



# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

So far as appears the grand jury is doing what everybody expected as soon as its composition was known, and that is—nothing much. In spite of the discoveries of the council committee and of the apparent collusion between the gamblers and the officers appointed to make gambling impossible, the grand jury, so far as we can see, causes the gentlemen of the plaid clothes no uneasiness. The rattle of the dice and the balls in their grooves can be heard any night by those with an ear for music, who care to listen. Gamblers have a keen scent for the huntsman as well as for prey. If the profession were in danger the members would be in hiding and the wheels would go round noiselessly. There is yet time for the grand jury to show a reason for assembling and THE COURIER hopes that it will deign to investigate the sore spots in the county and city administration.

Mrs. Martha More Avery, a socialist speaker of some prominence in labor meetings on the Atlantic coast has been speaking in Social Science hall for the past two weeks. She has a command of English and a habit of frequent appeal to "Almighty God" that generally distinguishes an agitator. Her sermons lack coherence, they are more passionate than logical. She has heard the growl of unemployed and starving labor, she has studied Karl Marx and other socialist writers, accepted their conclusion

and proposes a remedy, the details of which are not very clear. Vague denunciations of the present commercial and social system will do no harm and may hasten the inauguration of a better one. But to those of us who believe that the laborer is entitled to all the products of his labor, there is little satisfaction in listening to a socialist speaker, because he proposes no remedy that is not revolutionary or impractical. The money a man gets by sharpness, shrewdness, trickery, or by superior ability, he counts his, and nothing but the words of the Christ who taught men that to save life it was necessary to give it up and that a neighbor should be as dear as one's self, can teach us how to help those who cannot help themselves.

A redistribution of the wealth of the community would give only temporary relief. And the local committee appointed to conserve the community interests and disburse the common increment would not be apt to possess any more integrity than the local city government, which so far in the history of this country has not been a success and in many places, as in Lincoln, has been a system of organized robbery. It is not the rich that block the way to economic freedom, it is human nature. The solution of labor troubles would be easy enough if the doctrines of Christ were the foundation of the laws of the commercial world. But between the church and business there is a gulf set which is crossed at half past ten o'clock on Sunday morning's by dint of self-deception and by calling a spade a lily. Some time before Monday morning the deacons cross the chasm and stay on the other side till the next Sunday morning. Business as it is now conducted is irreconcilable with Christianity or the doctrine of equalizing self-love and neighbor love. The higher and more complex the business the more difficult the reconciliation. The unskilled laborer has no excuses to make, the skilled laborer produces something beautiful and is in harmony with creation, God and himself, but the gains of the proprietors of a department store depend on the number of small proprietors they can drive from competition. Their complete success would be a failure because the livelihood by which their customers have been able to buy goods, the department store has destroyed. The hundreds of merchant proprietors have been forced to become clerks while their purchasing capacity has been almost destroyed. It has been so in Chicago, it will happen so here, only in Chicago there are enough laborers, speculators, managers and professional men to lessen the effect

of the practical disappearance of the small merchant class. Members of many other occupations are in the same side of the chasm when Sunday morning comes. But the end of it all, the good socialist believes, is the destruction of competition and the establishment of cooperation.

Miss Frances E. Willard has been revered even idolized by the thousands of women composing the membership of the W. C. T. U. for so long that she has grown to believe that her advice is never out of place, even when addressed to the managing board of a university for young men. The Yale board has decided not to take any notice of Miss Willard's threats. New Haven has the reputation of being a very quiet and orderly town. The authorities of Yale college have always done what they could for sobriety and temperance and according to the testimony of the alumni and of residents of New Haven, there is very little rioting there. Strict prohibitory rules would tempt college youth to break them, whereas, if there were none there would be no fun in it. Miss Willard has been worshipped so much and so long that she has no hesitation in attempting to impose her conscience upon the president of the United States or a governing board of a university, as the case may be. This adulation which has deprived Miss Willard of her original sense of propriety is a strictly feminine peculiarity and is noticeable in club women or in any association of women. It should be discouraged, because worship, unless the object be a little ivory or jade god with immovable oriental features, or a supernatural being, cannot but move the object out of her commonplace relations to the rest of us. It is dangerous for any human being to forget his relative insignificance. If he forget, he is liable to do silly and impertinent things. The ark of the covenant, which is the evolution of the good, does not need to be steadied by human hands. It is well enough to do our best but it is necessary to let God's affairs alone if we wish to escape the punishment of Uzzah.

If the pcps had the courage of the republicans they would manifest the same patriotic devotion to good government and to the law. Instead of which contrast the work which the council committee has done without pay with the silly and wasteful sittings of the legislative committee, which has cost the state ten thousand dollars and accomplished nothing worth recording. The committee has been under the direction of Governor Holcomb—the apostle of pretention.

Each member of it, as a senator or representative, is unconstitutionally receiving pay for prolonging the term of office for which he was elected by the people. Secretary Porter disgraced his position by breaking a law framed to protect the ballot. Yet these repeated insults to the people of Nebraska have received no reproof from the populist party, which is in politics for revenue only.

It is a fact and not mere phrasing that the American system of self-government is still merely an experiment. Especially in municipal affairs it is true that an oligarchy, composed of those who make a trade of politics, rules. The people are only superficially consulted. It is a government of the people, by the gang and for the gang. The interests of the people are heard of only in speeches. When it comes to deciding a question concerning the welfare of the whole people, the city is sold to the highest bidder. The municipal system now in operation all over the United States is a failure. In New York city, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago the amount of corruption and the size of the failure depends upon the size of the city. On Monday night the year through in the cities of the United States from twelve to sixteen councilmen meet and wrangle over formal unessentials, while on questions of selling a valuable franchise to a company able to make it worth their while, they are unanimous. Philadelphia has been frequently quoted in the past few months because the exhausted and defeated city has given up the conduct of water and gas to a company. A New York paper says of Philadelphia's corruption:

"Were any proof wanting of Philadelphia's municipal corruption, consider the schemes now on foot to wrest millions from the city owing to the water needs. Philadelphia has an adequate supply of water in the Schuylkill, it being necessary only to filter that water. To build filtration beds five or six millions are necessary and the people by their votes at the last November election decided to make a loan for this purpose and for other public improvements. But some people have seen a chance to put millions in their pockets and councils have been hypnotized, so that instead of passing the loan bill they killed it. Now they propose to buy from a corporation composed, with one exception, of men who are not Philadelphians, a filtration plant and pay for it over a term of fifteen years the sum of sixty millions! How is that for financiering? In connection with this it must not be forgotten that the Reading Railway company's officers