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OBSERVATIONS.

Work on the streets and alleys has decidedly improved the appearance of Lincoln. The attention of the council is soon to be called to an ordinance prohibiting spitting in the street cars and on the floors and steps of public buildings. Such an ordinance has been successful in New York city and in other places where it has been tried and there is no reason why one should not be successful here. Even in Spokane, which was settled by frontiersmen as untamed and regardless of the decencies as any of the men who live here, is rid of this unhealthful nuisance. Before the ordinance went into effect the citizens were warned in the papers and by posters of the passage of such an ordinance, and the penalties of transgressing it as well as the date when it would go into effect. At first several men were arrested for paying no attention to the ordinance. When brought before the judge he let them off with a reprimand and a warning that next time they should be fined. A few were arrested for the second time and fined. The second arrest and fine were effective and Spokane's sidewalks are free from the disgusting and unhealthful filth which is a disgrace to Lincoln. The men who lean on the railings of the building on Tenth and O all day long are a nuisance and an annoyance. They decrease the value of that particular corner because their continuous presence hinders pedestrians and makes access to the bank on that corner a difficult matter. There is an ordinance forbidding loafing on the streets but we have never had policemen who

would enforce it. With a mayor and excise board such as we have happily begun to enjoy there is reason to hope that the present ordinance in regard to loafing and the prospective one in regard to spitting may be enforced. Under the present condition it is impossible for a woman to mount the steps of the postoffice building and save her skirt from soil, while the floors of the street cars are unspeakable. Spitting is so old a nuisance that unless it had been stopped elsewhere it would not be complained of here, but a city ordinance has made cities habitable again and it chanced that we have a mayor who is a doctor with a scrupulous regard for cleanliness and a will to make Lincoln a less disgusting place to live in. Hence there is reason for hope that an anti-spitting ordinance would not be vetoed and would be enforced.

The hen has been exalted in the reports of the comparative bulk of farm products to a place undeservedly high. The statistics and the cuts of gigantic hens compared to colossal sacks of flour and big steers which accompany them do not show the damage the hen has wrought. This would be extremely difficult because the hen owner pastures his stock on his neighbor's garden. That is one reason, indeed, that delights the statistician with the hen figures. The hen ranchero does not inscribe on the debit side of his account book, his neighbors' ruined plantations, his neighbors' loss of temper and the temptation which assails them (when the hens destroy their neat patches) to renounce christianity and all religions which interdict the eye for an eye and crop for a crop rule of conduct.

Every man who spades, rakes, plants, waters and weeds a patch of ground is entitled to the results of his husbandry and if his neighbor's hens dispute it, let them take the consequences of their squawking, stupid raid, and let their owners be prepared to lose their stock when they fail to restrain it from trespass. Juries will not convict a man for murder when the victim has broken the laws of society and invaded the murderer's family. I think the sentiment of the community would support the husbandman who should assassinate the fowl destroyer of his peas, his beats and his flowers. The selfishness which can turn hens loose on a neighbor's yard should be rebuked and equity, which occasionally regulates dislocated law, would refuse to recompense the man who should claim the price of his hens from the man who killed them for despoiling his garden.

Why is it that although Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are the villains of the play we do not hate them and even the gallery does not hiss the actors who assume the parts, when they appear before the curtain? Yet this man and his wife kill an old man who has

given them land and castles and titles, to whom they owe loyalty, and Macbeth kills the king in his own house, overstepping the guards whom his drugged wine has made insensible. They kill him, not to avenge a wrong, nor to right any, but to gratify an ambition as selfish as any which incited Richard III to murder men and women and children. Yet no audience loathes Macbeth and his spouse. Richard III is haunted by ghosts and frightened by dreams. He too sees gory spectres and experiences the tortures of a disregarded and abused conscience. Nevertheless the audience hates him for a villain and enjoys seeing him vanquished at last and all the insults and contemptuous spurnings that the villain receives at the end of nearly every play are especially enjoyed in the fifth act of Richard III. Richard has a conscience and suffers from it, though he has tortured and dwarfed it into a shape so small and misshapen he only fears it in his dreams. And then he does not love anybody. His own ugliness has lost him the love of women and his assassinations are untinged by the grace of a desire to place a companion in an enviable position. Macbeth and his lady love each other and thus are kept in spite of their crimes still within the sympathies of the audience. Then the witches who foretell the fate of Macbeth share (dramatically) the responsibility for his crime. Like the Greek chorus and the draught that Isolde drinks, they foreordain and Macbeth is (dramatically again) controlled by them. Therefore we do not loathe this cold-blooded murderer who is really no better than Hamlet's uncle, the husband of his mother, whom we are supposed to hate because he is so wicked, but who, in reality, Shakspeare chooses to make an object of aversion because it conforms with the purposes of dramatic composition.

The effect of the fatalism and the love motive is appreciated by Modjeska. She makes the most of the few opportunities for tenderness that the role affords and those opportunities are those of "business" rather than words. Modjeska's playing of any Shaksperian part is more enlightening than any variorum edition. The plays were written to be acted, and although, as in Macbeth, there is a deal too much of spouting and too little action, they gain by being put on the boards and freed from the two between which they lie when the scholar studies them and draws fantastic conclusions that will not justify on the stage.

It will be, perhaps, but a few years longer that the gentle Modjeska will continue to interpret life and literature. Meanwhile her intellectual appreciation and knowledge is deepening and it is a tribute to the western taste that the absence of those youthful charms which are the principal assets of most ingenues, do not decrease the audiences which greet her

with as much enthusiasm and affection now as when she was the most beautiful as well as the cleverest, actress on the American stage.

Pure romance, such as Robert Mantell has chosen for his metier, has the advantage of a very loose connection with consistency and probability, allowing the actor a large liberty. Mr. Mantell takes advantage of this fact to the injury of realism. In the last act of Monbars he is supposed to be at the point of death. His face is ghastly, his limbs totter and he asks assistance when he wishes to write his last will and testament at the table a few feet from his bedside. While writing it he sees in the mirror his servant pouring a powder into his medicine. He immediately accuses him of his treachery and the servant throws him on to his bed and chokes him, but Monbars, springing to his feet, seizes two swords, one of which he throws to the servant. Then he fights a stage duel with all the agility and strength of an athlete in prime condition. Of course he sends the sword spinning out of the hand of the servant and finishes the struggle by running a dagger entirely through the body of his opponent, an act requiring more strength than he has. But the romantic drama is not to be discarded because it contains impossibilities and Mr. Mantell's fine voice and perfect use of it will keep him popular for many years. His support was excellent and the love story was well staged, and barring the inconsistencies referred to, which annoy a literal mind, rather interesting as love stories are apt to be

The civil service system is doubtless better than the spoils system, in proof of which is the fact that most large railroad companies, banks, and various corporations have adopted it as the basis of promotion among employes. Under such a tenure, length of service, faithfulness and discretion, together with the accidents of location, et cetera, determine the rapidity of an employe's promotion. In the spoils system appointments are made with direct reference, not to the appointee's capacity to perform the duties, but to a political service which has no relation to those duties. Yet the spoils system has not created an office holding class, and the civil service must if it is carried to its inevitable conclusion. After a man has worked for a certain number of years in a department, which is commonly divided up to afford as many jobs as custom will permit, and that is a great many, after going to work late and quitting early, he loses the most valuable characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon, and that is the power of individual initiative. He is enervated. He does what he is told to do and actually dislikes to think for himself. What bureaucracy has done for the French it has begun to do for Ameri-