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W. MORTON SMITH Editor and Manager
SARAH B. HARRIS Associate Editor
WILLA CATHER Associate Editor

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OBSERVATIONS

I understand that it is so quiet in Omaha since the passing of Ak-Sar Ben that most of the people have nothing to do save to sit and reflect upon the wild dissipation of that never to be forgotten carnival week. One young and enterprising Omahan who derived especial enjoyment from the excitement of the fete makes a practice of consuming a large quantity of absinthe twice a week solely for the purpose of living again in the mad revels of the Feast of Mondamin. He says he can see all the goblins and gnomes and gold and glitter that marked the passing of Ak-Sar-Ben, and each time that he places himself under the influence of the opalesque liquid he enjoys in all its exquisiteness the ecstasy of his brilliant appearance as a Knight, and is again in the seventh heaven of delight dancing with beautiful Isadore Rush at the court ball. From all accounts I am afraid Ak-Sar-Ben has really turned the heads of the good people of Omaha, as I feared it would. I am sincerely sorry. Omaha used to be such a nice, quiet, well-conducted place for Lincoln people to visit when in need of rest. It has become far too frivolous.

Every Monday morning the Rev. Frank Crane holds down several columns of the Omaha Bee with his "Pulpit Editorials." I have always doubted the benefits of a minister's connection with a newspaper, just as I doubt the propriety of his connection with the theatre or the stock exchange or any other strictly temporal and worldly enterprise. I know that much can be said in favor of the church unbending and coming down to the common needs of common humanity, but I think that after all the greatest need of

humanity is for a little of that calm pure spirit force and strength, such as the church ought to give but can not give if it become worldly and mundane like everything else. For the mission of the church has never been to drive men to righteousness, but to offer it to those who choose it freely, to give the life of the spirit to those who are weary of the life of the flesh. Through the glory and fall of paganism, through the chaos of the dark ages, through the turmoil of the Reformation, through the frivolity of modern civilization, the church has never lost its first dignity, its first benediction. Whatever else it may have been or may not have been, it has remained industrious, dignified, conservative, apart, a silent, immovable witness of the life spiritual in all the transient ebb and flow of the life temporal. I should hate to see the church lose all this now and become editorial and commercial and political. It is the only institution left us which has any calm or quiet assurance, any claim upon the life of the spirit, and if the salt lose its savor wherewith shall the earth be salted?

I am not in sympathy with any of the sensational departures of the pulpit. I do not think that converted gamblers should be recognized by the clergy nor that sensational sermons advance the cause of the church. A minister has no need to advertise himself in a newspaper. A church has no right to go into politics or commerce. There is a species of clergyman, and his name is legion, who is enchanted with his own astuteness and prides himself upon combining the qualities of a financier, a politician and a theatrical manager. He sells at an advantage the corner lots that his wealthy parishoner donated for a church site; he works his deacons into the city council, he builds up the social side of his church until the theatres close their doors because they can't stand the competition with church socials and concerts. This sort of a clergyman is the kind much sought after. His church debt is paid and his pews are never empty. Perhaps it is a foolish scruple and yet there are some of us who have slight objections to "whooping up" the church of Christ, auctioning salvation under the hammer and rushing off the Kingdom of Heaven like Wichita town lots upon the public whether it is willing or not.

John P. Sutton, who was elected general secretary of the newly formed Irish national alliance, an organization that looks directly to Irish national independence, a cause that the national league and the land league squinted at, is, I believe, well qualified for the post. Mr. Sutton was for many years a resident of Lincoln, and it is no secret that he was a power in the affairs of the Irish National league. John Fitzgerald was the ostensible head of the organization, but Mr. Sutton was the power that moved Mr. Fitzgerald. All of the

addresses that emanated from the league headquarters in this city with Fitzgerald's name attached were written by the man who is now general secretary of the national alliance. A few years ago when the Cronin excitement was at its height newspaper correspondents in this city used to go to President Fitzgerald in the morning and ask for some official expression. They would come back again in the afternoon and get an "interview" written by Mr. Sutton. The new general secretary is one of the ablest men interested in the Irish cause. He is a scholar of no mean ability, and what he writes and says has in it much of the true Irish fire. He is intensely loyal to his native country. I venture to say there is no more staunch advocate of Irish independence in the alliance than Mr. Sutton, and his zeal will show forth in a way that will attract attention.

A dentist in this town has set a dangerous precedent. He made a set of teeth for a woman and then because she couldn't complete the payments therefor he sent for her and took the teeth out and wouldn't give them back until they were replevined by legal process. Has it come to this? Are the unfeeling merchants going to come after us and take our shoes and hats and clothes etc., just because we can't pay for them? If a dentist can take back his teeth a merchant can, with equal propriety, take back his clothing. It would be a little awkward to have a haberdasher or a tailor or a shoe man come up to us when we are out in good society and insist on having his neckcloth or his clothes or his shoes. Debtors have some rights which creditors are bound to respect—this sounds like Mr. Bryan, but it's not—and the line should be drawn at teeth and other things that we carry around with us.

There is a little serpent in India six inches long, as big around as your finger and just the color of the dust that it glides about in. Rudyard Kipling tells about it in "Rikki tiki-tavi," one of the "Jungle Book" tales. There is absolutely no cure for those who are stung by it. They must die. It is the most dangerous serpent known because its color and size make it practically invisible. It has no brave challenge like the rattle snake, nor the brilliant color, nor hooded head of other snakes. It is as if the dust on which we lay our kindred hand were to roll itself into a cylinder and strike us without warning. Such a reptile would have been exterminated by the frontiersmen if they had found them here. Some envenomed dust, invisible and fatal, in form fashioned like a man, still skulks in Lincoln. It writes anonymous letters defaming the most blameless of our neighbors and friends, and sends them out by the hundreds. The names read like a roll of honor. They represent the purest and best in the city. Caesar's wife would not be safe from such an attack as this. It is

like children who take a piece of chalk and write some obscenity on the sidewalk; it offends everyone who passes until some Samaritan rubs it out. Only this can not be rubbed out from the minds of those whom it traduces. Call a man names and he forgets it. Call a woman names and her happy unconsciousness of self is forever gone. She thinks when she looks into another's face that he must be thinking of that insinuation. In an old fairy tale the wicked stepmother tried to destroy the prince, her son in law's, faith in her stepdaughter. When the stepmother was asked what punishment was meet for such a person she answered: "He should be shut up alive in a cask stuck full of sharp spikes and rolled down hill." I would the anonymous letter writer of Lincoln might be put in a similar cask and rolled down hill.

For nearly eight years I have read the Bee. Sunday, for the first time, I came across something clever in it, and I think more of Mr. Rosewater's paper now than I ever did before. Something good has come out of the Bee, and the event ought to be celebrated. A couple of weeks ago the World-Herald started the report that Mr. Rosewater was in the last stages of consumption or heart disease or something, and that he would soon retire from the management of the Bee. Sunday there was an editorial entitled, "Waiting for Some One to Die." It was related how G. M. Hitchcock after having expended a patrimony of a half million dollars in trying to make a success of the World-Herald was still far short of the mark and waiting for some one to die. The writer went on to say:

"It may be unbecoming, but it is nevertheless a sad, solemn and melancholy duty for the editor of this paper to continue to live on for a while longer, even though he would like to accommodate the man who has been so patiently delaying his life's work while waiting for some one to die. Were it not indelicate on our part to offer advice to a man who has never been known to act upon any man's advice, we would gently intimate that in all probability he is not likely to inherit the kingdom which he covets. If the long-awaited vacancy in the editorial chair of The Bee should occur, as it will sooner or later, and no man is found competent to fill that place, it is still unlikely that the patronage of The Bee would drop like baked pigeons into the open mouth of any man who can do nothing and build up nothing until some one dies. If there shall be a void created in the Omaha newspaper field it will have to be filled by a man of brains, ability and integrity of purpose. Such a man will doubtless turn up at the proper time, but it will not be a man who is waiting for some one to die."

Mr. Harwood disclaims any political significance in his visit to Washington. He saw Mr. Morton, of course, but inti-