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OBSERVATIONS.

Considering that Lincoln, which is an average American city, has been trying to get good water for more than half a decade, and that it has been defeated, not because good water is not within reach, or within our means, but purely and simply by politics, is it not foolish, or rather inexact for orators, preachers and leader writers to keep up the old fiction of a free government? The government of the United States is free in form but actually every man, woman and child in it is daily deprived of his inalienable rights to pure air and pure water by the schemes of a few politicians who are helping themselves to a seat in congress or to a county or municipal office by ignoring the comfort and health of the citizens and by serving faithfully inimical interests which can reward, and has, loyal service. "Republics are ungrateful." So are municipalities. Let a man do his best for the city and no one will recognize his labors, but let a councilman or a mayor use his influence for a company or lawbreakers, like gamblers, and he immediately secures a "support" which will help him from one office to the next higher as long as he likes to stay in politics. Such reciprocal relations have delivered over most of the cities of this country, bound and gagged and utterly helpless to the most unscrupulous, ignorant, and selfish among the citizens who operate the free government for them-

selves and their relatives regardless of the liberties and rights of most of the people who neither hold office nor have political influence that they are capable, ordinarily, of using with effect. I say ordinarily because sometimes when the people realize that they have been robbed, they rise up as one man when voting time comes round, and turn the hucksters out. The fever-infected, lead-eating, poisonous water which the people of Lincoln are being forced to drink now, may, while destroying their stomachs, at the same time sweep away their long suffering patience. Things will not get better until they get worse. Party allegiance will not stand the strain of prolonged and aggravated personal discomfort. It will not surprise THE COURIER if the low grumbling and muttering, which is heard everywhere, develop into some expression before long.

It is asserted by Mr. Geo. Woods, who is anxious to drive more wells near the F street station, that this first vein, which is only 30 or 35 feet deep, is an inexhaustible stream of pure water. Mr. Woods also says that if the points which have been driven into the salt stream, underlying the fresh water vein be plugged, the salt water will not infect the fresh water because salt water is the heavier. Against this statement is the statement of Prof. Nicholson, of the State university, in the case of Kendall & Smith against the sanitary district. In that case he testified that an analysis of the water furnished by the city for public use, produced the following results:

A gallon of water taken from the South street station contained 95 grains of solid matter, of which solid matter 62 grains was common salt. A gallon of water taken from the F street well contained 40 grains of solid matter, of which matter 25 grains were common salt. A gallon of water taken from the Rice street station contained 16 grains of solid matter, of which matter one-half a grain was common salt. Water from each well was taken in August, 1895.

Although public sentiment is all on the side of the miners and against the mine-owners, the strike is no nearer a settlement now than when it began. Because of the number of mines in widely separated parts of the country it has been impossible to secure a complete strike. No class of labor is so oppressed as mining; no laborers work under harder or more dangerous conditions. On their knees, or with back bent like a clasp-knife, they labor with the heavy pick in solitude and semi-darkness. No labor with like dangerous conditions, is so poorly

paid. Bituminous coal is no cheaper now than five years ago, yet the wages of the miners have been steadily reduced. The difference has increased directly the profits of the mine-owner, which, with the expedient of the company store, has netted him fifty per cent profit. The scale of living among the miners and their families has been reduced to the point of starvation. For the sake of humanity, not for any enlightened or impossible philanthropy, this strike ought to succeed. It is not much that the miners ask, only the discontinuance of the company stores, uniform scales and screens. With these reforms the miners can live like other laborers in decent cottages, their children can be clothed and sent to school and they themselves will not look like hungry wild beasts. If there be any compulsive force in public sentiment, any power of the press, it ought to be exerted in favor of the miners who are fighting a losing fight against the mine-owners and starvation.

Those who are not running for some office, and they are in the minority just now, are trying to select the winners. Considering the number of slates that are made and changed every day, it keeps those who desire to be on the winning side, either very quiet or denying on one day the sentiments and the friends they had the day before. Around Sheriff Trompen loyalty flickered for awhile but when Mr. Jim Parker was confronted with arguments which seemed to prove that he could not be elected and withdrew, it flared up again and has only been occasionally dimmed by reports that as soon as he was elected, Sheriff Trompen had promised to replace the capable and honest Deputy Sheriff Hoagland with Mr. L. L. Lindsay. Such rumours and rumours of rumours keep the *olla podrida* on the turn and the watch. An account of a rousing Harrop meeting in an evening paper is matched in a day by a Woods meeting crammed with enthusiasts who clamor for the place of register of deeds for the people's favorite. The situation is comic only to those entirely on the outside. When bread and butter is mixed up with any question it is no longer comic to those, the quantity of whose bread and butter will be determined by the result.

The proposition to repave that portion of the city paved with cedar blocks at the expense of all the citizens is an injustice to those who did their utmost before the worthless and expensive blocks were laid, to prevent the city from using that material. It will be remembered that when city

paving was under discussion, the council visited cities where wooden pavement was in use and where the present condition of Eleventh street was in prophetic evidence. Nevertheless the council, in spite of indignant protests from honest and intelligent citizens decided to pave a district with wooden blocks. There is a strong analogue between the attitude of the council then and now. Only then it was pavement, now it is water. Then, no one who had ever used wooden blocks advised their use; now, no chemist who has ever analyzed the F street water advises its continued use. Then it cost money to get the council to change its mind about the worthlessness of cedar block pavement. Now there is an influence at work on the aldermen to make them admit that salt water is fresh. There is no reason now why the decision should be any more disinterested than it was then. Only four or five years from now the deaths which have been caused by infected water will be irremediable.

To replace the wooden block district at the expense of those citizens who are still paying for the brick paving which abuts on their property is an injustice to them. Eleventh street should not be repaved until the property owners on that street or any other, paved in rotting wooden blocks can afford to pay for it. If the wooden block district is repaved at the expense of all the taxpayers the wooden block district property owners should help pay for the brick paving already laid in other parts of the city. There is too great a favoritism displayed by the mayor and council for certain thickly settled parts of the city bristling with voters. An even-handed justice will in the end win the respect and perhaps the suffrages (though that is another and more difficult reward) of the citizens of Lincoln. The wooden block streets are in an almost impassable condition—exactly the state that those who laid them and those who authorized them to be laid knew they would be, but there is no justice in increasing the taxes of an already overburdened people to enhance the value of the property on those streets. If there were anything like retributive justice in politics the aldermen who awarded the contract to lay cedar blocks on those streets should now be assessed for their lack of judgment as well as for the well-founded suspicions of their disinterestedness at the time. But such an utopian plan is impossible in a republic. In Turkey an officer who made such a mistake would be beheaded. In America the ward politician is the tyrant. The people go to the polls as the herd goes to and from