

THE COURIER

LINCOLN, NEB., SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1897.



ENTERED IN THE POSTOFFICE AT LINCOLN AS
SECOND CLASS MATTER.

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY

THE COURIER PRINTING AND PUBLISHING CO

Office 1132 N street, Up Stairs.

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Subscription Rates—In Advance.

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| Per annum..... | \$2 00 |
| Six months..... | 1 00 |
| Three months..... | 50 |
| One month..... | 20 |
| Single copies..... | 05 |

OBSERVATIONS.

One of the most interesting features of the great exhibit will certainly be the decoration of its buildings, within and without. It is always effective to have the "trimmings" of an edifice suited to, or symbolic of, whatever it is meant to contain.

For example, on the Agricultural Building will be employed the colors of nature; they will run through the scale of yellows, from the palest to deep orange, but with corn color predominating. Also the whole range of greens will appear, and sometimes the rich reds of fruit. The ornamental details of this building will be drawn from agricultural products. Corn, melons, pumpkins, etc., will be reproduced in friezes, cornucopias, festoons, the capitals of columns and various other forms. The pavilion is to be surrounded by a frieze of turkey-cocks with their tails spread, a highly decorative and rather oriental effect. Above the whole will be seen a figure of Ceres, goddess of the fields, with her attendant nymphs, as well as the seasons and the months. Balls bearing the signs of the Zodiac will also rest on the central pavilion. The Mines Building will have a most beautiful color scheme involving the use of gold, silver, and the salts of copper, which last furnishes the peculiar and charming blues and greens that we

are familiar with in various metals and minerals. An opportunity that the decorative artist must delight in. Throughout Machinery Building all the elements of decoration are from mechanical or electrical sources. A great many flat spaces have been left purposely to be filled in with raised conventionalized motives taken from machinery—cogs, chains, bolts, pins and the like. The under colors of all this will be very warm in tone—quite flame-like—giving at a distance somewhat the rich effect of an Eastern rug. At the main entrance, the space above the door is filled by a great cog-wheel, against the center of which rests a delicate moth-like figure with outspread wings, the Spirit of Electricity. The cornice of the colonnade in front is edged by a line of crucibles, such as are used by founders. Over the end pavilion will be statuary groups symbolizing the struggle of Mind with matter. The whole building is crowned by a group of lions, harnessed and driven by conquering man—the victory of intelligence over brute force. The central point among these structures will be the Administration Arch, its color decoration being dark blue and gold, in moderate quantity; and these are the buildings that will directly face the visitor on his entrance to the grounds. Later we may give additional notes descriptive of other buildings on the south side of the lagoon.

The street sign ordinance grants a monopoly for fifteen years for practically nothing. While theatrical posters occupy only dead walls and vacant lots on back or side streets, the contemplated signs will, of course, be largest and most glaring on the most crowded corners. For instance at the four corners of Eleventh and O streets where the crowd is often of sufficient size to make rapid locomotion impossible, much of the present space would be occupied by the signs leased by a company from the city for fifteen years. The effect of these signs upon the appearance of a city which has four corners every block will be to transform our already sufficiently ugly streets into something resembling a dime museum or the gaudy alleys of the side show approach to a circus. The City Improvement association has worked with an energy which has caused the weeds to be cut down, and most of the signs on the telephone and street car poles to be removed, but all such attempts will be discouraged if the council grants to a company the right for fifteen years to put up immense signs on the corners. It takes a little effort of the imagination to see the city transformed by

these signs and even then its actual ugliness and cheapness will exceed imagination. If it is a good plan and does not affect the good looks and good name of a city, why has not Chicago or Omaha or any of the larger cities tried it? The Chicago council, if it were to grant such an ordinance, would be buried by the reproaches of taxpayers and citizens. It would be accused of bribe-taking, of dividing the spoils, and the next election would bury the members of that council out of sight forever. The City Improvement association whom one of the company addressed, was almost convinced by him that the appearance of the city would be improved by the company's signs. Be not deceived, the plans which these men propose to carry into effect contemplate the restricting of the city into so many sign areas. The signs will be put up and used for the purpose of making money and the aspect of the city will be ruthlessly sacrificed. The occasional theatrical posters on the dead walls and vacant lots of the city are of interest to the passer-by, they are frequently changed and they are only occasionally of an objectionable character. When they are, the City Improvement association should note and protest. (In passing, the triangular corner bill boards are now occupied by a cigar sign which is indecent and injurious to public morals)—I presume there is nothing to prevent any company from putting up bill boards on all the vacant lots within the city limits, provided the owner's consent is secured. But in this case a small rent would probably be charged and this is just what the corner sign company is seeking to elude. Putting up the names of the streets on the corners is a function of the city and will probably be discharged within a few years. Of course it will only be necessary to put up one sign at the corner where are the angles of four blocks. For instance, the company proposes to pay the city for the use of the four corners of Eleventh and O streets for sign purposes for fifteen years by putting up one small sign on one of the four corners. The councilmen grant a franchise which, when operated, will make the city look like the front of a clothing store in the convulsions of a fire-sale, these eastern visitors, to attract whom is the creed of the Commercial club, and the expressed motive for much expenditure on the part of the council, will be moved by the sight of so much ugliness to go back where they came from as quickly as possible, and the square miles of waving corn, the cubic miles of cribbed corn, the square miles of blue sky and the cubic miles of sunshine between and over all, will have

spread their glory in vain. The sophisticated eastern traveller knows that a people who will give their city to ugliness for nothing would make poor neighbors, poor customers, poor depositors, untrustworthy agents, and he will not cast in his lot with them.

An officer should be appointed in every city whose duty it is to inspect posters as they are put up and with power to order the suggestive ones down. Last winter the paper of four or five travelling companies was unsuitable for display and should have been destroyed as soon as exposed. The posters of "Cissy Fitzgerald" were especially offensive, and something about the cigar girl, who is posing on the streets now, is shocking. It seems to be no one's business to protest against improper signs, and an officer appointed without pay, but with power to prohibit the display of certain signs, would need be an exceptional character. No Anthony Comstock need apply. The pictures of processional and rhythical ballet girls are innocuous as well as those of the lightly poised *premiere danseuse*. It is difficult to describe the kind of posters which the municipality should not allow on the streets, but in general, the subject is feminine, the expression hypocritical and the pose and intention bad. Some member of the City Improvement association—of liberal education, of non-prudish habit, a not exacting or impossible theorist or moralist—might be made inspector of signs with much benefit to the city. It would be her duty to see that old and defaced posters should be taken down and the paper not thrown into the streets as is frequently done now. It was the committee of women of New York city who, when they were appointed to inspect the street cleaning, found out and made public the fact that the tenure of office of the street-sweepers, drivers, sorters and dumpers depended on politics not on the quality and quantity of work done. They reported the state of affairs to Mayor Strong and he appointed Geo. E. Waring and gave him authority to hire and discharge the three thousand men in the street-cleaning department without reference to party, or, what is more inclusive, to politics. Mr. Waring has cleaned New York city and in doing so has reduced the death rate over ten percent. The citizens owe the improvement to Mayor Strong who made it possible for Mr. Waring to work without reference to anything except cleaning the city at the smallest outlay possible to secure good service. But indirectly the citizens owe the improvement to the women who made a searching