



THE COURIER

LINCOLN NEB., SATURDAY, APRIL 5 1890



ENTRÉD IN THE POST OFFICE AT LINCOLN
AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

Office 217 North Eleventh St.

Telephone 384

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

Subscription Rates—In Advance.

Per annum	\$2.00
Six months	1.00
Three months	50
One month	20
Single copies	5

OBSERVATIONS

And what would you do with a mess of stuff like the Walton case, esteemed reader, if you were running a newspaper? Would you print it in full?

Or would you

Say as little about it as possible?

Does wide publicity in a case of this kind discourage the filing of divorce papers, or does it tend to lessen the soundness of the marriage tie?

Answers are solicited.

There is a chance for the numerous and able critics of the newspapers to tell what ought to be done in a concrete and present day case. No decently written and properly signed articles will be ignored. People who want to edit the editor will find this a golden opportunity to do so.—State Journal.

This is a serious problem. It is one that vexes every conscientious editor. On one side is the prurient curiosity of brutish people waiting to buy copies of the paper that teems with salacious details. On the other is the honest desire of the editor to keep his paper as clean and wholesome as possible. The proper point at which to draw the line is not always clear. The Journal does not often conspicuously offend by dipping into the smear of filth, and in the Walton case it adhered with more or less success to its conservative policy. But even the Journal's reports of this disagreeable mess were not particularly pleasant reading for persons with healthy minds.

In the first place the lawyers, from the point of view of this layman, were a little too eager in bringing out disgusting details, and the judge was entirely too lax in permitting the sewer to empty itself in the court room. Trials at law should be public, but when it is necessary to encumber them with filth it would be an act of propriety for the judge to drive off the crowd of idle auditors who gather at these foul proceedings like crows at carrion. And the newspapers might form a moral syndicate and bind themselves to exclude from their columns all objectionable testimony. The syndicate idea might be profitably used for purposes other than pecuniary gain.

It is a question whether the daily

newspapers are moulded by the masses or the masses by the newspapers. Editors have a habit of saying that the people demand so-and-so, and the papers must meet the demand; that if the papers are bad they are what the people make them. But the daily newspapers for a hundred years have, on the whole, rather kept in advance of a certain sort of demand. If today the public is eager for the disgusting realism of immorality and indecency it must be remembered that the appetite has been fed by the daily press with competitive zeal for more than a century. No newspaper can be much better morally than the people who support it—and live. But it can be a little better. It can lead if it does not get too far ahead. The trouble is, most newspapers instead of getting ahead of the people morally, are inclined to set the pace for immorality. Each paper is afraid that its competitor will be a little bit more scandalous and indecent than itself, and thereby sell a few more copies in the street, and so they are all scandalous and indecent.

The most repulsive feature of the Walton trial was the avidity with which the crowd gathered around the witness stand and drank in the nastiness. The people in their eagerness fairly enveloped the lawyers and witnesses, and formed a semi-circular mass of palpitating, prurient humanity. The crowd was like a vast sponge. It drank or absorbed the out-pourings from the witness stand and, expanding, waited for more. Human nature is but a little space removed from brute nature. It has a fine and delicate covering with the bestial instincts underneath; and it doesn't take a great deal of rubbing to penetrate the veneer and get down to the bestial. Sometimes human nature stirred by some spiritual force sustains a flitting apotheosis. At other times it drops to earth and grovels in the dirt with the beasts of the field. Civilization is the mask of barbarism.

The Walton case was perhaps the most notable divorce case that has been tried in this state. It was warmly and ably contested, and it attracted wide attention. That the judge would give Mrs. Walton a divorce was a foregone conclusion, but the granting of \$5,000 to the plaintiff was a surprise to many. Nobody had any particular sympathy for Walton, but awarding \$5,000 to Mrs. Walton looks like putting a heavy premium on a species of matrimonial intrigue that should be discouraged. It would have been a good thing if both parties could have been fined \$5,000, the money to go into the public fund. If the decision stands the suit will cost Walton in all close to \$10,000. There are several obvious morals to this notorious story.

Politicians who are looking ahead to the republican state convention say that the party should take some decisive action on the money question. There may be some trouble on this point. And this suggests the idea that times have

changed in the republican party of this state. "Why," said a Prominent Politician, who belongs in the same family with the Well Known Politician, "the republican party never used to have any trouble about platforms or resolutions. We had a system then that worked like a charm, and I don't know but it would be a good idea to go back to it. We would get together in state convention every two years, and there were two classes of us. One class was made up of the fellows who put up the ticket, and the other was made up of C. H. Gere. He made the platform. At the proper time Mr. Gere would produce his little platform, and it would be adopted unanimously, and we would go home happy. The platform never got us into any trouble, for it never said anything. It was so nearly like one of the Journal's editorials that nobody ever thought of reading it. Nowadays we have got in the habit of saying things in our platforms, and there is often trouble. For one I would rather see Mr. Gere disinterred and put at his old job."

All this week Lincoln has been under the stress of political excitement. The politicians who, according to Mr. Gere, are the salt of earth, have scattered their savor far and wide. Patriots have waxed purple in their enthusiasm. Statesmen are swollen with swagger. The ward boss has luxuriated in the pomp and panoply of power, as the voters have marched in serried and servile ranks to do his bidding. It has been a great time.

If the capital of the country is ever moved it should be to Lincoln. This town is not only the geographical and railroad center of the nation, but it is the political hub of the universe. At least it has that appearance.

This town is strewn with political wrecks. Every year the tide of adversity throws up a new lot of weather-beaten hulks, and the strand glistens with the debris. Lincoln seems to be the last port and final resting place for all the political barks of the state. They drift here, and for a time they rest easily on the placid sea. Then the sea gets choppy and then come the breakers, and the bark is hurried along to disintegration. The people of Lincoln have about them many object lessons of the curse of politics. A philosopher who occasionally visits THE COURIER office said the other day that politics wrecked more lives in Lincoln in one year than drunkenness does in three. He is not far wrong. Politics may be profitable and pleasant as a pastime. As a vocation it is to be abhorred.

Mr. Metcalfe, the gifted writer on the World-Herald, had an interesting article in his paper last Sunday on the four Johns, Thurston, Webster, Cowin and Wharton. Of these four great men three will undoubtedly assist in the illumination at St. Louis. John M. Thurston and John C. Cowin have been

selected as district delegates, and John L. Webster has been endorsed for delegate at large. The four Johns of Omaha are even more celebrated than the Two Toms of Lincoln.

Mr. Raker, the editor of the Gretna Reporter, the man sentenced by Judge Cunningham R. Scott to a year's imprisonment in the penitentiary for libel or contempt, has been trying for months to get a bill of exceptions from Judge Scott's court so that a hearing could be had in the supreme court, and up to the present time he has been unsuccessful. Mr. Raker, referring to Judge Scott's treatment, says: "A man in the wilds of half civilized Russia would expect better treatment at the hands of a despotic czar than he can here, when once he incurs the displeasure of this king of rascals." A little thing like a year's sentence doesn't cove this editor. If anything he has been more rambunctious since the sentence than before.

It is surprising that a man of Scott's picturesque incapacity should be tolerated on the district bench of this state. If there is one place from which passion and prejudice should be excluded it is the judicial bench. In Judge Scott's court they are exalted, forming with tyranny, a triangular despotism disgraceful to the state.

The republican mass meeting at the Funke opera house Monday night was addressed by Dr. Ricketts and John M. Thurston, of Omaha, and E. P. Brown, of this city. Dr. Ricketts is a colored man. He is somewhat well known in this city through his service in the legislature. He is in all respects a reputable, worthy citizen. Moreover he is able. His address was entertaining, and reflected the highest possible credit on his race. Mr. Thurston has made numerous appearances in Lincoln lately, but the warmth of his reception made it evident that he has not lost any of his popularity. His personal explanation was listened to attentively, and with frequent manifestations of hearty approval. Mr. Thurston's speech was, on the whole, a very creditable effort, and one of the best he has made in this city. The claims of the city candidates were presented by Mr. E. P. Brown, who but a day or two previous had won much distinction by his argument in the Walton case. Mr. Brown spoke clearly and forcibly and eloquently. Inasmuch as THE COURIER ventured to mildly criticize Mr. Brown for his action as a member of the republican city central committee in the recent unpleasantness it may be permissible for me at the present time to give some expression to the interest in and admiration for this young man felt by the people of the city who are acquainted with his worth. It is customary to refer to young men as rising. Mr. Brown has risen. He is made of the right sort of stuff, and undoubtedly he will establish himself in public regard as his father did before him.

There is a progressive minister down