

The editor of the *Valley Record*, of Ashland, Oregon, has been sentenced to fifteen days in the county jail and to pay a fine of fifty dollars for contempt of court for publishing an editorial criticism of the judicial system of the county. While the article in question was in very bad taste, wretchedly ungrammatical and displayed both ignorance and a desire to make a sensation, it did not contain matter that reflected sufficiently upon the judge to justify him in considering it a contempt of court. Judge Webster stated, in passing sentence, that such utterances have a tendency to bring the judiciary of the country into popular contempt and thus weaken the respect of the people for law and its administration. That is true enough in the abstract, but in order to have this effect they should be made by a person holding a position in the community that gives his opinion weight and in language which impresses one with the truth of the charges rather than with the shallowness and ignorance of the writer. Had the judge given this feature of the matter sufficient thought he would have passed it over without dignifying the editor with an official notice of his screed. So long as an "education" as a printer's devil combined with the financial ability to buy a handful of type enables any adolescent who may feel so inclined to "start" a newspaper and inflict his weekly assault upon the Queen's English upon a suffering community, so long will such senseless lucubrations find their way into print, and what little harm they may be capable of is increased ten fold by according them such notice as enables their author to pose as a martyr and continue his attacks with a color of justification.

This is a railroad-building age and Americans are pre-eminently the railroad builders of the age. Not content with the most wonderful transportation system the world has ever seen, American genius transcends the by no means circumscribed bounds of the United States and seeks to gird the whole continent in every direction with iron bands. The suggested railway to Alaska, and even across Behring strait to Russia, is not less probable than many present enterprises were a few years before their consummation. Still more likely of becoming a potent commercial agent during the life time of the present generation is the scheme for building a railroad from the United States through Mexico, Central and South America to Argentine Republic and Chili, which is reported to be receiving the attention of the pan-American congress now in session in Washington. A trans-Andean line between the oceans, with termini at Santiago and Buenos Ayres, is already nearing completion. The South American republics are anxious for internal development and the United States is anxious to obtain their important trade. In maritime commerce the United States is

weak. It would not be at all surprising if the prospective advantages of a great international, inter-American railway would induce the interested governments to give tangible form and hearty support to such an enterprise. Its construction would be a matter of but a few years if properly handled. This is a stupendous undertaking and one worthy of American genius.

The silver question is likely to receive considerable airing this year. Such economic questions as are involved in the tariff and the money problem savor too much of the dismal science to readily become popular, and it requires a deal of agitation to get them before the people on their merits. Thus no harm will result from continued discussion. As these matters are held before the public they become familiar and the glamour which demagogues or honest partisans may impart will finally drop from them and the essential features, which will stand out in their true light. The latest contribution to the modernized silver question comes from an eastern man, John J. Knox, and it may be termed a modification of the Windom plan of issuing certificates on deposits of bullion. In three important particulars it differs from the Windom plan. Mr. Knox would leave the present coinage law as it is to act as a self-adjusting balance wheel to the plan. He would prescribe and limit the power of the secretary of the treasury in the matter of determining the quality and price of the receipts of bullion. Finally, the details would be so arranged that the very questionable feature of making the government a party to bolstering up the silver industry—completely demonetizing silver and then lending such potential aid to increase its value as a commodity—would be lost. However, Mr. Knox's plan is far from a complete solution of the question and the present congress still has a very knotty problem to wrestle with.

It is wonderful how fatally accurate in his aim is the blundering fool who goes out in the mountains hunting and mistakes his companion for a deer. If but a portion of his victim's head is in sight he plugs it with unerring aim, while a deer might walk before his rifle in security. Every amateur deer hunter should be required to give \$1,000 bonds that he will not shoot his associate sportsmen.

The interstate commerce commission have recommended to congress a number of amendments to the law shown to be necessary by the practical experience of the past two years. One of these is most radical, being no less than the extension of the law to common carriers by water transportation. They desire the long and short haul clause to remain as it is.