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OBSERVATIONS.

Considering the history of Mayor Graham's administration, his farewell speech to the council is humorous. He said that the criticism of his conduct had been caused by ignorance and malice and in reality he had been a devoted servant of the taxpayers. His appointees, he intimated, had given perfect satisfaction. In his review of the water department he neglected to draw a parallel between the conduct of that department under his own Mr. Byers and under the present water commissioner, but assumes the credit of Mr. Tyler's management.

Perhaps if ex-Mayor Graham's administration had been better the taxpayer's would not have insisted upon a chief executive like Mayor Winnett, so that after all, the late administration was useful.

The new mayor and council possess the confidence of the public. The late mayor has been the object of suspicion ever since the revelations concerning the sale of policemen's and firemen's positions, and any recommendations from the mayor aroused suspicions of a deal. Under these conditions he was of little service to the city and undoubtedly the close of his administration is a relief to himself, the council and the people.

The attention of the street commissioner has been frequently directed to the filthy condition of the alleys without result, but Lincoln has a mayor now who is at the same time a doctor and consequently familiar with the effect of rotting vegetable and animal matter upon the health of the citi-

zens. It has been frequently urged that the present street commissioner attends to his duties. If the mayor as he passes to and from his office will glance at the alleys piled with all sorts of rubbish and already beginning to reek with unpleasant odors, he will be convinced that Mr. Lindsey has not lavished much time on them.

An efficient and conscientious street commissioner would do more for the improvement of the forlorn and neglected city we live in, than any number of new buildings. There is little hope that anybody will be selected because he has peculiar qualifications of business ability, neatness and devotion to duty. On the contrary, it has been the immemorial custom to bestow the street commissionership as the order of the garter is bestowed in England, purely as a decoration and with no expectation of any services in return. There are onerous duties sketched by the statutes for the street commissioner, but they have not been seriously considered, at least, by the present incumbent.

Upon the fulfillment of these duties the health of the citizens and their children's health depends. Yet notwithstanding this the office is still bestowed upon some thick-pated incompetent for "gallantry at the primaries" or on election day.

Because putting things to rights, cleaning, scrubbing and an orderly arrangement of her surroundings is a woman's special heritage and her daily work I think this city metamorphosis can best be accomplished by a woman. Not every woman, but such a one as is described in Proverbs. This tidy woman who keeps the accounts of her own household and brings order and beauty wherever she reigns dwells in every village and city in America.

If the auditorium were begun it would be easier to secure further contributions. Skepticism as to the real intentions of the board which collected the funds discourages those who are really anxious to see a large auditorium here. Kansas City's auditorium was paid for after it was built by a lottery scheme which was more effective than admirable. There is enough public spirit in Lincoln to build an auditorium without resorting to lottery methods, especially after the building has been begun. The Mormon tabernacle, with its miraculous acoustic properties, its enormous capacity and its dozens of ground floor exits could be built more cheaply than a more ornate building. Egg-shaped and built with as little architectural affectation as an egg, a whisper can be heard from one ovicular wall to the other, while Mr. Bryan's voice would be a whole orchestra. The Mormon elders simply speak and read in a large-family tone of voice. Its proportions, like the temple on the acropolis at Athens, have never been copied, though all the world acknowledges their perfection.

Such a building would attract conventions to the city and bring the crowds which in turn develop enthusiasm and incubate prosperity.

The first chapter of Count Tolstoy's new novel describes a Russian prison, the air of which is so foul that all who come into it from the outside are sickened. It is inconsistent, however, for an American to be shocked. Our own prisons are worse. Monday's papers contained an account of a man, not arrested for any crime and cast into a dungeon, but of a sick man overcome with hunger and cold in Chicago on the night of April 8th, in this year of our Lord, 1899. He applied, it is stated, to the South Chicago avenue police station early in the evening for a cell to sleep in, saying he was out of employment and had no money, and he was placed in the lodgers part of the basement. "Some time after, while Morgan was dozing in the gloom of the basement, he felt something bite him on the hand. Startled, he stretched out his hand and caught a rat. The animal squealed and as if that were a signal for a combined attack, a horde of enormous rats swept upon him, biting him in the arms and legs and sinking their sharp teeth into his scalp. Morgan screamed with terror and pain. His cries were heard in the police headquarters above and several policemen rushed down the stairs. They found Morgan half unconscious and with the big gray rodents clinging to all parts of his body. Nearly a dozen of them were killed by the policemen. Morgan will recover unless blood poisoning sets in". It is likely that this basement, infested with rats and other vermin, has a prototype in every city in this country. Here in Lincoln the air of the city prison is as foul as Tolstoy's Russian jail and the lodging the city gives to the unfortunate, whether his poverty and bruises are caused by misfortune or laziness, differs not from the South Chicago avenue station in which they put poor Morgan.

The Filipinos and the Cubans must be civilized and the indications are that we are going to administer it, but our municipal housekeeping is so slovenly and our hospitality so mean and cruel it requires an unusual degree of self-satisfaction to keep us convinced we are capable of instructing our savage neighbors.

It is a world old discussion as to the object of literature, whether it is to please and instruct or just to please. Shakspeare, the greatest writer that ever lived, may be accepted as authority and the moral teaching of the plays is even greater than their beauty. Ugliness, sin and vulgarity are incorporated. It is hard to get an aesthetic effect with decay. Shakspeare avoided the ugly and the commonplace. His characters have the grand air and it flatters one's amour propre to be of their company. On the other hand

Zola deprives his character of self-respect, he strips them of the rags they would cling to, even the basest of them, to cover their sores. After reading a diagnosis of Zola's the world is sick and degenerate and hope for the race seems silly credulity. But Shakspeare laughs at Falstaff and lets us laugh. His perspective is true and his values are maintained. Badness is an incident, a digression, an exception. Goodness is the rule of the multitude, who, walking in the sunlight on the main travelled road to the goal which is the development of the race, are portrayed with truth and fidelity, but with a spiritual insight that prevents him from making the stragglers heroes and heroines. And the journey from the cradle to the grave is a steep rocky road and the wayside ditch is full of wretches who have fallen there, but the ditch is not so wide or so full as the road that is full of persistent crusaders. Badness is so serious a hindrance to progress that the books which encourage it will be discarded, at least by experienced travelers who have found that lascivious books lead to the ditch.

Charles Dickens introduces his readers to intimacy with people whom we avoid in real life. Every book has two or three insufferable cads, who would be taught their place in actual life. His men and women lack distinction and Mr. Dickens loses his prestige by letting them do most of the talking. However cleverly a commonplace, vulgar character may be treated does not affect the fact of commonplaceness and vulgarity, and the author like Dickens who chooses to fill his pages with men and women on the edge of the ditch will be ignored by the procession on the road. So far as this taste for the disagreeable and brutish is concerned Dickens and Zola are in the same class, though the former is conscious that the British public must have a sprinkling of highly moral, aspiring characters to offset the bad ones.

General Miles has been severely criticised, not for saying the army beef was embalmed, but for saying it to newspapers and for not making his plaint to Secretary Alger. The two investigations into the kind of beef furnished the army, one conducted under the immediate supervision of the department at Washington which resulted in nothing except the dismissal of General Eagan from a position he had never filled, and the commission now in session in Chicago, have vindicated General Miles' unwillingness to address his complaint to the bureau at Washington. The commission now in session has examined army doctors, beef contractors, government inspectors, and commissary agents, privates, non-commissioned officers, army cooks, and all ranks of officers as well as the inventor of the "preserving process." The mass of testimony proves that a