

THE OBSERVER

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EDITOR AND OWNER.

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SNUBBED BY THE 'BEST PEOPLE'

The citizens of Salem, Mass., are not in accord on the question of erecting a monument to Nathaniel Hawthorne, the man who put it on the map for all time. Salem snubbed Hawthorne unmercifully during his life, and he retorted by painting it in his books just as he saw it—petty, spiteful and gloomy. Descendants of some of the worthies held up to scorn by the gifted novelist are among those objecting to any tribute to the memory of him who stands with Poe and Whitman in the one group in American letters that has secured universal European recognition.

Salem scorned Hawthorne. He had no social connections or social tastes and dressed shabbily and lived quietly. Therefore, according to the Salem point of view he was a nobody. Unfortunately, this is the point of view that would be taken in many small American cities. Social standing and the money to maintain it seem for more necessary than intellectual gifts for recognition by what are miscalled "the best people."

The only difference between the small city and the big city in this regard is that in the small city one is always running up against and being irritated by snobishness, while in the large city obscurity is softened by the realization that there are millions just as obscure, and that even wealth which would be intolerably patronizing and officious in a small town must take a back seat with honorable poverty. Nobody counts for much in a city like New York. That is why so many find its very immensely friendly and comfortable. Millionaires lose half their offensiveness when they are merged with hundreds of other millionaires.

The cliques and petty social monopolies of American small towns have much to answer for in the way of embittering sensitive men and women. Strangers, cultivated, educated and of equal or superior breeding to the local social magnates, live for years in them and remain aliens and outlaws. To those who happen to come from larger cities, where more democratic standards prevail, it is amusing in its pettiness, yet cruel and unkind in its ultimate effects.

The Hawthornes are scarce in this country, but the Salems—proud, exclusive, two-by-four cities with a social trust unregulated by any Sherman law—are plentiful.

THE CITY OF POLITE ROBBERY.

Reform seems to be rampant in the city of Washington. First the lid was clamped on the turkey-trot, then the inaugural ball was taboed and now the authorities have started crusade to curb the grabbing pro-

clivities of hotel proprietors and employers during the inauguration period. Excessive rates and special charges will be reduced or the authorities will know the reason why.

The open and outstretched palm has long been the most noticeable institution in the national capital. Besides it the Washington monument and the congressional library sink into insignificance. When the stranger arrives in the national capitol and steps off his train he is met by a chocolate soldier who seizes his grip and carries it to his taxicab. This person gets a quarter. The taxicab driver gets a dollar, the doorman who opens the door of the taxicab when it reaches the hotel gets anywhere from ten cents to a quarter, the boy who carries the grip into the hotel and up to the room gets a quarter and the regular rate for ice water is the same. If the person is economical he can keep his tips down so that they will not be much more than his hotel bill but the Washington visitor expects to be fleeced right and left and it would be against all ethics of the hotel business to disappoint him. It will not seem like the same old town with the excessive charges cut out, but the inauguration visitors will doubtless make the best of the situation and perhaps some of them will have enough money left to buy a box of figs on the train on the way home.

TURNING TO WOMEN.

"The Housewives' League Magazine" is the name of the new publication which is being issued under the supervision of this live organization of women formed for the protection of consumers. The league already has been of invaluable service in arousing the women of the country to a realization of their own interests, and doubtless the possession of a journal through which they can give the facts as to foods, drugs, fabrics, etc., will extend their sphere of influence.

The publication was started in January and now has issued its second number. It is published in New York under the supervising editorship of Mrs. Julian Heath. The contents of the February number include such up-to-date topics as "Pure Fabrics as Well as Pure Foods," "The Parcel Post and the Producer," "The Fabric Adulteration Evil," "The Lesson of the Egg Campaign," and many other subjects of current interest.

Backed as is this publication by women who have done actual service by organizing consumers in combatting high prices, it should prove a big factor in the further education of the housewives of the country. About all that is necessary to bring about co-operative effort against the injustices which have been perpetrated on the American public is a general realization of the plain facts. Wrongs have been tolerated because the full extent of the wrongs have not been understood. The women have it in their power to remedy many of the conditions prevailing. They are in touch with the dealers and with the type of goods they sell. They know prices, qualities and the other useful details of marketing. For any movement which hopes to bring about a higher stand-

ard we must look principally to the women.

A GOOD READING STANDARD.

In any book store nowadays one can see the great classics of English and foreign literature for sale at prices within the reach of almost any pocketbook. Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," Dante's "Inferno," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Goethe's "Faust," and Shakespeare's plays are but a few of the works of monumental genius which can be obtained in low priced editions. Coming down to genius of a lesser rank, but nevertheless imposing, we have the "Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," Carlyle's "Sartor Resartus" and "Heroes and Hero Worship," Emerson's "Essays," Epictetus, Dickens, Dumas, Balzac and a host of other luminaries for sale in modest cloth bindings but clear and legible nevertheless. In addition, there are several book publishers who are selecting standards and placing them on the market in uniform editions. "Everyman's Library" is one instance in point. President Eliot's "five foot shelf" is another.

The point is that there is nothing much wrong with the reading habits of a people who still are buying such standards as these. We hear a great deal nowadays of the superficiality of the average man, yet the average man seems to have excellent taste in selecting his book companions. While it is necessary and desirable to know and understand contemporary literature it is in the treasure house of the past that the proper perspective on life is gained. Depth, sincerity, love of humanity lie deep in these old masters. And the best of it that they are not old-fashioned in any proper sense. Writing as they did for all time, they are as fresh and vital for today as for the period in which they worked.

Incidentally, notwithstanding the fact that Gertrude Atherton's "The Reef" is acclaimed the most significant book of the year 1912 and "The Street Called Straight" its best seller, the Bible continues to be the best seller of all. Is not the whole book situation a forceful answer to the charge of superficiality leveled so freely at the present generation?

California may pass a law barring all one-armed persons from driving motor cars. All the suffragettes are in favor of the measure. Who could smuggle up to a one-armed driver on a joy ride?

The dean of the Woman's department of the University of Illinois declares that not one of her 1,000 students has a perfect foot. If they have perfect heads what's the difference.

A Michigan man has had part of his brain removed and that of a dog substituted. For his wife's sake we hope he gets none of those bulldog ideas.

Senator Cummins says the country will never go far wrong. It isn't often that a disappointed candidate for the presidency can bring himself to such an optimistic viewpoint.

Dr. Woods Hutchinson recommends the hard boiled egg as a food. This should interest the millonaires, but let him discover something for the poor folks as well.

Eastern doctor says there is a world-wide demand for a swat-the-fly crusade, and this is one case where the demand will never exceed the supply.

Chicago paper dateline: "Amundsen Found South Pole in Undershirt." Huh, when Peary found the north pole it had nothing on at all.

Dr. Wiley says the human beings of the future will be toothless. Now then, will we excuse the babies when they howl?

A Missouri woman has traded her husband for a mule. The husband is probably satisfied even if the mule isn't.

One county jail in Pennsylvania has been empty for two years. It must be outside of the political belt.

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One of the best dancing teams ever at the Arcade is Neary & Miller.

Their singing and dancing is a distinct novelty. The dancing steps are new and their singing is above the ordinary. It is indeed a very clever team. The picture program for today has for its headliner "The Mystery of Bascombe Vale." This is another of the Sherlock Holmes master mystery series and is equal if not better than the ones shown in the past. It is in two reels.

The other numbers on the bill are "The Little Enchantress," a very cute child drama and "The Trap," a comedy.

Coming Sunday, a vaudeville act of merit, Frederick the Great, the world renowned magician, and on Monday a big three reel production by the Kay-Bee company, entitled "The Law of the West." 2-28-13

E. W. EASTMAN, Attorney at Law, 108 Elm St., La Grande, Oregon. Practice in all courts of Oregon. Specialties: Collections, Commercial Paper, Contracting.

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FRANK J. CHENEY.
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