



THE COURIER

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OBSERVATIONS.

The great improvement in business is most apparent in those places where most business is done. The streets and the stores of Omaha, for instance, are full of people who are either buying or selling the products of the world. A year ago the streets had a deserted appearance. Today they are full of men with the preoccupied expression of prosperous merchants and traders; so busy that they have no time to consider the national monetary system, or politics in the abstract. They are buying and selling hogs, wheat, corn, dry goods and hardware, and that occupation of the idle and discouraged; the creation of a Utopian state where men deal justly and work righteousness no longer diverts them. South Omaha, which has become rich enough and important enough to resent the prefix, is the heart of commercial Omaha. The hives and hogs which are killed and packed there are wealth in its most concrete and convertible shape. The gold in the Klondike is in a more alluring form than the wheat and pork-ers of Nebraska, but between it and the comfort which it will buy lies starvation and the freezing cold of arctic passes. The South Omaha packing houses and stock yards are receiving and sending out again the wealth of Nebraska through so many channels that the plain people are the first to receive the benefits from it.

The article in last week's COURIER about the gambling games and the complaisance shown the proprietors by the city and county authorities, has aroused much favorable comment. Fortunately the editor of THE COURIER has no political chances to be ruined so that the public can depend upon the reports of the progress, if any be made by the city officials in the direction of enforcing the laws restricting gambling. The report that Lincoln is run with no restrictions against gambling, except a monthly assessment which is divided between the mayor and the chief of police, is bringing gamblers here from all over the country. The confessions of Sam Melick, the deposed chief of police, reveal a collusion between the city government and the gamblers which has heretofore only been hinted at. This town, which, on account of its great universities, which attract hundreds of young men, should be as free from gambling as good laws and their rigid enforcement can make it, is filled with gambling rooms which run all night. The indignation of the citizens is mounting, not against the gamblers, they are birds of prey following their vocation, but against the men elected by the people to administer and enforce the laws. The office of mayor should be filled by a man capable of appreciating the dignity and honor of representing fifty or sixty thousand people; a man who will not be misled by his associates who control a large number of votes into thinking that the masses of the people are immoral or will uphold an immoral representative. Party loyalty will cover a multitude of sins for a little while, but only for a little while. Unless gambling is stopped in Lincoln, it will increase and it will happen that among its victims will be a young man or two of good family, then indignation which permits such temptations to be laid in the highways where the people go up and down will get the better of party prejudices and a mayor will be selected for his integrity, ability and general decency. This city is run wide open—the phrase is a vulgar one, the civic crime it stands for is a horrible one. No wandering and depraved tramp who throttles the life out of a frightened woman, is any greater criminal than those men who accept a public office to betray it into the hands of dice.

In the heart of the city there is a university, on the hills surrounding the city are five more schools for young men and women. Aside from any moral consideration these schools are of direct and indirect financial benefit to the place. Just as soon as

the good people of Nebraska find out that the advantages of sending their sons to Lincoln are overbalanced by the temptations to which the city authorities expose them, one of the principal resources of revenue and fame will cease to contribute to the city's growth. Before this time arrives the good people of Lincoln, not to be found wanting by the people of the state, should insist that the laws be enforced. The beggarly tribute that the gamblers pay to be allowed to break the law will not recompense the city for a state reputation which is already a trifle difficult to explain to strangers and to prospective and investigating settlers.

A few years ago the Lincoln city council visited the large cities of the immediate cis-Mississippi region to investigate something, paying I think. The newspapers of the places they visited made much fun of the personelle of the expedition, the purpose of it and the manner of executing it. The visiting aldermen travelled in a private car furnished by a fatuous railroad company. The car left a trail of corkless bottles on the prairie. Denver was one of the places visited and they were entertained in various liquid ways by the common council of that mountain metropolis. The bill was charged to the city and at last accounts had not yet been settled. In Kansas City it was the same way. Whether the pavement was inspected between drinks does not appear. That they did not make useful observations is certain because they came back and ordered cedar blocks. The present council is fixing to go on another tour of inspection and the city will pay the bill one way or the other. It would be cheaper to send an agent who had already acquired some knowledge of water or paving, but as these are only the ostensible objects of the trip, the council is going in a body.

One of the best charities, if that can be called a charity which does not give money to the unfortunate and neglected but helps them to help themselves, is the Boys' Junior Republic, established within reach of New York. Mr. George is the president and organized the republic for the purpose of teaching boys and girls the meaning of citizenship. The members of the Republic live on a farm, they work and are paid for their labor in the coin of the republic which, at the end of their residence, is exchangeable for groceries, clothing, blankets, etc. It is a junior United States with all the principal institutions reproduced in little. The boys are judges, lawyers, policemen. They

sell products of their labor in an open market. They pay for their board, lodging and everything they consume with their wages. If a member offends against their laws he is tried and, if guilty, punished. The consciousness of the state and their part in it is aroused. They see the need of production, of farms; in many of them is created a love of agriculture which soon takes them out of the city. But the strongest and most important lesson that they learn is that of their civic duty and responsibility. What is citizenship to a boy brought up in an alley or tenement, inhabited by people of all nationalities who get drunk, fight, murder and are lugged off to jail by still another alien dressed in blue and brandishing a club? It is the law—a powerful something in which the boy has no part, a great powerful machine of no interest or benefit to him. But the Junior Republic make their own laws and administer them. The representative and responsible advantages of a republic gradually dawns upon him and his reformation begins with his dawning citizenship. He also sees crime as an offense against the social body which, until this time, observation had taught him was wrong and inexpedient only when detected and punished by the law. When a boy who has been a member of the Republic returns to the city he is no longer a gamin but an individual who realizes his position as one of the important parts of an autonomous whole. The social settlements are teaching the same lessons of citizenship and in the fullness of time, bad citizens will find it very difficult to be elected to any office, for the poorest will have learned their own rights well enough not to confer official power on a man incapable of appreciating the honor done him.

Nothing is more impressive than the sight of hundreds of people listening to the same music or the same words. The most arrogant aristocrat is humbled by the sight of the people in thousands assembled to worship God, or to listen to music or to an address. In the presence of a multitude many a man has been inspired to speech which quickened his own moral nature for all time. In the presence of a multitude that sense of one in many which is the sentiment that created the country and holds it together, is strongest. An auditorium, where the mayor can look at a good many of the people who voted for him and who trust him, where once a year the people can see the state university make its contribution to the wealth of the state, where delegates to state conventions can speak and vote in the