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## OBSERVATIONS.

## Rummage Sales.

Several churches in Lincoln and one benevolent institution have conducted rummage sales during the year. The articles contributed to the sale by the pious or benevolent are sold for very small prices to the poor or to inveterate bargain hunters. The institution is beneficent in two ways. The giver's house is relieved of a disorderly and unclassifiable accumulation and the poor who buy the stuff preserve their independence. However small the price, the poor man saves his face. The giver also receives the diluted blessing awarded to givers from old time. Of course where there is no outlay the profit is 100 per cent and the church possessing rummage rooms shares generously in this republican era of prosperity. The popularity of rummage sales is based upon the diversity of tastes, wants and temperaments. What is one man's rubbish is another man's treasure. It is a redistribution of property that requires no self-denial on the part of the giver, in fact it is a positive relief to a housekeeper who has lived for any length of time in one house. It involves no humiliation to him who buys, and it benefits the accommodating agent of transference, which in Lincoln usage is a church or benevolent association.

It carries out the ideas of the best students of charity that it is demoralizing to give when it is possible to sell, or exact some return. The satisfaction of the richest in getting a fine article only inconsiderably bent, or worn or scorched or soiled is shared by the poorest who flock to the rummage sales and with commendable discrimination, but with immemorial pleasure, select bargains in rubbers, furniture, cooking utensils, clothing,

etc. People who from afar condemn rummage sales have not reflected upon this universal passion, which is not confined to the capital districts, but is hidden in hearts that beat on fourth fifth and first streets, in the neighborhood of the car tracks. The triumphant customers of the rummage merchants lug their purchases home with an entirely different expression from that which they assume when they sneak away from the charity organization rooms with shoes, underclothing or old trousers which have been bestowed on them after an investigation into their moral character with the object of discovering if it merit old shoe leather, etc. The rummage counters are, like the rain, for the just and the unjust. The most inveterate drunkard or the most slothfully housekeeper can, for the moment attain the dignity of bargaining for what they want, and getting, it, depart with self respect, all the more precious to them because they have so little left.

## Clothed All in Leather.

Intelligent students of football have decided that the sole-leather pads, iron head cages and corrugated leg-armor that some of the players get into, inflict more injuries than they prevent, not to the padded, but to the player who casts himself on the man protected cap-a-pie. The Yale students now, merely tie their ears on with tapes, which is almost as effective in keeping them from being kicked off, and when the twenty-two men are in a heap it is much more comfortable for everybody except the men who are accustomed to being thus hermetically sealed up.

## Aspects of Mental Economy.

An essay on some phases of the dynamics of the mind, with particular observations upon student life in the University of Wisconsin, by Dr. M. V. O'Shea, professor of the science and art of education in that institution is number 36 in the bulletins issued by the University of Wisconsin.

Every resident of Lincoln has had two opportunities and invitations to listen to Dr. O'Shea on the subject of education. He is very much worth listening to as a scholar and as a quick-witted graceful speaker who has made experiments with the devotion of a scientist in his laboratory and reports then with the inspiration of discovery. Superintendent Gordon invited Dr. O'Shea to lecture here with the double purpose of helping the teachers and instructing the patrons of the schools in the most reliable recent discoveries in regard to their children. Not many patrons responded to the invitation because it was not generally understood that the patrons were especially invited. The process of getting acquainted with the scholars and of harmonizing the methods aim and instruction of teachers and parents, is a slow one.

But such means as Superintendent Gordon has used are being justified by results.

Through a series of misfortunes the grade schools of Lincoln are demoralized. One administration has lasted long enough so that improvement is noticeable now. No change in the whole city is more important or more encouraging than this beginning of a change in the public schools.

Dr. O'Shea's essay is a discussion of energy; how the student may best generate and conserve it. Investigations concerning the size of the rooms, the quality and kinds of food consumed, and the amount of sleep and exercise taken by the students of the University of Wisconsin, discovered a waste of energy. Considering a human being as a machine, built to accomplish a certain character and quantity of work an investigation into the energy or power which makes the machine go, is valuable.

By means of the curious machines of the psychological laboratory it is possible to measure muscular fatigue and nerve fatigue separately, the influence of noise upon a sleeper, etcetera. Assisted by this cunning engineering and by 326 answers from students to a questionnaire concerning the food they eat, the rooms they study and sleep in, and the exercise they take, Dr. O'Shea's conclusions in regard to air, food, sleep and exercise that students need, are sound. A student's food should be nourishing and so well cooked that his energy for several hours after eating will not all be required to digest it. He should sleep long enough to clear away the depleted tissue piled up by the machine in doing its work. From the nature of the experiments the conclusions cannot be exact. However the wastefulness of the student's time who is improperly nourished is clearly demonstrated. This state which spends so much money in order that young citizens may return in knowledge and power to the state, interest on the investment, is concerned in such investigations as those carried on in the department of education of the University of Wisconsin.

In proportioning the tension to the occasion and effort Dr. O'Shea says, speaking of Americanitis, that; "it is maintained that Americans do not know how to rest, which means that they make more fuss about doing a thing than is necessary. Dr. Clouston, the eminent Scotch authority upon nervous diseases said, "You Americans wear too much expression upon your faces. You are living like an army with all its reserves engaged in action. The duller countenances of the British population betoken a better scheme of life. They suggest stores of reserved nervous force to fall back upon. This excitability, this presence at all times of power not used, I regard as the greatest safeguard of our English people. The other thing in you gives me a sense of insecurity, and you ought somehow

to tone yourselves down. You carry too much expression, you take too intensely the trivial moments of life." "Much egotistic-introspective thinking seems to irritate the nervous system, unloosing forces which should be securely held until their services can be profitably utilized."

Perhaps no characteristic of American women is more apparent than the nervous self-examination to which they conscientiously submit themselves. Blessed are the happy people, despised of the highly conscientious, who enjoy the full capacity of the day and their opportunities. Their happiness is beneficent and contagious. In refusing to be made miserable by misery they increase the happiness of humanity as the rose does by unconsciously and beautifully being. The repose and enjoyment of a man whose eyes are not turned inward is reflected in the eyes of his friends. To be good and beautiful as the rose is, is the duty of women, but they spoil their effect by taking thought and by worrying and looking worried. Mr. Bryan spoke of the number of wan women he saw on his summer's travels. They can be seen any time, summer or winter in all parts of the country. They have got into the habit of looking wan and the president, free silver, free trade, or imperialism has nothing to do with it. When they shake hands they grip the unconscious hand extended to them with a tension that indicates something momentous. Club members talk over unimportant subjects with a fixed expression and an earnestness that is absurd when they consider the relative unimportance of the subject. Nevertheless they invite the same strain next day and the day after, go to a doctor, for an ailment that is self-curable but which is making wrecks of American women. Dr. O'Shea's diagnosis, is the same, in effect as the appeal Miss French made, viz, to take light things lightly, and even to take serious matters as lightly as possible.

## In China.

The Empress dowager is still in control. Kang-Yi, a member of the privy council and next to Prince Tuan, the inspiring cause of the massacre of foreigners, has been decapitated, probably by a friend. Yu Sien has committed suicide by swallowing gold leaf. Yu Sien was governor of Shenshi, and an anti-foreign fanatic with a record of many missionary butcheries inspired by him. The Powers demanded the death of both these men and they preferred the old Chinese way of killing themselves or getting a friend to do it. In China it is *infra dig* to be put to death. It is quite consistent with exalted family traditions to hand your sword to a friend and invite him in choicest Chinese phrase to cut your head off, or to hold it in such a way that the suicide can fall on it.