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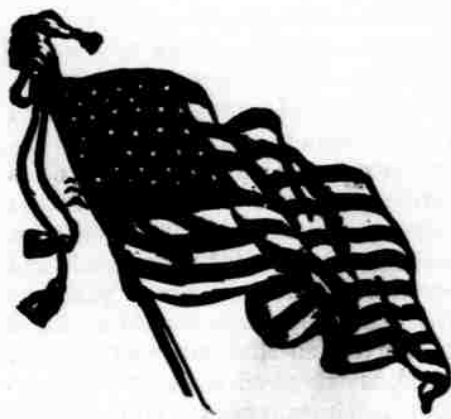
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## OBSERVATIONS.

In a recent estimate of the literature resident in Chicago Mr. Howells mentions three writers who are worthy serious consideration. George Ade, the author of the Artie stories and of a department in the Record called Stories of the Streets and of the Town received the highest praise. Mr. Howells confessed that he read the Artie stories over and over again with renewed appreciation. Mr. Ade's pure objectivity is refreshing. He sees his story and his characters as the artist sees his model. If we were to see the same people we would not be especially interested but as he draws them we see motives and character, although his own personality is kept out of the

way but the art student knows that after all it is the handling of light and shade, the clever drawing, and humour that are Ade's alone that makes them interesting. The stories that are read twice and three times have a vitality that will keep them alive long after we are dead.

THE COURIER is in receipt of a neat cook book compiled by the Omaha Woman's club, with especial reference in the recipes to the western market and its most abundant wares. It is appropriately called the Trans-Mississippi Homemaker and contains a few prefatory essays by Mrs. Strawn, Mrs. Tracy, Mrs. Arthur and others on social life in the home, hygiene of the home, ethics of home making, etc. Bound in with the recipes are many blank pages so that new ones may be added. It has only one defect and that is the absence of an index. When the young husband brings home a steak or some mushrooms or a lobster and says he is hungry Mrs. Young-husband may not know how to cook them. If there were an index in the Trans-Mississippi Homemaker she could turn to mushrooms or lobster or steak without wasting the minutes being counted by a hungry man. The book is dedicated to the daughters and in view of this very probable contingency, in which the daughters in question may play the ingenue part, would it not be thoughtful for the mothers to prepare an index for the next edition?

The death of Mr. Hayden long before his time, from the effects of chloroform which he had formed a habit of administering to himself when unable to sleep by natural means, should be a warning to those who are slipping into the habit of narcotics. Sleeplessness increases in direct proportion to the narcotics we take to free us from it. Victims of morphine, bromides and chloroform find invariably that the nervousness they seek to cure increases with the frequency and amount of the dose. The altitude of the place we live in induces nervousness and the temptation to take a dose that will relax the tense nerves, irritated by the business complications of the last few years is very great. Mr. Hayden should have lived on the coast. Possessed of an exceptionally nervous temperament, it was over-stimulated by a residence of twenty-five years in Nebraska. If only the anaesthetic, harmless shore of the Atlantic, with its fogs and tonic salt, were nearer, fewer of the spirited temperaments, stimulated to the point of continued

wakefulness, would be tempted to use narcotics. Nebraskans ought not to go the mountains for rest, but to the damp, lovely, depressing, stupid Atlantic coast.

The isolation of the new world and its political youth has hampered it with few partnerships or precedents. For instance, the custom among European nations at the conclusion of a war, has been to allow the neutral nations to award the territorial spoils, first to themselves for their interference and then, if there is anything left, to divide it arbitrarily, or in such a manner as to least effect the umpires without regard to the rights of the triumphant belligerent. The United States is capable of settling her trouble with Spain without interference from Germany, Russia and France. As President McKinley rejected their offers of arbitration before the war it is quite likely that he will be unable to see that their advice can do Spain or America any good when the war is finished. The attitude of France and Germany is unfriendly, even aggressive. For the United States to accept mediation from representatives of either or both is impossible. Germany is known to desire the Philippines. France would make any pact with Germany to get back Alsace and Lorraine. Both are committed to an unfriendly attitude toward our country. It is certain that president McKinley, if there were no other reasons, would not ask the French or the German advice as to the disposal of islands conquered from Spain. Should he do so it would seriously affect the popularity which his wise and generous conduct of the war has gained for him.

Opportunities for distinguished bravery have been so few in the United States army for twenty-five years that chances for risking their lives and gaining immortal fame in the present war are eagerly sought. For the last quarter of a century distinguished conduct on the field of battle has been impossible to the high-spirited soldiers of our army. The selection of Hobson for his perilous mission is resented by the officers who were passed over and if the chance to die is bestowed on one not next in the line to death and fame there is an outcry all along the line. Since the close of the civil war doubtless there have been officers who have fretted out an existence at a military post who were capable of conducting brilliant campaigns, unrecognized Napoleons and Grants who have been

retired on account of age just at the age when the need for military genius has arrived. Their lives have been consumed in routine in which any drill master could have done as well. No wonder then that they envy the chances that the young army officer now has to show his metal. They would have rung true too had they been tried.

The continuous deathless presence of valour and of military genius whether tried or not, in our American soldiery is exactly what constitutes its strength. Like the king, it can never die, though to the post commander who has inherited military genius and is not called upon to exercise it, it can not be especially gratifying that the next century will afford the successor to his genius an opportunity to save his country. Something of the theosophic theory of the development of genius in one state and body of existence for which the conditions were unfavorable in another and previous one might help the officer without an army to be reconciled to his life-long inactivity.

Rural free delivery of mail is enjoyed, it is said, by every country in the world except the United States and the Central and South American states. One hundred and fifty-seven petitions from thirty-five states and territories are on file asking the extension of the free delivery service. Free daily delivery of mail to farmers will increase the total amount of mail handled. The farmers will subscribe for more papers and their wives and daughters will write more letters because they will get the answers more promptly. The reception of a daily mail will bring the country nearer the city, decrease the isolation, and make it easier to keep the boys on the farm. But in considering the effect of the extension on a time-honored institution the Kansas City Star says: Doubtless the free delivery system will prove as much of a convenience in the country as in the town, but the change will destroy the dignity and prestige of a great American institution—the postoffice. To go to the postoffice has been considered in this country about the first useful task that infant legs can try, and the journey to the postoffice and back has been among the last occupations of trembling and tottering age. What youth and age will do when they no longer go to the postoffice but the postoffice comes to them, it is hard to conjecture. The postmaster will certainly find his importance diminished when he no longer meets his constituents face to face and hands them their let-