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PORTLAND, SATURDAY, OCT. 21, 1911.

FRIENDS OR ENEMIES?

President Taft had nothing to say in Oregon about the Oregon system. Nor has he expressed his views elsewhere on that subject, so far as The Oregonian has observed. He is criticised by his hypercritical critics because he did not discuss the subject. Possibly it did not occur to him. But it is well known that he opposes the judicial recall. Does his unyielding and outspoken opposition to the judicial recall make him an enemy of the Oregon system?

Then what shall we do with ex-President Roosevelt, who objects to the judicial recall, who says that any system (like Oregon's) must be judged by its results, who says that the referendum is all right, who says frankly that he is in doubt about the initiative, and who has sharply attacked the Oregon ballot of 1910, with its thirty-two distinct measures, as confusing, perplexing and impossible?

What shall be said about Woodrow Wilson, who opposes vehemently the judicial recall and who says the initiative and referendum should be employed to restore representative government, and who says that the initiative should be used sparingly and guardedly?

Are all these frank critics of the Oregon system its friends, or are they all its enemies?

BY THEIR FRAUDS WE KNOW THEM.

We do not share the alarm of Mr. J. H. Wilson, as expressed elsewhere in The Oregonian today, over the growth of the single tax delusion. Mr. Wilson fears single tax will be adopted in Oregon because the number of large landowners is relatively small. But the single tax battle is not one with small property-owners arrayed against large property-owners. If there is to be any distinct alignment it will more likely be one with the owners of highly-improved property opposing the owners of partly cleared or partly developed tracts. It will be the well-to-do, able-to-pay property-owners against the struggling homebuilders.

We have had that catch phrase, "stop fining men for industry," thrown at us so often that possibly a number of citizens up Corvallis way are beginning to absorb it. Robert Louis Stevenson once pertinently said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but principally by catch phrases." Some of Mr. Wilson's friends are apparently taking nourishment with considerable noise. That is all.

Let us look into this "fining of industry" a moment. The man who ten or fifteen years ago began clearing 160 acres of land in the Willamette Valley paid as a rule no tax except a tax on land. He paid only a land tax because he had nothing but land. But his well-to-do neighbor who had come before him paid taxes on his horses and carriage, his piano, his comfortable house, and thereby lessened the burden on the poor neighbor. The latter, as he accumulated stock and buildings, gradually paid more taxes and he gradually also became able to pay them.

We are now told that it is wrong to tax his accumulated wealth and improvements. We are fining him for his industry. We should remit his fine and put it on the man now starting in on 160 acres of raw land. Raise the latter's taxes. That's the thing. Fine him for not coming to Oregon when the general property tax was in operation. Fine him for not having been born a generation ago. Fine him for not having money enough to buy an improved farm. Fine him for trying to gain a home with but bare hands and willing heart as capital. The new settler has but little livestock; his shack is often worthless; his household furniture is nil; his inplements are too few for the assessor to enumerate; his land is his only taxable asset. He's no business to have nothing but raw land. Therefore fine him by raising his land taxes.

That is single tax, and it applies as a fine not only against the new settler, but against every landowner in greater or less degree who has not yet had the time, money or ability to get the major part of his land under cultivation. Not only this, but single tax in fining the speculator until he lets go fines the man who buys from the speculator.

The land held for speculation is usually unimproved. The purchaser's taxes are to reach the maximum before his income begins and at a time when he is least able to pay. No, it is not the big landowners' fight alone. It is the fight of all who desire to protect the small home owner and the beginner—of all who wish to see the state develop, grow more prosperous and maintain the credit of itself and people on a firm and substantial basis.

There are to be reckoned with, too, the thousands of voters who pay no taxes. The Fels press agents are alive to this fact. They present the glorious promise that single tax will promote building operations, solve the saloon problem, cure the social evil and do other wonderful things. But as a promoter of employment and consequent prosperity, the single tax is most persistently presented. Vancouver's growth is almost daily cited as proof of what single tax will do—and it is cited with full knowledge, undoubtedly, that Vancouver does not have single tax. Single taxers refuse to drop the fake. Mr. Cridge, in The Oregonian today, still chases the exploded bubble.

In British Columbia there are two taxing powers, the province and the municipality. The Vancouver municipality gets most of its revenues by taxing land only. The province, however, goes into the municipality and taxes nearly if not quite everything that is taxable except land. It would be as truthful to say that in Vancouver land is exempted from taxation as to say only land is taxed. But it is by such frauds and deceptions that the Fels agents expect to earn their salaries—just as they earned them with the poll tax fraud in 1910. The Oregonian, however, unlike Mr. Wilson, belives that the voters of the state are now awake.

EIGHTEEN MEN OF OREGON.

The Oregonian ventures to suggest, in the interest of the general neighborhood peace, that the paroxysmal Journal (Portland) suspend its epileptic outbursts long enough to fix its troubled gaze once more on the names of the Taft committee, which has undertaken the labor of intiating and promoting, in conjunction with other committees, the Taft primary campaign in Oregon. Here they are:

T. B. Wilcox	Johnson Porter,
Ben Selling,	Phil Metschan, Jr.
A. G. Rushlight,	John S. Beall,
Dr. A. C. Smith,	A. E. Clark,
W. B. Ayer,	W. F. Woodward,
Dan J. Malarkey,	Amedee M. Smith,
John F. Logan,	J. B. Yeon,
D. O. Lively,	John H. Burgard,
Waldemar Seton,	W. M. Killingsworth.

That is the committee. It numbers eighteen—count them—eighteen highly-respected citizens of Portland. Some of them have been prominent in politics and all of them are widely known as good men, good Republicans, good Oregonians, good Americans, and sound patriots. No group of men in Oregon has performed a greater measure of efficient public service; none are more disinterested; none more reputable; none more worthy of the general confidence.

Now the Portland Journal, Democratic exponent of Republican demoralization and Democratic voice of Republican factionalism, rolls its bleary eyes, tears its remaining hair and hoarsely howls "reaction!" "assemblyism!" "machine!"

Will our frothy friend descend from unconvincing and noisy generalities long enough to give the political and personal records of the members of the committee—all of them? How stand they on the Oregon system—the direct primary, initiative and referendum, Statement No. 1 and all? Let us have the whole harrowing story of the cause of the Democratic paper's vast agitation and tearful cogitation.

A GOOD CENTRAL BANK.

The Bank of France is probably the strongest financial institution in the world and certainly it is the most useful. It has branches in every town of the Republic so that its influence pervades the whole country. In France there are no panics such as we enjoy periodically. "Stringency" of the currency is unknown and government loans are taken up by the people, not by syndicates of millionaires. The French are a nation of investors, not of speculators, and this desirable condition is to be ascribed largely to the fact that the government bank makes investment easy for everybody who has saved a little money. The great war loan to pay the German indemnity was subscribed twice over by the French peasants, distressed as the country was at the close of a disastrous war. Another loan offered soon afterward was subscribed for ten times over. It is impossible in practice to impair the credit of France.

One of the wisest activities of the bank is the provision it makes for rural loans. A farmer who wishes to set up in business can obtain money from the bank to purchase land, build a house and buy stock. The terms are easy and the time is not limited unless he so desires. The loan may be continued from generation to generation as long as the security is not depleted. What every Frenchman, banker or peasant wants is income. The capital he is content to leave undisturbed. The effect of this loan system upon the rural community is incalculably good. With the postal savings banks and the parcels post it makes the French farmer independent of sharks of every variety. He can procure all the funds he needs for legitimate enterprise at low interest and need not worry over the date of repayment, for that date can be postponed as long as he wishes, provided only that the interest is paid and the security kept up.

We cite this example from France to show that the problem of establishing a sound and useful government bank is not novel, nor is the solution at all mysterious.

GETTING DOWN TO THE PRACTICAL.

The shortcomings of several irrigation companies which have been operating, or pretending to operate, in Central Oregon are not conducive to rapid development of the portion of the interior within their blighting scope. A Salem dispatch yesterday told of one company which set out to water 17,929 acres with water sufficient to cover only 2000 acres. Water rights on more than 18,000 acres were sold at $10 per acre, the company thereby realizing more than $180,000. Yet when the state proposed that this money be utilized on a storage system the company refused. The state, too, has failed in a suit to cancel the Carey act contract.

Another company in disfavor with the Land Board has made a somewhat better showing. Still it is said to have attempted to supply lands with water from one canal that should have come from a canal yet to be constructed, with the result that the farmers who have paid for service from the lower canal are suffering from a shortage of water.

These things do not speak well for Oregon, for the state, in entering into a Carey-act contract, gives at least a strongly implied assurance to the water purchaser that the project is soundly financed and that the promoters are honest and capable. So long as the sins of tricky promoters remain unatoned, so long will suspicion rest on future undertakings of the same character. The state Land Board herein has an issue that needs feel the force of a firm, consistent policy conceived in the interests of the settler and of right and justice. If the administration can solve the irrigation problem of Central Oregon and solve it right, it will have achieved more for the good of the state and community than can possibly come from all the new wrinkles in convict control and purchasing of supplies that the Governor can think up in his entire term of office. It is a practical problem that demands a practical solution. The Land Board cannot do better by the state than relentlessly to dispossess all promoters of irrigation projects whose course has been shady, wavering or dishonest.

MAKE LAND PRODUCE MORE.

Having brought under cultivation practically all the available agricultural land, this Nation is now confronted with the alternative of increasing the production of that land or soon buying food abroad. This is particularly true of grain. The average yield of wheat is 14.3 bushels an acre and we consume 6.5 bushels per capita and export about 10 per cent of our production. As our population increased 21 per cent in the last decade, it will not be long before it will have overtaken the production of wheat and passed it.

The only way out is to make the same acreage produce more, and to this end the National Soil Fertility League is working. It has encouragement from experiments in some countries and some states. Germany and Belgium realized the same necessity over a quarter of a century ago and set to work to increase the fertility of the soil. In twenty-five years Germany increased the output of staple crops 35 per cent. Belgium, by sending out farm demonstrators, produced even more remarkable results. She turned the drift of population back from city to country, increased the value of farm land two-thirds and increased the crops of wheat 57, oats 63.8, rye 53.4 and barley 50.5 per cent. Similar improvement has followed in this country wherever farmers have taken the advice of farm demonstrators, even rocky old Vermont showing four times the yield of the Dakotas.

To bring agriculture up to the desired scientific standard of maximum production without exhausting the soil requires more than demonstration to the present generation of farmers. It requires teaching of first principles of agriculture to the rising generation. This can best be accomplished by substituting the graded country school for the district school; that teaching may be continued till the boy and girl are ready for college or farm work. In some states an omnibus gathers the children and takes them to school that the obstacle of distance may be overcome. In these days of the automobile, a motorbus should do this service. That it may do so efficiently, good roads should be provided.

With a certainty of money in farming and with the country made habitable by good schools and good roads, the drift of population may be turned from city to country and the story of thrifty, densely-populated Belgium told over again in the United States.

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE AND MARY SHELLEY.

The discovery of a love affair between John Howard Payne and Mary Shelley, the poet's widow, would be deeply interesting if it were real. Payne is known to everybody as the author of the words of "Home, Sweet Home" and it is commonly supposed that he composed the music also. But the fact seems to be that the melody is Italian. He picked it up on the street in Naples, perhaps, where the beggars sing airs that are the despair of all the musicians.

Mrs. Shelley has some renown of her own. She is remembered as the author of "Frankenstein," a novel which was widely read in her day and is not yet forgotten by any means. The name "Frankenstein" is often applied, by a singular blunder, to the monster whom the hero put together out of fragments which he collected from tombs and death chambers, but it was really the name of the hero himself. When one wishes to allude to the famous fiction it is proper to speak of "Frankenstein's monster," but Frankenstein himself was a likable young man, his only failing being an excessive fondness for risky experiment.

Mary Shelley was the daughter of William Godwin, who was well known as the author of works on social science. He would be called an anarchist in our day. Like Shelley he believed that marriage should be merely an agreement between the parties which either might terminate at will. Mary accepted his teaching so faithfully that she went abroad with Shelley after his first wife deserted him and for a time they lived together unmarried. After the unfortunate Harriet Westbrook had set him free by committing suicide, Shelley married Mary in proper form and they made an exceptionally happy couple. After her husband was drowned Mary returned to England and met Payne in London.

The author of "Home, Sweet Home" was not a successful man in the ordinary sense of the word. His solitary notable literary production sold well, but he did not receive the profits. In fact he was always poor and had been in prison for debt, though in those days this was no very black disgrace. He was born in New York in 1791, the son of a schoolmaster, and, having chosen an actor's life, made his way to London, where he worked in partnership with Washington Irving, making over French plays for English use. The two men shared the same room for a time.

Irving became so highly respectable in later years that it seems odd to think of his close intimacy with Payne, who was half hobo and all Bohemian. But the exigencies of the literary career make strange bedfellows. Payne wrote some original pieces for the theaters. In one of these plays, "Clari the Maid of Milan," "Home, Sweet Home" was inserted as a lyric. The play has been forgotten, but the lyric has not and never will be.

These facts have been collected by Jeannette L. Gilder and published in the Chicago Tribune. Miss Gilder goes on to intimate that Mary Shelley fell in love with Irving and used Payne as a sort of stalking horse in the affair. He had a pocket full of complimentary tickets to all the theaters, since he was an actor, and supplied them plentifully to Mrs. Shelley, who often went with him to the play. As their intimacy developed Payne began to hope for marriage, but he was humbly respectful in pleading his cause. Miss Gilder prints several of the letters he wrote to her.

"Be certain," he wrote one day, "that I feel the limit I am bound to set to the compliment of your unreserve, and that I am incapable of presuming upon it even in the wildest dreams. . . . May I not then praise you and like you and more, much more than like you, without a box on the ear or frowns?" Mary Shelley replied that he was good and kind and deserved nothing but kindness in return, "but we must tread lightly on the mosaic of circumstance, for if we press too hard the beauty and charm is defaced." At the same time she would like a box to see "Virginius" and would Payne attend to it?

The affair never got beyond the thinnest platonic relation. Payne raved a good deal and Mary Shelley responded with discreet platitudes, but evidently she did not care for anything about him but his theater tickets. No doubt his erratic ways amused her, but there is plenty of ground for believing that her experience with Shelley had taught her that erratic ways were better enjoyed outside the bonds of matrimony. Irving must have attracted her much more strongly than Payne did, for he was eminently staid. A union with him might have promised entrance to the society of which Mary had seen little up to that time. Shelley came of noble stock, but his family had cut him off when he was expelled from Oxford. His atheism and disgrace made him an abomination in British society, which has always been eminently devout, no matter what else might be said of it. He had little money and no friends. The Lord Chancellor deprived him of the guardianship of his own children when he began to live with Mary Godwin and his poetry was looked upon as an emanation from tophet.

Harriet Westbrook was supposed to be the victim of Shelley's sins and was therefore pitied, but Mary was his active ally and had to bear her share of his odium. Her circle was rather restricted when she returned to London to live and both Irving and Payne must have been welcome additions to it, though it is impossible to imagine that she could have thought seriously of marrying either of them. Such a marriage would have involved living in America, which was out of the question for a woman like Mary. Her eagerness for Payne's theater tickets reveals her as a true woman. There was not the slightest need of her sponging at that time, for Shelley's finances had improved before he died and he left her in easy circumstances, but, like all her sex, she could not let a bargain pass by and preferred to spend a man's money rather than her own, even if in doing it she stirred up trouble in his heart.

It would be pleasantly instructive to learn the reasons why the Daughters of the Confederacy want to hang Lee's picture in the University of Washington. He may possibly have heard of the region now called Washington when he was alive, though we doubt it. Certainly the bare name was all he knew about the country. His picture is a welcome ornament wherever it appears, but we can think of many halls where it would be more appropriate than in Washington University.

The milkman who undertook to deliver eggs along his route had a happy inspiration. Why should he not deliver butter, too, and dressed poultry and some of the apple pies that mother bakes? Our social scheme is sadly defective in the matter of distribution. We can produce food as well as anybody, but when it comes to placing it in the consumer's hands we are just about helpless. Our devices are absurdly expensive and futile.

If what Mr. Heckbert says is true, the Park Board would make poor farmers. Their chickens would go hungry unless they foraged upon the neighbors and their pigs would squeal in vain for supper. Wild animals shut up in a "zoo" have not a very enviable time of it even when they are taken care of. When they are neglected and starved the case looks like wantor cruelty.

Governor Johnson's fidelity to the recall induced him to absent himself from the Taft banquet at San Francisco—not only to the judicial recall, but to the recall of the President to open the 1915 fair. The Governor is an insurgent, all right, but when the interests of California are involved "he lay low," like Bre'r Rabbit.

The request of the managers of the poultry show soon to be held for financial aid from the county is reasonable and within the law. A successful chicken exhibit does much to fire the enthusiasm of a great many people other than the cranks in the business, and Oregon needs the stimulant.

The death of Eugene Ely is the first sacrifice Portland makes to the science of aviation. Ely learned to fly high and showed his skill and daring by his flights over the business streets of the city last June. His death adds to the heavy price paid by the year 1911 for toying with the elements.

A Freewater rancher, 78 years old, has just remarried after being a widower for five months, but as the bride is 56, the affair is wholly their business and both are to be congratulated.

J. P. Morgan swore off a quarter of a million in personal taxes Thursday. That gives hope to many local people who are making life burdensome to the board of equalization.

Which of men's exclusive rights will women take next? Many of them have taken the ballot, some have taken the trousers, and now they are taking the razor.

The failure of the bank at Philomath has a mitigating feature, in that it was helping local industrial concerns and passed the limit.

The time has come to stop this high cost of living. Catfish is quoted at 15 cents a pound. Great shades of Missouri! What next?

Elimination of the Krebs people from hopgrowing removes a big landmark in Oregon industry.

The call of the elk, not the recall, will be heard by the Gill hunting party in Alaska this year.

Fifty thousand dollars a year for rent of the Harriman bridge means a million nickels.

The trouble in the County Court is just a family quarrel.

The potato show at Redmond will be an object-lesson of the right sort.

Talesmen, rather than defendant, seem to be on trial at Los Angeles.

Oregon hops are at 40 cents and the brewers must have them.

Eastern weather is prolonging the agony of the fans.

Gleanings of the Day

Following the example set by Germany and imitated by France and England, Japan has arranged for an exchange of lecturers between her universities and those of the United States. Dr. Nitobe will be sent to lecture six weeks each at Yale, Virginia, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Minnesota and Illinois. Another Japanese emissary to this country will be Saburio Shimada, M. P., who will lecture to the Japanese people residing in America and teach them so to order their conduct that they may not be a reproach to the civilized country from which they have emigrated. But the main idea of the Japanese residents in inviting Mr. Shimada was to introduce him to the American people and give them a chance to hear him and thereby establish more firmly the confidence of the American people in the Japanese, and by showing the real state of the progress of the residents convince the Japanese gentleman that their position was such that it could not be upset by the agitation against them.

United States District Attorney Wise of New York has stirred the anger of the New York bankers by a speech to the American Institute of Banking, composed of bank clerks, in which he handled them without gloves. He said the records would show that there are more bank presidents, bank cashiers and other officers charged with crimes than the lesser employes. He said that he had noticed that when an investigation had been started into a bank's affairs or management, those employee who knew nothing about the matter and had absolutely nothing to tell the grand jury were able to retain their positions afterward, "while of those who did testify before the grand jury or the petit jury, none are occupying banking positions today." He continued:

> Yet they are the very men whom bank presidents should be seeking out most eagerly. There are none better fitted. They demonstrated that by the course they took. And I think it is a shame that they should, for doing the right thing, be cut off from pursuing the very career for which all their early training had prepared them.

He is accused of arousing antagonism on the part of bank clerks to bank managers by saying:

> Why wouldn't it be a good thing for you men of the American Institute of Banking to form a league which should be in protest against such a standard? If any bank employe refused to take any part, however small, in the commission of an act in violation of the banking laws, and if he lost his position for his pains, the members of such a league would all walk out. It would be a real contribution to good banking and good citizenship.
>
> He confessed that when he gathered how much knowledge of finance and of commercial law the bank clerks were exhorted to acquire, he was led to wonder how much they were paid, and whether or not they did not feel like saying, with Andrew Jackson's servant, when replying to his master's criticisms:
>
> "Egad, do you expect all the virtues for $13 a month?"

All this provokes the Commercial and Financial Chronicle to indignation. It tells of the great work done by the clearing house to "clean up" the banks, but it does not deny that the clerks who testified against bank wreckers are out of jobs in banks at least. It accuses Mr. Wise of inciting clerks to organize a union, to strike and inciting discontent by dwelling on low salaries, but it admits that they are not overpaid. His outburst is attributed to the bad example set by Attorney-General Wickersham in making war on the trusts.

In 1910 the sales of mineral water in the United States amounted to $6,357,590, the product being 62,030,125 gallons, as reported by George C. Matson, of the United States Geological Survey. Minnesota was the greatest producer, with 9,962,370 gallons, derived from 19 springs. New York was a close second, selling 8,780,903 gallons from 46 springs. Wisconsin, however, obtained the greatest income from her mineral waters, her sales amounting to $974,366; New York was second, with $858,635; and Indiana third with $514,058. Minnesota's sales amounted to $281,009. Louisiana has only four commercial springs. They produced 2,313,000 gallons. The importation of mineral waters in 1910 was 3,306,303 gallons, valued at $983,136.

Active agitation for closer relations with Russia is being carried on in Japan by the Russo-Japanese association, which is headed by General Teranchi, ex-Minister of War and which is raising a fund of $100,000 to promote the movement.

An international commission to establish a new system of government for China and do away with the system of graft and squeeze is proposed by Dr. W. W. White, president of the Teachers' Bible College of New York, in an interview with the China Press of Shanghai. He was starting home from his second trip to the Orient and said:

> The thing that most appalls us is the thought that unless some radical and heroic action be taken the present condition of poverty and misery must continue to prevail for hundreds of years. The officials of the empire pay high prices for office and they get their money back by grafting upon the middle and poorer classes of the people.
>
> The whole nation is graft-ridden and his graft halts at nothing. When a great flood or drouth produces a famine and the generous people of their nations contribute money to relieve the distress, even this money is wasted in graft. It is unbelieveable. I am informed by a man who knows what he is talking about that two firms at Wuhu made more money out of the Anhui famine than was distributed to the starving people of the province during the entire course of the famine.
>
> You have an example of graft here in Shanghai where the Chinese are paying from twice to three times the amount they ought to pay for rice. This is because the rice is not allowed to come in. The dealers take advantage of conditions to mulct the public and they are permitted to do it.
>
> And what are you going to do about it? I say that until the entire system of squeeze is done away with, China will continue to remain the weakest among the great nations and will continue to flounder hopelessly about in the mire of her own official corruption. Until China herself cleans house and abolishes all forms of corruption she cannot hope to stand erect among the powers. And I have come to the conclusion that China will not of her own accord do this.
>
> An international commission should be formed to undertake this reform and the reform should extend from top to bottom. The nations should enter into this compact in the interest of humanity in general and especially in the interest of the women and children of China. They should announce to the world that the integrity of China would be preserved; that no part of the empire would be partitioned off, but that with clean hearts and hands they were going to take charge of their wayward brother, show him the error of his ways, brace him up, put him on the right track and tell him to go along.

It is time that a campaign of education was inaugurated as a means of blocking the game of these conspirators, says the American Banker, referring to the get-rich-quick swindlers. The school and universities of the country ought to make a point of giving instruction which would safeguard the students against this widespread form of swindling. A hundred millions a year is too large a sum to be lost, and if the capital thus wasted could be invested in productive channels of industry, it would be of great benefit to the country.

SUCCESS OF FRAUD IS FEARED.

Opponent of Single Tax Has Gloomy View of Vote on Issue.

CORVALLIS, Or., Oct. 19.—(To the Editor.)—Mr. U'Ren's suggestion that the single tax will take off of the land in use and place on the land held for speculation, has its flaws. I am not averse to placing a proper tax against the lands held for speculation by the railroad, or by Weyerhaeuser, or Collins, or the Monroe Timber Company, or by Hartman, or by Booth-Kelly, or C. S. Smith, or many other of our timber barons who have seized the sources of production in that line. Indeed, I contributed somewhat towards raising the value of the Southern Pacific holdings, in this county to a reasonable price, and when their tax agents came our way convinced them that the raise was only in harmony with the assessment of other like property, and that they really owned valuable timber lands, although they had not known it. But to double the tax on any of these timber speculators, and work a corresponding reduction in the lands of a man who happens to be using his land, is not to my liking. The timber barons cannot all use their land at one time. It will require many years, many decades, in fact, to denude our primeval forests of their wealth of timber, and meantime shall the county each year deplete the value by a tenth, or such a sum, in taxes? It would only require about ten years to take the value of the timber itself. Then why not confiscate it at once, and not drag out the misery.

The exemption of personal property and improvements will not nearly double the tax on that class of property alone. Whenever you take the tax off of improvements and movable property, and place it on the land alone, it is obvious that the spread over all the land must be uniform. The thing about this that appeals to me, and that gives it a semblance of reason is that land is immovable. It cannot get away. It can be viewed once in five years, and thereafter the assessment is easy until another time to view it arrives. This makes assessing largely an office job, as it should be, listing property, instead of valuing it afresh each year. Each man has a different idea of values and consequently the assessments show it. And this creates discrepancies among the different counties each year.

If the valuation placed on lands were to be uniform over all the land, taking into consideration the state of improvements, and entering a value for those improvements; that it is a farm is well improved with orchards, houses, good fences and the like, give it the value which its improvements would justify; to each piece of pasture land give its proper value, and to each field, give its value, and make these values uniform throughout the taxing district—perhaps there would not be so much to complain of.

I am satisfied that the single tax will carry in Oregon. We are going to extremes in legislation and in the fads which follow closely in the wake of such legislation. This single tax idea appears to me to be one of the rankest frauds as yet promulgated in this state. And yet, I believe it will carry.

Take the case of United States Senator. Because a few interested men insisted on running things in the Republican party, the rank and file voted for a Democrat for Senator—an honest Democrat. But there was nothing honest about the system which put him in the Senate. I did not vote that election.

Take the case of Governor. Because a number of interested men tried to run in through the semblance of an assembly in Portland a candidate for Governor, the rank and file of Republicans repudiated him, and voted for a Democrat. I am frank to say that I was one of those Republicans, much as I regret it—much as I then regretted having to do so. But what could one do? Uphold the candidate who had been produced in the manner the Republican candidate was produced. It was not to be thought of. No other had a lookin. To say that the primaries were open to all comers, was not exactly so.

These are some of the results of our boasted progress.

I do not believe altogether in this sort of progress. Rather it would be far better to return to the system in vogue prior to the adoption of the direct primary, and have the scrapping in caucus, within the party, or in the party primary within the party, and then when the party moves forward to meet the enemy at the ballot, go united.

The single tax idea is simply the abuse of this progressive system. But it is of little use to say so. For I find all about—Republicans, Democrats and all other sorts—a good proportion of them already committed to it. The number of large land owners is relatively small, and the number of voters of smaller means large. There's the difference and these smaller proprietors will generally vote for the single tax, unless I am mistaken.

J. H. WILSON.

Duck Shooting Annoys Mr. Clarke.

PORTLAND, Oct. 19.—(To the Editor.)—It is a great source of vexation to me that so many young men who can ill afford it are being fleeced by the duck-club promoters. At this season of the year every one who has a little stagnant pool of water is anxious to lease same to the ever-verdant week-ender. I dare say one might well say, serve them right, for there is neither sport nor profit in it, and the filthiness of such a destructive and noisy diversion I need not dwell on. Danger there is in plenty for many of the so-called sports on learning the use of a gun for the first time. Most of these ambitious youths are amateurs, though so far the accidents seem to be few, miraculously so. Considering the apocryphal nature of everything connected with duck clubs I am sure that as the season advances numerous fatalities must occur. I do not see any reason in particular for these orgies myself, and while I condemn the poolroom gush that no doubt is responsible for most of the hunting, I condemn still more the happy jack parental pulpit for its lack of intelligence in allowing the strong young American minds to drift so far away from decent ideals.

E. B. CLARKE.

Old Scotch Song.

PORTLAND, Oct. 18.—(To the Editor.)—Please publish what is referred to in the song, "Coming Through the Rye." Is it a rye field referred to, or the old stepping-stones across the Rye river? Who wrote the song?

A SUBSCRIBER.

A field of rye is meant, according to Alfred Moffet's "The Minstrelsy of Scotland," published by Augener & Co., London. The same authority says: "Robert Burns has written a portion of this song, but the latter is a very old one and the true author is unknown. To say that a stream of water is meant is erroneous. In every version of the song we have seen, the word is written rye, but not with a capital 'R.' The condition of the rye fields in damp weather would be quite sufficient to reduce the 'petticoatie' of a careless young lady to the 'draig't' condition."

Old Coins at Mint.

PORTLAND, Oct. 19.—(To the Editor.)—If I should go to the United States Mint with a $20 gold piece and ask for change, would I get face value or would they weigh the piece and deduct the wear?

H. G. A.

The value lost by wear would be deducted.

N. NITTS ON CHALK

By Dean Collins.

Nesclus Nitts, he whose sapient talk
Kept people of Punkindorf Station a-gawk,
Aimed careful and long, with an eye like a hawk,
And nailed with his quid a lone bug on the walk.
Then spoke on the tested food value of chalk.

"The school sup'rintendents fer three weeks or more,
With bacteriologist fellers, went o'er
The whole field of chalk, such as school boards has got,
To test and to find if 'twas pizen or not.
Eighteen diff'rent brands or so, I've understood,
Was given to 18 guinea pigs fer their food.

"In rations of grams, so the papers has stated,
Them pigs ate the chalk until plumb satiated,
And throve and grew fat, thus conclusively showin'
No pizen nor germs in them crayons was growin'.
'This chalk,' said the testers, 'is proven the best,
And feeblest school children could eat it with zest.'

"The paper don't state why they wished thus to find
That crayon ain't pizen; but I have opined
It's some modern scheme that the school boards is takin'
To substitute somethin' fer cabbage and bacon,
And other commodities, which has all took
A rise that's beyond many folk's pocketbook.

"Course I may be wrong, but right here I'm a-sayin'
There's chances that this recent testin' of crayon
May lead in the future to sech table talk
As 'Have an eraser!' and 'Pass the green chalk!'
Who knows but the chalk test the school board's been givin'
May show a way out from the 'high cost of livin'?"

Portland, October 20.

Half a Century Ago

From The Oregonian Oct. 21, 1861.

At the meeting of the Common Council Friday night a resolution that a committee be appointed to inquire into and report the necessity of organizing a police force was adopted. Messrs King, Harbough and Hallock were named as the committee.

It is reported that the revenue cutter Jeff Davis has seized the brig Sunny South on Puget Sound. She is partly owned in the South.

The court met yesterday morning and heard arguments of counsel in the case of State vs. F. Patterson, who is accused of the murder of Captain Staples. Mesars. Mitchell and Page appeared for the state and Mr. Logan for the defendant. The court decided to admit the prisoner to bail in the sum of $15,000, in default of which he was remanded to jail to await his trial at the next Circuit Court.

Mr. Cridge Reverts to Vancouver Again.

PORTLAND, Oct. 19.—(To the Editor.)—Henry E. Reed should read up on the British Columbian system a little more carefully than he appears to have done from his communication in The Oregonian of October 15.

If he takes my advice he will discover that Vancouver, B. C., collects no poll tax or tax on personal property. Its city revenue is almost entirely collected on land values. With the state taxes (provincial) it has nothing to do. To that extent it is a single-tax city.

Confiscation? Bosh, Brother Reed. All land now belongs to the state. All is held to paying the taxes levied or the tenant is dispossessed. The owner of a home would far sooner pay the rental value of his land and have the public services extended and enlarged than pay on his improvements the present tax. A piece of unimproved land worth $500 would be annually worth $30 a year. Who would not pay it cheerfully in preference to all the multiplicity of public burdens that now rest on him from the graft of the sugar trust to the street-improvement confiscatory swipe? Not until then would we have the full rental value taken, and when it was taken only value would be given in its place.

There is land enough in Oregon for 20,000,000 people. Stop fining them for industry and they will come. When men can obtain land by merely paying the rental value they will be able to build without borrowing.

The opponents of the single tax propose nothing but the present system. That must be changed.

ALFRED D. CRIDGE.

FEATURES TO INTEREST ALL IN THE

SUNDAY OREGONIAN

"Murmuring Sweet Nothings," full-page photograph.

Panama Canal to have world's greatest dock and harbor system, illustrated article.

Ten Minutes with the funny men.

Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes, the adventure of the Greek interpreter, by Sir A. Conan Doyle.

Inspecting Oregon's Food. How Uncle Sam protects the public. Illustrated.

"In Eighteen-Sixty-One," song featured in "Up and Down Broadway."

Pickings for Peers still good in England. Illustrated.

A Tale Never Told, short story by Alfred Williams Anthony.

Washington's Beau Brummels, men socially prominent at the National capital.

"Compensation," a novel of Washington society.

New Fables in Slang by George Ade.

Portlanders Who Served in same regiment in Civil War.

Widow Wise, Sambo, Hairbreadth Harry, Mrs. Timekiller, Slim Jim and Anna Belle.