

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

On another page is printed a communication from an unknown correspondent in Omaha who replies to the criticisms of the Administration Arch in a *COURIER* of two weeks ago. The remonstrance, because it is in the symmetrical, distinct chirography of an architect, because of the use of quasi-technical terms, and the evident pride of the writer in the arch, warrants the suspicion that "Sojourner" drew the plans which he defends with so much knowledge and dignity. I have never seen anything like the top of the Omaha Administration Arch, either actually or in illustrated works on classic architecture. But "Sojourner" names and locates archways of great beauty, topped with spires. Against facts of this sort a generalization such as *THE COURIER* made is somewhat bruised, but on the other hand the examples mentioned are not like the Omaha arch. In the walled towns of Germany where the gateways are arched the type is confused and loses character and significance because it serves two purposes. *THE COURIER* critic supposed on looking at the design that it must have been drawn to answer a double purpose and is very glad to have that judgement confirmed.

The only part of the Trans-Mississippi arch which was criticised was the top, which departed from the pure type, acknowledged to be Roman, the type of which the

German is a corruption, not generally followed by the designers of festival buildings. The lower part of the arch must be of a definite form. The arcades at the side of it are not a part of the arch proper though they contribute to the beauty of it. The Omaha arch till it reaches the turrets is like the other arches in the round arch, the four pillars or pilasters and the arcades.

"An arch begins and ends with the occasion it memorializes." But triumphs like Napoleon's or epochs like Constantine's have no historical end. They have been. They are forever. It is fitting that a permanent monument in the form of a triumphal arch commemorating the first celebration of the Trans-Mississippi states should be erected that future generations be reminded of the pluck and victories of their forefathers, the one time frontiersmen of Nebraska.

In conclusion it is unnecessary to remind readers of *THE COURIER* how many times the elegance and beauty of the designs by Messrs. Walker and Kimball have been commented upon in these pages. They are men of originality as well as of a cultured appreciation of the art of other men and ages. Their work is an honor to the state. The beauty of the Trans-Mississippi buildings is in safe hands. The designs of all the other buildings, as shown in the small cuts, are very satisfactory. *THE COURIER* would not have criticised the Administration Arch had not the eminence of the architects been attested by numerous plans and finished buildings. In the Arch, the firm has fallen below expectations, which they themselves created, by establishing a standard far and away above that ever reached by any other architects in the state. They know a secret of columnar combination which is enough, in itself, to hasten the deserved triumph headed their way. Architects, of greater fame, with no more originality or elegance, have failed when obliged to construct a building for more than one purpose, because beauty and simplicity are one.

*The Call* accuses the Slayton jubilee singers of drinking beer and singing comic songs. Both charges are true. From long association with chautauqua people the Slaytons have acquired a mock seriousness of expression and demeanor which is as unpleasant as it is contrary to the tendencies and habit of the race. Their repertoire consists of a number of jubilee songs which are so old that no other traveling show playing to audiences acquainted with all the popular songs for ten years back, would dare to sing. *The Slayton's* sing to people who

do not go to shows and whose knowledge of popular music is confined to Saakey's compositions which are capable of destroying musical ears entirely. The Slaytons are thus in the habit of receiving applause for worn out compositions like "Golden Slippers" and "Don't you hear dem bells." The people who listen allow themselves no more dramatic recreation than that contained in sociable tableaux or the marchings and recitations of a Sunday school celebration. The Slaytons, therefore seem to possess a mysterious and heaven born genius. Their victories are so numerous and easy, they have ceased to exert themselves to learn any new songs. The ecru soprano occasionally insists on singing an Italian aria and is rewarded by a silence unmistakably disapproving. Even the charity of the large sized prayer meeting can not condone a singer for trying that which she can not appreciate either musically or intellectually. Petted by the *naif* appreciation of easily suited audiences, the Slayton's have forgotten that they are members of a once subject race and have assumed the condescending manners of celebrities. It is these rather than what they choose to eat or drink that makes them undesirable attractions for summer assemblies. The negro songs they sing have nothing objectionable about them except their hoary age. *The Call* seems to think they are too worldly for the Epworth assembly. The world demands more for its 25 cents than the Slayton's can supply.

*THE COURIER* congratulates the people of Lincoln on the opportunity, which the council has at last granted them, of securing good water. If experts are to be trusted—and they are not infallible, the only water worth digging for flows on the east side of the town. To the west is the salt basin and the lowlands, which receive the drainage of the city. The Council has recognized the purity and abundance of the water flowing in the A street well and it is at last to be allowed to flow into the salt corroded pipes of the city, and the F street well is to be reserved for use at fires. To the agitation begun and conducted by *THE COURIER*, this decision on the part of the council is due. Even if the new well is unable to supply water in sufficient quantities, the greater purity of the water will compensate the city for the change. It does not require the opinion of an expert to convince the people of Lincoln that surface water from ground lower than the city and to which it slopes, if full of all uncleanness. An amateur physiologist in the public

schools knows that typhoid fever is propagated in that way. The A street well is on high ground which slopes towards the city and the vein of water there, which is presumably from the same source as the Rice vein, has not shown any indication of exhaustion.

In the August McClure's Rudyard Kipling enters the door which George Du Maurier opened. No one will ever know the excellence of Du Maurier's work till he sees a master of English and technique, like Kipling, try to do it. The latter introduces himself and five more or less brutal little chums, in school at Eton or Harrow or Rugby. But the lads are dim. I do not lose sight of the machinery by which Kipling moves his automata. I would not know them the next day. And in part II. when we do meet them again as lieutenants and captains on a furlough, they are too reserved and cocky to make it worth while to renew their acquaintance. The fire of "Auld Lang Syne" which warms Kipling's heart and sets him to telling the story of his youth, can not warm America to love the six opinionated, brave, disagreeable Englishmen. Probably the personal equation, made Du Maurier's fame. He had the genius of Little Billee and the warm, loving kindness of all three men and Tribby. After once adequately expressing himself, he could no more, nor was there any need. He was not an all around writer like Kipling, whom in his own *milieu* he surpasses as he surpasses everybody else—in his own *milieu*. Kipling is obscure with the slang of Indian barracks and allusions to officer's mess gossip. Nevertheless as "The Slaves of the Lamp" is written by Kipling it is interesting even when it is unintelligible. Interesting because he is a master of style and ingenuity, but as for himself, I dare say, we would not care for him, though he has more versatility than the old Dear who signed himself, among other names, George Du Maurier.—The frontispiece is by Boutet de Monvel, the French illustrator and painter who inspired our own Peter Newell. It shows the Paris gamin in all his impudent might. The atmosphere that the boy breathes and we feel is French. It is impossible to say how. The other articles of interest are the dynamite factory at Ardeer, Scotland, and the first meeting between Grant and Lincoln. In "The Voyage of Copley Banks," Conan Doyle at last disposes of the private Sharkey, who in a series of twelve or thirteen tales has been putting men and women to all sorts of frightful death, cutting out their tongues or noses as he thought best.