

Street Illuminations-- Electric Parades

When the portals of the city are swung back for the entrance of King Ak-Sar-Ben, sixth of that name, he will be greeted with a gay brilliancy of fire and flame, exceeding in lustre any beacon ever before raised in the chosen city of his realm. Every important avenue in the city will be aglow with countless incandescents, which servants of the king have suspended along the streets during the last few weeks. More definitely, there will be 4,200 electric bulbs, each with the power of sixteen candles. On Farnam street the effect will be brighter than the day, crossed arches of vari-colored lights spanning the street for eight blocks.

In short, the knights have spared no time or pains in conjuring up the daylight, and the night only will be allowed to show its swarthy complexion at the outskirts of the city. The lighting arrangements this year extend over an unusually large territory, the longest line of bulbs being strung along Sixteenth street, from Cass to Howard. At Capitol avenue a branch lane of light runs eastward, connecting with Fourteenth street, which is also illumined as far as it maintains the dignity of an avenue of trade.

The principal efforts of the fire kindlers have naturally been devoted to Farnam street, which will be a worthy and brilliant spectacle. Seventy large arc lights will surmount the center of the street at frequent intervals and the dash of Ak-Sar-Ben colors at the intersections will add to the dazzling effect. At the summit of the avenue four great buildings of the city will shine like palaces of light.

The dwellers in the city hall will hide none of their lights under bushels, but will display them as usual on a hill. The outlines of the lofty towers will be revealed in dots of flame and the architectural features of the building will be emphasized with lines of incandescents. Eight hundred of the lights will be ten-candle power and the remaining 400 of sixteen-candle power. On the advice of City Electrician Schurig no bunting will be hung along the front of the building. The irregularities of the stonework are so marked and the breeze at that exposed corner so invariably brisk that there is danger of broken globes igniting the flimsy bunting. Such an incident occurred during the Transmississippi Exposition, although no

floats was illumined wholly by electricity with startling effect. The following year two of the parades were electric, forty floats in all. That was in 1899. There had been painstaking experiments in other cities to bring about the same result, but without a semblance of success, but since last year's parades Milwaukee and



AK-SAR-BEN ILLUMINATIONS--CITY HALL AND BEE BUILDING--Photo by Best

New Orleans have both fallen into the way of doing the thing and have copied after the Omaha pageants.

Superintendent Renze accords to City Electrician Schurig a large measure of credit for valuable assistance in effecting the necessary wiring of the floats, which that gentleman conducted almost exclusively, and valuable suggestions in many other respects connected solely with the domain of electricity.

state officers, justices of the supreme court and members of the legislature.

Among its guests it has numbered the present candidates for president of the two great parties. During his visit to the Transmississippi Exposition in October, 1898, President McKinley was a guest of the knighthood of Ak-Sar-Ben and its Board of Governors officiated as his escort and bodyguard throughout his stay in the city. With him came many of the chief members of the diplomatic corps, dwellers of the uttermost parts of the earth and subjects of monarchs of perhaps greater power than is that of Ak-Sar-Ben, but the tenure of whose rule is far less stable. It was for the edification and enlightenment of these distinguished visitors that the knighthood gladly reproduced its splendid parade of the previous week's fall festivities, which reproduction was reviewed by the president and his numerous and distinguished retinue. General Miles was also a guest at that time and General Shafter, while during the regular festivities the previous week Postmaster General Smith reviewed the annual parade.

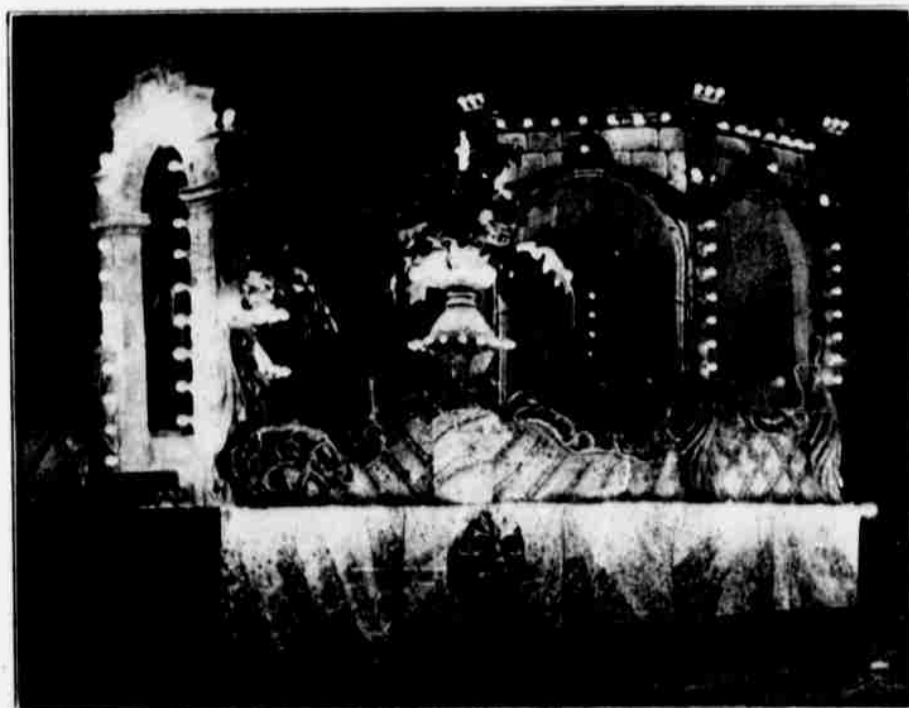
Among the other distinguished men worthy of mention is Hon. W. F. Cody, the redoubtable Buffalo Bill, who, as a Nebraskan and a subject of Ak-Sar-Ben, was admitted to membership and gallantly rode the mythical goat.

Visitors from outside of Omaha are always welcomed and admitted without being required to pay the \$10 initiation fee charged from Omaha subjects. During the last year visitors have joined the honorary membership of the order from all leading cities of the United States, so that the fame of the knighthood has been carried to all parts of the country, from New York to San Francisco, from Buffalo to Galveston and from Portland, Ore., to New Orleans.

The active membership has been confined to Omaha men alone, and the order has sustained a steady growth in spite of the practice of entirely renewing membership each year. In 1895 there were enrolled between 200 and 400, in 1896 from 500 to 600, in 1897 about 750, in 1898, 1,000, in 1899 over 1,100 and in the current year the total membership will not be cast until the final initiation ceremonies just prior to the annual parades.

Distinguished Guests

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AN ELECTRIC FLOAT--"THE FORTUNE TELLER"--Photo by Best

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Electric Parades.

Under the wizard spell of Gus Renze's superintendency the Omaha knighthood of Ak-Sar-Ben has been the pioneer in pageantry with electricity as a factor. Superintendent Renze attributes to the ingenuity of Walter Jardine the suggestion of the feasibility of illuminating a parade with the subtle fluid. It is related that prior to the birth of Ak-Sar-Ben Jardine had conceived a plan whereby a commercial parade by a local business house was lighted by electricity and in 1897 it was tried with variations in lighting nine of the floats in one of the parades. A partial success was achieved and the next year one of the big parades of twenty