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OBSERVATIONS.

Courtesy.

Governor Roosevelt came to town and the fusionists offered to take down the picture of Bryan and Stevenson, the "Save the Republic" banner, which stretches across O street, and, for the first time, suggests that Nebraska populists have a sense of humor. The republicans have never objected to the Bryan banner and replied that they would rather it were left hanging, and that, anyway, the McKinley and Roosevelt banners would stay where they are till after election.

There is no courtesy in politics. Between two opposing political parties there is only distrust and unlimited enmity. The presidential candidate that wins this year will distribute to loyal workers post-offices, foreign consulships, cabinet positions, attorney generalships and various kinds of deputy positions not hard to fill and well paid for. Courtesy is not proof against this hope. In this Christian land, courtesy is practiced at functions and on polite occasions where man ceases for a few isolated moments to think of the rewards of activity, the difficulties of competition, and of short cuts to political office. Deacons and elders who are bankers never take their consideration and worry about souls into the bank. The fusionists, therefore, who profess to be deeply shocked by the discourtesy of the republicans should pause and reflect that there is no such thing as cour-

tesy in politics. It is only within the last ten years that decency has been introduced into politics, and we have not yet grown familiar with the observances that decency has introduced.

The offer from the fusionist brethren recalls the offer of Judson to Brandon in "When Knighthood was in Flower." Judson and Brandon were fighting a duel to the death. Judson had on a suit of mail, but he was exhausted, having just fought two duels with Brandon's father and brother, whom he had killed. He offered, then, when he saw he was sure to lose his life if the fight continued, to spare young Brandon's life. He breathed hard, and his thrusts lacked force. He said:

"Boy, I would spare you. I have killed enough of your tribe; put up your sword and call it quits."

Brandon replied: "Stand your ground. You will be a dead man as soon as you grow a little weaker. If you try to run, I will thrust you through the neck as I would a cur. Listen how you snort. You would spare me, would you? I could preach a sermon or dance a hornpipe while I am killing you." * * *

Lincoln is a republican town, and a democrat would never have been elected here if republicans had remained worthy of their trust and nominating conventions had remembered that party loyalty will not stand the strain that the members actually subjected it to in nominating ignorant, corrupt bosses to honorable positions. Because Lincoln is a republican city, the number of McKinley pictures and banners greatly exceed Bryan pictures and banners. When Mr. Bryan and his friends come to town, he must be confronted by repetitions of McKinley on banners and posters.

The Street Fair.

It requires a week to prepare for the street fair and a week to tear down the booths and clean the streets. Not all the merchants get back the money the booths and space cost them. Some of the most energetic and boldest traders get an adequate return. The same amount of energy can doubtless be expended to greater profit coincidentally with the state fair. The loss of effort in putting up an elaborate booth for five days and tearing it down on the sixth is apparent. The displays must be removed at night and replaced in the morning. The textile fabrics are injured by the dust and by the continual handling. The demoniacal uproar of the merry-go-round, promenading bands, squeaking rubber toys, megaphones and diversified human gabble tire the really delicate drums of the ear in much less than a week. The state fair managers believe that this year's attendance predicts tremendous crowds next year. Accepting this probability, Lincoln people can calculate on entertaining a fair proportion of the farmers of Nebraska. One

week's revel in pumpkins, the races, the "art palace" and side shows is all we can expect. Two weeks of fun-making are too much, even though the weeks are separated by a month. We are not a carnival people. Allow the American populace north of Mason and Dixon's line any liberties and it quickly becomes a head-smashing, rowdy populace. In New Orleans, in the south of France, in Venice the carnival revellers disport themselves, but are still bound by the laws of decency and courtesy. No one is struck by anything heavier than confetti, and the police are obliged to watch only the disorderly classes. How different is the northern carnival spirit. Men and boys stand in a long line on the streets, armed with rubber balls, and the passers-by are peppered with blows which sting occasionally, when the balls are filled with water or small stones. Neither young girls nor old ladies are respected, but some times a man of the right size, with a glitter in his eye, passes in front of the loafers and not a ball is discharged. After the Police Judge of Lincoln announced that he would not fine any one for assault and battery committed on account of a provocative rubber ball assault, the rubber-ball braves disappeared. The benefits and disadvantages of a street fair have just been demonstrated in Lincoln. The general discussion of the institution is pertinent, and The Courier invites an opinion from any who are interested in the subject.

Red Pottage.

Cutting, slashing and thrusting, dark alleys, lanterns, tall, comic opera boots, cloaks worn over one shoulder, plumed hats, cavalier oaths (death, s'blood) and manners are all the style with novelists now. It is a style soon over. "To Have and to Hold," "The Helmet of Navarre," "When Knighthood was in Flower" are in great favor momentarily, but a little adventure goes a long way with grown up men and women. Boys are not easily surfeited with fights and assassinations and midnight, hairbreadth escapes. But theirs is a wholly youthful appetite, and the large part of the reading public is middle aged.

The author of "Red Pottage" set her scenes and her men and women in the world of today. They do not crumble to dust at a touch. We are not dragged into the past by costume, furniture or old usage of words and musty convention. She has drawn three fine men, entirely unlike each other, but, quite possible, blood and bone heroes, and of the three I like Newhaven best, and he was not drawn for a hero. The bishop and Dick Vernon, the Australian vine grower, are virile types, too, whose prototypes live in Lincoln, Nebraska, whose hands we have the honor to shake, whose footsteps ring on our sidewalks whose burly forms fill up the doorways they pass through. There are

not many heroic souls, but there are enough to furnish every human being with a practical demonstration of the truth that the hero is not extinct. All men are superficially alike, and it is only when danger and death threaten that the lion hearted are distinctly grouped by themselves, not by any desire on their part for isolation, however, but by the fleeing crowds who have left them at the post of duty.

Although "Red Pottage" is a psychological struggle, one of the "inside" tragedies that are to modern novelists what the symphonies of the masters are to the musicians, the action is rapid, and the story never degenerates into that internal questioning and weighing and everlasting retracing that Messrs. Howells and James and Edith Wharton mercilessly inflict upon us.

The beginning of every chapter has a keynote in italics from Kipling, Meredith, the Bible and Shakspeare, from Goethe, La Fontaine, etcetera. It would be better if authors would put these italic quotations at the end of chapters, instead of at the beginning, then their appositeness would be accredited. As it is, the lover of old things applied to new ones, is obliged to turn back to the beginning of each chapter, as he finishes it, if he wishes to find out what instance of Shakspeare's, or Goethe's, or Kipling's prophesy has been again fulfilled.

It is not a book for *la jeune femme*, but for those who are unfortunate enough to have experienced the average man and woman it is a moral stimulus. The contemplation of the world in average, leaving out of vision the heroic souls who actually exist and finally die for others, is a sickening experience. It is productive of the blessed conviction, however, that a God of absolute purity who can contemplate so low an average for many thousand years, without disgust, is of incomprehensible tenderness and patience, and must be sure of human regeneration eventually. The old philosophers believed that God could not stand wickedness beyond a certain point, and they arranged the Flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to reconcile the problem of absolute goodness, confronted for a long period with irredeemable vice. The good bishop in "Red Pottage" has heavenly patience and an insight into human nature only occasionally possessed by the clergy. The bishop is sorely needed to balance a detestable rector, who is a busybody, a bigot and an egotist.

Club Work, the Year Through.

The meeting of the Nebraska club women, in effect, begins the club work of the year. Eastern clubs busy themselves in the summer time largely with eleemosynary missions. In Nebraska, except for the village improvement societies, and some de-