

The Oregonian

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. INvariably in Advance. Daily, Sunday included, one year, \$5.00. Daily, Sunday included, three months, 1.50. Daily, Sunday included, one month, .50.

imposes upon crude raw materials. The inevitable effect of these duties is to skin the country of its resources for the benefit of foreign nations and to strip us of our raw materials to become the laughing stock of the world for our lack of foresight.

A SORRY FABRICATION. Mr. Lincoln Steffens, the magazine writer, has written an article for the American Magazine for March, on politics in Oregon, of which advance sheets have been received. In his effort to describe conditions in Oregon during past years the writer says:

Perhaps the conditions I mean can best be brought home by citing an agreement written by Harvey W. Scott, the really great editor of that really great newspaper, The Oregonian (and its afternoon edition, The Telegram), one of the great editors of the country on our United States Senator, Scott had had hopes. Bourne had had them, but he had nothing left but a small minority of the legislature. Those he owned, however; they had cost him \$25,000. Scott wanted Bourne's legislators, so on the last night of the session he wrote the agreement printed below, and which he signed, the leading editor of Portland, wired it (hence the verbal errors) to Salem. Here it is:

In case I receive Jonathan Bourne, Jr.'s assent to the Senate seat at the joint session of the Legislature tonight, I hereby agree to use the full power of the Morning Oregonian, and the Oregonian, to elect John H. Mitchell at the next Senatorial election, and elect Jonathan Bourne, Jr. in his place.

It is simply fiction. This so-called agreement, alleged to have been written by Mr. Scott, was not written by him nor dictated by him, nor ever seen by him, till now. It never existed. It is a fabrication by somebody, and sheer forgery. It follows, of course, that it was not "wired" to Salem, on the last night of the session, or at any time, by Mr. Ladd, or by any one else; and Mr. Ladd, moreover, never saw it till it was shown him in this magazine article.

VALUATION AND DEBT. In Illinois they have a singular law for levy of taxes. The law requires all property to be assessed at its "fair cash value," but provides that one-fifth of that value shall be the assessed value for all purposes of taxation. The intent, undoubtedly, is to keep down excessive expenditure and prevent prodigality. Last year, as the Chicago Tribune informs us, the "fair cash value" of all the property of Chicago was \$2,359,000,000, but the valuation on which taxes were levied was one-fifth of that, or \$471,000,000. Besides the object of keeping down the expenditure that great riches would provoke or induce, the law is so adjusted as to keep down public indebtedness. The law forbids any municipal corporation to become indebted to an amount exceeding 5 per cent of the taxable property therein. So the actual limit of indebtedness is not 5 per cent, but 1 per cent. The limit of the indebtedness of Chicago therefore—a city of two millions of people, with property valued at \$2,359,000,000, is \$24,000,000.

BANK CLEARINGS AND BUILDING PERMITS. The fine manner in which Portland weathered the recent financial storm is in evidence on every hand, but for purposes of comparison with other cities, there are few, if any, more accurate barometers than bank clearings. The New York Financial and Commercial Chronicle, which makes a specialty of compiling clearing-house returns by groups of cities, is at hand with the complete figures for the first week in February. In the Pacific group, California makes the poorest showing, the decrease in San Francisco as compared with last year being 33.4 per cent, Los Angeles 36.5 per cent and Oakland 59.1 per cent. Seattle was somewhat better with a loss of 18 per cent, while Portland showed a decrease of but 6.9 per cent.

THE DUTY ON PETROLEUM. Representative Gustav Kuesterman, of Wisconsin, gave to Congress and country some interesting facts about Standard Oil and in a speech he made the other day. The occasion was an amendment which he offered in the House repealing the Dingley duty on petroleum. The false belief has been seriously spread by Mr. Rockefeller's agents that there is no duty whatever on petroleum, but Mr. Kuesterman shows that there is one and that it amounts in some cases to 200 per cent.

THE LAND-GRANT PROBE. Senator Fulton has done nothing worth in securing adoption of the land-grant re-act by the Senate, directing the Attorney-General to institute suit to protect the rights of the Government and the public as to the land grants of the Oregon & California Railroad and the Coos Bay Wagon Road Company. These grants comprise the largest scheme of public land despoilers to rob the public domain in this state. The terms of the grants, which were intended to protect the public interest, have been repudiated by the railroad and the wagon road company (now the Southern Oregon Company), from the time the land fell into their hands. The record of these grants and of those of other wagon road companies in Oregon is a tale of infamy. There should be retribution now for the railroad and recompense to the public interest.

CHILDREN AND ROSES. It is a fine thing to interest the school children in the work of planting roses. The child—boy or girl—who is taught in the simple lessons of beautifying the home and the city through the cultivation of and interest in growing things has at least but a lopsided development. He should be taught to have the children out in force today—not to plant roses in the parks, perhaps, since it is very desirable that the slips should grow after planting, and to insure this they must be well and properly set—but to see how it is done and lend such assistance as they can. A sense of responsibility and proprietorship that goes with this call upon school children to help in planting these roses will be of benefit to the plants later on, when it will be necessary to take care of them and cut off the faded and falling blooms. It is a beautiful thing to call the children out to invest them with responsibility, arouse their interest and incidentally instruct them in the care of the plants. They will thus become an animated feature—indeed, a valuable factor in the Rose Festival from its beginning in February to the grand climax of its beauty on parade day in June.

of such an entry on the transfer books, but it seems passing strange that a real estate transaction involving \$25,000,000 should escape the attention of the newspapers. The lack of publicity given this immense transaction is probably due to the innate modesty of the Seattle people. Despite the occasional presence of these deals, that would make first-page stories in Chicago or on the Arabian Club, Bulletin, in strictly legitimate unadvised business, Portland continues to lead all other cities on the Pacific Coast, and is rapidly nearing the point where all traces of the recent setback will have been eliminated.

THE FAREWELL ADDRESS. Washington's Farewell Address is not a discourse which swells with buoyant optimism, though neither is it a despairful Woe. He wrote it the father of his country was not yet a very old man, only three-score and four years had he then numbered, but he had lived an intense and varied life and his latter experience had been bitter. He had seen treason, envy, insubordination, greed, their offspring, the human heat and human conduct in an Arnold, a Gates and a Lee. He had seen the adulation of his countrymen turn to malignant calumny. But all this had ripened his nature without souring it. When he finally retired from public office to his home at Mount Vernon, Washington had lost much of his earlier enthusiasm and some of his confidence in mankind to gain the calm wisdom tinged with melancholy of the philosopher who looks backward without regret and forward without too much hope.

UNCLE JOE'S PSALM OF LIFE. "Doin' Nothin' All the Time" About Tariff Revision. John Sharp Williams in the Congressional Record. Mr. Chairman, the possibilities of the members on the other side of the chamber seem to have been aroused a few moments ago about a clash of opinion upon this side. They seem especially to rejoice in the fact that there is no rod of authority in the Democratic party whereby absolute unanimity of expression about measure or candidates can be obtained. While I am sure that all Democrats do not always express exactly the same ideas under the same circumstances, I thought, perhaps, it would be well to express before the country just at this moment the reason why the Republicans here are generally united—outwardly, at any rate—notwithstanding the fact that now and then one of them arises in his place and serves notice that if somebody does not "get out of the way" he is going to be run over. I cannot express that idea any better than by reading a little piece of poetry that was produced in the Chicago Record-Herald and which, emphatically, I am not the author. I do not wish to be charged with all the doggerel I put in the Congressional Record. It is entitled "Uncle Joe's Psalm of Life," and it reads as follows:

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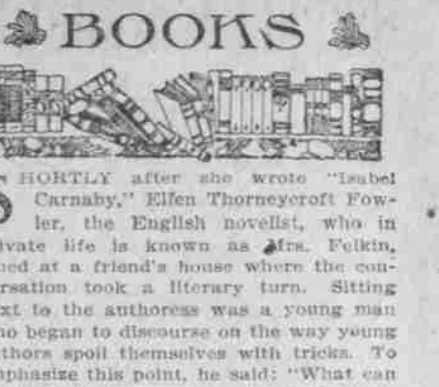
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