

# Street Fair an Accessory to the Carnival



AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS.—Photo by a Staff Artist.



PARADE COUNTERMARCHING IN FRONT OF MAIN ENTRANCE TO CARNIVAL GROUNDS.—Photo by a Staff Artist.

**S**TREET fairs, such as have within three years become one of the attractions of the annual festival of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, form one of the features which does not trace its origin back to the Latin races of Europe, but which comes from the Teutonic races, and is to be found in its glory in England of the middle ages, in Germany of the same time and still continues in the north of France and in Ireland, where the "fairs" are held annually, and where the natives not only bring their wares to sell but exhibit such produce of their skill and ingenuity as may cause comment.

The street fair became a fad in the west about six years ago, and for a year or two it was a poor county seat town which did not hold a street fair. Like all other fads it speedily dropped out of sight, but it was caught by the Board of Governors of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben as an idea which, properly developed, could be made an attractive feature of the annual festival.

There was strong objection at the time of its introduction because of its name, "street fair," as the public, with one of its customary changes, had become tired of the word and some had come to deride the street fair as the innovation of his Satanic majesty, where a year or two before they had hailed it as one of the most harmless and elevating of amusements. For this reason the members of the Board of Governors and their active assistants spoke of the "street fair" under their breath, and did all they could to keep the words in the background while doing their best to advance the idea. The result was that in 1900 the people of Omaha were given an entertainment the like of which they had never seen. There was set apart for them a district in the city where the spirit of the carnival was never stilled from the earliest dawn until the clock sounded the hour of midnight. The space was small, but the fun was more fast and furious than that, as the crowd could not scatter. The

carnival spirit might pervade the entire city at times during the week; might penetrate the business districts on the days and nights of the parades, and might be seen in the homes and in the workshops at certain times, but in the district set aside by the Board of Governors, with the consent of the city authorities, for the street fair, that spirit was ever present from the day before the carnival opened until the day after it closed.

To enter the grounds was an invitation to all persons to make a victim of one if possible and it was also fair notice to all to look out for themselves. The men became small boys and dignified matrons laid aside the years which had passed them on the journey of life and all became children until they had passed from the gates. Within the walls of the district dignified city fathers toyed with confetti and screaming devices which they had often banished from their homes when introduced by some youthful member of the family. Reverend divines forgot their professional expressions and faces habitually as long as a cloth-yard shaft became as round as the full moon under the hilarious influence of the carnival spirit there intensified and localized. There was no objection to the loud shrieking "barker" who on one side told of the wonders concealed behind the canvas of the tent and endeavored to drown the alleged music performed by the mechanical manikin who stood upon the axis of the merry-go-round. Staid men of business, whose faces are more often seen behind the windows of the counting house than in the streets, forgot their cares and were boys for the time—and such a time it was! Never had Omaha seen its equal and never had Omaha seen assembled in one body the crowds which filled that space during the week of the street fair.

There is a tendency on the part of the American public, which is not found to such an extent in other countries, to carry whatever they do to extremes. It is said that we take our business too seriously, our pastimes too intensely, and the street fair at Omaha was no exception. It was a democratic crowd and there was a certain amount of license allowed by the authorities; therefore it was no wonder that there could be found among the multitude those who forgot the responsibility which follows upon liberty and that from fun the jostling and "horse" play would become malicious, especially when someone so forgot the time and place as to enter serious objections to what was intended at first as mere pleasure.

When the first street fair ended there was a strong feeling that it would never be repeated, but when the second year had rolled around the demand on the part of the men whose cash made the annual carnival possible and upon the part of the public who annually visit the city to attend the carnival was such that the Board of Governors could not resist it and the second street fair was projected. That year more attention was paid to order and certain restrictions were placed upon the merriment of the crowd. A higher class of attractions had been secured and everything promised one of the most successful fairs ever held anywhere. On the days before Thursday of the week of the fair the attendance had been in excess of the preceding year, when the dread news of the death of President McKinley came and from that time the fair was a failure from a financial standpoint.

This will be the third year of the street fair as a part of the carnival and fall festivities. With years comes experience not only to men, but to institutions and the

Board of Governors has profited much by their past experience. The street fair has been placed in the hands of a professional entertainer. In the spring the manager selected and Walter Jardine, the chairman of the committee having the work in charge, made a trip to New York, where they spent a week or more at Coney Island and other popular resorts of the metropolis. The result of this trip was that they secured some of the attractions which were on exhibition there at that time and they had an opportunity of seeing what was the latest in the form of such amusements which might be duplicated at Omaha. The trip resulted in the committee securing the best line of variety attractions which has ever been seen in Omaha except during the Transmississippi exposition, and some of the attractions then here, improved and modified, are to again be seen in Omaha.

One of the best features of the coming fair will be the presence of Sorrentino's Banda Rossa, which was here last year. This band will give daily concerts free to the people who attend the fair. In addition to this there are many other free attractions which will be presented during the afternoon and evening, while the part set aside for concessions, for which we have invented no better name than the "midway," will be filled with shows of more than usual merit.

The street fair is not intended by the Board of Governors to be a source of revenue. If it takes care of its own expenses the board is satisfied, but those expenses are considerable and the admission fee charged is but nominal. Whatever money may be left at the close of the fair is turned into the general fund of the society and is applied to the legitimate expenses of the organization.

## Four Good Short Stories

**A**N English nobleman in ill health was out one morning early, wearily taking a constitutional. Walking along his game preserves, he turned a sharp corner and came face to face with an Irishman who had the reputation of being an inveterate poacher. Putting his hands and what they held behind him, he preserved a perfectly virtuous aspect, while the gentleman hailed him cordially with, "Good morning, Pat."

"Good mornin', yer haner. An' phwat brings yer haner out so airly this mornin'?"

"I'm just walking around, Pat, to see if I can't get an appetite for my breakfast. And what brings you out so early, Pat?"

"Och, bejabbers, Oi'm jest a-walkin' around to see if Oi can't git a breakfast for me oppelite!"

"Justice Shiras has a collar button story which he tells with a great deal of gusto," says the Chicago Record-Herald. "A man in Pittsburg, where he used to live, had a wife who was complaining of dyspepsia, and she heard of a certain remedy that was put up in capsules. Her husband bought a dozen at a drug store and brought them home in a pill box. At the same time he bought a dozen collar buttons made of a metallic composition that looked very much like pearl, and the druggist gave him a pill box similar to that in which the capsules were put up to carry them in. He took both boxes home, handed them to his wife and the same day she began to take the medicine. After she had taken twelve doses she was entirely cured and advertised the wonderful remedy all over the neighborhood. About this time her husband lost his collar button, and, opening

his pill box, found it empty. A brief investigation showed that the capsules in the other pill box were still there and that his wife had swallowed twelve composition collar buttons, two a day for six days, and been entirely cured of dyspepsia."

John H. Converse, president of the Baldwin Locomotive works, was interviewed a few weeks ago by a newspaper man who was looking for a "feature." He asked Mr. Converse a good many tiresome questions and some which, to the interviewee, seemed decidedly impertinent. Finally he wound up with:

"Now, Mr. Converse, what do you find most difficult to get out of your men?"

"A day's work!" emphatically replied the maker of engines as he reached for his hat and signified that the interview was at an end.

After General Scott captured the City of Mexico, during the Mexican war, Colonel Childs was placed in command of the troops in Puebla. Among the officers there were Major H. L. Kendrick and Lieutenant Selden. Kendrick was dry in humor and quaint in speech. After the fall of the city Santa Ana hovered around Puebla with a large command of cavalry, keeping Colonel Childs in a state of alarm. In one of the forts Kendrick commanded and Selden under him. One morning the enemy was reported rapidly advancing on the fort. Childs rushed to the fort, shouting to Kendrick: "The crisis is coming—the crisis is coming! Why don't you fire?" Kendrick turned to Selden and quietly said: "Mr. Selden, commence firing." Selden asked: "What am I to fire at?" "Oh," said Kendrick, "fire at the crisis." So Selden's guns thundered at the crisis.



Interior view of the Hiller Liquor company's establishment at 1309 Farnam street, Omaha's new up-to-date family liquor house. The only place of the kind in the west and undoubtedly the hand-

somest store in Omaha. Visitors during the Ak Sar-Ben who call on this firm will be presented with a handsome souvenir glass. The assortment of high-grade wines,

liquors, champagnes, etc., kept by the Hiller Liquor company cannot be found outside of New York City. Don't forget the address. It will be worth your while to call.