

THE COURIER

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OBSERVATIONS.

The Library Site.

Should the attempt to raise \$7,500 for the purchase of lots on the corner of Fourteenth and N, fail it will become the painful duty of the library board to accept some of the sites which the city or individuals offer the city for nothing. The board may be forced to accept the site at the intersection of eleventh and J streets. The erection of a handsome building on this site would make of eleventh street a boulevard or court of honor. It is only a block further from O street than the main building of the university and exactly the same distance from O street as Nebraska Hall, the northern most building on the campus. More than two thousand people attend the university daily and not one of them, not even one of the professors whose forebodings of the consequences of building the library at eleventh and J have prevented the board from considering the advantages the location, is wont to complain of the distance of the institution from "the centre of population."

The height of land at eleventh and J on which it is proposed to build the library, is commanding. It is one of the very few locations in the city that does not need to be pointed out. It is in full view of the throng on O street and will attract atten-

tion. Make a place beautiful and it is no longer isolated or out of the way. A beautiful woman can make any corner of a ball room popular. If the library is built in this one site that is left in the city worthy of a noble building future generations will bless the discrimination of the library board which had the courage, the foresight and the imagination to place a noble building on city property not theretofore considered suitable for a building site.

When the world's fair was located so far outside of Chicago it was predicted by mathematicians who were expert figurers on "the centre of population," that the fair would be deserted because "people would not go so far out" to see anything. If the Lincoln city library is of any use as a library, readers and borrowers will throng its halls. It is an educational institution and will attract patrons. The site under discussion commands eleventh and O street. If the library be built on the intersection it will not be many years before the city will be in possession either by purchase or gift of the four corners on eleventh and J streets. As the city grows there will always be this breathing place: a noble building in a commanding site set in green grass and waving trees. Such a little park is a cynosure that attracts more than eyes. The four thousand dollars which Mr. Thompson and other men have offered if the library is erected at eleventh and J will buy books to put into the handsome shelves. Whereas if the resources of the city are exhausted for a site the library on the corner of fourteenth and N streets for many years will not be more than a library in name and appearance.

If a resident of this city had contributed twenty-five thousand dollars for the erection of a library an obscure and unsightly site would not even have been proposed. Mr. Carnegie offers seventy-five thousand dollars for a library building in Lincoln and his gift should be placed as fastidiously as though he were a resident of Lincoln.

It is urged that clerks will not frequent a library building five blocks from O street. The eleventh and J street location is five blocks from Fitzgerald's store, and four blocks from Herpolsheimer's. The corner of fourteenth and N is only two blocks nearer Herpolsheimers and is five blocks from Fitzgerald's. The latter location would of course be especially convenient to the clerks at Miller and Paine's.

The attractive power of a beautiful building filled with books and set on a hill has never been tried in Lincoln. By all the experience of centuries, by the crowd around a beautiful woman, by the multitude who preferred to stay outside and look at the buildings and the arrangement of turf, shrubs, trees, water and sky, a noble building on the intersection

of eleventh and J, surrounded by a velvet turf, approached by asphalt streets and with a view stretching fifty miles on every side of it will never be deserted.

The President of the United States and of the Filipines, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.

At the time the United States made the Louisiana purchase, congress vested in President Jefferson the administrative authority of the territory. It is proposed to vest in the president, now, until further action by congress, sole authority in the Philippine archipelago. The language of the proposition is nearly identical with that which gave to President Jefferson authority which he so wisely used. The editor of the Review of Reviews asks: "Shall President McKinley go on with this great work or will the country prefer to have the Hon. William J. Bryan take charge of it just one year hence? Mr. McKinley, through the war department, and the military administration of Governor General Wood is carrying on a very remarkable work of reconstruction in Cuba. To complete it will require at least two or three years longer. And some other undertakings might be named which, in the opinion of many, require continuity of treatment for the best results.

Lesser Destinies.

Since General Booth's book dealing with the problem of the poor in London, it has become fashionable for novelists to live in the slums and make studies from life, of the dwellers in the tenements. It is no longer permitted to study the poor from a fragrant distance. To study the poor it is necessary to give up the warmth, cleanliness, and good air of the houses of the well-to do and to live with them. They will not let a "toff" draw them. The plain air artist who is painting a landscape in sunshine when, the clouds get between him and the sun, must wait until the clouds roll away and the values are restored. The modern literary realist must draw only from life. Mr. Samuel Gordon, the author of "Lesser Destinies" is only a capricious apostle of realism. He is at his best when he is most obedient to the canons of the newest school. When he goes into his studio and paints from memory his studies are lay figures and he drapes them in the style of Dickens. He is most artificial, and conforms closely to tradition when he tries to paint a criminal. His unfamiliarity with the type is apparent, because it follows so closely Dicken's murderers and thieves. If they were drawn from life and the likeness were good our own ignorance of individual criminals would not prevent us from recognizing their vitality. Per contra, the women in "Lesser Destinies" are drawn with sympathy and not from memory. The heroine is a spinster "with a

plain face that told the tale of her thirty-two years without any attempt at circumlocution; it was a plain, wasted face, with concave cheeks in which perpetual shadows had made their home. The thin lips had, with constant pursing, tapered off into a point, as though the taste of vinegar were on the palate behind them. The angular chin completed the staccato effect. Nor did her eyes redeem her. They were commonplace, business-like eyes, fit for doing their appointed task and nothing more." Without alluring us by beauty of face or body, or fascinating us by her wit or the undefinable charm of womanliness, she is still Mr. Gordon's heroine and she is interesting enough because of her unsatisfied longings, because of her insistence upon her right to be happy in her own way, to justify his selection. If it were not for the prosy, stogy, smarty villains, whose conversation is not worth the pages devoted to it, and for the machine-made ending, "Lesser Destinies" would not sink into the ruck of books we have read and forgotten.

Mr. William Barr.

Although Mr. Barr lived in Lincoln for nearly forty years and gave to churches and to charity his fair proportion, he never got the credit for liberality. To the Y. W. C. A., to the Congregational church of this city and to how many other organizations I do not know, he was a constant and liberal giver. In his own expenditure for his own comforts he was parsimonious. He enjoyed the possession of money for itself and not for its purchasing power or for the influence it might give him. But more than many men he valued religion, music and justice; and when agents from a church applied to him for aid they were not often refused. He was liberal to others but not to himself. He has been involved in a lawsuit for many years and at last a decision was rendered against him which seemed to him and to many others very unjust. He was old, poor in friends, and he brooded upon the wrong done him, till not even his money was of much consequence to him, and he died. Nominally this is a christian community where love is supposed to rule. Yet fifty thousand men and women go about their business, day after day and only a few, perhaps one in a thousand, concern themselves for the isolated and the lonesome. The man who has no family ties, who is not personally especially attractive, who is without talent except for making a living and saving money does not lead an enviable life in an American community where the sense of humor is crude but universal. We are set in our ways and very provincial and the old bachelor, the old maid, everyone who varies from the expected and the average, ministers to the habit of ridicule. Travelers to Turkey have