

The Oregonian

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is being summoned. This, of course, would not solve the problem in the country where "wire tapping" has become a habit. Persistent curiosity would take the worst offenses to the line whether the bell rings or not. Some of them, we suspect, would be at the instrument every five minutes seeking to intercept a message. Yet the city system suggests an idea.

Portland, Tuesday, Jan. 25, 1916.

IGNORANT OF OUR OWN TIMES.

One of the most disheartening factors to those who realize the tremendous importance of the present war and of the future of the world at large and of the United States in particular is the prevailing unenlightened reaction to its origin, its progress, and all the related facts. Communications to The Oregonian reveal that many readers are ignorant of its causes, though these have been explained at length in news dispatches and in editorial columns.

A recent test at three Eastern universities traces this ignorance to one of its sources—neglect of current history in our colleges and, where this subject receives attention in the curricula, neglect of it by the students. The test in question consisted of an examination on ancient history of the war at the University of New York, Bowdoin and Williams colleges.

Some of the questions were: "Where is Gallipoli?" "What is the capital of Bulgaria?" Others were: "Who is Bethmann-Hollweg?" "Poincare, Von Hindenburg, Sir Edward Grey, the great French minister of foreign affairs, the ruler of Germany." At Bowdoin forty-two out of fifty-three students answered wrongly the question, "In what country is Saloniki?" and results at New York were similar.

When President Campbell sets out to "democratize" the State University it is not to be supposed, of course, that he is seeking to "popularize" the institution in any vulgar sense. He is not hunting mere popularity. He wants, however, to enlarge the usefulness of the institution to the state by giving instruction to greater numbers of young men and young women.

At New York none of the students answered all the questions correctly, only three graded above 90 per cent, the average was 63 per cent, and nine of the twenty-three freshmen failed. Another class of twenty-three freshmen averaged 55 per cent, sixteen and thirteen failed, while the upper class averaged only 61 per cent.

Too many colleges still have their heads buried in antiquity and know more about the battles of Thermopylae, Salamis and Actium than about the battles of the Marston, Poland and Gallipoli or Poland. Where the curriculum does include modern history, students probably are better informed about the heroes of baseball and football than about the men and events which are giving a new turn to the history of the human race.

Moral crusades have been undertaken without effect against the Peeping Tom of the rural telephone. Sermons have been preached without result. The moralists are still at it all efforts to put a stop to the nuisance. A disheartened party liner writes in despair to the Newberg Graphic complaining that he can have no secrets from his neighbors. The spy in Europe who steals the war secret is shot. The common thief is imprisoned. But the purveyor of telephone conversations cannot be taught that it is as wrong to steal a conversation as a coin.

If the telephone can be made to call only the party that is wanted, perhaps it can be made to repel those who are not wanted. If three rings call Jones an automatic attachment that would turn a strong electric current into Smith's receiver would break the Smiths of the listening habit very quickly. The current might be gauged just short of the voltage required for electrocution—although not too far short. If our electrical geniuses cannot perfect this plan or one of a similar nature, then we fear that the woes of rural party liners are hopeless.

WATCHFUL WAITING'S LITTLE BROTHER.

Let the Americans come back home. That has become the Democratic watchword under the Wilson administration. When the rights of our citizens abroad are infringed the Democratic is placed upon them for venturing outside the limits of the United States in the futile belief that their country would look after their welfare and interests.

When the matter was being debated in Congress the other party school of thought is that the danger would be imposed upon the Americans in the islands by withdrawal of American Government agencies. Representative Rucker immediately arose to shout the Democratic battle cry of peace. Let the Americans come back home!

President Campbell, of the Oregon State University, has devised a plan for democratizing the University. The details were given in The Sunday Oregonian. They are worthy of the attention of every educator in Oregon. If the idea so scientifically worked out by President Campbell shall be adopted, the inevitable effect will be to popularize the University so that there will be an opportunity for education by many students to whom the cost of four years at Eugene is now prohibitive.

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ALASKA'S RECORD OF SHIPWRECK. One of the most shameful stories of Government neglect is that of "Marina" Andrews in the Washington Historical Quarterly. No sea route is more infested with danger than the Inside Passage, as the route between the belt of islands and the mainland of Southeastern Alaska is called.

MUNITIONS AND NEUTRALITY. Those persons who like the writer of a communication in The Oregonian "cannot see the logic to our position that a munitions embargo would be unequal" fail to recognize that neutrality is defined by international law, not by the government of any one country which chooses to remain neutral.

A total of 230 ships have been wrecked in Alaska waters since 1848 involving monetary loss of nearly \$13,000,000, according to a table given by Mr. Andrews. The first record of shipwreck tells of loss of a vessel in Vancouver's exploring expedition in 1792. After the United States acquired the territory several Governments transported and supply ships were lost.

son has condemned the action of these belligerents as contrary to international law. He denies the right of any nation to change the laws of war in order to meet new conditions which have arisen since the war began. Were he to attempt a change in the law defining the duties of neutrals without the consent of other nations, he would do that which he condemns the belligerents for doing.

WATERWATCHER'S MAIN QUESTION.

More important than speculation as to Origin of Man.

The writer believes that creation can be either direct and instantaneous or gradual and slow. The prolonged creativity requires as much of creative power as an at-once construction. It General's story of creation seems to anticipate the evolutionary method so near to our own as to be indistinguishable from it.

EMBARGO WOULD NOT SAVE LIVES.

When war was declared by Italy, that country was expected to make short work of the Austrian navy, but has not been able to prevent it from capturing both of Montenegro's ports.

WAGES 27 PER CENT HIGHER THAN A YEAR AGO.

Grand opera fell short \$100,000 in Chicago. Comic opera, however, took to do a flourishing and profitable business.

WIDE INTEREST IS BEING SHOWN IN BASKETBALL.

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BIRD WATCHER HAS SUSPICION.

He Thinks "Deadly" Robin in His Yard Must Be Female.

"VANCOUVER, Wash., Jan. 23.—(To the Editor.)—Following your good article I have been feeding the birds during the past few weeks. From a humane standpoint and as an opportunity to observe the habits and characteristics of birds, it is a pleasure and experience well worth the small trouble and expense attached to it.

BRICK THOUGHT NOT SUITABLE.

Correspondent Objects to Its Use in Postoffice Exterior.

PORTLAND, Jan. 24.—(To the Editor.)—I noticed in The Oregonian a few days ago that the Postoffice building soon to be erected in Portland would probably be constructed of brick in the lower stories and brick in the upper stories.

Score in Oribance.

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Time Is Money to Him.

In Other Days.

From The Oregonian of January 23, 1891.

A special meeting of the Young Men's Democratic League has been called for Wednesday evening. The purpose of the meeting is to secure the enactment of the Australian ballot reform bill now pending before the Legislature.

The Portland Amateur Athletic Club will organize and settle down to business at once. The club already has a large membership and a meeting will be called to elect officers and perfect arrangements for opening up rooms.

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