

CASUAL COMMENTS

I HAVE been struck lately by the thoughtfulness of the great majority of us, and particularly by the frequent exhibition of this trait in the streets and in public places. Thoughtfulness in this instance, as in most, is but another name for selfishness—unintentional, perhaps, but none the less selfish and unkind.

I THINK it is more thoughtfulness than anything else, and believe that if we would but think a little, and be a few other people in the world besides ourselves and our particular friends, we would soon cease making ourselves a nuisance to others in this way.

THE cure for thoughtlessness is quite evident, thinking, and for this particular kind, thinking of others is the surest remedy. If we think of others we will remember that they are right on the pavement as well as we, and when we stop to talk will naturally choose a spot which will not interfere with their comfort; when we take a car we will not forget that other passengers will likely come in, nor later the fact that the majority of people go to the theatre to hear and see the operator play, and that it is well to get out at other times to be kept standing in the aisle at church until all have left, and the chance of speaking to someone, nearly gone for that day.

STRICT another pamphlet accident. Another added to the list of victims demanded by the great public for their amusement. We must see balloon ascensions, though the balloonists do fall and are killed. What is one life, more or less, as that we are amused, and, anyway, it is not their fault that we are forced to do it, and if they are killed while endeavoring to earn a living, it is their own fault for trying to earn it that way. This sounds heartless, but isn't it practically what is said by the world in general, and will we not be just as eager to see the next man or woman, who is willing to risk his or her life, coming up on the air like a piece of paper, and wonder how they can ever do it? Just as usual. Isn't it a grand illustration of the equality of opportunity that some people prize so much about, and doesn't it prove clearly that everything is beautifully provided for in our present system of free competition? Of course it does. The man or woman doesn't need to go up in a balloon and drop down to death unless they like, and they'll do it if they do. Perhaps they don't, but

would they do it if no one were willing to pay to see it? Would they think of earning a living in this way if there were plenty of avenues open to them which promised something more than a bare subsistence as the result of severe toil? I think not, but perhaps you estimate the question more satisfactorily for yourself. Try it.

It is amusing to watch those around you at any one of the lunch counters that have become such an institution in Toronto of late. All kinds of people are there, and all more or less in a hurry. There is the "regular customer," who sits down as though the place was built for him (as, indeed, it was), and without a moment's hesitation strings off "corn cakes, glass of milk and pumpkin pie," "a hot sandwich and cup of coffee," or some of the hundred and one other combinations possible for a ten or fifteen cent outlay. That's the correct figure with the regulars, and though occasionally one or two twenty cents or a quarter, the great majority go the former figure. Then there's the man who "generally goes somewhere else, but thought he'd try a quick lunch to-day." He has, for the sake of appearances, to spend a little time studying the bill of fare before he decides just what he'll order; the man who is always in a terrible hurry, and who never gets waited on, and always gets the wrong thing when he is at last served; the cranky man, who is never suited, and who asks all sorts of questions of the girls, and makes a lot of noise; the sturdy, sensible, middle-aged fellow, who is always ready to help out, and who is always ready to help out, and who is always ready to help out.

Or course, there's the sweller and more or less of the same kind in connection with the other institutions, sometimes more, sometimes less. He has, for the young man who likes to do the proper, or who does not care to mix with the common herd when they feed, goes, and where the young ladies who are at "bus'ness" satisfy their delicate appetites. Either also lies the young man and his "sister" or "cousin," the dapper of suitors and shining table figs. Here things are brighter and also more artificial; as in more style in more ways than one, and, as a usual where style is concerned, a good deal of uncomfortable waiting has to be put up with until your desires are realized. Things are rather neat, prices from a dollar to higher, to say up to, but at both lunch counter and restaurant, hunger is satisfied and a contented crowd of men and women stream out and take up the cheer or pleasure of the day again. In either case if you are at all observing you can study human nature to good advantage and gain considerable knowledge whether disposing of a fifteen-cent lunch or a dollar-and-a-half dinner.

The Fair will be in full blast next week and some of us will have plenty of visitors. Sometimes we want them, sometimes we don't, but they come just the same, and we ought just as well give them a good time as not. Perhaps they may kind of knock our plans out, but you know we can't send them home, and as we will have to go round with them some, let us do it pleasantly. It don't take any more time to do things this way, and its wonderful how much easier it is for us, and of course the visitors enjoy it better. I know it's not encouraging to take our country friends to see all you can and no sooner get them anywhere than they say "bye," and want to go somewhere else, but if us of us lived in the country ourselves once, and were worse jumpers than I think they are. Remember the way they make things pleasant for us when we went out to spend a week or so with them on the farm, and let us try and give them the best kind of a time we can. We'll feel better after it's over, and they will have a pleasant visit to look back on. This doesn't apply where the visitors are people you want particularly to come, they're all right, but it's the folk who sort of blunder in upon you at fair time and who mean well, but don't know when there's room for them. They are the ones to be round to and to give a good time to and I hope you'll do it.

A GROWING ARMY. That the army of the unemployed is a growing one in this country may be seen from the following statement by the Hon. Charles L. Wright, United States Commissioner of Labor:—It is probably true that the time has arrived when every person in the United States who desires to remunerative employment cannot find it. Five hundred thousand people must compete for 450,000 places. What I am especially anxious to see with the great army of the unemployed, which through all ages has hung upon the outskirts of civilization. I am distressed simply with currents in the way of occupation. In face of the facts from a statistical and careful and capable as Mr. Wright, what becomes of Mr. Atkinson's scheme? It is the effect that employment is to be had by every capable person who wants it. —New Nation

THRIVED BY RAILROAD PASSES. I HAVE SEEN SEVERAL SEASON CRANKS, of New Hampshire, in possession of the free pass system of the Boston & Maine railroad, says with a look of unctious:—"All they care for is to get a free ride, and the paper managers look free. Ministers ride free or at special rates. The governor rides free. His council ride free. All officers of the Legislature all ride free, not only during the session, but during the rest of the year. Country, city and town officers ride free. The wives and children of most of the free riders also ride free. Above all, local politicians in every town and city ride free. The exceptions to the above statements are so few that they prove the general rule. Corruption by free passes and mileage tickets is almost universal."

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