

Hotel Fontenelle a Triumph of Modern Art and Skill

Contains Everything that Experience or Anticipation Can Suggest for the Con- Architect Tells of the
venience and Comfort of the People Who Will Use It, and Is Beautiful Building of Fontenelle
in All Its Lines and Appointments

Features of the New Hotel that Show How Carefully It Has Been Planned

A great philosopher once, in eulogizing the marvels of the human brain, called attention to the fact that no great thing has been accomplished by man without being first accomplished in the mind of man. Alexander conquered the world in his mind before he did so in fact. Augustus Caesar "found Rome a city of wood and left it a city of marble." He turned it into a city of marble in his mind before he did so in fact. Washington determined to cast off the British yoke in his mind before he brought it about in fact. Bell conceived the telephone in his mind before he ever succeeded in constructing a working model. Edison dreamed of machines that would talk and pictures that would move and wires that would glow and give illumination long before he actually succeeded in producing such unheard of things and gave them to the world. And so it is with the magnificent Fontenelle hotel. Here it stands in its proud position, a thing of beauty and comfort and luxury.

Has Every Convenience. Every convenience that the art and inventive genius of man has devised for the comfort of man—and man in this construction, of course, embraces women, that is to say, includes woman—every such convenience has been installed in the Fontenelle. The Fontenelle has grown before our eyes. First a hole in the ground excavated by steam shovels and men with wagons and teams. Then the deep-laid foundation and then the structure rising, story by story, to the top. Then other months of work inside at the seemingly endless task of finishing, decorating, installing of plumbing, installing of 339 bathrooms, carpeting of endless floors, papering of limitless walls, electric wiring and fixtures and so on and so on. And now it stands there complete, ready for its guests. But stop and think—What is it? Is it a mass of steel and concrete, hollow tile and brick, marble and polished woods? Yes. But it is more than that, far more. It is the embodiment of an idea.

Embodies an Idea. Just as every other worth-while thing in the world is the embodiment of an idea, an idea that found root in that mysterious realm, the mind of man. And this great idea that saw in prophetic vision the Fontenelle hotel as it stands today, was watered by the rains of hope, and nurtured by the sun of optimism and strengthened by the days of faith, in the future of the Gate City of the west. That's the way that Omaha grew, and everything in Omaha grew, and everything elsewhere grew. The names of the men who had this dream that came grandly true are mentioned elsewhere. They are so well known anyway that naming them in print again is scarcely necessary. The big thing is that the idea that existed in the mind has taken form in the material and that the Fontenelle stands a monument to Omaha enterprise.

They Called It Fontenelle. And here in the twentieth century the white man who has built a great city and named it in honor of the tribe of red men known as the "Omaha's," or Omahas has dedicated and named the finest of the hotels in the city of Omaha after the greatest of the chiefs of the Omaha tribe, Logan Fontenelle. If the spirits of the red men walk and haunt the happy hunting grounds they must surely view with approving "uh" the magnificent hostelry which is named after their great and beloved chief. "Ugh, heap fine teepee, good teepee named after Big Chief Fontenelle," they say. Descriptions of the hotel itself are found in detail in other parts of this section. Every department and feature is taken up separately and its wonderful features told about. Here will be given a general view of the great hostelry. One scarcely knows where to start. It is all so fine. Since we must start some where let it be the bottom. There are two floors entered directly from the street. Here the hotel starts off with an advantage right at once. This is possible because of the grade of the two streets on which it faces. Eighteenth being considerable lower than Douglas is at a point several yards to the westward of Eighteenth, where the main entrance is. This Eighteenth street entrance leads into the "ground floor," so called, which is exclusively the abode of the men. This is a region that ordinarily is not to be invaded by wives, mothers, sisters, sweethearts nor any of the gentler sex. In this masculine region are found such things as the men's lounge, the billiard room, the barber shop, the grill with its life-saving station, popularly known as the bar. But let us go to the upper regions where we can get a glimpse of something more interesting than mere men. Let us enter by the main entrance on Douglas street. This leads up a few steps directly to the "main floor," as called, where is the lobby. And here and in all floors above men and women are on the same footing. Nothing above the ground floor is reserved for man's view alone. And nowhere does a woman need to feel out of place. The bar and such things are confined to the ground floor.

Lobby is Busy Spot. The lobby is on this floor with its busy clerks, its busy switchboard for local service, its other busy switchboard for long distance service, its cigar and news stand, its telephone booths, its writing rooms and its flower stand. Here are pleasant nooks and comfortable seats. Opening off to the left is a delightful room with the most dainty decorating and furnishing. This is the ladies' reception room. Opening off the other side and facing on Eighteenth street and running the full 127 feet that the hotel faces on that street is the great dining room which can be divided into two sections for smaller parties. Above the main floor and overlooking it

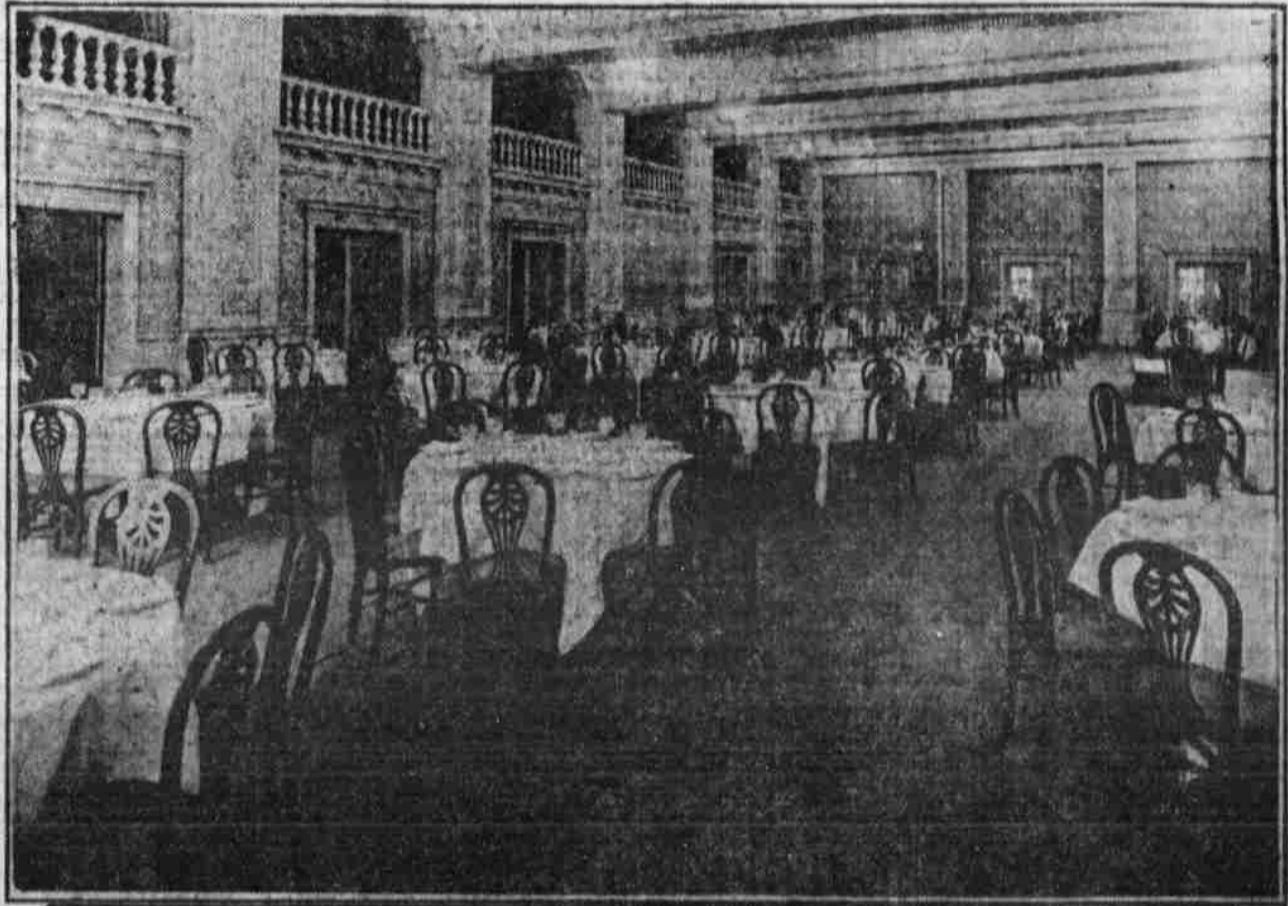
is the center-like a balcony is the "mesanin" floor, or half floor. A beautiful, semi-private place to promenade this will be with its outlook on the busy lobby below. From this floor open off two musicians' galleries which are for the use of the orchestras that will play in the dining rooms. On the west side of this floor and on the same level are the large and small banquet rooms which can be thrown into one when large affairs require it. These will also be used for giving great balls and receptions. Several private dining rooms for small parties are also found on this floor. The executive offices are on this level, being reached through a small corridor. They are located in the southwest corner of the building. Director General. William R. Burbank, the manager and president of the leasing company, has his office here with a reception room adjoining. There is also a large book-keeping office with a big vault. The office of Assistant Manager Abraham Burbank is on the main floor adjoining the main desk in close touch with the operating end, the clerks, etc. Now up another floor we go and have only just arrived at the "first floor," so called. The naming of floors thus follows the European and continental style. What we call the second floor, that is, the next floor above the street floor they call the first floor. So it is in the Fontenelle. There are three floors below the "first floor."

This floor is the first one given over to rooms for guests. It is like all the floors above it until the tenth floor, except that the upper part of the banquet rooms, which are located on the mesanin floor, project this high up. Coming to the next floor above, we have a typical floor. It is just like all the floors above it until the tenth floor is reached. All the rooms are outside rooms with abundance of daylight pouring in through ample windows. The rooms on the outer tiers face the streets and alley. The rooms on the inner tiers face the inner rectangle of the hotel. But every room is an outside room, communicating with the beautiful, wholesome, life-giving, disease-killing daylight. And every one of them has a bath, a private bath of most delightful plumbing and porcelain directly attached to it. Telephone in Every Room. And in every room there is a telephone through which the guest can talk to almost any place in the United States. And there's ice water and ordinary water and hot water galore. And there are pretty pictures on the walls, and deep, soft carpets on the floors. And the furniture is rich. And there are double doors between communicating rooms to be closed when the rooms are not rented en suite. And the transoms above the doors are opaque so that the guest who wants to sleep won't be disturbed by light shining in from the hall. And some of the rooms are built so they can be thrown into suites of three or four rooms, sitting room, bedroom, private bath and private hallway. There is one superlative suite that will be known either as the "royal suite" or the "president's suite." What is that, O. Skeptic? You say

One End of the Main Dining Room



East Side of Beautiful Banquet Hall on Second Floor



there'll be no use for such a suite here in Omaha. And why not, oh, doubter; oh, iconoclast? Study your history and try to make up for your youth and callow inexperience. Did you know that the Grand Duke Alexis, brother of the czar of Russia visited Omaha? Did you know that King Kalakana visited here not only once but twice? Did you know that Don Pedro once visited in Omaha? And the Marquis of Lorne?

President's Visit Here. Probably you didn't know that President Grant was here twice, and President Hayes, and President Harrison, and President Cleveland, and President McKinley. And in more recent years the various presidents have visited here repeatedly. Henry M. Stanley was also one of the guests of Omaha in the earlier days of the city. Yes, there will be use for this suite for presidents and members of royal families. Of course it won't be kept closed and locked when there are none of these exalted mortals here to occupy it. Its various rooms will be open for occupancy separately and individually. And if anyone comes along who wants to pay the price, of course such person will be quite welcome to occupy the royal suite as long as he wishes to pay the price—and is able to do so. Now, returning to our corridors, one thing that will delightfully surprise the visitor and guest is the width of the halls, which varies between six and a half and seven feet. At a certain spot in each hall you will observe a brass tub about three inches in diameter protruding in an upright direction, as Washington Tojo would say. This is one of those little refinements of convenience found in this up-to-the-minute hotel—it is a chute into which you can drop your key when you are going out. Save Embarrassment. This will save you the trouble and the embarrassment, especially if you are named Mary or Priscilla instead of William or Oscar—the embarrassment of slipping up to the desk where that wine salesman from New York and the cigar drummer from Saint Louis are talking, and Mrs. E. Van Hyphen Everingham and Mrs. Millionaire Boggs-Barrington-Boggs are chattering, and half a dozen

other folks are making a gambit for you to ruin. Ah, "when a feller needs a friend" in a time like that the little key carrying chute is a friend indeed. Well, there are so many little conveniences and surprising novelties that we must not stop to name them all. We must leave a few for you to see yourself when you go through the hotel. Of course the various elevators have their places at each floor, with their annunciators announcing the floors where the elevators are. On every third floor there is a special service station, with maids and bellboys in charge to still further facilitate the service to the patrons. Service is Superb. Oh, there is certainly superb. The pneumatic tubes that run from the office—didn't we mention the pneumatic tubes? Well, you know there's so much that we can't take it all in at once, and so you must pardon, dear reader, our overlooking the pneumatic tubes. But there are pneumatic tubes running all over the house, down in the kitchen and up to these service stations and almost everywhere. Well, now, for instance, suppose Muriel comes in to visit you some afternoon. What does she do? She presents her card to the clerk and mentions your name. The gentlemanly clerk sees that you have room No. 323—that's one of the expensive ones, and just the kind you'd have, wouldn't you now? Well, the clerk just drops Muriel's card with the number of your room into the pneumatic tube and—z-z-z—it's at the service station, nearest your room, and a few seconds later you have it in your hand. "Send her up, please," you say, or "Yes, I'm home," and a moment later Muriel is in your apartment. Now isn't that like living? Well, rather. Deep, Soft Carpets. And the carpets! Ah, we haven't mentioned those carpets yet—deep, soft, pretty carpets that delight the eye and caress the foot. Even the steam radiators have their own little improvement and refinement. Even they seem to have gotten the spirit of modernism in this hotel and decided that they must do something to keep up with the procession. So their contribution to the comfort and delight of guests consists of a "new

method of turning on their steam—turning off the same. All steam radiators known up to the present have been turned on or off by a valve located near the floor, a valve, moreover, that had to be turned like any crude valve down in the engine room. One had to stoop over and turn and turn for quite a while. Not so at the Fontenelle. Here, at the top of the radiators so that one need not stoop down, is a small and well-bred handle which has an indicator and dial attached. One just pushes this handle around in a semi-circle and turns the heat on or off or half on or half off. You can do it with your little finger. Well, this covers most of the delights of the second floor.

Many Floors Alike. And every floor above the second is like it until the eleventh floor is reached. Second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth—nine floors that are identical, with the exception that carpets and wall papers differ somewhat in color. Otherwise they are as like as nine peas in a pod. Room 309 is exactly like room 509 and room 809. Room 118 differs in no respect from room 618 and room 918. If you come to the Fontenelle and remember that on a previous visit you had room 509 and were pleased with it and ask the clerk to give you room 509 again, and the clerk replies: "Very sorry, sir, but 509 is occupied by W. J. Bryan, a statesman of Washington, D. C., who will speak at the Bellevue chautauqua tomorrow," do not be angry. For the gentlemanly clerk will, perhaps, be able to accommodate you with one of the eight other rooms that are identical with room 509. Clever idea, isn't it?

Comfort of Guests. And right here—speaking of refinements and care for the comfort and contentment of guests—there is a little bit of thoughtfulness that strikes one looking over the big hostelry. There is no room No. 13 in the Fontenelle. There is no room 313, nor 413, nor 513 nor any other combination of the fatal number, the hoodoo, the nemesis. Search as you will, it cannot be found, because it is not. The numbers otherwise go along in

The story of the building of the Fontenelle hotel was very aptly told at the banquet Thursday evening by Thomas H. Kimball, the architect who designed the structure and superintended its construction. He said in part: "Fontenelle, scion of a noble family of old France, son of an Indian mother, friend of the white man, teacher of civilization, respecter of treaties, promoter of peace, whose wisdom and fearlessness made him chief of the tribe that gave its name to this great city; whose courageous life was sacrificed in defense of his people; whose unmarked grave lies southward in the silent wooded hills toward which the Missouri's waters flow, but whose monument this building is—typifying in its rugged strength as it reaches upward, his aspiring, sterling qualities, his persevering, patient nature born of Indian blood—symbolizing in its adorning gothic crown his grace of heart, his courtliness of manner, his adventurous spirit, bequests of his proud French ancestors. Thus his nature, high and daring through the fusion of French and Indian blood, is expressed in this building which bears his name—Fontenelle—Logan Fontenelle—a true brave, in birth, in life, in death!"

From the Beginning. "As far back as the summer of 1912, to my special knowledge, the name Fontenelle had been proposed for the hotel that it was planned to build in Omaha, and as the aspiring architect who trusted that the projectors of that hotel would be wise enough to choose him to do the building, I had formulated the scheme of design that I hoped would some day express in brick and stone an appropriate monument to one who has been called Nebraska's foremost citizen. "The million-dollar palace hotel is a creature of our own time. It is only within the last twenty years that anything of the kind has ever been projected in the history of mankind, and it is a wonderful fact that our people have so promptly acquired the million-dollar hotel habit. Most of these hotels have a strong family likeness in plan, construction, and even design. The Fontenelle, the latest of the group, presents some striking innovations. It has been built without graft, and without even the suggestion of it. The owner's money has bought more dollars for dollars than ever before in a hotel. Without sacrificing any of the essentials of a million-dollar hotel, the Fontenelle will be turned over to its owners at a lower cost per guest room and per cubic foot than that of any other hotel of its class.

No Time Wasted. "In point of time it has been built as fast as has ever before been accomplished, and a little too fast. On the 13th day of January, 1914, the contract had not been signed, and today, one year, one month and five days after the letting of the contract, the Fontenelle will be open to the public. "In the feature of entertainment Hotel Fontenelle gives a greater proportional area and more floors proportionally to public entertainment than does any other hotel in the United States. The 339 guest rooms are provided each with its own bath room. "The usual telegraph, telephone, pneumatic tube and other equipment is to be found in the Fontenelle, the same as in other prominent hotels, while its special features of teletypograph, key return service and quadripole control hardware are only to be found in the hotels built within very recent years. Another idea of which the Fontenelle is proud is the consideration it has given its help in their quarters

equipped is this army that guests' laundry sent in before 9 a. m. will be returned all fresh and clean the same day. Every piece of machinery here is the latest type. Some machines are of later type than found elsewhere in the west. For example, there is a power darning and do it "powerful quick." Typically large and light and airy quarters are provided also on this floor for the women employees, two being assigned to each room. There is also a laundry and rest room for them and a laundry for their own linen, where they have plenty of hot water, stationary tubs, electric irons, etc. Fuller description of this floor is given in another part of this section. The Workshops. Up another floor and we come to the topmost, the thirteenth. This is given over to the carpenter shop, the paint shop and the upholstery shop. These will be busy places with a staff of employees who will be constantly employed in making such repairs as are in continual demand in a large hotel. Thus the top two floors and the bottom two floors—the latter underground—are used for operations connected with running the hotel. Below Ground. The activities that go on in the bottom two floors, the basement and sub-basement, are described elsewhere in this section. They have principally to do with steam and vacuum cleaner machines and refrigerating machines and air compressing machines, and many other kinds of machines. "These lower regions are inhabited by a grimy-faced and greasy-handed tribe of men who are skilled in the arcane of machines and boilers and wheels and cylinders and the like. Without these men the hotel could not operate. It would be a big, cold place and most of the refinements of convenience and luxury wouldn't operate. We must give credit to the men in the lower regions. There is a faint idea of the fair Fontenelle. And now, perhaps a few figures, which are homely things, but informative, will be interesting. As to the Size. The Fontenelle building has 154 feet frontage on Douglas street and 125 feet on Eighteenth street. (Continued on Page Twenty—Col. Four.)

and other accessory accommodations. No hotel in this country has so humanely treated its help. A unique feature of the plan of this hotel is the serving of three great dining rooms, any two of which occupy more area than one entire floor, from one kitchen, and with equally short travel to each. The hotel is fireproof in the most extreme sense of the word. It is furnished and decorated and equipped with furniture that compares favorably with any hotel in New York City. "In the dining room, particularly, Edward Hotslag has excelled even his own excellent reputation as a decorator. "The engineering features of the hotel have cost more in proportion to the whole cost than is true of any other hotel of its class. The double entrance feature, made possible by the grade of the streets, has resulted in giving one floor over to the entertainment of men. The mesanin, and lobby being more intimately associated and more attractive in consequence to the feminine guests of the house. The very important element of hotel patronage, the American traveling man, is taken care of in this hotel in a way that he has never before been treated. The top two, the best floors of the building, have been devoted to his particular entertainment, a feature which I am sure will be greatly appreciated by the traveling man himself. For other items of interest you are cordially invited to make a tour of the building and see for yourself. Praises His Client. "In letting Hotel Fontenelle speak for itself as I have proposed to do, I am struck with the idea that there may come, perhaps, too much credit to the architect; therefore, I want to say in no uncertain terms that no such building would have been possible for any less considerate client. By that I mean that the way in which the Douglas Hotel company has made the architect's effort count is nothing short of remarkable; that no such building would have been possible for any other tenant. No one will ever know to what extent the genius and experience of William R. Burbank have been built into justing materials in this building; no such building would have been at all probable in the hands of any less a building general than C. R. Vaughn, vice president of the Selden-Breck Construction company, and it is quite possible that no such building might have materialized with any less enthusiastic architect, whose enthusiasm, by the way, goes so far as to desire here to record his gratitude to every one who has worked upon the building, and especially to his consulting engineers, Neiler, Hitch & Co., and to his own office force, of which he is very proud. Good for the City. "What a hotel may mean to a city is expressed in a dispatch just received from one of the foremost citizens of Syracuse. I will read it: "Greeting and congratulations. If the Fontenelle does for Omaha what the Grandias has done for Syracuse, and it will, the Fontenelle will be the best thing that ever happened to Omaha. "When Hotel Fontenelle has had an opportunity to speak for itself I feel confident that it will be pronounced a success, but nothing is a success in the present century that does not succeed financially as well. Before I close I want to enter a vigorous plea for the present effort in the name of the city of Omaha, and in the behalf of this hotel enterprise and its tenant, our new citizen, William R. Burbank. Let us join together, remembering that it is our hotel and that Mr. Burbank has publicly announced that it is built for us to enjoy, and let each of us do his part toward making it the most successful hotel in the whole country."