rudely criticized and condemned as jarring upon the patriotic sentiment "Stand up for Nebraska." But Mrs. Peattie will not be annoyed. She has seldom written to tickle the public fancy.

The new volume is a collection of short stories, many of which have been printed in the magazines. It contains "Jim Lancy's Waterloo," the Cosmopolitan story of Nebraska that caused so much comment in this state. In this and other stories are given graphic descriptions of conditions that in certain localities and under certain circumstances, have obtained in Nebraska. There is pathetic truth in what she has written, truth that gives an impressiveness to the stories. The hardships undergone by some of our people in the last two or three years afford a rich field for a clever, feeling, writer like Mrs. Peattie. And she has used her material to the end that her stories have distinct individuality. They are vivid, real, strong. But we cannot but regret that she has taken all the sombre hues that the local fields afford and in the weaving used none of the bright colors we know so well. The blasting hot wind, the devastated fields, the scorching, hot

sun, the drouth, disappointment, failure—all these are terrible, and they are true. But they are not all. This is not Nebraska, as the casual and uninformed reader of Mrs. Peattie's volume might imagine. And the material which the writer has used is not any more productive than that which she disdains. The glorious sunshine, the pure, invigorating air, the unexplainable exhilaration, wide prairies and undulating expanse, the rich soil, the prosperous and happy people, the hopefulness and promise—all these are inseparably connected with the very name Nebraska, and who will say that an artist cannot take these bright colors of truth and weave a romance quite as valuable and striking as the web of the dark shades of sorrow and failure? Nebraska cuts a sorry figure in these stories, and it is too bad. For there is gladness and happiness and success in the land, and these are entitled to a hearing.

But all of this has nothing to do with the literary value of the stories. Mrs.

several sides of the water, intimates that THE COURIER, or rather the letters written from Omaha, are vulgar and sensational. Elevating his finely chiseled and rather pretty chin, Mr. Chase sniffs the air, and declares that THE COURIER is engaged in an effort to get subscribers in Omaha.

Our disappointment in falling under the displeasure of Mr. Chase is poignant. We hardly dared to hope for the commendation of the great man who is recognized as, intellectually and racially, the peer of all journalists either east or west of the Missouri river whose slightest word is an irrevocable dictum in the art galleries, five o'clock tea rooms and tailor shops of Omaha. But we did hope to be permitted to get along somehow without calling out the blasting, withering, conclusive denunciation which the beautiful editor, the hero of that eventful journey to California in The Same Car With Mrs. Helena Modjeska and Mr. Helena Modjeska, has seen fit to heap upon us. Was ever the lot of aspiring, modest endeavor

mere nod, a single Chase smile. Five o'clock tea is never sipped until he gives the word. The great city of Omaha is ruled and swayed by Mr. Chase. The very elements wait on his pleasure. When he smiles the sun shines. When he makes his appearance on upper Farnam street and commences to strut his lordly strut the gilded youth fall in behind him and, locking step, follow the sandhill Brummel. The ladies thrust him kisses and call him, "dear Clementina," and the common people salute him. There is only one Clement Chase, and he has set him against us. Tuff luck.

The natural thing for us to do, after Mr. Chase has declared himself is to poison "Penelope" and withdraw from the Omaha field. But, on thinking the matter over, we have decided to nerve ourselves to the task of continuing our course as we have begun, the beau-sage notwithstanding. Having Mr. Chase's disapprobation already we have nothing more to lose, and we will endeavor to live down the present disgrace.

Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Kennard and Mr. Gere and Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Atkinson and the 1697 other patriotic republicans of Lancaster county who expect a lucrative appointment at the hands of President McKinley are no doubt much disturbed by the recent action of Mr. Cleveland, placing some 30,000 offices under the civil service rules. But these gentlemen should not get too excited in their grief. Mr. McKinley will not feel bound to abide by this eleventh hour reform of the foxiest president this country ever had. This new order will probably be one of the first relics of the democratic administration to be kicked out of doors after the 4th of March next.

Mr. Cleveland has given the people a touch of high life in many different ways in his seven years of duck shooting, but this effort to embarrass his successor is the greatest piece of impudence in the whole impudent Cleveland administration. It out-Cleverages Cleveland. Civil service reform as it is practiced in this country is the most fantastically absurd piece of governmental bric-a-brac ever produced by fecund Mugwumps, and if Mr. McKinley is the man the people take him to be he will not hesitate to smash some of this decorative folderol when he shall take the place made vacant by the fat man and his guns.

The members of the general conference of the Methodist church, now in session in Cleveland, are only human, and it is probably demanding too much to ask them to be consistent. Human nature, whether Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist or agnostic, is weak and variable. When a man shows signs of becoming consistent he is called up higher, and the job is completed in the company of the saints. It was not surprising that members of the conference ridiculed the young people's society of Christian endeavor



Mammoth Hot Springs
(Yellowstone Park.)

Peattie has a deft touch. She is clever at characterization. She is sympathetic, imaginative. Her stories have a live, flesh and blood quality that insures readers. Her book will be read.

If readers of THE COURIER observe a lack of sprightliness in this paper this week they may set it down as the result of the depression caused by the unkind remarks of that journalistic sage and calf skin litterateur, Mr. Clement Chase of Omaha, editor of the tinted and lachrymose Excelsior of that city. Mr. Chase, than whom there is no more learned or prodigious authority on this swelling continent, says THE COURIER has given displeasure to the people of Omaha by the manner in which the gifted writer, "Miss Penelope," treats of persons and things in the big city; and Mr. Chase, with that exquisite discretion and fine discrimination for which, equally with his acquaintance with Madam Modjeski and her grizzly husband, Count Bozenta, he is noted

so unfortunate? Could any newspaper enterprise be more unlucky?

Had the condemnation of THE COURIER's course come from any one of the small fry editors in Omaha we would not take it so much to heart. If, for instance, Mr. Rosewater, or Mr. Bryan, or Mr. Hitchcock who are connected with more or less obscure papers, had said what Mr. Chase said, we wouldn't care a farthing's worth. But when Mr. Chase himself turns his reproving glance in our direction, then the situation is indeed serious.

Mr. Chase may not be properly appreciated in Omaha. Great men frequently have to travel to the next town to get credit. But here in Lincoln we know how good and great and powerful and beautiful he is, and that's what depresses us so. Never a tennis ball flies across a court in Omaha but Mr. Chase is there to direct its course. Great artists cringe at his dainty feet. Buds and anxious mammas fight for a