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## OBSERVATIONS.

### The Woman Question.

It has been with no intention of hurting anyone's feelings that I have called attention to Mr. Bixby's constant abuse of women. Although protesting that he is a friend indeed to woman he does not cease to remind her that she is the stupid part of creation, born and bred to a valet's and cook's part, that she is an unnatural mother and an ungrateful wife to take an afternoon out once a fortnight, and that unless she confronts a cookstove when she leaves a washtub or lays down the mop, or her freshly disciplined son she is all out of drawing. Out of her natural environment of four kitchen walls decorated with pans, mops, brooms, a handsome upright range—baby grand—and kitchen table and sink with the tubs in the centre background Mr. Bixby calls woman "unnatural," "mannish," "bawling". If she venture to a club he reminds her she is neglecting her sacred duties, that her husband might come home and want a "sosige" and because his wife has unsexed herself by going to a club there is no "sosige" sizzling for him. He calls the clubwoman's attention to the claims of man to her whole time and all her reverence. If we are, as denominated, a little sillier than the fools the safety of society demands that we each of us should have a jailor, but if we are capable of reasoning the sort of servitude that hypocrites preach is now and ever will be impossible. The Courier can be criti-

cised for taking a jester too seriously. Only the truth hurts, but this jester was something too insistent and recurrent.

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### British Soldiers.

In a series of articles on the privates and officers of the Queen's army a writer, who is himself an officer in that army, described in Harper's Monthly of this year the life of the officers. Neither in England nor in India was there any account of real soldierly training. Good fighters are not made by uninterrupted cards, whiskey, and soda, and all night feasting and dancing. Most of the officers are letter perfect in drill and know the regulations, but a commanding general is surely in need of inspiration and quite another sort of training when actually in the field. British officers, since the days of Lord Cornwallis and Lord Howe have not been masters or even students of strategical warfare. If it be necessary to take a city or a fort the British officer charges like a bull and like a bull is slaughtered. The military greatness of England is in spite of military stupidity and because of wealth, overpowering numerical strength, and the quality of unflinching loyalty, stubbornness and bravery in the soldiery. At the battle of Bunker Hill the British took the American redoubt or position but with a loss of 1,054 men. And then as now there was waiting in England and nobody understood why with an army willing to stand up and be shot at and shoot, to charge with a cheer and to obey orders, a few undisciplined militiamen were able to defeat them. From the retreat of Lexington 1775, April 19, to the surrender of Yorktown 1781, October 19, in twenty-four engagements, including the surrender of two armies, the British losses in the field were not less than 25,000 men, while those of the Americans were about 8,000. Now, the English are as patriotic as we are, and perhaps more so. They are conceited with an old, seasoned conceit that we are not old enough to have developed. In five hundred years of fox hunting they have not learned the uses of strategy. They can fight straight out with their fists. They can shoot pretty straight with a gun, but the subtler Boer leads them into ambushes that the Yankee soldier would smell or detect by the use of a sense which the English despise and have never cultivated. In 1775 Lord Howe depended on British prestige. It was enough to occupy Boston and New York with real soldiers, he thought, to frighten a few boorish provincials into obedience. In the early winter of 1899 Commander Buller has occupied the Transvaal in exactly the same way. At Bunker Hill, Balaklava, Tugela, English soldiers were ordered to charge a hidden foe whose strength had not been ascertained. Officers and men were mowed down like grass and they fell in swathes. Their

bravery is as unquestioned as ever but their hereditary lack of foresight is beginning to be recognized by the world militant. It is not so certain they will win in the Transvaal. The Boer generals are sly with the slyness of the imperturbable Dutch. They know their veldt and have been trained to an out door life. The Boer regimental officers know nothing about silver table service, and rich hangings in their quarters. They are cowboys whose luxuries are the hardships of the British officer. With the newest thing in guns and powder handled by steel muscles and directed by the subtlety which is Dutch, it is not absolutely safe to predict that Oom Paul will be expatriated by England very soon.

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### Co-Education.

The recent ruffianly conduct of a few undergraduates of Wisconsin university who broke into the young ladies' rooms has been used by a number of editors who do not believe in co-education as a horrible example of the manners and morals that system produces. Ruffianly conduct among male undergraduates of institutions coeducational and otherwise is, unhappily, frequent enough, but this exploit is unique. Students of Wisconsin university are peculiarly savage and barbarous—more so than the ordinary college student who considers all mankind his prey and all its property his to burn or carry off when he is out on a lark. Yet, in all the fatuous annals which record the deaths of fraternity initiates, the repainting of John Harvard's statue, and the defacement of public buildings, there is nothing like this Wisconsin barbarity. As it is a single instance it is therefore not an argument against the system. In can only be regarded as an outbreak of savagery, impossible to account for.

In the older institutions of the east co-education is still regarded with horror and from the girl's point of view I am not sure that daily association with the men who fill the gallery of the opera house with a hoarsely shouting, shrilly whistling, loudly stamping and occasionally hissing crew, is refining or at all desirable. They may make fine men but at this period of development and unrestraint they are not desirable companions for a well bred girl. The effect upon the young men of association with the young ladies in Nebraska university is not noticeably refining. Retrospectively some of the Alumni admit that respect for the young ladies occasionally restrained, but in the mass and to an outsider the sight and sound of several hundred university students is not encouraging. Individually they are very likely amiable and well bred.

Radcliffe college is a sort of expurgated and diluted Harvard. It is a graduate school and not especially popular. It contains about forty-five young women who are studying: San-

scrit 1, classical philology 4, Germanic philology 6, history 3, economics 1, education and teaching 17, mathematics 9, fine arts 1, music 1, geology 1. All these are graduate courses in Harvard and that there is not a "snap" among them is evident. Yet Professor Barrett Wendell recently announced that "Radcliffe college was contributing to the slowly enfeebling infatuation of Harvard's professors" with the system of co-education. Professor Byerly says quite the contrary that Radcliffe is standing between Harvard college and the complete co-education that Professor Wendell fears. So long as the authorities can answer all pleas for co-education by pointing with conviction to Radcliffe it is surmised that the army of women will be turned back from the doors.

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### Mrs. Bertha Hebard Pettis.

With the exception of the years spent in Wellesley and in Europe Mrs. Pettis has lived in Lincoln all her life. It was my good fortune to know her intimately in her school days. As a girl she was quiet, a very able scholar and an amiable friend. As the mother of four little children her time was absorbed by them. It is fortunate that they are too young to estimate what the loss of such a loving, wise, devoted mother means to them. It is difficult to speak temperately of Mrs. Pettis. Her life was so fragrant, she herself, was so unconscious of the beauty and strength of her own character that only a poet can adequately express her ineffable womanliness. And even a poet could only recall to those who knew her the exquisite gentleness, culture, and magnanimous devotion of this gentlewoman. The fragrance of the violet can not be described. If one does not know what it is, so much the worse. It can not be described or memorialized after it is crushed and faded. But those who knew it, and the faint sweet odor it breathed in the intimate, hidden place where it grew will forever remember the violet.

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### The Personal Tax.

The personal tax is the smallest tax levied, yet, although the law is explicit in regard to the duty of the city treasurer to collect the tax, neither Mr. Aitkin, Mr. Elmer Stevenson nor Mr. Jones resorted to distress warrants—the last and authorized resort for collecting the taxes—except in cases where the debtor was leaving the city. The city treasurer has generally felt perfectly satisfied with the performance of the occasionally unpleasant duties for which the people pay his salary, by the annual issuance of notices to tax-payers and by following them, when not paid, by notices threatening forcible collection after a certain, specified date. These notices are entirely perfunctory. Fortunately most of the citizens believe that their taxes must be paid and pay