

The Oregonian.

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December wheat in Chicago closed on Saturday at 75 1/2 cents. On the corresponding date one year ago it closed at 75 1/2 cents. Walla Walla wheat in Portland sold on Saturday at 72 cents per bushel. On the corresponding date in 1901 it sold in Portland at 61 cents per bushel. December 12, 1899, the quotation on the same option was. Portland, 51 cents; Chicago, 66 cents per bushel. Liverpool quotations Saturday were less than 1 cent per bushel higher than they were on a corresponding date one year ago. These figures will prove of interest to the people who in former years were professedly unable to understand why the Portland market failed to respond to every advance in the Chicago market.

Interior newspapers always placed the blame for this independence of the Portland market on an alleged Portland wheat pool, and incidentally sought to work up a feeling against this market. The wheat business in Portland now has a different character. Fewer exporters in the wheat business in Portland now than there were at this time last year, and if the "wheat pool" theory were correct, they would hardly be paying 11 cent per bushel more than they were paying a year ago, with the European market less than a cent better than it was at that time. As a matter of fact, there is no other commodity on the face of the earth more difficult of control by a pool or trust. This is on account of the universal production of the cereal.

TODAY'S WEATHER—Cloudy, with probably occasional showers; east to south winds. YESTERDAY'S WEATHER—Maximum temperature, 44 deg.; minimum temperature, 25 deg.; no precipitation.

PORTLAND, MONDAY, DECEMBER 15

After the State Land Agent has been performing the duties of his office for four years it is discovered that there is room for doubt concerning the legal existence of such an office. The authorities are evenly divided that lawyers differ in their opinions. The question was whether the law providing for the appointment of an agent had been repealed. Since the Legislature of 1899 twice repealed an act which had been repealed once before, it is not surprising that they would leave some repealing acts uncertain in their effect. The remarkable feature of the case is that the Governor gave his approval on successive days to two acts which related to his office, and which were in conflict with each other. It is altogether probable that the Governor had so many bills to examine that he could not even make a thorough inspection of those relating to his own duties. When the next Legislature provides for the employment of committee clerks, perhaps it would be good policy to provide a competent clerk for the Governor to assist him in ascertaining the legal effect of the laws he has passed. In the multitude of duties thrust upon the Executive during the Legislative session, he can scarcely be expected to give all the bills the attention to which they are entitled. The Legislature this session will have the advantage of being provided with a new compilation of the statutes, so that they will not be obliged to search in a dozen different volumes in order to find out what the law is.

A new and interesting fact is set forth in Higginson's new biography of Whitaker, viz., that he was not only a poet, but a very shrewd politician. It seems probable that Whitaker's Congressional nomination by modern methods of political appeal to mutual self-interest in securing posts of honor. A letter is quoted written by him at 24, in which he makes a dexterous appeal to "mutual self-interest." His few years in practical politics had fostered in him an ambition for power and patronage that was not suspected by those who knew him in later life. He never took up with civil service reform, and he did not hesitate to invoke political influence to obtain a place in the Oregon State Bank. His brother-in-law, and to retain him in office. This circumstance is not mentioned by Higginson, but it rests on good authority. Whitaker was an abolitionist, but never a Garrisonian. He was a Free-Soller, and afterward a Republican, but he was never an advocate of the dissolution of the Union, as were both Garrison and Phillips. He strongly disapproved John Brown's raid, and disapproved Brown as "badly misguided," and disapproved "the mad and madcap attempts as that at Harper's Ferry." Furthermore, Whitaker declined to support woman suffrage. It is an interesting fact that Whitaker, the poet, should be the most conservative, the most sober-minded, of all the old anti-slavery reformers, and the only one among them who had ever been an ambitious practical politician.

The organization of a Fair Association for the purpose of giving an annual livestock exhibition and race meeting in this city is one of the most important movements for the benefit of the livestock industry in the state. The magnitude of this industry is not generally understood, but it has reached proportions where it now contributes something like \$9,000,000 per year to the wealth of the state. An industry of such vast importance is certainly entitled to all of the assistance and cultivation that it will receive a positive benefit from well-conducted stock exhibitions is an assured fact. In the early days of the industry the stockmen of Oregon were obliged to import large numbers of high-grade animals from the older settled portions of the country and from Europe. In that era exhibitions were of little value, for the reason that we had nothing to exhibit that would attract the attention or the cash of visitors who might attend. But the stock business has now reached a point where the state has switched around from the position of an importer to that of an exporter of fine animals. Oregon sheepmen are shipping prize-winning bucks all over the United States, Oregon horses are winning fame and money on the finest tracks in the East, and Oregon cattle bring the highest prices in the Eastern markets. The advantages of stock shows and public sales which always go with these exhibitions lie in the fact that they attract large crowds of buyers

of all classes of stock. Without these fairs that bring out the best of all kinds of stock it is impossible for Oregon breeders to attract the best class of buyers. The latter have neither time nor inclination to make a farm-to-farm canvass of the state in search of the class of stock they are seeking; but they will always be found wherever the various grades of well-bred stock are massed for inspection. The proposed stock show now in process of organization is composed of representative men of the city and state—men whose names are a guarantee that it will be conducted for the benefit of the industry, and not for the pleasure and profit of a few racing sharp who in the past have not only killed legitimate racing, but have also dragged down the stock business with it.

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ASPECTS OF TRANSPORTATION.

The Klickitat Railroad enterprise has given to the transportation situation, as related to the interests of Portland, an entirely new aspect. First and foremost it has demonstrated to our people the power of their own large capital, and through it, Portland's real independence of the great foreign railroad combinations which have arrogantly assumed to apportion our country among themselves, to promote or hold back its development, to "route" its traffic and "place" its business as it may suit their convenience or assure their profit. The Klickitat Valley has been retarded in its progress a full twenty years under this policy, and now, if the tactics of bluff and bluster which have characterized the delay, it would be retarded to the list of districts waiting in isolation and poverty the convenience of a foreign railroad company. Central Oregon, including the valley of the John Day River, the valley of the Deschutes and the Lake country further south, has long been in this humble attitude, and has been left to wait because it has been assumed that nobody could hope or would dare to contest for the transportation and general business of these regions with the powers in control of this part of the railroad field.

HOW TO RAISE REVENUE.

In one year more, according to Governor Odell, direct state taxation on general property will be abandoned in New York. Minnesota is rapidly accomplishing the same change in its tax system, and in five years, according to State Auditor Dunn, the direct state tax will entirely disappear. Thus it is seen that the Klickitat enterprise, by the emphasis it has given to the fact that the basin of the Willamette and Lower Columbia Rivers now practically extends to The Dalles, has shown that the gateway of the Cascades is no monopoly, and that the occupation by one railroad of its single rail route does not necessarily close it to competitive systems. For, with the old barrier to navigation at the Cascades out of the way, railroads operating either on the north or the south side of the river and connecting with it at The Dalles or any point below, may extend their operations to Portland by means which nobody can hinder; while at the same time they may command without treaty with the established roads and without oppression from anybody all the advantages of terminal facilities on the river front at Portland. This makes a situation in which two men in New York, one representing the northern and the other the southern "merger," may not get together and in an hour adjust the transportation conditions and destinies of the Pacific Northwest with reference to the selfish interests of the properties represented. It means that a way is open by which Portland may, if she can muster the initiative and the energy (she has already the necessary command of capital), establish her own independent connections with a large part of the country east of the Cascade Mountains and within the field which the two great railroad trusts, operating under a mutual understanding, have partitioned between themselves, and from which in effect they have warned all comers.

These demonstrations made by the Klickitat enterprise amazingly emphasize Portland's interest in the project represented. While this is not probable, as a general rule, yet if it be admitted for the sake of argument, still it is preferable that state revenue be raised indirectly by means of a state tax. Tangible property—property which the Assessor never fails to find—is bearing more than its share of the burden, while money, notes and accounts, special privileges, etc., usually escape taxation. An indirect tax will be more equitably distributed, and those who pay it will do so without inconvenience. If all state revenues were raised by indirect taxation, there would never be any incentive to low valuations which still prevails in this state. While state taxes are being apportioned among the counties at a fixed ratio, there seems to

be a feeling that perhaps some time the state may return to the old system, and values have not been advanced as they should be. Let Oregon once establish a tax system which insures a permanent separation of tax collection for state and county purposes, and assessed valuations will become pretty nearly an index of the actual market value of the property.

GRAIN BY RAIL TO THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER.

What have the railroads to gain by delivering grain to the vessels at the mouth of the Columbia, rather than making the delivery at Portland, where the business has been established for many years? This is the question suggested by the story printed today to the effect that such a plan is in contemplation. It is plainly cheaper to haul grain down the Columbia on a water level than to lift it away into the sky to cross the mountains to Puget Sound. But, having reached ocean vessels by the easier route, why continue pulling the freight another hundred miles by rail, when it can be more cheaply transported over the same course in the holds of vessels?

On the assumption that the matter printed today correctly represents the attitude of the railroads, and it must be admitted that appearances seem to confirm it, the Northern Pacific is the aggressor in the movement to force common grain rates to the mouth of the river. Three considerations operate to determine its position. First, it wishes to get rid of climbing the Cascade Range with its grain; second, it has not adequate facilities of its own for reaching Portland from the grain-growing Columbia Basin, or for handling wheat that might deliver here; third, there is money to be made in opening a new country and building up a new town, such as would be involved in carrying the Northern Pacific line down the north bank of the Columbia to its mouth. These are business reasons, and they must have weight. The question of rivalry between the two great transcontinental systems may have a moral bearing on the case, but personal feelings can be and usually are subordinated to considerations of pecuniary profit.

Now, would it increase the profits of the Northern Pacific to carry wheat down the Columbia to its mouth? There can be no doubt that it would if the company had a track on that route in operation. Not having such track, will it be worth while to build it? The cost will be something like \$7,500,000, carrying an annual interest charge of about \$350,000. The grain traffic would hardly warrant such an investment. It is to be observed, however, that the same route that will give a water grade for grain will give the same advantage to other traffic, and that it is rather more than possible that a large part of the tonnage to and from Puget Sound would pass through the Columbia Gorge in preference to toiling over the steep mountains. Then there is the new business to be developed along the Lower Columbia—the lumber carriage out, the Summer resort travel, and, by no means to be despised, the opportunities for thrift in new townsite enterprises.

Granting that the Northern Pacific will sooner or later make this move, the R. & N. will make no mistake in breaking leading at the mouth of the Columbia is not so imminent that anybody should have night sweats over it.

SPRIT OF THE NORTHWEST PRESS

Philosophy From Idaho. The average man would serve his country with as much zeal as he serves himself. The world would not be so full of selfishness if it were not so full of adversity.

Wife and the Palouse.

The Palouse and Whitaker are consequently mud of the Palouse country are ever-present subjects of conversation, and with many, a source of needless discontent.

In Keeping With Our Dignity.

The President of the United States should have an annual salary of \$100,000. Such a powerful and rich nation as this should not assume such a niggardly attitude toward its Chief Executive.

Asks Insurance Investigation.

A law looking to the control of insurance rates in Oregon should engage the attention of the Legislature. Rates are being advanced until they are becoming unreasonable. We believe inquiry into the business of the insurance companies will show that the receipts are double the amount paid for losses and expenses.

Contrariness of the Easterner.

People are fretting to death in the East and fuel to keep warm and even for cooking purposes almost unobtainable in Oregon. We are having some rain, but Oregon weather cold enough for a frosty morning. Yet some people seem to prefer to live in the blizzard-stricken East; but some people have contrary ways.

The Real Land Grabbers.

While Congress is so deeply absorbed in endeavoring to amend the homestead and timber land laws it should not overlook the fact that it is not the persons who buy and pay for the land or homesteaders, but the real and active land-grabbers are railroads and wagon roads.

Looks Well for the 1905 Fair.

The Harriman lines, the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroad Companies, have agreed jointly to contribute \$50,000 towards the celebrating of the Lewis and Clark Centennial. This raises the amount of contributions so far to \$148,000.

The Other Side Takes an Inland.

The transcontinental railroad lines entering Portland are not adhering to their former liberality. They refuse to even make a joint \$50,000 subscription to the Lewis and Clark Fair unless the state first appropriates \$50,000. It is not probable they will have to make the begrudging contribution.

Jonathan Is His Own David.

It would seem strange indeed for Jonathan Bourne to entertain aspirations for the Senatorial toga, but that appears to be the situation. Bourne, a Republican with Populistic tendencies. But it is quite reasonable that, even if the Governor and the Portland people could hope for the toga, they are to employ the vernacular of the day, "dead ones," and might as well hope for a ride over that railroad to Mars as to hope for a seat in the upper house of the National Congress.

The Dull Thud That's Coming.

With a wave of the hand that would appear to end the matter, as if spoken by authority, the Astorian Republican with Populistic tendencies. But it is quite reasonable that, even if the Governor and the Portland people could hope for the toga, they are to employ the vernacular of the day, "dead ones," and might as well hope for a ride over that railroad to Mars as to hope for a seat in the upper house of the National Congress.

Objection to Reciprocity.

Take the treaty with France. Under it Eastern manufacturers are to procure their goods in the French markets, at the expense of the dried fruit and wine industries of the Pacific Coast. French wines and dried fruits would be admitted in competition with the like products of the Pacific Coast, but no Pacific Coast product would have any easier entry into France. This is a kind of reciprocity against which there can be legitimate objection.

What Is a Census, Anyhow?

Such a thing as a signed census for a caucus is an anomaly, bearing the proof of sale and delivery on the face of it, and should be repudiated by all decent and honest Republicans in Oregon. All Republicans should go into caucus on a plain, verbal announcement in each house by the presiding officer. That is the way both houses of Congress organize. There are no precedents outside of Oregon, unless it is in some rotten-borough Democratic state, for a signed call. Men who do not want to sell their vote for cash or for a Federal office better smash the rotten caucus of signed, sealed and delivered caucus to nominate a Senator. It is un-Republican, un-American, un-Democratic and unmannerly, and will only produce a dead-end in Oregon and leave us without a Senator.

Stupendous Irrigation Project.

The cost of this, the largest irrigation project of the age, has been set at \$2,000,000. It is a large sum, but it is well expended. Perhaps in no other part of the world is there a section of country where an improvement of this sort would have so important an influence on the life of an entire people and prove so much of a national blessing.

NOTE AND COMMENT.

Good morning! Nice weather, isn't it? Venezuela has long been dunned, but it looks as if she were now to be done up. Whoever tries to select presents for 10 friends knows the exact definition of the strenuous life.

A strictly up-to-date preacher should choose for his text, "What shall I give for Christmas?" President Cleveland is now wishing he could get in another shot over the parapet of the Monroe Doctrine.

Now we know what was the matter with the Prince of Wales. He was wondering what Papa Chulalongkorn would say if his writing-love letters to an American girl, who is likely to make much money out of these royal and fervent epistles.

John Barrett is both sawing wood and saying something. Too many go to sleep in the calm assurance that silence is golden. When they wake up they generally find that they are in the midst of a silence where no sound is heard, and some who talk have the gold.

New Yorkers yesterday had for their bill of fare hail, sleet, rain and snow. And coal is something awfully a ton. But the Oregonian got out of his bed to see the gleaming mountains and a blue sky. Let that hardened lover of the good old times pray vigorously for "Christmas weather," but the most of us are quite willing to trust to our gentle climate.

On this we rise to start in on what will doubtless be one of the merriest weeks of the whole year. Anticipation will lend the next few days wings, and before we are aware of it, Time will have gathered our happy hours into the storeroom of memory. Surely it is the gift of God that we may never lose happiness once attained. Its material form may melt into dust, no sense may be able to apprehend even a trace of what raised us to the skies, but in the depths of our hearts we bear the central jewel safely. And in days of want we can still open the casket of the joyous past and revel in its precious memoirs.

"M. A. P." tells a story with regard to the late Czar of Russia. He was one night playing a game of whist at Homburg, and the present King, then, of course, Prince of Wales, and several of his friends were of the party. Among those friends were the late Sir James Mackintosh, a well-known bon vivant of the 50s and '60s. Sir James was one of those blunt, downright, rough-spoken Scotchmen, who didn't know fear of God or man. In the midst of the game Sir James called out to the Czar, "You've revoked." Everybody's blood ran cold. The Prince of Wales, I have been told, kicked the Scotchman under the table, and the Czar, blushing and confused, exclaimed in bewilderment, "Revoked? Why, I never did such a thing in my life!" But Sir James persisted, and the Czar was obliged to be in the wrong; whereupon Sir James replied to the observation of the Czar, "I daresay you've often revoked, Your Majesty, but this is the first time you were ever told so."

APPLIED FOR THREE PENSIONS.

Washington—Commissioner of Pensions Ware recently concluded an investigation made to determine the pensionable status of Mrs. Ashton, a widow of New Albany, Ind., who is the widow of three Union veterans and the wife of a fourth, and has decided to await the outcome of Mrs. Ashton's most recent matrimonial venture before taking any action.

She Was Widow of Three Veterans and Is the Wife of a Fourth.

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Dr. H. C. Minton's Warning Against Woman Workers.

Trenton, N. J.—The Rev. Dr. Henry Collin Minton, moderator of the last General Assembly, sounded a warning to the Nation in his sermon today. Dr. Minton's theme was "Home, State and Church," and in the course of his remarks said: "The American home is at stake. We are losing the joy and the hope of our Nation. God grant that it may continue to be so. But it is not without its perils. Conditions are combining to make the survival of the home a more serious problem than ever before. The young generation of today are filling a hundred places our grandmothers never dreamed of filling. Every one of them is robbing a home of a wife and mother—a household of a milkmaid or a maid.

Without a Champion.

Ya kin see's pick up a paper An' its poets' corner greet; 'Cept 'er see'er pirty poet; But 'er mother, saintly sweet; But 'er'll have a time a-s'-archin'; 'Ere 'er'll overtake er' poem! At this time for pore old dad!

PLEASANTRIES OF PARAGRAPHERS.

Customer—What do you charge for 10 cents worth of camphor? Druggist (absent)—Twenty-five cents.—Chicago Daily News. "But, you see, I only want the camphor and the sugar-balm. Don't you break sets?" "No, madam. We generally leave that to the servants of our customers."—Punch. "How did you like the sermon this morning?" "Oh, it was a beautiful discourse. I don't believe I shall ever be converted. It was a sermon on anything in it."—Chicago Tribune. General—I see here's an article on "Revolution in the Mine Pic." Colonel—That's the kind of revolution you mean. I suppose, General—Yonkers Statesman. I know some niggers what's so lucky," said Brother Dickey, "dat I wouldn't be 'tall surprised to hear dat some er dem niggers on a Christmas—My daughter, s'r, she has married the same amount of money after she has married that ole bad before. The sutor—I wouldn't deprive her of it for anything.—Brooklyn Life. "Philippus, an' Buster! Just killed in the Philippines, and was to have been married next month. Mr. Jones—Gad! fortune favors the brave. Elizabeth—Begone, Horatio, me mudder says yer ain't refined enough to go in our set. Horatio—You're crazy, you are. Ain't no foddin' workin' in a lard refinery dis very mornin'—Detroit Free Press. Naggy—I's funny how women will change their minds. When I first met the girl who eventually became Mrs. N., she was one of those who declared she wouldn't marry the best man in the world within a year, she married me. Naggy—But what makes you think she has changed her mind?—Baltimore American.