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OBSERVATIONS.

Which?

The portraits of President McKinley and Mr. Bryan, published in last week's Courier, are reprinted this week because of the many demands for the picture. The picture of Mr. Bryan is not a chance kodaker's shot, but a large twelve inch picture, representing in full Colonel Bryan and General Lee sitting in front of their tent in Florida. The two men were admirably posed for the picture which was sent to Lincoln and placed in a local photographer's window where it remained for several months. The inference is therefore not unfair, that the likeness was satisfactory to Mr. Bryan and his friends.

Russia-American Wheat Corner.

In the August McClure's the story is told of the attempt in 1896 by the Russian government to induce the United States to co operate with the Czar in raising and maintaining the price of wheat to one dollar. Hon. J. Sterling Morton, then Secretary of Agriculture, replied very decidedly to the communication referred to him by the Hon. Richard Olney, then Secretary of State. He thought the relation of supply and demand the only regulator and that "it is not the business of government to attempt, by statutes or international agreement, to override the fixed laws of economics." The secretary's opinion was so adverse to the proposition, that he discouraged even the invitation to a conference between representatives of the two countries. He replied that he did not believe "for a minute that a conference of the representative countries which export cereals would throw light upon the nature of the crisis, to which the memorandum alludes."

The Russian department of finance acknowledged the rebuff by silence, but its members are still unconvinced and stubbornly anxious for a conference between agricultural economists of our country and theirs. To convince the United States that their project is feasible, members of the Russian department of agriculture offered statistics covering a number of years of Russian harvests and the

relation between bountiful years and the price of wheat. The figures certainly prove that speculation and not wheat scarcity has effected the price of wheat. What speculators can do, the not too-confident Russians believe can be done by the two fabulously wealthy peoples who produce ninety per cent of the wheat of the world.

In 1893 Russian wheat sold for fifty cents a bushel, notwithstanding that the laws of supply and demand, working freely, would raise the price. In 1892 wheat sold for one dollar a bushel. "From 1882 to 1893 the area of cultivated land in the world increased only five per cent. Crops gathered increased at the same ratio. At the same time wheat consumers increased eleven per cent, and the rate per capita increased steadily during the same period." In other words, there were not only six per cent more people eating wheat in this period than in the preceding period, but each individual's appetite for wheat had grown by what it fed on, and each one ate more wheat, yet the price fell. The Russian government's sound conclusion was that something was interfering with the law of supply and demand, for the law was a dead letter. The artificial causes which forced a price of fifty cents for wheat in 1893, when there were more people to eat it and when people ate more of it than in 1883, when it sold for one dollar, the Russians had the courage to investigate. They decided that the speculators were the culprits and they have since been studying out a way to circumvent them.

Mr. Whelpeley says that "The scheme devised by the Russian Minister of Finance, intended for presentation to the United States, was bold, but simple in its provisions. The two governments were to enter the market as buyers of wheat, at the price of one dollar per bushel. They were also to agree to sell this wheat at a price which would cover the original outlay, interest on the money invested, and the cost of doing the business. According to Russian computation a price of one dollar and eight cents a bushel included all these charges. If the supply of wheat was such that foreign buyers could not pay, the two governments were to absorb the surplus grain, through banks or other agencies, and store it against a time when it might be needed to supply a deficiency in the crop."

"The justification is that all the wheat of the world is used for food. With a guaranteed market of one dollar a bushel, no one could buy it for less. Dollar wheat means no decrease in consumption, because the increase in price for the small quantity used by each consumer would be insignificant, and wheat has many times before reached the dollar point without decreasing the amount consumed.

"Therefore, neither government would be obliged to become an actual purchaser of wheat. It would still be sold to consumers."

A permanent fixing of such a rate would stimulate wheat growing and decrease the pressure of population in crowded cities. But the wheat belt is a limited area and production could not break a corner upheld by the United States and Russia. If comparatively puny speculators like Mr. Armour or the vanished and vanquished Joseph Leiter, or the innumerable horde of men celebrated for cornering the wheat market, can keep the price up, there is no obvious reason why the United States and Russia cannot between them keep up the price and sell dollar wheat to the world.

"The possibilities of such a trust are

startling. The wheat crop of the world in 1898, was 2,879,000,000 sold by the farmer for fifty cents a bushel. Russia proposes to add a billion and a half dollars to the value of the wheat crop of the world. The United States' 700,000,000 bushels could be sold for \$350,000,000 more. The Russian farmers' wheat would sell for \$200,000,000 more. England imports 125,000,000 bushels of wheat, and this agreement would cost her \$60,000,000 more than it does now for bread. The farmers of the United Kingdom would get \$30,000,000 more for their wheat." The agreement would array the wheat importing against the wheat exporting classes, but by the distribution of the wealth among the farmers of the world, all the nations would be stimulated and enriched. It does not matter how high the price of any article is, so that we can afford it.

The Consent of the Governed.

The consent of a large number of the governed has been dispensed with in North Carolina, where the democrats have won by 40,000. Chairman Simmons of the state central committee says the election was won by "business like methods." The amendment disfranchising the negroes is a democratic measure. Its enforcement will perhaps give the negro an opportunity to become a useful citizen out of range of the shotgun. All political preference becoming out of the question for him, and political jealousy and rivalry being destroyed, the negro will learn an independence and self-control that will in the years to come produce a man of worth and character. His disfranchisement is not altogether inimical to the progress of the negro, only that it is queer that it should be accomplished by the American supporters of Aguinaldo and the boxers.

Street Railway Fares.

For several years prior to 1896, there was in force in this city an ordinance which prohibited any street railway company from charging more than twenty-five cents for each package of six tickets. It required every company to keep for sale by the conductor or driver of each car, packages of tickets of the required number, for twenty-five cents each, ready for delivery during the running of the car, to any passenger applying and paying for the same. This was a reasonable regulation, and it afforded to the patrons of the companies, and especially to women, a most convenient method of procuring street railway tickets, and that at a reasonable price. The present ordinance requires the company (there is now but one and it has a monopoly of business) to sell eleven tickets for fifty cent or twenty-two for one dollar, and requires the company to keep them on sale at three convenient places in the city during business hours. If there be a place in the city where such tickets can be procured outside of the office of the company, I do not know where it is. The council would consider the convenience of the patrons of the cars if at the next council meeting it should repeal the existing ordinance regulating fares and the sale of tickets and re-enact the old ordinance requiring the company to keep tickets for sale on every car, six for twenty-five cents.

Clubs in the Kentucky Mountains.

Mrs. Katharine Pettet, chairman of a committee of the State Federation of Kentucky Women's Clubs, read a very interesting report on the progress and results of social settlement work in the mountains to the mem-

bers of that body, recently assembled in annual meeting at Covington, Kentucky. No other report or address was received with so much sympathy. To the isolated mountain woman the coming of the cultured woman has great meaning. Mrs. Pettet's account of the mountain women's desire to learn to cook better, sew better and know something of the world on the other side of the mountain was pathetic. When the work stopped in the spring, their sorrow at parting from their friendly apostles and teachers was genuine and affecting. Nearly \$300 was raised at the annual meeting for the purpose of carrying on the work, and several kindergarten teachers, with their outfits, started immediately for the mountains. The present state officers of the association are: Mrs. A. M. Harrison, Lexington, Kentucky, president; Mrs. Moberly of Bowling Green, first vice president; Mrs. Dohrman, second vice president.

Justice for Convicts.

The charges of brutal treatment of convicts at the Nebraska penitentiary are still uninvestigated by the officials to whom the citizens of the state have delegated this duty. In this instance Georgia has set an example to Nebraska. A convict was killed there by a whipping boss, who lashed him for refusing to work when he was sick. When the man died the grand jury heard of the cause, examined witnesses and brought in a true bill against the boss, charging him with involuntary manslaughter.

City Improvement in Omaha.

The Woman's club of Omaha is keeping three blocks on Sixteenth street, from Farnam to Capitol avenue, clean. A man in white, with O. W. C. on his cap and a push cart, patrols this district. The object is to demonstrate the beauty and healthfulness of clean streets.

A short time before the opening of the Trans-Mississippi exposition the Woman's club appointed a city improvement committee, with Mrs. Smith as chairman and Mrs. McKelvy as assistant chairman. The function of the committee was to make clean and beautify, and the members performed their duties effectively. So much so that the constitutional and perennial grumblers at club women were obliged to confess their utility and the worth and unselfishness of their gratuitous labor and care.

The experiment in Omaha is watched with much interest and hope by the members of the City Improvement Society of Lincoln.

Chinese Women.

Neither their sisters nor missionaries can help the women in China. They are prisoned and bound by the egotism and barbarity of the men. Neither the example of the resident Americans and Englishmen, the admonitions of the missionaries, nor their own sufferings have alleviated the condition of Chinese women in the years these influences have been suffered to operate. The birth of a girl baby is still regarded as a disgrace and it is a brave nurse or doctor who announces a girl's birth to the father. Mothers who are truly kind drown their daughters before they are old enough to realize the cruelty and disapproval of the world. So competent an authority as Dr. Colman, Li Hung Chang's physician, declares that there is not a family in China that has not had at least one case of attempted suicide among its female members. Girl babies are beaten, starved and neglected, while their brothers are