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Portland, Sunday, Aug. 18, 1907.

IMMORAL LITERATURE.

An exciting discussion has arisen among our literary pontiffs and arbiters of taste over the question why the Americans of today prefer to read the American books.

This explanation leaves two things unaccounted for. It does not tell why the American novel after another, though essentially a creature of style and arid in thought, nevertheless pleases the whole Nation instead of a local audience.

current disposition of British writers to discuss risky subjects is not a transient lapse, but a return to an inveterate national habit.

Of all these literatures ours is the weakest. Has our purity anything to do with intellectual sterility? Can a literature be pure and at the same time immoral?

It can be pure and silly at the same time; but silliness, happily, is not a permanent quality of immorality.

German critics boldly declare that American literature, in spite of its careful delicacy in language and subject matter, is really indecent.

What goes by the name of American literature is afflicted with a decadent neurasthenia which is vastly worse than indelicacy. It is so preoccupied with what it must not say that it fails to say anything worth while.

It is not that the general sentimentality of the age is so rampant that it vitiates the literature of the age, but that the literature of the age is so rampant that it vitiates the sentimentality of the age.

The reason why the Portland Gas company didn't make an intelligible and complete report to the Auditor is, that it doesn't know how. It doesn't know how because it never learned how, and it never learned because it hasn't had to learn.

Now the public may want something done again. There is a city charter provision which requires that holders of franchises in Portland shall "make stated quarterly reports in writing to the Auditor, which shall contain an accurate statement in summarized form, as well as in detail, of all receipts for all purposes and all expenditures for all purposes, together with a full statement of all assets and debts, as well as of any other information as to the costs and profits of said service as the Auditor may require."

"Why is it that we are hearing so much of graft, of political and business trickery and dishonesty, and general social corruption?" This question Dr. J. R. Straton asked and answered in the course of his recent sermon at the White Temple. Here is his answer: "It is because so many men have lost their faith in the true God and the realities of the Christian religion."

By "true God" Dr. Straton means the God of the ancient Jews, who, through Elisha, cured Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy and wrought other miracles of the same sort.

a man of them is talented with heresy, not one of them cherishes a single doubt of a single dogma.

The simple fact is that the formulas of religion which Dr. Straton and many others preach are worn out. For our time they have neither power nor meaning.

The recent passing of Mrs. Sherar, of Sherar's Bridge, on the Deschutes, in Wasco County, will recall to hundreds who have passed that way during the past thirty-five years many acts of kindness that marked a "stopping place" on a weary journey.

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ing sand into a great industrial city, modern in every detail, in the short space of a few months, is one of the marvels of corporate enterprise. Banded by millions and with other millions certain to accrue as profits, this city was launched with a confidence and pushed with an energy that secured immediate results.

LET THE FACTS BE GIVEN.

The brutal whipping alleged to have been meted out to a convict on the convict who had escaped, been retaken and returned to that institution, backs back to the dark days of human slavery.

The Oregonian does not think that life in the penitentiary should be made attractive to wrongdoers. It is possible on her way to the farther interior to teach a little country school.

The story to which reference is above made is probably exaggerated, though not untrue. The system of management of this institution that seems to prevail and in the hands of men, whose sensibilities have become blunted through long contact with the criminal class it might easily be true.

A VANISHING INDUSTRY.

The New Bedford (Mass.) Mercury has just celebrated its 100th anniversary by issuing a handsomely illustrated edition giving a complete history of the whaling industry, a business which has made the little New England port famous to the world.

Now all that is to be changed. That excellent humanitarian, Dr. Clarence True Wilson, who delights to go into the highways and into the villages, having eliminated slot machines, put a stop to gambling and shut off Sunday booze, and thereby reformed this hitherto wicked city, will today give himself to the Butte and in his kindly, pleasing way show the unfortunate wretched of the hammer the way to better things.

In 1845 the seagoing tonnage of New Bedford was double that of Philadelphia and the port was fourth in the list of great American seaports, being excelled only by New York, Boston and New Orleans.

The great fleet which for more than half a century made the name of New Bedford famous and a household word in all parts of the world, has almost completely disappeared.

After consideration of the matter calmly and judiciously for four straight months, the conclusion is overwhelming that the Beavers are not as good a team as the 1906 champions.

Seattle boomers are probably lying awake nights concocting a scheme to "stand off" Tacoma's \$6,000,000 skyscraper, which has been started—in the newspapers.

Another Pittsburgh millionaire defendant in a French divorce suit, usual cause of suit, helps to keep the steel trust town well advertised abroad.

with the wonderful clipper ships which were built for the California gold rush. There was not much in common between the "rubbies," stockily-built whaling craft and the clean-limbed, symmetrical racers whose clouds of canvas carried them along at steamer speed.

The uncontrollable fury of a dry grass fire must be witnessed to be understood. The settler's menace and dread, the horror of the wild creatures of the plains, from the lordly buffalo of a past era to the timid deer and rabbit.

Old Yamhill is going to give a good account of herself when apple-picking time comes. Aside from the fact that Millard Lowndale lives there and proclaims that he has Hood River growers beaten out of sight when it comes to the color and flavor of the reliable old Spitzenberg, there is a multitude of horticulturalists about McMinnville, Astoria, Sheridan and Newberg who are in the race to prove that Willamette Valley apples are the finest on earth.

Wonders of Travel.

A Portland youth, having heard of the many strange sights to be seen in travel, recently took a trip to neighboring cities. When he returned he described the wonders he had viewed as follows:

I traveled over many places, And I find in every station Wonders in astounding cases.

Buildings are erected upwards. Pierced with windows facing streets, And the lifts shoot up and downwards, And one's friends one never meets.

Streets are long and hot and asphalt. Autos snort and on you glide; If they strike you it's not their fault; Coppers never can be spied.

Trolley-cars go whizzing by you. Hacks and wagons make you dodge. Everybody tries to lose your lodge. Poor relations seek your lodge.

All these wonders I have witnessed, Since I took my trip away. Don't you think that I have progressed And should go on today?

Aunt Polly's Philosophy.

A HARD customer is one you can't cheat, while an easy customer is one who has cheated you after the bargain.

Selected from the Rockefeller axioms: Whether a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush depends on whether you have plucked it or not. It's pretty hard for a wife to convince her husband that half the weight of the suitcase is the suitcase itself.

No Grandstand Plays Then.

"Give me liberty or give me death," cried Patrick Henry.

Let the Ants Work.

"Go to the ant, thou sluggard," shrieked a poor, but willing-to-work victim of capitalist slavery, at the lulling son of a rich trust magnate.

"That's what father says he's been doing all his life," answered the youth, "but teaching me how to do it."

Fame on Two Beaches.

Down at Clatsop Beach is a 1770 post, somewhat of a myth, who, after seeing the tide wash the sand, wrote the following:

O sands of Father Neptune Who on the Summer beaches May have lurked.

On sands of Father Time Are others writ. Who in this life tilled long Or mayhap fill.

To you I leave the question To be guessed: Of these two, which the longer Fame possessed?

Lies and Fishes.

A CLACKAMAS editor laments that though it may be easy to catch fish in Clackamas River, Rogue, Nehalem and Grand Ronde, it is easier to tell lies about them. We don't believe it.

COMMENT ON SUNDAY OREGON TOPICS

In Defense of Powell Valley Girls—Wonders of Travel—Aunt Polly's Philosophy—Lies and Fishes—Fame on Two Beaches—Race Suicide Question—Several Views of Rockefeller—Buttermilk and Idiots—Poem From the Santiam—Mister" in Disrepute.

SOME persons jump at conclusions wholly unwarranted by facts or appearances. For example, somebody in the Graham Herald writes:

The actions of the occupants of at least two buggies on the Powell Valley road last Sunday afternoon proved beyond the shadow of doubt that they were not married. She was holding his hand on her shoulder in one buggy and in the other the young lady was sitting on her beloved's lap and he was giving both hands to the other.

How does the writer know but that the pair were just coming from the preacher's or were on their honeymoon? Besides, we don't think it gallant to "howl out" the girls of Powell's Valley region in such fashion. We always defend the girls up Johnson Creek. One of them cooks one morning every morning, and acts like the girls mentioned by the editor, although we came from the parson several years ago.

Oregon's Retort Courteous.

A CITIZEN of The Dalles, attending a dinner in New York recently found himself called upon to answer many questions about the West. One New Yorker, who had never traveled beyond the Alleghenies and had evidently imbibed his knowledge of the Far West from boyhood reading of Nick Carter literature, asked:

"Don't you fear the Indians out there?" This amused the sharp-witted Oregonian and he replied:

"My dear sir, if Columbus had discovered America on our side, you fellows would be wearing blankets yet."

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try, but the flies are wholly innocent and do not concern the fish, at any rate. It is beyond our credulity that fishery men are liars. And to know our good opinion about them, we shall reject their testimony about one another.

"You Can't Always Tell."

"WORK for the people," exclaimed Billionaire Rockefeller, between two meetings of his Sunday school class. "The people can't get along without me."

These words borne to the ears of others brought forth varying comment. The doctors pointed to their foreheads dubiously, feared Mr. Rockefeller might live the last of his 95 years in an institution for the feeble-minded.

However, the president of the steel trust, the beef trust and the sugar trust smiled approvingly, saying: "That's what we're doing, too."

Mark Twain thought Rockefeller's words a huge joke. But the people couldn't see the joke. To quote a modern proverb: "You can't always tell from where you sit."

Buttermilk and Idiots.

BUTTERMILK craze has no charms for a certain editor in the wheat belt, who rather thinks the high merits of that beverage are somewhat overrated in the country gulping it down like champagne. "Cluckers, cluckers, cluckers!" Nor does he think those merits appreciated by the "idiots," for, in his opinion, they siph it down not because they like buttermilk, but because they must imitate a craze. They would take down corn husks or swell quite as readily, if the fact commended it, says the grouchy editor. Listen to this indictment of the "idiots":

Thank God, the editor enjoyed buttermilk and preferred it to beer and wine long before the modern, unassuming, contrived beverage was discovered. He led the idiots of the country gulping it down like champagne. Cluckers, cluckers, cluckers! Then Dutch cheese, and finally, we presume the fact will develop into a long handled gourd and a well rounded melon. Now if Rockefeller or some other great man should, by chance, be compelled to eat husks with corn, he would be down on all fours gnawing corn from a log trough in less than 25 hours.

Isn't it enough to make us jealous of the idiots, too—those of us whose mothers on "churn day" used to turn out buttermilk for us and the bogs to drink? That fluid is too good for idiots, especially when they make a bad fat of it. But fat seems to use good objects and otherwise, without discrimination. The Indians had a habit of picking minute tormentors out of one another's hair and cracking them between their teeth like nuts. White women used to wear hoopskirts, and at the beach they still dress in bathing costumes that would be considered "perfectly awfully" anywhere else. The Indian bride of a certain white man at Astoria in 1812, was so smeared with noxious fish grease, according to the custom of her people, that the groom had to scrub her before receiving her. Right now the whites are chasing each other in autos, and but yesterday the women were straddling bicycles in bloomers.

We sympathize with the Starbuck editor, but would like to ask him what he is going to do about it. Still he might refuse to vote for the buttermilk candidate for President. And what do the dairy people of Tillamook think about it? And Dairy Commissioner Bailey?

Not Sleep Eternal.

From the ticks of the Santiam, numerous lines of verse have sprung, but hardly ever of serious sort. It will be remembered that Bill Johnson, a certain person, had a death in rhyme of humor. This time, however, we have a strain from another lyre, thrummed by a person who confesses himself advanced in years, but somewhat near his twilight. He explains that after the evening night he expects dawn again. Here follows the verses have come from Santiam's sacred shrine, somewhat near his twilight, where the currents flow slow and deep:

An old man looked upon the yellow grain and sighed. "This thus," said he, "all things upon the earth are vivid;

Then to pass, To glow, to gernal night comes after morn, alas! Four thousand years went by; then up a shoot of green. The long with Pharaoh's clay the grain had lain unseen. And now again the morn. And how with Pharaoh's right? It is still with what mortal knows an end of life?"

"Mister" in Disrepute.

A N Oregon editor rejoices that "Mister" is the only title not fallen into disrepute. We cannot agree with him, although we do not see much weighty concern in the question.

In our earliest recollection, "professor" was the most dignified prefix. Professor Smith was principal of our school. In his office upstairs in the shadow, he had a mystic machine for dusting the jackets of bad little boys. A non-lamer came to town, then a dog trainer, both entitled "Professor." We marveled at the title but said nothing. We had too much respect for Professor Smith.

There was a Doctor Jones, also regarded with respect, since he brought brothers and sisters to our house. But there came to town another doctor, who paraded the streets with a brass band and gave a minstrel show to convince sick persons that he could cure them. We could hardly reconcile these two doctor titles, either.

Then there was the "Hon." John Brown, who was treated with great deference, since he gave money to an orphan's home. The Hon. John Brown dealt in mortgages and foreclosed when he could. Another "Hon." turned out less respectable. His name was James White. He looted a bank and ran away from his family with an actress. The title "Senator" was adorned and adorned in turn. Hewson "roomed" and "roomed" in "Palmer." An editor is always "Mister." We have seen some of them good and others bad. One could not abstain from forging checks though imprisoned frequently. Other editors have been guilty of sundry misdemeanors and even crimes. Other trades have had many bad Masters too.

Therefore, we cannot agree that mister is the only title not fallen into disrepute. In fact, if final proof is wanted, we need only cite that when boys we called every man, to whom we wished to be respectful, "Mister," but when he passed out of sight, called him any old name. The fact is, if names or titles were the test of character, we should all be tainted.