

# THE COURIER

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## OBSERVATIONS.

The election by the council of Dr. Winnett to the chairmanship of the city council was a wise choice. The doctor has made a record for keeping still and voting according to the dictates of an unusually enlightened conscience. Mr. Mockett's exhortations and Mr. Webster's exegetic expounding of the economics of city water, paving, franchises, sewage, etc., are too valuable and have resulted in too substantial benefits to the city to be lightly suppressed. Besides both the latter gentlemen recognized the propriety of making the silent doctor with the judicial mind, president of the council. It would be in the way of a penance for the other two to listen to speeches by councilmen with not half their gifts and be obliged either to keep still or give up the chair. Whatever is, is best. Allah il Allah.

Why the president and the diplomatic correspondence should ignore the destruction of the Maine as a casus belli has to do with the mysteries and intricacies of international communications. But supposing we had blown up an English or a Russian or a German ship while it was fastened to a buoy in New York harbor? There

is no doubt that war would be declared against us for that reason just as soon as the proofs of the crime could be presented to Queen Victoria, Emperor William or the Czar. The few German missionaries who were killed by Chinese roughs were paid for by an immediate seizure of Chinese territory which gives Germany a foothold in Asia that will be added to as fast as Russia and England will allow. But we permit the Spanish to blow up a ship and 266 United States citizens and refer to it only casually in communications to the Spanish government. The comrades of the marines who are thus ignored are rightfully indignant. The negotiations now being carried on between this country and Spain are supposed to have for their object the independence of Cuba which is, strictly speaking, none of our business. They neglect the real point at issue which is our business, viz., an attack on a United States ship and the murder of 266 United States sailors. Yet no one except the sailors that are left seem shocked at the country's desertion of Americans for Cubans to whom it owes neither gratitude nor protection. If the destruction of the Maine is to be diplomatically considered as a mere unimportant incident the loyalty and bravery of the marine service is in danger of being seriously affected.

People who live and move and have their being around among the public men of the city say that Street Commissioner Lindsey is not blamed for the faults of the administration, although he is known to be a friend of the mayor. It is generally believed that "Bud" always raised his voice against the practices of the mayor and told him in emphatic language that crooked work would bring him in more trouble than the office was worth. Among the men around town Lindsey is regarded as a man of brains and political honesty. The chances are that if he goes on and saws wood in the street department there will be no howling demand to have him decapitated.—State Journal, April 8.

A few sidewalk ordinances which appear on another page of this paper may explain this editorial commendation in the foregoing paragraph. The Journal is doing its affable best to play up to the lofty patriotism of the Hamilton club without losing the commercial advantages of Bud's friendship. "The men around town" who regard the street commissioner as a man of brains and political honesty are those who laugh at reform, who admit that the people can never be represented by any one unwilling to buy political support, by men in short, whose own business interests overbalance any and all considerations of public welfare. Such men recognize the fact that the street commissioner has political

sagacity and accepted his assistance in the days before the Lincoln system of nominations made it less essential. A newspaper policy which allows the counting room to dictate the editorials, not alone as to what and whom they shall ignore but as to the persons and principles they shall commend, may gain a few dollars from printing sidewalk ordinances and lose reputation and influence which in time of a crisis may have fatal results.

The report of an electrician printed in last Sunday's Chicago Tribune as to the danger of electrolysis attacking the iron foundations of the high buildings is very alarming. It is well known that iron piping after a few years contiguity to the electric current crumbles like soft chalk. The water and gas pipes of this city have only recently had to be renewed in many of the streets through which the electric street railway passes. Those who examined the pipes that were taken from the street were appalled at the extent of the destruction which the electric current had accomplished in a few years. When the immense weight of the sky scrapers of Chicago is considered, the danger which threatens to disintegrate foundations which were capable when laid of bearing thousands of tons more weight than that erected upon them, assumes a more threatening aspect than any foreign foe. Hundreds of people occupy the Masonic Temple and buildings like it, hundreds of human beings encompass it at all hours of the day, and it cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Yet the iron girders, eighteen feet deep in the earth, protected only by cement which absorbs water—a conductor par excellence of the current, have been exposed to the electric current ever since they were laid.

The money invested in the street car plant and the convenience the cars are to the public must be set over against the cost of the buildings and the lives of the people in and around them. Unless means of absolute insulation are quickly discovered and applied, intra urban electric transportation is doomed. The loss of life and property that the crumbling of the foundations of a building sixteen stories high would cause cannot be estimated. The fact that millions of dollars worth of property as well as human life is threatened by this metallic disease insures quick action to avert such disaster.

In consideration of the expense which all cities traversed by electric street cars have incurred by reason of the damage done water pipes and paving the street car companies should

pay their taxes cheerfully and, as quickly as possible, get into complete rapport with city councils.

The suggestion made in THE COURIER last week that the city government select a chief from among the employes of a metropolitan fire department, has been received favorably. The chief of a division in New York or Chicago has risen to his place by a series of brave deeds and exhibitions of quick intelligence as to the source of a fire and the means of extinguishing it. Such a man has scores of rivals in a large city. In Lincoln he would be alone in his glory with none to dispute his right of way. He would save many thousands of dollars worth of property, he would have the confidence of the people and the insurance companies and would be in a fair way to become distinguished. Of course such a man would need to be paid twice the salary he was receiving when discovered by the mayor or committee of the city council of Lincoln in order to induce him to leave a metropolis for glory and the west. But the extinction of one one hundred and eighty thousand dollar fire, like that of the recent Davis fire, would pay an expert chief's salary for a century. There has never been a fire in Lincoln large enough to frighten the spectators that the chief and firemen have not apparently shared their panic. The prompt action of a cool expert who has quenched hundreds of fires in the sky scrapers of a city is something that our bucolic eyes have never seen. But the windy city needs a man of heroic proportions who knows and knows that he knows and in case of a fire will take supreme control and allow no one, be he mayor or councilman, to dictate to him. Recrudescence over the mistakes of the Davis fire is futile unless it indicate a way to secure the city against a recurrence of the same kind. That fire which smoldered for two hours and was not checked until it destroyed a half a block of the most valuable property in the city is proof enough of the need of a chief who has learned how to control fire and men and direct water where something is burning, rather than on columns of smoke.

"England and the United States are now virtually the only representatives of liberty and law against militarism and despotic government." Our Irish friend and fellow citizen will not admit that England across the water is the only representative of constitutional liberty and that the two nations are united by blood, law and literature so strongly that not even the fear of offending the Irish vote