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OBSERVATIONS.

The Isthmian Canal.

The report of the Isthmian Canal Commission has not been made public, though the commissioners returned last summer and made a complete and exhaustive report. It is suspected that the commission is very much in favor of the Panama route, both on account of the canal which has already been dug there and on account of the greater distance of Panama from the volcanic region. The Nicaraguan route seems to be more in favor before, than after an investigation of the comparative advantages of the two routes. The southern states are vitally interested in the building of a canal. It is as important to the future southern development as the great transcontinental railways, which bisect this country into northern and southern halves have been to the development of the north. Southern sentiment in favor of an Isthmian ship canal is almost unanimous and senators from the south are beginning to be urgent for the beginning of this great water way which will mix freight rates all up and transpose classifications.

There is much to be urged against subsidies and we are not backward about stating the case of the people against the shipowners who wish to farm the people, but this matter of intercommunication between America and Central and South America needs attention. Between the two great continents of North and South America there is scanty direct communication. Travelers from America to S. America take passage on a trans-Atlantic steamer which goes to England and from there embark for their South American destination. The round trip costs an American

one thousand dollars. Between Great Britain and our biggest neighbor a line of steamships is in constant operation. The Atlantic coast line steamers on this side do not cross the Caribbean Sea. The new *entendre* and relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico, the Cuban possibilities and the Isthmian canal, will stimulate southern development to such an extent that trans-Caribbean ports will respond and a trade be established, the possibilities of which are so extensive that their contemplation is at present as unsatisfactory as a prospectus of operations in Mars. English trade with South America is very large. To American ears, Colombia, Venezuela, Guiana, Brazil are far-off foreign-sounding appellations. We do not realize that the bare feet of the South American natives touch the same earth that our box-toed, calf skin clad feet, spurn, less kindly. A man from Lincoln, barring tropic miasma, savages, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and changes of temperature might walk from Nebraska to the southernmost point of Good Hope without needing anything more seaworthy than a ferry. Just as soon as we get commercially conscious of *one* great American continent connected by an isthmus which is nothing but a thin tongue of land connecting two larger bodies of land, we will begin to enjoy the benefits of selling things to and buying things from a country with latitudinal capacities ranging between 15 and 55 and longitude 45 and 80. To the equator and beyond it in the next one hundred years the tide of business and of American energy will flow in increasing volume.

A Culture Club.

A new club was organized in Lincoln last week, to meet once a fortnight and discuss a dinner and a paper, the latter prepared by one of its members. It is called the "Candle-light Club" and is composed of nine professors, seven lawyers, two doctors, a minister, a priest, a journalist and four business men, or twenty one professional men and four business men. Such evidence that the club movement is spreading among the men-folks is very gratifying to club women who have listened to fulminations from the pulpit against clubs and their power to distract a woman's mind from church entertainments, church decoration, church repairing, the missionary society, the prayer-meeting etcetera. The Candle-Light Club proposes to accomplish what all women's clubs announce as their object: namely the sociable discussion of otherwise burning topics. The dinner which precedes the discussion serves to bring the men together and to keep the membership interested. As seventeen or eighteen of the members are married, seventeen or eighteen wives will not have to order meat for dinner on every alternate

Monday evening. Very fortunately for domestic arrangements the members meet on alternate Mondays and dine together en club. There is no reason why there should not be just as many men's culture clubs as there are women's. The organization of the "Candle-Light" will be followed by others until all the men who have not considered the relation of culture to life are actively engaged in the preparation of one of those profound productions called "a paper."

Not Yet.

The Independent publishes a report from Professor Edwin E. Slosson of the university of Wyoming of his attempts to join a woman's club in that state. By one official he was informed that the members had no prejudice against men as men, but men were so engrossed in business that they would not join if permitted. When he explained that he was not engrossed in business she dismissed him with the inconsistent statement that if he were admitted all the men in town would want to join. The next woman he approached on the subject replied that the members were so ignorant of parliamentary law the men would laugh at them. When he told her that the men would be only too glad to teach the women he was illogically notified that she did not know any man in town who could teach the woman's club anything. A third lady said that men could not attend the meetings of the club because they were held in the afternoon. When he suggested changing the time to evening she answered that that was impossible because there were no men in the club and the women could not go out alone evenings. Professor Slosson's last application was equally unavailing. He attempted to prove how competent he was to enter any department of the club by reciting the list of his varied accomplishments. When he finished the lady remarked that if he knew as much as he thought he did she didn't see why he needed to join a woman's club. The professor concluded his "tale of woe" with the simple words: "I do not know to this day why I am not a member of the woman's club."

The White Rats.

Mrs. Fiske and Henrietta Crosman are the only two prominent actresses who have refused to make terms with the theatrical trust. Mrs. Fiske will play wherever she can make the best terms and for the manager that offers them. She is too exalted a theatrical star to be forced to make terms. And her independence has not reacted upon her disastrously. Henrietta Crosman is not so unique and managers in the trust can get along without her so she has had her troubles. The White Rats is a combination of competent actors against the theatrical trust which has reduced their wages, while at the same time increas-

ing the price in New York to the patrons. The trust has also deprived actors of freedom of action and threatens their dignity and self-respect.

The association called "The White Rats," is an offshoot of the English "Water Rats," an organization founded to curb—and it was effectual—a condition similar to that existing in this country. Only performers are admitted to its membership. Since its organization, only a few months ago, over 600 members have been enrolled. It is a secret society. Should any member reveal any business he is forever banished from the society, and every "White Rat" is under oath to refuse to play with the traitor in any theater. In its treasury there is already some \$30,000. A system of benefits has been devised to increase this amount as needed. They have started an insurance fund for the benefit of the members. The whole plan has been devised and carried out with infinitely more business tact than ever before displayed by any body of performers. It is significant that such men as Henry Lee, Nat Goodwin, De Wolf Hopper, Peter Daily, Jeff d'Angelis, and a large number of other widely recognized actors have joined and are taking an active part in the affair.

In the meantime the vaudeville trust has been notified that after the 24th of June no member of the order will book through the offices of the vaudeville association. They will book thereafter through the exchange to be managed by the Association of White Rats. The White Rats announce that they will play where they please, and will not submit to the percentage system which the vaudeville syndicate extorts from their salaries for booking these people in the trust's own theaters.

Miss Anthony.

Speakers of the W.C.T.U. advocating equal suffrage have repeatedly asserted that as soon as women were allowed to vote, saloons would be closed. Mrs. Nation's hatchet has demonstrated the contrary. The women have equal rights in Kansas with the men and yet, it appears, from Mrs. Nation's forays that there are as many saloons in a prohibition state, as in Nebraska, or any other high-license state. In condemning Mrs. Nation's lawlessness, Miss Anthony remarked very appositely that the law is mightier than the hatchet and considering that the men of Kansas have armed the women of Kansas with the suffrage they ought to use it to elect state officers who will enforce the laws of Kansas. From her youth Miss Anthony has been an earnest believer in law and order. Her criticism of Mrs. Nation, should therefore not have surprised her followers among the W.C.T.U.

Lawlessness can not effect any permanent reform and the city or state which permits saloons to run contrary