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OBSERVATIONS.

European editors profess to believe that the statements of the president before and at the beginning of the Cuban war disclaiming any plans of territorial aggrandisement were insincere. Nevertheless neither president nor people, at the beginning of the war, had acquisitive designs upon Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. But like the building of a house or a ship or the growth of a nation or an individual, plans have had little to do with the successive stages of development consequent upon war and the change in the relative positions of the combatants and outside powers towards us and towards Spain and towards each other. Like a decisive move on the chess board, once made it involves a series of sequential moves, which the player must make or be beaten. It is not as though there were any choice, after the first move. Assumption of power by the United States in the Philippines and Cuba could not be avoided unless by a violent unprecedented and quixotic refusal to accept the logic of the situation and the responsibility of our own initiative.

On last Sunday the symbol of Spain was hauled down from the government building in Havana and the symbol of the United States took its place and Captain General Castellanos delivered the island to the American commission of evacuation. This ceremony was only the last one of a series of Spanish evacuations of the western continent. In 1775 all the territory west of a line drawn due south from the westernmost arm of Lake Superior through what is now Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas and Louisiana, belonged to Spain. In 1801 the French had taken half of the Spanish territory. In 1812 what the French had is marked on the map "Federal territory," and Spain was crowded into the southwest corner of what is now the United States. In 1836 the federal territory reached from Puget sound south as far as the present northern boundary of California. In an 1848 map only a little doily of Mexican possessions can be found on the northern boundary of the Mexican peninsula. During this time of expansion, from a time previous to 1775 to the present time, there have always been those who had grave fears that the United States was a bubble that we were blowing too big and that it was about to burst. Like the resurrectionists they have confidently expected the end of all things American as each piece of additional ground was added to our noble demesne. Expansion hitherto has been spasmodic, but the spasms have occurred regularly and they have never failed to be accompanied by the tremors and grave doubts of a certain small portion of the inhabitants. Also on each occasion the result has been rather the result of circumstances and the laws of growth rather than from any voluntary and premeditated attempts at aggression. On the declaration of hostilities at the time of the American Revolution there was probably none of the leaders who contemplated entire separation from England, neither Franklin, nor Washington nor any of the members of congress assembled in that first capital of the nation at Philadelphia. But as the situation developed the appreciation of the inevitable result deepened until the conviction which resulted in the Declaration of Independence, was signed by the members of congress July IV, 1776. This lack of foreknowledge and preparation for a larger country is exhibited in the messages of presidents and in state documents of various kinds since the days of Washington. For example: Referring to Cuba, James Buchanan, secretary of state in June, 1848, wrote the American minister at Madrid as follows:

"You are authorized to assure the Spanish government that in case of any attempt, from whatever source, to wrest from her this portion of her territory, she may securely depend upon the military and naval resources of the United States to aid her in preserving or recovering it."

This is only one of many instances on record in which the history of the United States, grown from a narrow binding along the edge of the eastern coast of America to the present occupation of the continent from ocean to ocean, has seemed to convey no hint of destiny to the statesmen who have written state papers and presided as presidents over the most extensive experiment in democracy ever made.

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One of the parishes of London has adopted a system of lighting its streets, dwellings and public buildings by using the street sweepings for fuel. Before the system was adopted the parish paid about $30,000 a year for carting refuse to a barge on the river Thames and towing it to a dumping place in the sea, and about $20,000 annually for gas to light the streets and parish buildings. About $60,000, or $10,000 more than these annual charges, which was met by taxing the people," says William E. Curtis, "was invested in an electric plant, which has since been run twenty-four hours six days in the week and twelve hours on Sunday, furnishing electric power for small manufactories during the day and for illuminating purposes at night. The street sweepings have furnished almost all the fuel necessary. The cost of coal in addition was only $64.32. The total expenditures for the first year were $19,070 for wages, supplies, stores, insurance, repair and other purposes. The interest, sinking fund, rents, and the ordinary allowance for the depreciation of the property was $10,205, making a total of $29,275. The gross receipts for the sale of light and power, including a credit equal to the average charge for street lighting by gas, were $45,205, thus leaving a net profit of $15,930 for the benefit of the parish treasury, which will be used in enlarging the plant.

"Arrangements are now being made to use the escaping steam to heat the water of a public bath, instead of allowing it to go to waste.

Furnaces have been added for burning the garbage collected from the dwellings which could not be used for fuel, and the extra expense, which was, however, comparatively trifling, was more than offset by saving the cost of hauling the garbage to the barges."

The system has been so successful that other parishes of London are putting in similar plants The committee of the Lincoln city council which has been appointed to consider the suggestions and theses of the Good Government Society might apply to the mayor or under mayor of Shoreditch for information regarding the garbage burning furnaces.

* * *

"Stalky and Co.," Mr. Kipling's new serial in McClure's magazine, is a story of boys at school. The boys themselves are little brutes and Mr. Kipling presents them undecorated with the sentiment that most boys acquire only with their first love affair. Not at all like Mrs. Burnett's Fauntleroy, these boys are pitiless, prejudiced, selfish animals. How one of them could have grown up to be Mr. Kipling himself is no greater a miracle than the sudden transformation of the gnomes who delight in torturing and fighting dogs and killing cats and in all forms of human exasperation, into chivalrous men, ready to work with the hands or the head or both for some woman or for children who were but now their detestation. This conversion, of course, is only apparent. The boy, who, up to a certain period, appears to exist for the purpose of eating, throwing things, and defeating instructors, hired to teach him the lore of the ages, must conceal the life of the spirit. The sudden exhibition of sentiment and the fruits of the spirit in young men is sufficient evidence to those who apply natural laws to the spiritual world that the boy has had a soul from the beginning, though he has been as unconscious of it as the shell is of the chicken that finally cracks it. McTurk, Stalky and Beetle, (the last is nicknamed from the glasses he wears and is the Kipling boy himself) are in an English boarding school which possesses all the familiar, Tom Brown, characteristics of fagging, cricket, forms, and dormitories. The boys are scornful, cruel, selfish egotists with that most impenetrable and overweening egotism of boyhood, which, as aforesaid, develops into a manhood that shirks not responsibility nor begrudges labor for a sentimental reason. Nevertheless the contemplation of the boy as Mr. Kipling remembers him, and he has the most penetrating and accurate memory since Shakspere, is not pleasant but it is more satisfactory than the impossible galboy that Mrs. Burnett wrote about sitting in her boudoir and remembering her own son with a mother's fatal inaccuracy. I can well believe that Mr. Kipling's accomplishments and his present elevation above all who write stories in any language have gone to his head and made him believe that when he was a lad he knew all the time he was inspired and that the boys he was forced to associate with, and the tutors who presumed to teach him and make rules for him were dolts. I cannot believe that he was quite such an insufferable intellectual snob as he says he was, or how could he have escaped the vengeance of the rest of the school.

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The discussion last week at the teachers' convention of the question: Resolved, that the public schools are an adequate and natural preparation for citizenship; suggested to the listeners that the teachers themselves and the club women who formed part of the audience and furnished a portion of the debate, did not consider the public school system an adequate preparation for citizenship. The teachers were ready to defend it as being better than any other system in use, but tried by the scale of adequacy they were obliged to admit that the citizens whom it graduates into political activity every year do not, as a whole, appreciate their communal duties and priveleges. Most of the policemen and firemen, as well as the