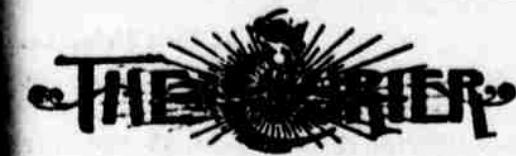




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OBSERVATIONS.

Results of the Peace Conference.

When the Czar proposed an international peace conference, when the nations accepted his invitation to talk it over, when the commission finally assembled and the parts of it began to watch each other as though they were seconds arranging for a duel of their principals to the death, all the societies for the amelioration of mankind, and many newspapers expressed high hopes of the result. The real consequences of the conference may be large but they are so far in the future that it is not safe to attempt anything but platitudes concerning them. One of the largest and most formidable nations is actually at war and the mistress of the seas is getting ready for a declaration against the Boer government of South Africa. The advance of the Russian occupation of China has not been checked. The single result in the establishment of the principle of the neutrality of merchant vessels of all nations and their immunity from attack is worth all the expense and the elaborate preparations and hopes. A result which was not incidental, but of first importance, to the members of the peace conference was the opportunity they had of meeting with the more or less distinguished men of all nations, of making speeches in a hall hired for the occasion, and of practising the evanishing art of diplomacy.

* * * Voting the Straight Ticket.

Whatever the machine men say about it the voter who refuses to stay by his party when the party leaves

him and all other honest men in the lurch by making bad nominations is the man to whom each party owes whatever respectability it may possess. The independent voters turn the scale and the fear of them is present in nominating conventions. This fear is frequently the cause of the nomination of a ticket better than the composition of the average convention. The disdain therefore, that the machine-made have for the bolter is undeserved, for the bolters by the very fact of existence and by their habit of scratching off the names of unworthy candidates from their party ticket purify that party and stimulate and frighten conventions

into making better nominations. The bolter is the only loyal party man. He alone cares enough for his party to see the spoils divided among the advocates of another one. He is the idealist who is willing to sacrifice the loaves and fishes for his principles. If it were not for the bolters in the republican party, it would today be destroyed of its own cupidity. So long in power it has fattened on perquisites and if it were not for the sterling dogma and creed of those who believe in its principles and care nothing for its patronage and plunder it would have destroyed itself as Greece did and then Rome in the intoxication of power.

* * * The Treatment of Trusts.

Henry Macfarland in the September Review of Reviews, offers a valuable suggestion entitled, "How to eliminate Trusts from the presidential campaign." It is conceded by lawyers and students of the constitution and legislation based on it that congress has not the constitutional power to destroy trusts. But it has never been admitted by anyone, since the war, that the constitution is impeccable and perfect without further amendments. The anti-slavery discussion of pre-revolution days proved one thing definitely and that is, that the constitution is not like the bible, nor even like the books of Mormon, or like Al Koran or Zend Avesta. It is not complete and perfect but a convention and contract for living Americans to keep with each other so long as it suits the convenience of three fourths of the free and independent states to do so. If trusts are enslaving black and white in this country—and there is by no means a unanimity of opinion about that—it is easy enough to amend the constitution so that they will become illegal. It is easy enough, that is, whenever three fourths of the people agree that they are obnoxious. Mr. Macfarland, therefore advises the republicans in congress who are as much interested in eliminating trusts from the presidential campaign, as the democrats are in agitating their destruction, to propose an amendment to the constitution, giving congress the power, which it now lacks,

to deal with trusts and other aggregations of power and capital which threaten the interests of the many and favor the few. "It would take, of course, two thirds in each house to adopt such a resolution and the republicans, when they meet in December will not have two thirds in either house, but the democrats can not afford to oppose such a proposition, directly in line with their contention against trusts. There can be no doubt that the resolution would be adopted and it could be ratified by three fourths of the states, according to the constitutional requirement in time for the congress to be elected next year."

Republicans, since the last amendment to the constitution, have been inclined to regard it as a closed book, to be referred to and quoted with awe. Consequently they will be reluctant to accept this advice as sound and act upon it. The people are of more consequence than a constitution and the very men who drew it up would be the first to amend it on necessity. They would not have been rebels if they had not been revolutionists, radicals, brave men, ready to adapt old principles to new times. The law of the continuity of types makes it certain that as soon as the people decide that trusts are unfair and inexpedient they will be dissolved by the people, and if the constitution is in the way it will be amended so that it shall become an instrument of their destruction.

* * * The Veterans of Two Wars.

The graybeards who were boys in 1861 and the boys who are now veterans of the Spanish American war are jealously weighing the hardships they endured. The graybeards of '61 have told us their stories so many times and posts of the G. A. R. have been drawn into politics more or less. The effect of repetition and of using an organization to accomplish some purpose other than the one for which it was created is inevitably to decrease the enthusiasm of the membership and of outsiders also. The soldiers of '61 have lived over and over again the four or five years war. As General Manderson very eloquently and truly said at the first celebration of the First's victories "the years of a man's life since the war, though they have been many and filled with honors do not count with him as the few strenuous years when he was a soldier." And if General Manderson, who has been a senator of the United States and is receiving constant recognition of his brilliant legal services counts the time he spent as a soldier as the most worth while of his whole life, how much more the less ambitious private in the G. A. R. who recounts his experiences with an ever increasing enthusiasm to a decreasing audience. The soldiers of the Philippines, on the other hand possess the modesty of youth and their experiences have

just happened. Three months ago they were wading through swamps and running from one rice ridge to another. They are just from the field where they were in advance of their rations most of the time and subsisted on the corn and rice foraged from the fields. The old soldiers think the youngsters of the First have not suffered hardships because they are ruddy and fat. Perhaps more remarkable than the magnificent charges of the First and its quick conversion from green troops into a regiment of splendidly disciplined soldiers which was selected from all the regiments in the Philippines for the hardest and most dangerous duty, is the silence of the young heroes concerning the hardships they suffered. Questioning will elicit something of the hardships they suffered with a joke and a laugh. They had little to eat but corn and rice. They slept on the wet ground, they had scanty clothing and they were in a foreign, tropical country. The soldiers of '61 were never far from their rations. The climate of the south is cool in comparison to the climate of the Philippines and the soldiers could retain their haversacks. They have not made any complaint and no investigation will be made as to the kind of corn and rice, privates and officers alike ate. All the poor soldiers were shipped home before the first engagement. For Colonel Stotzenburg, knew the good soldiers from the poor ones and was willing to ship the latter home on a thin pretense of sickness. Feeling that the real reason of their release from the army was not sickness but one more uncomplimentary to themselves, just as soon as these soldiers arrived in Nebraska they drew up a petition and presented it to the Nebraska legislature which thereupon committed the conspicuous folly of condemning a man on the fighting line who was even then making a reputation in the Philippines such as the Sirdar has made in Africa.

The little recognition we have given these veterans of the year is not enough. It is due them and will deepen our satisfaction to read the reports of the campaign some of them will write. The Rough Riders fought in all the scrimmages they could get into. But those were few. They have been celebrated by Governor Roosevelt and the prestige of his name has exalted the Rough Riders to an esteem they may deserve absolutely. Comparatively the First were in ten times the number of engagements. Colonel Stotzenburg's ability to manage men and win a fight was recognized by the general in command who constantly consulted him. Stotzenburg and the First Nebraska are to Nebraska what Roosevelt and the Rough Riders are to New York. Only the First has a longer list of victories on its banners.

* * * Dreyfus' Sentence.

Ten years of imprisonment to save