

# THE COURIER

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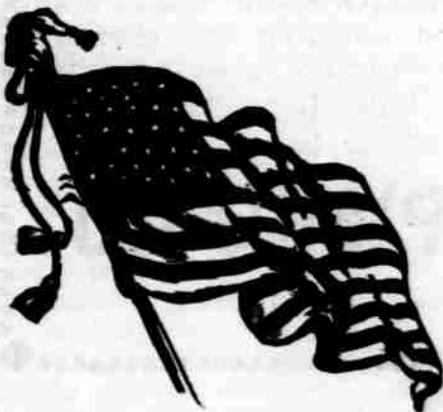
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## OBSERVATIONS.

General Wesley Merritt has denied the report that he said to newspaper men that he would obey orders only conditionally. His reputation as an accomplished soldier and man of few words and quick action reinforces his denial. A board of strategy such as sits and thinks at Washington, nearly as far from Havana as it is from Manila is a necessity. The civil power must be nominally first even in war and if this board confine itself to general directions the commanders in chief will be able in emergencies to do their unhampered best. No situation can be foreseen in detail and Admirals Dewey and Sampson and Commodore Schley are prepared for an accident to

the cable whenever the board threatens to intervene between them and victory. Such an accident will not impair the dignity of the board nor subject the officers to reprimand, which is part of the inestimable advantage naval officers have over army officers.

If the street commissioner would give a little attention to the condition of the streets the council might not be about to conclude that his office is supererogatory. The condition of the down town streets and sidewalks is revolting to all the senses. Since the warm weather has arrived and pedestrians have begun to walk in the shade as far as possible the lowness of the awnings placed at the entrance of every business house causes the passers-by either to duck their heads or walk in the sun. The city ordinance in regard to awnings says they shall be at least eight feet above the sidewalk. The sidewalk belongs to those who chose to walk on it and not to the abutting property. This matter of low awnings is a great inconvenience to thousands every day and as the heat increases we ought to be enabled to take advantage of the shade of the buildings instead of which we are forced into the sun or obliged to walk bent after the manner of age or rheumatism.

The vote on the Mockett sewer scheme in the council meeting on Monday night illustrates the passage of time and the changes occasioned by it. The motion referring the plan of sewer extension was carried by a vote of 8 to 6. Those voting aye were: Dobson, Erlenborn, Guthrie, Malone, Schroeder, Spears, Webster, Winnett; noes, Bailey, Barnes, Geisler, Mockett, Stewart and Woodward. The council generally settles down, after the election of new members, into two well defined groups. It will be seen by the foregoing that Messrs. Mockett and Woodward have joined what was the George Woods or administration group. The political fate of this group was foreshadowed both last fall and this spring. The voters in Lincoln have learned to be no respecters of persons. There is no reader of the newspapers or ward worker in Lincoln who takes the signs of the times at first hand who has not learned that a conviction in the minds of the public that a councilman is not voting and planning for the good of the whole city but for a particular section thereof for his own behalf is followed by scratching of that councilman's name for whatever office and on whatever ticket it is presented to the people of

Lincoln. These reminiscences are urged here that the salutary lessons of history may not be neglected by those who aspire to still further expressions of confidence from the People.

A spacious playground has been cleared in what is known by the well-to-do as the "slums" of Chicago—be sure the residents of such uncomfortable districts never call the place they live in slums. It is only the rich who thus mark the distance of their own residence from those they can not get near enough to help. The really intelligent and self-sacrificing settlement people have learned the needs of the poor by choosing to live next door to them, and be poor too. These people have found out that about 4,000 little children of the poor in Chicago have never seen a park, and that their only playgrounds are the streets and alleys. They have induced the city council to make a playground for the children where the children can use it and it is full all the time of healthful play.

There is a pathetic picture in the June Harper's of a little colored girl tending a sleeping baby and binding a quilt. The verses underneath say that she has no time for play "With dish yere chile to mine and dish yere quilt to bine," but all the same she is playing all the time she is a "mammy" and the sweet dusky face has all the mystic pretending of childhood while she "bines and mines." The world is a long time in acknowledging the rights of childhood to play time and a play ground, but this beginning of a session to the children of their inalienable long-unrecognized rights, is an encouragement for the future.

There are little children playing in the dirty, uninspected alleys of downtown Lincoln. Since the war began, little troops of five or six have made parade grounds of the alleys littered with swill and all kinds of illegal and unhealthy refuse. Martialed by boys of ten or twelve, these troops in which there is no age or sex limit are pretending they are soldiers sweeping over daisied hills, and their imagination is so strong that the excitement of a real battle-field flushes their cheeks. These children own a playground that custom and commerce has deprived them of—but we ought at least to keep the alleys we have left them fit for their innocent feet to tread.

Governor Holcomb's treatment of the young men who have had four year's training by a United States army officer is a repudiation by him of the system established at such a cost

by the government. The governor has disregarded considerations of fitness and training in order to reward men of his own party and by doing so has made the commissions granted by the government of the United States meaningless. Every year during his administration the governor or his representative has presented commissions to the young men recommended by the officer in charge of the military department at the university. On these occasions promises have been made to them as to the positions the commissions would entitle them to in case the country should go to war. The moral effect of the non-fulfillment of these promises through the fatuous hypocrisy of a governor in recognizing the commissions only of those whom he thinks will be of use in his designs upon a third term or a still more fanciful office at Washington, will discourage the military department at the university. When Governor Holcomb makes his next presentation speech, to the keen-eyed, well set-up young fellows who are recommended for commissions by their commanding officer, he will need to call an extra amount of Pecksniffian self-satisfaction to his aid to carry him through what he calls an address.

The system now well established of detailing a United States army officer at institutions of learning, keeps a body of trained young men at the call of the government. It is better than the German system of compulsory military service in many ways. The service is rendered during the years of their college life, while the young man who cannot afford to go to college is not interfered with. It produces an intelligent soldiery not to be matched by the army of any other nation on the globe. The French, English, German or Spanish soldier is inferior in strength, patriotism and intelligence to this particular kind of American soldier which the United States has spent many millions to prepare for the occasion which has now arisen and which Governor Holcomb is doing what he can to make of no avail.

Even Mr. Bryan's enemies are forced to admit that the campaign which he conducted himself was brilliant; that he showed great political ability, strength of will and power of endurance. But if he accepts a commission which demands a technical knowledge which he does not possess and for which an endowment of brilliancy in general cannot possibly be substituted he will endanger his reversionary interest in the presidency and at the same time lose the confidence and