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Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs
Telephone 384.SARAH P. HARRIS, Editor
DORA BACHELLER, Business Manager

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OBSERVATIONS.

Even the Chicago papers are devoting space and illustrations to the evils of the slot machines. The Chicago city council has not heard anything about it and will not be apt to on account of its personelle, several individuals of which own some very profitable saloons where slot machines whirl merrily all day long. The relations between private profit and civic duty are just as loose in Chicago as they are in Lincoln. But I have not yet heard it hinted that the mayor of Chicago receives fifty per cent of the profits from each machine in the city. In Lincoln a machine in a popular saloon is said to make about twenty-five dollars a day, which is twelve dollars and a half clear profit to the proprietor. The latent passion for gambling which is the inevitable inheritance of every human being, only needs a little cultivation in youth to become the dominating passion of the man. It is far more common and responds more quickly to cultivation than the drink habit. Very few juveniles, for instance, like any alcoholic drink. They swallow it with a grimace and like it only after experience has taught them the effects. Compare this reluctance with the zest with which children play games of chance and it will be admitted that the professor of gambling has an easy task. Within convenient access of every public school in this city, there is a news stand, candy store, or cigar stand which contains one or more of

these machines. They are in many forms, the most common being a wheel studded with pegs which allows a marble to bound from one to another with the possibility of winning ninety-five cents on an investment of five. Where the play-ground was formerly filled with boys playing marbles, tops or ball, according to the season, these lollypop shops are filled with urchins wearing the nervous and strained expression of the failures who sit about the tables at Monte Carlo. Let any of the councilmen or officials who are responsible for this state of things visit the news stand in the Brace block. At those hours of the day when recitations do not claim them, they will find the room filled with boys from the high school, making cigarettes, swearing, gambling and engaged in the culture of anything which seems likely to smother them worthless and obnoxious members of society. In a few years they will be candidates for county and city offices and some of them will be elected and the character of their administration will be due in part to the conduct of the city by the mayor and city council in the years when they were boys, viz: 1896, '97 and '98. Some of the most impressionable will then be prepared to assume the attitudes of the loafers who are now cumbering the highway at Eleventh and O and Tenth and O. The mayor and city council are neglecting a sacred duty when they do not investigate the slot machines, and the evil they do to the children.

There are many who think the jurymen in the Luetgert trial, who refused to vote for the conviction of Adolph Luetgert, were bribed. The big sausage maker has a brute's face and a brute's body. Psychologically he was capable of committing the crime he is charged with. It was shown that he loathed his wife and loved a maid. Such a temperament urged by love as well as hate would be capable of sitting all night long by a bubbling vat in which heat and chemicals were reducing the flesh and bones of his wife to a viscous liquid from which policemen and anatomists would not be able to reconstruct Mrs. Luetgert. Probably he is guilty as charged. Possibly he is not. He should have the benefit of the doubt. Mrs. Luetgert, partially demented by the danger, difficulties and disgust of connubial existence with Luetgert may have wandered off and died, or may be earning her living as a servant in some secluded farm house. Disappearances are of such frequent occurrence that conviction of murder where the body cannot be produced should be based upon absolutely

flawless and impeccable evidence. The evidence in the Luetgert case is very far from being of such a character. As to hanging him just because he is a brute and capable of the crime as charged, the working out of such a principle would deprive this country of many prominent citizens who have, so far, managed to keep out of the reach of the executioner. Hanging on suspicion, even on a general reputation of brutality, belongs only in a digest of lynch laws and cannot be recommended to any community or jury. The judicial mind of the obstinate juror in the Luetgert trial may have obstructed justice; on the other hand it may have saved a brute, born with dull sensibilities and little moral sense, from a punishment which he had done nothing to deserve. Better the escape of a hundred criminals than that one innocent man should be hurled from that shameful platform with the bitter conviction in his congenitally clouded mind that God and humanity are unjust. The very serious effects of the newspaper accounts of such a case as Luetgert's or as Guldensuppe's, upon immature, unhealthy minds, or the temporarily morbid mind of a woman, cannot be estimated. These cases should be quarantined, the infection restricted at least to a neighborhood, at least to the generation alive at the time they take place. Many crimes society is responsible for, and there is a certain justice in the environment which caused a crime being made to suffer in sensibilities and reputation for what it produced, but the hungry generations yet to come will have troubles enough of their own.

It is a pity that the distribution of free seeds by congressmen cannot be stopped. There is not an economist or honest thinker in any business who can give any good reason why thousands of dollars should be spent annually for seeds to be presented to owners of the most productive soil in the world. Secretary Morton's confidence in himself has never been disturbed, not even by the jibes of his agricultural constituents when they failed to get their annual packet of seeds. The distribution is an injustice to every citizen of this country who does not receive a packet, but who is taxed to pay for it. The original intention of the law was to encourage the trial and acclimatizing of foreign plants. The advertisements that Secretary Wilson has sent out ask for bids only on seeds of beet, cabbage, turnip, squash, etc., as well as flower seeds. Only the ordinary varieties in the stock of a dealer in seeds is asked for. The scheme

does not contemplate, nor has it for years, experiment with rare seeds with a view to the enlargement of agricultural possibilities in the United States. It is an injustice to all but the comparative few who receive the seeds, and bears especially hard upon the men in the seed business. The government is without any ethical or constitutional right to force the seed dealers to compete against a rival so isolated from the rules which control the commerce of individuals as a nation. But the present secretary has no notion of allowing his popularity to be affected by refusing to distribute a largess which neither he nor the government has any right to bestow. He realizes that it is more important for his future prospects to please and conciliate than it is to do even handed justice to the people whose agricultural interests he has been appointed to look after. Secretary Wilson is, first of all, a practical politician. From his point of view it would be foolish to follow in the footsteps of a predecessor whose administration from an ethical and business standpoint was a brilliant success, but who was politically a failure.

There are still those who say they believe that women's clubs are a fad that will soon be forgotten for a new expression of the gregarious instincts. All things decay as soon as they cease to grow and change. In the ten years or more since culture clubs began to displace social gatherings the tendency of the larger ones has been towards the study of economics in the household, family, school and city, and away from purely literary study, which every intelligent person can just as well study by himself as in a club. The study of municipal problems has been richly rewarded in many cities by the active participation of women in the street cleaning, charity and public school departments of city government. This is the final end of the club movement: organization for the sake of improvement in the home, the school and the city. Association for mental improvement is laudable and pleasant, but any disturbance such as war or pestilence will interrupt and destroy it. Association for the purpose of actively participating in municipal life will be strengthened by any occasion which threatens existence or liberty. What if Paris in the time of the Revolution had been leavened by fifty women's clubs, the membership of which belonged to all classes of society. Instead of the demoniacal, frenzied, disheveled women who paraded the streets of Paris carrying pikes sur-