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TODAY'S WEATHER—Fair and continued cold; winds mostly northerly. YESTERDAY'S WEATHER—Maximum temperature, 52; minimum temperature, 15; precipitation, 0.01 inch.

PORTLAND, SUNDAY, JANUARY 26.

THE ELECTRIC RAILROAD.

Those who are planning to build an electric line of railroad up the Klilckit River from the Columbia to Goldendale have hit upon the best and surest means for the giving of transportation facilities to what may be called the "side districts" of Oregon and Washington. It has been demonstrated that if regions like the Klilckit Valley are to wait upon the coming of standard lines of railroad they must wait long.

But the electric road is quite another thing. It is lighter of construction, it is simpler and cheaper to operate, and it is in all respects calculated to answer the requirements of districts whose main necessity is to be brought into connection with the main trunk lines of the coast.

The Klilckit Valley is only one of many similar districts which might be brought into immediate connection with general markets by the construction of relatively cheap electric lines. East and West, there are everywhere, in the Nebalem country and other regions beyond number which make little or no progress under present conditions have the means of development in their own hands if they would strike for relief through the relatively cheap electric road, rather than hope against hope for the standard road, which is wholly beyond their reach unless some great corporation may chance to look their way in connection with larger projects.

There is no more interesting phase of secondary development in the older sections of the United States than the growth of electric railway lines. East and West, they are everywhere, every where, and very commonly in districts already occupied by lines of standard road. With one break of less than three miles, it is now possible to travel all the way from New York to Boston by trolley lines; and the journey could be almost indefinitely extended in half a dozen directions north from the last named city.

Chicago is coming to be a center of electric railroads rivaled only in its character as a center of standard railroad lines. There is scarcely a village anywhere within 25 miles of the city which may not take its choice of riding by standard road or by trolley; and it is to the facilities which the trolley lines afford that many of the newer Chicago suburbs owe their existence.

California, too, is doing a good deal in the way of electric road building, in spite of the disadvantage due to lack of water power and to the high cost of coal, which is there the only available reservoir of motive power. Santa Monica and San Pedro are connected with Los Angeles by electric roads, which carry both freight and passengers, and there are similar connections between Los Angeles and Pasadena and other neighboring cities.

web of electric feeders extending throughout the country about the last-named town. Everywhere the electric road is coming into extensive use, not merely as a means to overcome isolation, but in districts already served by standard roads. It thrives alongside the standard road because it is able to do business at lower rates. Its relative cheapness makes it, within limits, a far better agency of transportation for small districts than the standard road, which must earn interest upon a large basis of invested capital.

HIGHLY BENEFICENT "PROTECTION."

Relatively new countries like Oregon and Washington, whose development is dependent largely upon the extension of railroad lines, have had now an opportunity to witness the operation of a system which holds the materials of railroad construction at abnormal and unreasonable prices.

The conditions of the steel rail market in this country and on the other side of the Atlantic are extremely significant. In our Eastern markets, as stated above, the current price approximates \$23, while the price of the same grade of steel in England is only \$22 1/2 per ton. Ocean freight alone is \$5 1/2 per ton; so that American rails are being sold in England at \$17 per ton net.

It will, of course, be urged by those who speak for the steel trust that it could not profitably sell the whole of its product at the low price made to its foreign customers. This may be so, but even so, it does not explain or justify the wide difference of \$11 per ton between the domestic price and the foreign price.

To be specific, at the last quarterly meeting of the combine, held about two weeks ago, it was announced that the earnings for the preceding nine months were \$84,772,293, or a sum equivalent to \$15 per cent per annum upon the capital stock of the company. This would not seem serious, but the fact that this is a pretty good business, though it is a pretty good business, these days which will get this rate of profit; but it becomes highly unreasonable when it is remembered that the company is itself a combination of highly inflated small companies and its "capitalization" probably represents double or three times the money actually employed in the business, and when it is further remembered that great fortunes are taken out of the earnings in various forms before the dividend account is made up.

MUST CUT THEIR HAIR AND SHED THEIR BLANKETS.

Commissioner Jones, of the Indian Bureau, has decided that if Indians are to be civilized they must conform to some of the more common rules of civilized life in their dress and customs. In this view an order has been issued to the noble red man to have his hair shorn, to cease painting his face and to refrain from indulgence in the sacred dances, the last of which unfit him for the ordinary duties of even an Indian camp.

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cautions against proceeding with undue haste in carrying out this order. They are to rely upon their own force, and in no case to use harsh means until milder measures have been exhausted. Political history does not support the idea that the Indian agent is a tactful person, hence if dark threats of "Indian uprisings" are heard as consequence upon this order, it may be taken for granted that "Poor Lo" has not been tactfully dealt with in the attempt to make him cut his hair, wash the paint off his face and shed his blanket, in the interest of civilization.

MATHEMATICS IN WAR.

President Roosevelt, in his message, referring to West Point education, said: "Too much stress should not be laid on mathematics, nor should proficiency therein be established the right of entry to a corps d'elite. The typical American officer of the best kind is not a mathematician, but he must be able to control himself, to control others, and to show boldness and fertility of resource in every emergency."

Admiral Melville, the chief number of the Forum, under the title of "The Military Duty of Engineering Institutions," shows clearly that what is most needed in both the Army and the Navy are plenty of officers who are trained engineers. The working of a fleet of modern battle-ships has become largely a matter of steam engineering, so that Admiral Melville's views concerning his own branch of the service will hardly be contradicted.

The ablest officers of the Confederate army, Lee and Joe Johnston, were engineer Generals. Grant, who on the general course stood about the middle of his class, ranked as the finest mathematician in his class. Professor Davies, a famous mathematician, said Grant was so fine a mathematician that his real ambition on leaving West Point was to resign in a few years and become a professor of mathematics in some college of repute.

But since the days of our Civil War the introduction of improved rifles and cannons has so completely revolutionized modern warfare that the study of military mathematics is far more important and essential to an Army officer than it was thirty years ago. President Roosevelt admits that the future naval officer "must be a fighting engineer."

The Interstate business is done legally under the interstate commerce law, and the "original packages" decision of the United States Supreme Court makes it easy to obtain a supply of liquor amply sufficient to irrigate the arid stomachs of the State of Maine. The conclusion of the whole matter is that the principle of prohibition as expressed in summary laws is a survival of New England Puritanism, it is a failure, even under the spiritual terror of a theocratic government; it was a failure under the ablest, sternest and most despotic of the warrior Plantagenet Kings of England.

Seth Low has been Mayor of New York for more than half a month, and yet he has not purified the city. Dr. Parkhurst is both indignant and impatient at this unseemly delay in effecting municipal reform, and advises the Mayor in an open letter that "there is not much to choose between a Tammany administration that has had principles and a reform administration that has had good intentions."

ARID LAND FILINGS.

It is the opinion of Hon. Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Secretary of the Interior, that there is no one question now before the American people of greater importance than the conservation of the water supply looking to the reclamation of the arid lands of the West and the settlement of men who will actually build homes thereon and create communities. The question, as thus stated, is a compound one, the value of its solution depending upon the extent to which its latter clause is carried out.

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LIQUOR LEGISLATION.

Bishop Potter, of New York, in a recent address before the Church Club of that city, declared that "wherever prohibition has triumphed it has educated a race of frauds and hypocrites. Prohibition is an impudent fraud; it is an impudent failure; it permits the sale of sarsaparilla with 17 per cent of alcohol in it, and prohibits the sale of claret with only 19 per cent of alcohol in it."

When the United States battle-ship Missouri was launched at Newport News, December 17, 1901, Miss Marion Cockrell, daughter of United States Senator Cockrell, christened the ship, Miss Cockrell just before the launching received this telegram: Kansas City, Mo., Dec. 25, 1901.—Miss Marion Cockrell, Newport News, Va.: We appeal to you in the names of Christian men and women to use this God-given opportunity to redeem the name of poor old Bourbon-voiced Missouri by using water instead of wine for the launch of the battle-ship Missouri. Yours in Christ's kingdom.

This kind of invocation of Jesus, who both made wine and drank it, smacks of stupidity or sanctimoniousness, and is probably the kind of stuff that has the note of hypocrisy in it referred to by Bishop Potter. The truth is that the wine will not do, and that the only way through sentimental legislation, it will test all legislation looking to the abatement of the drink evil by a comparison of results. Tested by experiment, prohibition is thoroughly discredited in nearly all the states of the Union.

There is a good provision in any state will not effect the release of martyr wives who reject all relief that comes through the divorce channel, it opens the door of escape to suffering women who have a sense of the dignity and individual responsibility of true womanhood that will not permit them to sink their own and their children's happiness in another's uncontrolled appetite for strong drink. What ever may be said of the scriptural proverb for divorce, it falls far below in capacity to inflict degradation and suffering upon wives and homes, the condition known as "habitual drunkenness."

There is said to be a "pickle famine" impending, the pickle-producing area of the United States having suffered from drought last season, rendering the crop short. One might as well speak of poverty in connection with a serious falling off in the output of diamond mines as of famine in connection with a shortage in the pickle crop.

Homeless areas, though yellow with wheat at the harvest season, or dotted with flocks and herds, do not fulfill the dream of occupation which has long hovered over these lands. Homes and families, schools, libraries and churches—these fulfill the idea of occupancy conceived by the first explorers who

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IDOLS IN ECLIPSE.

Two Idols are entering eclipse. They are the grammar and the dictionary. And the sacerdotal caste of pedants and professors finds its authority on the wane. We have reeled with the sweet smoke of rhetoric for a long time. The world has become the vassal of martinetts for generations.

This is the reversion that follows every crystallized religion. The grammar and the dictionary were once demi-gods, because in them were the rules of good usage. Whatever was in the grammar or dictionary was absolute. The question no longer was "Whence cometh wisdom and where is the place of understanding?"

It has come to such a pass that each succeeding dictionary makes its predecessors antiquated. The assiduity of professors is so great that our vocabulary numbers, we are told, over 20,000 words, and is still spawning with frightful rapidity. The latest dictionary contains thousands of words not in any preceding book.

Habitual drunkenness is a direct cause for divorce in 35 states of the Union. It could be extended to the remainder with great justice to women who occupy the unfortunate and hopeless position of the drunkard's wife. The Supreme Court of West Virginia recently decided a case of this kind in favor of the wife, the deciding Justice saying: "No woman is compelled to live with that worst of all bruteries—drunkenness—the peril of her health and life."

As to grammar, any one who is acquainted with other languages knows that English is pre-eminently grammarless. The classic tongues had elaborate grammar. Latin has no inflections, no genders of nouns, no declensions and no genders of nouns. However, to satisfy our pedants, we have all these. And pedants lament that they cannot make English more accord with the classic models, whereas they well know that the English, a grammarless tongue, is more supple and plastic than any language dead or living.

There is something in that signal. The darkness certain fate. So as they please, without being lectured by temperance preachers.

THE COLD WIND FLAG.

You say that the weather prophet. Names that are both hard and long. You may say that his predictions. Are invariably wrong. His words are a kind of telling. Shows the weather will be fair. But you shudder at the banner. With the big black square. Though at every other forecast. You are always wont to scoff. You question him at sunset. And you'll turn the water off. You will order loads of fuel. And for winter you'll prepare. What you see the flag is flying. With the big black square. There is something in that signal. The darkness certain fate. So as they please, without being lectured by temperance preachers.

SLINGS AND ARROWS.

The Glorious Fifth Act. Behold the poor inventor, of whose genius there's no doubt. But who has not the common sense to take a patent out.

Now look upon the lady with swell dresses and a taste. At whose expensive wardrobe all the women stand aghast. She comes to warn the hero's young and silly husband. That she should have some pointers of her husband's early life.

Of fustian and no visible employment or support. Who tells gray-headed jokes as if he really thought them new. And never fails to flash coin when the hero's note is due. Whose faculty for helping folks is by the villain slain cursed.

Troubles of the Drama.

PADUCAH, Ky., Jan. 25.—The citizens of this place are highly indignant because a traveling company has insulted the South by playing "Uncle Tom's Cabin." The revolver market has jumped several points in the last six hours, and is still soaring.

NEW YORK, Jan. 25.—The cable trusts are much increased at the authorities for permitting the performance of "A Message from Mars," which, they say, is an infringement on their privileges.

CHICAGO, Jan. 25.—The people of Chicago have decided not to allow another production of "Hamlet" in this city, on the ground that the title of the play is a covert allusion to the case of the town.

SANTA FE, N. M., Jan. 25.—It has been learned that "Arizona" is soon to be presented here, and measures will be taken to keep it out of the Town Hall. New Mexico is a far better state than Arizona, and a play that is not good enough to be named after it is not good enough to be presented here.

TACOMA, Jan. 25.—The forthcoming presentation of "A Hole in the Ground," by a bunch of bum hams from Seattle, will not be staged here. No insults to Mount Tacoma of that character will be tolerated by our patriotic citizens.

There is something in that signal. The darkness certain fate. So as they please, without being lectured by temperance preachers.

Blindfolded and Alone, I Stand.

Blindfolded and alone I stand. With unknown thresholds on each hand. The darkness deepens as I creep. Afraid to fear, afraid to hope. Yet this one thing I learn to know. Each day more surely as I go. That I am blind the good and ill. By changeless law are ordered still. "Not as I will."