

CURT COMMENT OF THE TIMES

There is something suspicious about the alleged attempt to dynamite the new court house at Omaha last Saturday night—and the suspicion is by no means directed wholly to the structural iron workers. Of course every attempt will be made in certain quarters to implicate the union iron workers, the contracting firm of Caldwell & Drake having had trouble with that organization. But it is possible that parties financially interested stand to lose under the present contract for erection, owing to these same labor troubles. And what more likely than that these parties should seek to "cover" by faking up an attempted "dynamite outrage?" Such things have happened. And early in the erection of the building there were rumors of "rotten work" in the matter of steel erection. What more natural than a "dynamite outrage" to cover up the aforesaid poor workmanship? The coincident dynamiting of the contracting firm's. Indiana plant instead of being corroborative evidence of union complicity is really the contrary. We are reminded in this connection that General Otis and his union busters of Los Angeles have not yet cinched the "dynamiters" of the Times plant, although we were to see the criminals in jail inside of a week, and three months and more have passed.

This "Boy Scout" foolishness ought to be nipped in the bud by watchful parents. It would be easy to teach the boys habits of obedience without cultivating in them the martial spirit. And it is not necessary to cultivate the martial feeling in order to get boys out of doors and interest them in many sports. The men who originated this movement are men who think war and dream war and want war. The Christian parent who countenances this "boy scout" tommyrot has no business to waste his time in praying for the era of universal peace.

The Omaha woman whose cat, "King Thomas," won the sweepstakes prize at the Omaha dog and cat show, is receiving the congratulations of her many friends. Not being acquainted with the lady Will Maupin's Weekly does not feel impelled to add its congratulations to the chorus. But if some one will kindly furnish us with the name of the mother whose baby won first prize at the baby show given under the auspices of Brandeis & Sons of Omaha, we'll risk committing a breach of etiquette by addressing a total stranger and send her a letter couched in our most complimentary language. This paper has no time to waste in congratulating a cat raiser when there are women to congratulate on having become mothers of the future men and women of this republic.

Of course somebody is responsible for the death of those 150 girls who were cremated in the fire which destroyed a garment factory in New York last week. And of course nobody will be punished. Human life is the cheapest thing on the market today—150 lives being cheaper than a couple of fire escapes. One girl was identified by her pocketbook "containing \$3, her week's wages." Yet there are those who wonder why the "white slavers" in New York secure so many victims. It strikes Will Maupin's Weekly that it would be a good idea to take a vacation on this foreign missionary business and put in a year or two of effort and money in trying to convert the heathen of our own land who worship the

almighty dollar so sedulously that they care not a rap for the lives of the thousands of working women. As between the heathen who worships a god of wood or stone and refuses to live off the labor of his little ones, and the heathen who bows down to the gold dollar and lives off the sweat and toil of innocent childhood—as between these two we prefer the heathen who worships the god of wood and stone.

By the way, we've heard a lot about using bloodhounds to track down criminals, but so far as we can recall the hounds haven't performed any real service. The bloodhounds used to be all right, but there's a lot of difference between trailing a splay-footed slave through a canebrake and trailing a leather-shod footpad or dynamiter through the paved streets of a big city.

Nebraska spends approximately \$3,000,000 a year on her roads, and each spring finds the roads as poor as they were the spring before. The present conglomeration of road laws is ridiculous, wasteful and inefficient. The roads are too wide, they are worked in a haphazard fashion by men more anxious to get back into their fields than to make good roads, and the overseeing is usually done by men who wouldn't know a good road from a cord of wood. There is just one thing that prevents Nebraska from having the best dirt roads in the world—the fact that the King road drag is too cheap. If D. Ward King had patented the drag, made 'em out of mahogany, polished them till they shone, trimmed them with silver and sold them for \$700 each on the installment plan, there would be a hundred in use where there is only one now. The King drag is so simple and so cheap that little attention is paid to it, yet its intelligent use would give Nebraska roads that would equal the macadam roads of the east or the concrete roads of France.

Lieutenant Governor Hopewell has a few acres of wheat up in Burt county—about 540 acres in fact. It is growing on land that was a swamp most of the time up until three years ago. When Judge Hopewell announced that he was going to tile that piece of bottom land he met up with neighbors whose words reminded him very much of the neighbors of Puddin'head Wilson who wondered what'n thunder Wilson wanted with the other half of that dog. They said the land wouldn't raise a crop; that it was "sour;" that it wouldn't drain. But Judge Hopewell and his son went right ahead and drained it, just the same. They have had two crops of wheat off of that former swamp and the returns have paid for the draining and repaid the original cost of the land twice over. The fact of the matter is, Nebraska soil will produce anything if intelligently handled. And there are sixteen million acres of Nebraska soil—every acre fertile—that await the intelligent application of agricultural methods.

The nomination of Mr. Armstrong to be mayor was something of a surprise to those who imagined that a campaign of misrepresentation would suffice to defeat him. It was also a sufficient answer to the holier-than-thou bunch whose membership believes that all who disagree with it are hell-bound and tied to Satan. Mr. Armstrong owes his nomination to several causes, not the least of

them being his personal popularity. Another contributing cause was that the people have come to the conclusion that a big, growing city like Lincoln should have its affairs administered by a big, broad-minded, practical man of wide business experience. And still another contributing cause was the vile abuse heaped upon Mr. Armstrong by persons who make every pretense of being fair and decent.

Fair-minded people—people who are not so prejudiced that they fail to see good in those who hold different opinions—are coming to resent the imputation that those who favor license and regulation as opposed to prohibition and bootlegging are all saloon advocates or tools of the brewery combine. The attempt to put Mr. Armstrong in the attitude of being for unbridled license because he favors license and regulation, failed, as it should have failed. Briefly, the people of Lincoln have tired, not so much of the "dry" policy as of the policy of nagging and prying and interference in those sacred privileges that belong to every citizen.

But it must not be understood that the result of the primaries means a cinch for the advocates of the "wet" policy at the coming May election. The excise question yet remains to be voted on, and the result of Tuesday's primaries means that the "drys" will immediately set about perfecting their organization. They were caught napping because they did not imagine it possible to nominate Mr. Armstrong. They simply misjudged the temper of the people.

It is certain that a number of men who are opposed to open saloons voted for Mr. Armstrong and his associates running for excise-men, and did so because they resented the prying and nagging methods that have been in vogue, and which has resulted in actual invasion of private homes and private affairs. These men voted for Mr. Armstrong because they want a change in some of these methods, not because they favor open saloons.

Last August "wet" republicans came over into the democratic primaries and nominated the democratic candidate for governor. Last Tuesday the "wet" democrats of Lincoln played the same game. The difference is that last year the "wets" nominated the weakest possible man for the governorship, while last Tuesday they nominated the strongest man for the mayoralty.

The whereabouts of a gentleman named Graham, who came to Lincoln a few months ago and started what he declared was to be a populist newspaper of national importance is a matter of considerable mystery just now. He bought a newspaper plant, solicited some advertising, advertised quite extensively and secured some subscriptions, but to date he has seemingly failed to issue the paper. About three weeks ago he left town, saying he had business in Chicago, and set the date of his return a few days later. Since then several anxious inquirers have shown up, but all queries as to his present abiding place remain unanswered. Mr. Graham may return, and we sincerely hope he will. It would be interesting to know whether it is possible to resurrect the once powerful populist party.