

supplied, will be substituted. If all the transportation routes into Peoria should advance their charges unreasonably, they would merely insure the early transfer of the industries of that town, which are dependent upon the supply of corn for raw material, to other places. In other words, the services of different carriers would be substituted for theirs. To enumerate all of the examples of this kind, would exhaust the list of commodities carried by rail, and would cover the entire domain of railway transportation. There is scarcely an article in use that cannot be drawn from any one of several supplying regions, and consumers frequently do not know and rarely care which source is utilized. No one knows these things better than the traffic officers of railways, and they are universally aware that attempts to violate the limits thus imposed, must work disastrously to the properties which they serve. Hence, if the term "monopoly" is, for the sake of reaching a common basis for discussion, admitted to be applicable to railway business, it is evident that whatever monopoly may exist or may be possible, is so restricted by the conditions of the transportation industry as to make it impossible to use it to exact extortionate rates.—*Railway World*, May 18, 1901.

THE WHY AND WHEREFORE.

The movement towards civic improvement and public beauty, has assumed such proportions as to warrant a group of earnest-minded men and women in organizing the National League of Improvement Associations, with headquarters at Springfield, Ohio.

The League, as a federation of interests and of organizations of a varied nature, seeks to serve as a clearing-house for ideas and information; to direct attention to special needs; to emphasize the best means for attaining desired ends; to secure general interest by an extensive press and platform agitation, and to gain intelligent, responsive public sentiment, through educational literature and stereopticon addresses.

The League has an open field, does not rival existing organizations, and is in no sense a legislative body. Without duplicating effort or destroying individuality, it seeks to bring about unity and harmony between all the forces. It is hoped to lessen ephemeral organization, to avoid misdirected effort, and to secure a more general co-operation.

The plan of work includes an extensive news service, the supply of data for speakers and writers, preparation of photographs and slides, a reference exhibition and circulating library, suggestions of programs for meetings and clubs, arrangement of assembly and institute presentation, the circulation of timely literature, the formation of local organizations, the direction of special

effort for firms and other bodies desiring expert service.

The earlier publications, "The Work of Civic Improvement" and "The How of Improvement Work," have been received with much favor.

Affiliation Proposed.

The League aims to secure in every community, either affiliation with some existing organization, which may undertake the work best suited for local needs, or to form a society for that particular purpose.

Affiliation is urged in order that all may have a part in the national movement—helping others to help themselves. Then we aid in every community through an extensive press and platform agitation; each city is placed on record as being live and aggressive; the League prepares valuable helps for local use, and all are kept in touch with advance steps throughout the country by means of bulletins and reports.

The efforts of the League lead to a lessening of municipal expenditure and paternal responsibility in matters frequently forced upon the city by neglect of individual civic duty.

Moreover, the arousal of civic consciousness makes keener the recognition of wasteful expenditure, and secures heartier support for legitimate public improvements.

With a public spirited program, shrewd business men in direct control, and a showing of results, we invite the consideration of all, of the League, as being worthy of trust.

Contributions from any given locality can be followed immediately by a careful campaign of education and agitation proportionate to the financial basis.

Reports, printed matter and newspaper clippings relating to every organization and other local work will be most welcome.

Address, National League of Improvement Associations, Springfield, Ohio.

"THE RED RAIN."

Dr. Thomas Lamb Phipson, author of "Researches of the Past and Present History of the Earth's Atmosphere," which has just been published by J. B. Lippincott Company, recently had sent to him a small quantity of the fine dust, which fell between the 11th and 13th of March, this year, in Sicily and various parts of northern Italy, and which was commonly known as "the red rain." Dr. Phipson made a careful examination of this dust, and, as a result, gives his opinion that it is not desert sand, nor volcanic dust, as many believe; but the mineral dust left far in the air by the explosion of meteors. He says that particles of this dust are from two one-thousandths to five one hundred thousandths of a millimeter in diameter, and many, far from being red, are white, gray, green, yellow and brown, a few

being a true ruby red. Both iron and nickel were found in these grains. Dr. Phipson's statements are especially interesting, in view of the numerous so-called "rains" of variously colored substances, which from time to time are reported from different portions of the world, and whose origin has yet to be fully explained.

NEW HABIT IN BIRD LIFE.

A very weird habit in bird life has just been discovered. The homray, a large and beautiful, but rather clumsy bird, leading a quiet life in the backwoods of the East Indies, feeding mostly on the fruit of trees, seldom descends to the ground, and its nest is in the hollow of a tree high up.

As soon as the female has laid her five or six eggs, the male begins to fetch mud and to wall up the opening of the nest with it, leaving an opening barely large enough to allow the very large bill to pass.

Probably this is done to prevent the heavy and awkward fledglings falling out of the nest to the ground far below.

In several cases observed, when the female was liberated after her long and close confinement, she was found pitifully poor and weak, although the male was diligent in providing her and the young ones with food. Is he tyrant or sage, or stupid slave of instinct?—*London Express*.

NO GREAT AMERICAN SCHOLARS.

It has been said that just as England has no great composer, America will never have a great scholar. I do not believe that, says Prof. Hugo Munsterberg, in the *May Atlantic*. At the middle of the seventeenth century, all the nations of Europe had great philosophers,—England, France, Holland, Italy; and only Germany had the reputation of having no talent for philosophy. It was just before Leibnitz appeared on the horizon, and Kant and Fichte and Hegel followed, and Germany became the centre of philosophy. As soon as the right conditions are given, here, too, new energies will rush to the foreground. In carefully watching year after year, the students here, I am fully convinced that their talent for productive scholarship is certainly not less than that of the best German students. Compared with them, American students have an inferior training in hard systematic work, as their secondary school education is usually inferior. And secondly, they have infinitely poorer chances for scholarly work in their future, as I have fully pointed out. With a more strenuous preparatory training behind them, and a better opportunity for productive work before them, these students would be the noblest material from which to develop American scholarship.