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# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS

Ex-Governor Furnas, secretary of the state board of agriculture, is a wonderful old man. He is now some years past seventy, and is hale and hearty. He has done some excellent work in developing the state fair and on more than one occasion I have joined the chorus of praise which, annually, has been bestowed upon the venerable fair manager; but there are one or two little things that cause me to defer this expression. In the first place if Mr. Furnas was correctly reported in the Bee, and I have seen no denial, he has made a wilful misstatement in connection with the state fair, and gone out of his way to strike Lincoln, a city that has always entertained the friendliest feelings for the ex-governor. The late fair, in Omaha was, it is now well known, a financial failure. In seeking to take off the edge of this disappointment Secretary Furnas said: "The Nebraska state fair has usually been a losing business. Last year's exhibition at Lincoln left us considerably behind, and in fact left us in the same shape nearly every year that the fair was held there." There are three distinct propositions in the above. One of them is true. The other two are false. Last year the fair was not a success financially; but usually it has been a paying business, and in Lincoln it more than paid for itself nearly every year. Had it not been for the tens of thousands of dollars which Secretary Furnas donated to the State Journal company, and other special beneficiaries of his extravagant management there would have been a big balance in the fair treasury when the exhibition was taken away from Lincoln, a good deal more than enough to make up the loss last year and the bigger loss this year. It will not do for the secretary to cast upon Lincoln the discredit of his own improvidence. Another thing that has always interfered with the success of the fair, and which in part accounts for its failure this year, is the policy of the secretary in scattering passes broadcast. Think of it, 14,371 passes issued this year!

These are his own figures. These passes were not given, as many suppose, to newspapers for advertising purposes, but were presented to jack leg politicians and general roustabouts and also to some respectable people, who ought to have gladly paid their way.

The State Journal has profited too richly at the hands of Secretary Furnas for it to tell the truth now; and the Omaha papers are constitutionally unable to tell the truth, but nevertheless, the fact has leaked out that the fair was a fizzle, from the money point of view. The small number of paid admissions and the deluge of passes tell the tale. It is said the loss will be between \$10,000 and \$15,000, possibly more. How the Omaha papers did lie about the attendance! The Bee said there were 40,000 people on the grounds Wednesday.

According to Furnas' figures, the total attendance, including 2,998 dead-heads, was 17,589. On Thursday, the so-called big day, the Bee said there were fully 60,000 people at the fair at one time. The official figures are 31,241. The total attendance for the five days was only 78,391. The Omaha papers said the railroad companies were not able to carry all the people who wanted to go to Omaha to attend the fair. After seeing these figures I don't believe anybody went to the fair from out in the state, except a few Lincoln people, and the ladies invited to take part in the Ak-Sar-Ben ball. Omaha alone ought to have turned out more than 18,000 people in five days. In Lincoln, if we accept Secretary Furnas' word for it, the attendance on a single day has reached beyond 50,000. If Secretary Furnas takes exception to any of the above statements The Courier columns are open to him.

The people in Lincoln who attended the court ball in the den of Ak-Sar-Ben in Omaha Thursday night of last week were much impressed with the immensity and other notable features of the entertainment. Omaha has a weakness for big things, and the court ball was really the biggest thing of the kind ever seen in the state. No firemen's ball ever given in Omaha or Lincoln could be compared to it. People from everywhere were at the ball. There were society beaux and belles from South Omaha and from dozens of other places. And all of the chinks and corners of the big building were filled with gay humanity. It was not only immense. It was swell, as well. The committee were determined to have everything swell, and so they decided to admit no one not in evening dress. No plebeian high necked dressmaker cutaway coats could pass muster. Of course with this provision a perfectly swell affair was insured. For only swells have evening clothes. Omaha people say, with much pride, that everybody present was in evening dress. To be sure some of the spiketails were of ancient and picturesque design, and some of what the Omaha papers called "toilettes" were unlike anything ever seen before any place on earth. But they were evening dress, and of course their wearers were swell, and the committee were well pleased. The ball was unquestionably a success. As one distinguished Omahan, one of the resplendent knights, said, "it was a howling success." The gentleman, continuing, remarked: "Why, everybody was there, and I tell you all the other soirees I ever attended wasn't in it with the court ball. The men all wore swallowtail coats and all that I

noticed wore white shirts and collars and cuffs. They were dressed fit to kill and the women, why some of them were gorgeous with their silk and satin and long trains and low necks and diamonds and flowers. They were swell and no mistake. Years ago we used to have big times at the skating rink in Omaha; but there was nothing like this ball. It was bigger and grander than all. And Jerusalem, it was swell."

No resident of Omaha has spoken of the ball without calling it swell. There can really be no doubt that it was swell, just as swell as the very swell people of Omaha could make it, and when it is known that a requisition was made on South Omaha for a large portion of the culture and brilliancy of the entertainment even those benighted individuals who were not present have some idea of the swelldness of the ball.

At the ball there were diamonds and beauty and much fine raiment and all sorts of glitter, but the feature and attraction par excellence was the actress in the \$750 gown, or "toilette," as the Omaha people called it. The beautiful actress, in drawing powers general sumptuousness, was a bigger thing than the Feast of Mondamin at the state fair or any other one element of the great Omaha carnival. Every person from Omaha who was at the ball and with whom I have conversed said in breathless enthusiasm. "And Isadore Rush was there. And she wore diamonds and a toilette that cost \$750." Nearly always they have added, "and she was swell." In fact many persons have proved that the court ball was swell by the presence in a \$750 gown of Mr. Roland Reed's dazzling leading lady. In many cities the presence at a select and proper social function of Reed and Rush would not be quoted as an evidence of its tone, but it is a well known fact that many cities are 'way behind Omaha. Omaha people were not foolish enough to give any consideration to the social position of Mr. and Mrs. — I beg pardon, Mr. Reed and Miss Rush. They saw that Mr. Reed was fitted out with an evening coat and Miss Rush "had on," as the South Omaha papers say, a \$750 gown, and with unerring wisdom they knew Reed and Rush were swell. Omaha young men will not soon forget the time when they danced with Isadore and \$750 in dry goods, and the young ladies will remember equally well tripping the floor at the court ball with Roland Reed in a swell evening coat. Omaha's swell ball has indeed left a lasting impression.

The Hon. William Dustin Robinson, member of the legislature, of this city, is sometimes mentioned as a candidate for governor and other high offices. He is also mentioned in an article in the Arena, which proves that the fame of our young statesman extends far beyond the precincts of his own balliwick. It traverses the hills and valleys and fetches up in old Boston town. Mr. Robinson is certainly to be congratulated. Very few of us are quoted down in Boston. I doubt if the people there ever heard of Col. Philpot or Bud Lindsey or the State Journal. So the distinction shown the Honorable Mr. Robinson, M. L., is considerable.

A writer in the Arena who has heard of Mr. Robinson, but who does not know him as we, his constituents, know him, thinks our young legislator advocates

for wearing apparel for mankind, only the clothing that nature provides, and that he believes in eating raw meat. Now this is doing Mr. Robinson a great injustice, and the Arena should hasten to correct its error. Mr. Robinson has a certain amount of consistency, and if he advocated the kind of clothes that were in use in the Garden of Eden, prior to the little forbidden fruit episode, he would himself go in and out among us attired in this fashion, viz., clothed in nature's dress, but I do affirm that I have seen Mr. Robinson many times, and I do not recollect ever to have seen him dressed in clothes differing from those the rest of us wear." They may be a little better, but they are after the same pattern, and are certainly not the kind that nature provides. Nature's clothes do not have hip pockets and turned buttons. And then that raw meat accusation—really that is going a little too far. Mr. Robinson may like his meat a little rare, just so the red blood shows on the plate, but I have seen him dine and I know he does not take any of his food raw. And if he doesn't eat raw meat himself he surely does not advocate raw meat for other people. There is a grave misunderstanding.

It seems that when the age of consent bill was before the legislature last winter, Mr. Robinson jumped to the floor—legislators, and particularly young legislators, always jump to the floor—and hurled a few epigrams at the transfixed multitude. One of them was this: "Nature, not the statutes, fixes the age of consent." That was an unfortunate epigram. It never ought to have been hurled. For it attracted the attention of somebody who wrote to the Arena, Mr. John O. Yeiser, and placed our representative in a false light. Mr. Yeiser argues that if Mr. Robinson thinks nature fixes the law of consent he also "probably advocates wearing the clothes that nature provides, and eating food in the raw state as nature produces it." Mr. Robinson doubtless said what Mr. Yeiser said he said, but the deduction is most erroneous. Mr. Robinson wears proper clothes and he does not eat raw meat or uncooked food. Probably in the future our representative will be a little more careful with his epigrams.

It is with considerable regret that I see my good friend, Jerusalem Gustavus Perseverance Hildebrand embark in the newspaper business on what he would doubtless call, "his own hook." If there be any glory and profit in being a newspaper man these times it is in being a newspaper man without a newspaper. A newspaper man who owns a newspaper just now is a good deal like the fated individual who found himself the possessor of a white elephant. As long as you don't own a paper you can extract no end of enjoyment out of life; you can get most of the perquisites and read all of the exchanges you want to, and never get nearer than the next block to trouble Jerusalem Gustavus Perseverance Hildebrand is a good natured, happy hearted soul and it is too bad that he voluntarily exchanges his merry freedom for the thralldom of newspaper proprietorship. I am afraid he won't smile as of yore, and that would be a misfortune. But here's to the rejuvenated Herald! Long may it wave; may it live these many years, and enable its owner to live in pomp and oriental splendor. Col. Hildebrand will make a good readable weekly paper out of the Herald. There isn't much for the straight democrats in this county to cleave to, and they certainly