

"There is a body of people who believe that dullness and solemnity in literature make respectability."

Town Topics is one of the brightest papers published in this country and one of the most brutal. If its editor had not been an editor he would have been a surgeon. As it is he is never happy unless he has the scalpel in his hand. As for subjects he prefers women. Everybody who has any psychological knowledge at all knows that a woman's bonnet is her vital point. Attack that with ridicule and the bare nerves will quiver. Imagine Mrs. Burden reading the two following paragraphs:

It has been suggested that while the burglars were about it, they might, for the relief of those who have some artistic feelings left, have taken away Mrs. Townsend Burden's violet bonnet and her still more wonderful headgear with the vari-colored plumes. The violent violet bonnet seems to be an especial favorite with Mrs. Burden, as she aired it or one like it last summer at Newport most continually, and it has bobbed up again recently. Perhaps, however, if these had been taken away, something still more startling would have soon been in their place, so it may be all for the best.

I was very much amused at reading in one of the newspapers that Mrs. Burden's diamonds were almost equal to those displayed by Mrs. Herman Oelrichs. Mrs. Oelrichs never wears jewels at all, and is generally most simply gowned. Mrs. Astor, Mrs. Henry Sloane and Mrs. Bradley Martin have always been famous for making the most lavish displays at the opera. I have never seen Mrs. Burden when she wore all her jewels or even a part of them. I suppose that room was wanting.

Omaha society is much more sophisticated than is that variable entity called society in Lincoln. Although not even Omaha has reached the metropolitan point of indifference to things calculated to improve the mind and character. If it happens to have German opera all there is of it and some other people crowd the house and listen humbly and seriously. If Omaha is going to have anything to fall back upon when she claims the homage due a metropolis from provincial towns she must drop this seriousness and be frivolous and inconsequent always. Omaha has made encouraging progress in the last ten years. In this beginning of the new year it is well to take a retrospective glance at what a spirit of reform has accomplished for Nebraska's city. In the first place, Omaha has very good turn-outs—handsome horses, harnesses and carriages driven by neat coachmen. In Lincoln the horses and carriages are well enough but "any old thing" seems to do for a coachman and harness. The Omaha young men have a modish way of getting over the ground, a neat tounure, that Crete and Saltillo might study. There is only one man in Lincoln that dares to wear a chrysanthemum in his buttonhole during the somewhat long season for that flower and his name is always given to the minstrel manager when he asks for a name which will make his very poor jokes funny enough for the gallery to laugh at. There was a time when Lincoln men did not dare to wear anything but coarse clothes. It is the survival of border intolerance that seeks to make this young life an unhappy one. Omaha has passed that line and there are other indications of a higher life beginning there which will be enumerated at another time.

The Burr fire on last Sunday brought out most of the population. It would have been an economical idea to have taken the census then and there. A few men good at figures and large generalizations like those who stand

day after day on the corner of O and 11th or O and 10th, might have brought their trained minds to bear on an estimate of the crowd and saved the country the expense of an official count. They would need only to add the fifty or a hundred whom the fire whistle failed to awaken from their Sunday nap, or who were too sick or too lame to walk or ride. Everybody else was there. It was an occasion to see ones friends such as the century may not repeat. Everybody had a good time and was sorry to leave. It was understood that the house had passed out of Mr. Burr's hands into those of an insurance company. It is very hard to sympathize with an insurance company. Not because it is not worthy or ever did anything to harm us, but because a company is so abstract a thing, it lives east somewhere and is composed of sleek financiers who think of Lincoln as a barbaric place way out west. The smoke was so dense that the firemen could not stay in it long enough to bring out much furniture. There was very little saved. Oddly enough the books generally so easily damaged were not much injured. The china also appears to be all right. The carpets are covered with sand and water, the pictures struck by a stream of water, have only the frames left, the wood work is charred and warped, altogether, the house is a desolate wreck. In spite of the destruction no flames were seen at any time by the crowd. As long as the house was to be destroyed it was a pity that a spectacle did not occur. At the present time the house is guarded by policemen, the glass of the windows is broken in and the house where so many parties and dinners have been given only needs a jackal to be completely horrible. The slow consumption of Mr. Burr's house by smoke and water is like the loss of his expectations. They were once a magnificent structure, He lost his credit, then slowly and without much noise the structure slowly melted away. If it had not been for Nebraska drouth and universal depression that is, if the times had continued as they were when Mr. Burr laid the foundations of his fortune, he would now be one of the wealthiest and influential citizens. As it is—

We have lost from our midst a Colonel Sellers or a Colonel Carter of Cartersville in the person of Colonel Fredd who started the Nebraska Hedge Co. a few months ago. Colonel Fredd is a professional promoter. He has started over ninety different companies. Every new enterprise, however worthy, needs just such a sanguine, confident promoter as the colonel to give it a push to start with. He can most always do it. He has the energy, the honesty, the faith. The Nebraska Hedge company was not a great success but Nebraska people have cut off many luxuries in the last two years, and they drew the line long before they got to hedges. Colonel Fredd has gone to Denver and interested himself in Cripple Creek mines. He mines and countermines the Cripple Creek district in the Denver stock exchange and word comes from there that he has made \$30,000. He is willing to place about 100,000 shares of some of his best mines on the Lincoln market. If some of the stocking capitalists might be induced to invest in this rare chance, it might air a little money that has been in a confined place for a long time.

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