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OBSERVATIONS.

The Twenty-fifth of December is a day to forget old grudges, to take a new interest in humanity, to remember one's friends and be truly grateful for them, to draw closer to kin folks and to return thanks for the tie that binds. The flimsy nature that exults over or disparages a gift from a friend and forgets that it symbolizes affection, is unworthy of friendship. The gift is a sacred symbol, but only the trembling hands of age and the pink, small hands of children receive a gift as perfect in itself. The aged for the love it stands for, even if it be something they cannot use, think of the giver with a full heart. The children take gifts from Santa Claus as from a blessed gent whose largess is a reward of virtue and selected from millions of others for each particular child. Christmas does not amount to much unless the children consent—as they always do—to shed upon the grown-up people their unfeigned, effortless happiness. Some of that brightness that gleamed around the head of the Baby eighteen hundred and ninety-seven years ago, still shines around the head of the new-born, growing paler as youth merges into maturity, and skepticism and cynicism takes the place of imagination and faith. Christmas day in the morning is a re-nascence to the adult Christian world because of the irresistible children and of the tradition which will make this world a good place to live in all the year through, by-and-by.

The Union-Commercial club will begin the new year in its new quarters, the Y. M. C. A. building. Although some regret has been expressed that the Association has had to lose so fine a building, it is sympathy wasted. The young men have never shown that they appreciated their handsome club house by contributing much to the running expenses. It was a gift in the first place from the successful men of Lincoln to the young men, who had a fortune, fame and family to acquire. In the meanwhile the hall bed-room was said to be their only spot for recreation, study and society. This is not quite true. There are many homes, humble and otherwise, in this city where any young man of good morals can make himself welcome if he chooses. Every hotel office is a men's club where, day after day, the same groups may be seen exchanging remarks and tobacco. If a man has the spirit of comradeship he gets into pleasant relations with his human surroundings on the first day he enters

a town. If he has not no Y. M. C. A. can make them for him. The regulations and rules that seem to be necessary in a Y. M. C. A. exclude many men who want to smoke and do not want to attend "meetings" but who possess energy enough to make their financial help indispensable. The young men who have repeatedly refused to help the association out of debt are unworthy so handsome a building. The young men and older ones who are members of the Union-Commercial club will pay their share of the expenses, take strangers there to dine and the building will be inside as it has always been outside, a credit to the city.

Much has been said about the evils of club life and little about the advantages. There is no influence to which a young man responds as readily and gratefully and naturally as to that of men older and wiser and perhaps richer than himself. On the outer edge of the circle, they unconsciously accept the ideals and standards of the older men with whom they are associated. The friendly intercourse of club life encourages the strugglers and deepens the sense of responsibility of every member. That man who is a beloved member of good clubs, possesses charity and shows it every day, he is gentle and clever and he uses his gifts without arrogance. He sets the pace for the whole club and his humanity is worth more to the young male animal who looks up to him than sermons and creeds innumerable.

The club at the present time is imbued with a spirit of devotion to the interests of the city and before 1899 may have accomplished something by an unselfish activity in city politics.

An eastern exchange says that Russell Sage has made his will and left fifty million dollars to the people as embodied in various philanthropic educational and art institutions. The income of \$1,000,000 is apportioned to scholarships in Yale, Harvard, Columbia and Wellesby, Vassar and Radcliffe, for the advantage of such boys and girls as prove best fitted for a college course.

The income of \$400,000 is set aside for the support of American art students in the art schools of Italy and Greece. Mr. Sage, prompted, it is said, by certain domestic influences, has protested vociferously in this glorious will against the increasing dominance of Gallic methods and morale in American art, and has taken the means mentioned to turn the current in the direction of the ancient and classic schools. Mr. Sage has left a handsome income to his wife and nearest relations, but nothing princely, so that the money is practically distributed again among the people whose custom made stock in his companies valuable. This lavish distribution of a heap of money which he has been all his life piling up, seems inconsistent. He is a miser and loves money for its own sake. Yet, unlike a miser, he does not wish to bury it when he is no longer capable of enjoying its possession. So determined is he that no legal quibble shall destroy or delay his heaven-sent intentions, that all reasonable demands of kith and kin will be satisfied by adamant contracts and oath-accepted settlements before his demise. In the years to come when Mr. Sage's small haggling with apple women will have been forgotten, he will rank as the most devoted lover of his kind. When Astor Vanderbilt & Huntington will only be remembered as rich men, Russell Sage will be honored by all kinds of grateful memories. "The other men were, in their day accounted good fellows, but how favored the nineteenth century to be characterized by a man

whose gifts to mankind dwarf Baron Hirsch's Rockefeller's, & Stanford's benefactions." And this is the man who said to his physician lately: "I know my friends think I'm a trifle near in money-matters, but why shouldn't I enjoy myself in my own way? Now, one of the greatest pleasures I know—a thing that affords me almost as much satisfaction as getting a railroad, or a canal, or a gas company at my own figures—is to make that apple-woman down by my office give me four russets instead of three for five cents. Why, I can stand and dicker with her for half an hour for that extra apple, but in the end I get it—yes, sirree, I get it."

The public, as a whole, is glad that the Lansing theatre difficulty has been settled. Either one of the former owners could have managed it better alone than both of them, each watched and opposed by the other, did. Now that the theatre has been bought by Mr. Oliver and named after him, it passes into the hands of a man who has no other object than to put the theatre into the best condition for making money. Public interest in the Lansing-Oliver misunderstanding has only been kept alive by pride in the beautiful opera house which, during the campaign, has suffered from dirt and neglect. The removal of the property still owned by the former litigants was fortunate for the opera house. As it is now there is nothing in the theatre still owned by Henry Oliver and J. F. Lansing, all property owned in common having been removed to the Halter block, where the dispute over a fair division will eventually take place. This is out of the range of public vision. The present owner of the theatre did not buy the furniture. It belongs to the two unfortunate families who put so much in the building just at the time when prices began to fall and landlords were pressed to the bottom of the heap. In any circumstances dual ownership of so large a property is apt to end disastrously, but Messrs. Lansing and Oliver's difficulties were aggravated by the hard times and family relationships, which are always complicated without mixing partnerships with them. Under the new management the beautiful theatre has fine prospects and we hope that prosperity and peace will brood over The Oliver.

MUSICAL.

The second concert of the series given by the Philharmonic Orchestra preceded by a matinee concert for school children, was given on December 14th at the Oliver theatre. Mr. August Hagenow was the capable conductor. Dr. Charles Baetens was concert master and several soloists were heard. At the afternoon concert for school children—a most commendable enterprise, which Mr. Hagenow will undertake again. Miss Marion Treat sang most charmingly, despite a severe cold. The following popular program was well rendered:

March—King Cotton.....Sousa  
Descriptive Pieces:—  
(a) Au Moulin (At the Mill).....Gillet  
(b) Elfenreigen (Dance of the Fairies).....Ehrichs  
Soprano Solo—Angels' Serenade (violin obligato).....Braga  
Miss Marian Treat.  
Overture—Poet and Peasant.....Suppe  
Violoncello Solo—Gavotte in D.....Popper  
Master Karl Smith.  
Idylle—In a Bird Store.....Orth  
Soprano Solo:—  
(a) I Once Had a Little Doll, Dears.....Henschel  
(b) Jerusha.....Gaynor

(b) There Little Girl, Don't Cry.....  
.....Campion  
Miss Treat.  
Overture—American Airs.  
In the evening the following program was presented:  
Overture—Poet and Peasant.....Suppe  
Selections from the opera, "Fera-mores".....Rubinstein  
(a) Dance of the Bayaderes.  
(b) Wedding Procession.  
Scene and Aria from the opera "Freischuetz".....C. M. V. Weber  
(With Orchestra Accompaniment.)  
Mrs. Martin Cahn.  
Descriptive Pieces:—  
(a) Au Moulin (At the Mill)..... Gillet  
(b) Elfenreigen (Dance of the Fairies).....Ehrichs  
String Orchestra.  
Violoncello Solo, Concerto, (with orchestra accompaniment, Goltermann  
Master Karl Smith.  
Section—L'Africaine..... Meyerbeer  
Soprano Solo —  
(a) Love Me Well.....Bember  
(b) Lullaby.....Bevignani  
Mrs. Cahn.

Two Hungarian Dances—  
No. 1, G minor..... { Brahms  
No. 2, D major..... }  
Cello Solo—Le Desir, (with string accompaniment).....Hauser  
Master Karl Smith.

March et Cortège—La Reine de Saba.....Gounod

The orchestral work under the capable direction of Mr. Hagenow was as good, perhaps better than usual. The concert was too long, but having this fault was excellently conceived and carried out. The music was modern in character, scored for the full orchestra and received an adequate rendition at the hands of our orchestra, now having the full quota of instruments.

At the evening concert Mrs. Martin Cahn of Omaha, a soprano of brilliant voice and facile execution, was heard in the prayer and scene from "Der Freischuetz," and also in a group of piano-forte accompaniment. Mrs. Cahn is a singer of temperament as well as voice, and left a definitely good impression. Master Karl Smith, an unaffected and boyish youth, played the Goltermann concerto for cello very smoothly and with abundant technical facility. So marked a talent should receive the fostering care necessary to make a finished artist of this boy. Both he and the singer were warmly received—in fact were compelled to respond to encores. Mr. Hagenow is to be congratulated upon the success of the series of concerts he has inaugurated. The next concert of this series is to take place about the middle of January, with Miss Marian Treat as soloist, but it is probable that a concert will be given on the 29th of the present month at the Funke opera house for the benefit of visiting teachers. At this concert Mrs. Harriet Demeat Packard, a soprano soloist, will be heard.

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