

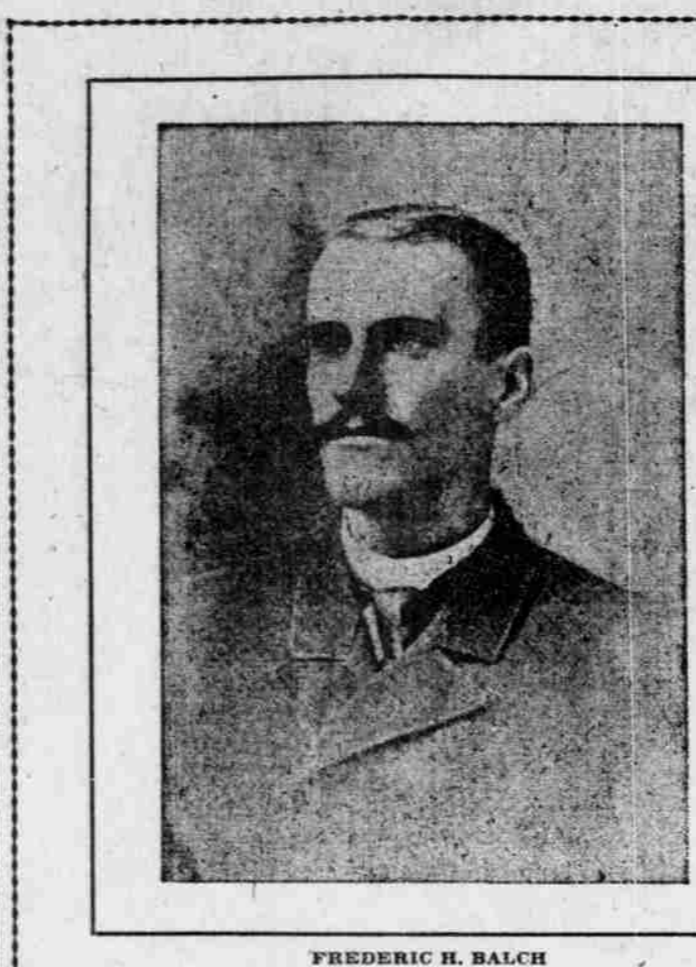
PERSONALITY OF THE MAN WHO WROTE "THE BRIDGE OF THE GODS"

FREDERIC HOMER BALCH

ASPIRED TO BECOME THE WALTER SCOTT OF OREGON—HIS UNTIMELY DEATH

AFTER having read that delightful romance of Indian Oregon, "The Bridge of the Gods," the inquiry naturally made, who is F. H. Balch? It may be a surprise to many to know that Oregon claims him as a native son. So little has been known heretofore of the intense and interesting personality of Frederic Homer Balch that it seems but right that the admirers of Oregon literature should learn something relative to the talented young author who wrote this Oregon classic. His death occurred before he was 20 years of age, when he was standing on the threshold of a great literary career for which his talents gave promise.

Frederic Homer Balch was born at Lebanon, Linn County, Oregon, December 14, 1881. His parents were both pioneers. He was a boy of great ambition. At a very early age he learned to read and write; also at a very early age he resolved to win fame, no matter what the cost. Referring to this resolution, he wrote in his journal: "It may have been a boy's fancy then, but it grew into a burning thirst in after years. Stories of war were used to fascinate me. My ancestors have been soldiers for more than 100 years, and I was proud of my Welsh blood—the blood of the old Britons, a line more purely noble and English than Norman and Saxon. My ancestors were free men of England before the Saxons had heard of the 'White Cliffs,' or the Normans had sailed the Baltic."



FREDERIC H. BALCH

Taber attended school for six months. On account of the mother's health the Balch family again went forth to seek a home. This time they settled in a little town called Lyle, in Eastern Washington, on the Columbia River. An older half-sister and her two children came to Lyle and bought a small farm near by. This sister, being a widow, it naturally fell to the lot of Frederic to make his home with her. He ever after attributed to this sister the molding of his entire life. Her goodness and wisdom must have been great, as his after life showed such singleness of purpose and pureness of heart. All this while Frederic was still dreaming dreams and soaring into ambitious thoughts. But life was not always sunshine, for he was obliged to go into the world and do whatever presented itself in the way of work. The R. & N. Co. was then building its line up the Columbia, and this gave the opportunity for labor; so Frederic Balch shoveled sand and handled rock among the lowest class of humanity. Even while engaged in this manual occupation, his mind was filled with romantic thoughts and he completed an Indian tale, entitled "Wauluhah." The name was afterwards used for the heroine of "The Bridge of the Gods," parts of which he later submitted to one of the first literary critics in the Northwest at that time, Judge Mathew P. Deady, who gave it great praise. However, the manuscript was not accepted by the publishers. This romance was afterwards destroyed on account of the strain of infidelity that ran through it, which was at variance with his later convictions.

had come to rule his life, but he threw himself into his speaking, riding and missionary work with the utmost zeal, spending almost all his days on horseback and his nights in preaching. This close attention to his pastoral duties, the long rides, the exposures, keeping appointments through drizzling rains and blinding snow storms, bore the usual fruits of over-taxation by undermining his health, so that presently he was obliged to give up some of his most arduous labors.

WHAT THE ZITHER SAID. By Frederic Balch. I learned a lesson, Genieveve, Tonight from what the zither said; Its swift notes taught me not to grieve, Nor mourn for pleasure fled. "Be brave! the keen notes rung: 'Be brave; speak strong.' Bold words: be sorrow from you flung; 'Twill not be long. "Ere watches from afar; Would you falter in her sight? She, lifted like a star, She sees you day and night. Aye, her deep pity knows All the cares that on you press; All your sorrows, woe; Think you she loves you less? "Be brave, be true, be strong; Speak words that burn; Defend the right, denounce the wrong; Be worthy her you mourn." This was what the zither said, What it told me, Genieveve. Was it your message, yours, my dear, Saying, "Cease to grieve?" I will be brave and true, Fight out the battle to the end; Live a life not unworthy you; Live a life unstained, sweet friend. "But, alas! for the years awhile; Alas! for the glad years fled; Ah, me! for a look or a smile From thee, O silent dead! Oh, when the words the zither said, But weak the human heart; Ah, me! I hunger for my dead With pain beyond the artist's art; The other slings a song divine, Of purpose grand and high; I see a grave beneath the pine The river flowing by. I see the reach of weary years, Of burdens bitter to be borne; Of deathless memories stained with tears. O zither, can I cease to mourn? Alas! I failed to learn the lesson, Genieveve. Tonight from what the zither said; That spell it with the music fled. —Published in the Pacific, Sept. 19, 1887.

ford, as his ward. She was then a girl of 18. The Crowfords settled in Linn County, and there she married Mr. Balch, James A. Balch, the father of Frederic, was a man of inventive turn of mind, but lacking practical endeavor. He was born in Sullivan County, Ind., in 1835, came to this coast in 1851, was in frontier service 1854-63, serving as Lieutenant in Company F, Eighteenth Regiment Oregon Volunteer Infantry. In his early days in the Northwest he taught school in various places, including Olympia and Astoria. In his first manhood he attended the Wabash College, Indiana, and adopted law as a profession. At one time he served as County Judge in Klickitat County, Wash. And old daguerrotype portraits him as a man of fine presence and intelligence. His son described him as "a very handsome man, full of verve and grace, certainly gifted beyond most of our men, a man of intense ambition. My earliest recollection of him is of his returning from the War of the Rebellion. It was, I think, a rainy day. We children were all in bed, the others were all waiting excitedly for his arrival. I remember the anxious expectancy with which the older ones were awaiting something. Then we heard the stage horn and about my father he entered the room. A handsome, stately soldier, dressed in uniform. It is a living picture standing there at the farthest limit of my memory."

ELIZABETH IN HER NEW OREGON HOME PAINFUL DOMESTIC STORY OF GREEN FIREWOOD AND BAKING BREAD FROM "SOFT WHEAT" FLOUR

AMONG "The Pointed Fir."—My Dear Nell: In my last I tried to picture some of the beauties surrounding our new Oregon home, but I do assure you that that given was only the preface to this wonderful nature book of the hills. I would like now to tell you more of it, but as man cannot live by scenery alone, and you particularly want the details of our early experience here, not only the lights but the shadows, I will have to go back again to those memorable days of January, 1902. Green fir seen upon the hills is admirable, green fir in the kitchen range is abominable, especially after being soaked by rain for three months. When first put in the stove bolstered up by plenty of pine kindlings, it would blaze rather hopefully, until the moss burned off and the pine burned, then with sighing and sobbing say: "You surely don't expect me to go it alone, do you?" shed a few rainy tears, then turn black and all was over. The snout of our packing boxes were demolished in the effort to make a go of it, but all in vain; it simply would not burn, and we had to go back to cooking by the fireplace, where it did fairly well, with a liberal supply of bark, the latter burning well here, but of no use in the range. While in the slough of despond, a man came to bang wall paper on us. Hearing our lamentation, he suggested trying the wood in the oven before using it. Long may that man live and prosper! The curing process helped wonderfully, only now it burned out in a jiffy. Fill the stove full, leave it 15 minutes, come back to it, and not a vestige of fire is left. No coals such as burners of oak and hickory would naturally expect to find. We soon learned that the stove must never be left alone; one must stand there hand on the throttle, like the engineer of a locomotive.

claimed: "Filling a saw! I didn't suppose either of you knew how." "Know how to fill a saw?" fairly shrieked Bert, "I filled 'em, I may say, from infancy up." "Yes," chimed in his shameless confidant, "and if I had a dollar for every one I've filled, I'd ask nothing of J. Pierpont Morgan, and with the look on the part of our auditors." Soon after dinner there came a rapping at the kitchen door, and there we found the shining precursors on their shoulders a saw about four yards long, one carrying an axe, the other an old tin pail, half full of iron wedges. "Whither away?" was asked. "We are going, ladies, to hold 'em in communion with nature in her visible form." "Oh!" "Yes, ma'am, we are going to draw near to Nature's heart, as it were, and give out a chunk of it to satisfy your awful cravings." We were then told that if we would glance up Mount Nebo about twilight, we would behold a novel and interesting sight, "Suppose neither of you ever happened to see a tree snaked out of the woods, did you?" "I've seen 'em from infancy up." "Yes, if it had a dollar for— but our hearers had gone to recline the horses which stood near, literally wretched in log chains. They had not long been gone, until the rain poured down as if the bottom had dropped out of the water tank above. We pelted them then, through that long afternoon. Sure enough, about dark, 'silently down from the mountain's crown' a great procession swept—but, look as we might, we could see nothing being 'snaked.'"

completed the work of sacrifice. Night after night he studied and wrote, many times by the flickering light of pine knots in the open fireplace of a pioneer home, toiling hopefully toward the goal of the young author's ambition. Eight such years were thus represented in the completion of this historical romance. About this time came the loss of the half-sister who had been such an inspiring companionship and stimulus for the higher and loftier aspirations of life. In the year 1885 Mr. Balch entered upon his pastorate in Hood River Valley as a home missionary of the First Congregational Church. For the first two years his work in his chosen field paid him \$1,000 a year, but he was obliged to minister to his scattered flock and to hold church services. He also served as pastor of a Congregational Church at White Salmon, Wash., just across the Columbia. His zeal was so great that he would send a hay wagon into Hood River, four miles away, to give his church members an opportunity to attend his church services. He succeeded in having a frame church building erected, in which divine service is still held. It is a neat little white church, on the edge of a wood, in the heart of the valley, and stands as a monument to his good work. His old home is opposite. But against all discouragements Mr. Balch felt the crying need of religious work on the frontier, and never wavered a moment from the determination that he must give up his cherished literary aspirations and obey a command to enter the ministry. The struggle was intense, as he felt that he was casting aside forever the great, overwhelming ambition of his life. After the final decision was made in favor of the ministry, and fearing lest the new work at times would prove discouraging and his literary ambition would lure him again into forbidden paths, he decided to destroy the manuscript of "Wauluhah." Its destruction was painful to all the family. His sister clung to him, begging him not to destroy it, and trying to save some of it from the flames. Mr. Balch, however, was firm in his decision that one might fancy was on the face of Cecil Grey, his hero of "The Bridge of the Gods" when he turned his back on England and civilization to become a missionary to the Indians, the minister

crust as thick as this fir bark, and as hard. An Experiment With Bliscent. One day while mulling it into loaves, I thought: "I'll just use some of this for bliscent." Bert, my brother, who was with me, and I did. First, the bread was baked, and put out on the table, where it looked as if it had just been exhumed from the ovens of Pompeii. Then, with beating heart, my great venture was placed in the oven. After 20 minutes of thrilling suspense, the door was cautiously opened, and lo! my own had come to me. The queerest-looking outfit you ever saw, Nell, they seemed dried instead of baked, and were about half their original size, had shrunk and shriveled as mysteriously as Mr. Mansfield in the "Jokily and Hyde" transformations. Their crusts were strangely porous, and as I plumped them down, the bread they looked like a lot of little medallions. Just as I was debating in my mind whether it was worth the effort, I felt that the men came in, were about to pass through the room, when Tom's eye was arrested by my layout. "Hello! Look at Elizabeth's geological exhibit—four big, round boulders, and, saying the jests, 'what might these little jokers be? Geodes? No, can't be geodes; not the right color. What would you call these things, Bert?' Scrutinizing them carefully, Bert thought they 'might be a sort of ammunition.' 'Not shells,' said Tom, hitting them a resounding whack with a No. 16 carving knife. 'Too solid, and there is no fuse to 'em. Might be beer-weights.' Wiping tears from my eyes with piteous fingers, hermetically sealing one, I looked up with the other, remarking: 'You are pleased to be merry, gentlemen.' "Come, Bert, we've got to fly. When Elizabeth begins to talk like Shakespeare she's mad; but I'll just take one thing out of the thing, without and without it open and see if I can find out what it's made of." We wrestled with this flour, Nell, for six long months, while the bread improved, but it was never good. One day the groceryman gave Tom a different kind, saying they had ordered it specially for 'newcomers,' as they all complained of the other. When I tasted it, however, too, was Oregon flour, I had small hope of it, but to my surprise it made light, soft, tender bread, which was eaten with praise and thanksgiving. And now, Nell, I've given you a shakedown enough for one time, but in the words of the familiar hymn, "Still there's more to follow." Yours devotedly, ELIZABETH. November, 1892.

development of solanine which may affect us, although it is hard to reconcile this contingency with the fact that so many of us consume the potato cooked in its jacket. The solution of the mystery, indeed, may lie in the occasional development in the potato itself of its active principle. Canada's Coal Lands. Toronto Star. Time will show the wisdom of the Dominion government in setting apart 50 square miles of the coal lands of the Northwest as government property. The coal can lie there for the present. It is not needed, and will not be for a long time to come; but it is there, it belongs to the state, and some day it can be mined by the people and for the people, if need be. The Crow's Nest Coal Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway have larger coal areas, but they have not better coal than that preserved under Mr. Clifford Sifton's policy to remain the property of the state. The Socialists argue that all the coal should have been held in behalf of the people, and mined by the government; but, practically speaking, this is not yet possible, and will not be until the advocates of public ownership of all the utilities and necessities are in a voting majority in Canada. Half of those who follow the cause fall weak at heart when the time comes to actually do something that may be owned and operated. But the publicly owned coal fields of the West will always serve in a measure as a check upon the company-owned mines, and one day they will be worked by the state, for people grow too wise to part with further property of that kind once its value is within popular knowledge. When the West is filled with people, retention by the state of control over the coal supply will be seen to be one of the best pieces of practical statesmanship in Canadian history.

limbs and shattered nerves. There is no limit to its powers for evil; not a fibre of the body is beyond the reach of the dangerous acids and poisons circulating in the blood; the valves of the heart are often affected, resulting in palpitation or something far more serious. Rheumatism does not always come on suddenly; its growth is often gradual. Little pains begin tugging at the muscles or wandering from joint to joint as winter approaches, or the weather is unsettled and changeable, but they increase with each recurring attack, and nothing is more certain than that this insidious disease will at last get you completely in its power and almost before you realize it joints are swollen and locked, muscles contracted and stiff, and you are a chronic sufferer from Rheumatism. You can never conquer this deep-seated disease with external remedies that give only partial or temporary relief, nor by flooding the system with Alkali and Potash mixtures, which break down the digestion, while the disease is left to pursue its destructive work. No remedy brings such prompt and lasting relief in rheumatic troubles as S. S. S., which attacks the disease in the blood, neutralizes the acids and stimulates all the blood making organs. It removes from the system all poisonous substances, purifies and enriches the thin acid blood, and when the Uric Acid salts and the gritty particles are dislodged and drenched out of the aching muscles and joints, the patient is happily relieved for all time of the discomforts and misery of Rheumatism. S. S. S. being a purely vegetable remedy can be taken with safety by the old, middle aged and young. It will cure you, no matter whether you are a long-time sufferer or only beginning to feel occasional twinges of Rheumatism. Write us about your case and our physicians will advise you without charge. We will mail free our special book on Rheumatism.

But a good liniment or plaster will often give temporary ease by producing counter-irritation and reducing the inflammation and swelling, but there is nothing curative about these simple remedies, for Rheumatism is not a skin disease and cannot be rubbed away with liniments or drawn out by plasters or anything else applied to the surface. Rheumatism is caused by urea, uric acid and other irritant poisons in the blood, which are carried through the circulation to every part of the body and deposited in the muscles, joints and nerves. When the system is in this condition, exposure to night air, cold winds or damp, chilly weather, seem to arouse the sluggish blood and the most terrific pains begin to shoot through the muscles and joints and they swell and inflame, writhe and twist, and so intense is the suffering that the strongest constitution cannot long hold out against the nerve-racking tortures of acute Rheumatism, and many times its victims are left helpless, helpless cripples, with crooked

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