# The Oregonian

PORTLAND, OREGON.

Entered at Portland, Oregon, Postoffice as Second-Class Matter.
Subscription Rates—Invariably in Advance.
(By Mail.)

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| Daily, Sunday included, one year | $8.00 |
| Daily, Sunday included, six months | 4.25 |
| Daily, Sunday included, three months | 2.25 |
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| Daily, without Sunday, one year | 6.00 |
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| Sunday and Weekly, one year | 3.50 |
| (By Carrier.) | |
| Daily, Sunday included, one year | 9.00 |
| Daily, Sunday included, one month | .75 |

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Postage Rates—10 to 14 pages, 1 cent; 16 to 28 pages, 2 cents; 30 to 44 pages, 3 cents; 46 to 60 pages, 4 cents. Foreign postage double rates.

Eastern Business Office—The S. C. Beckwith Special Agency—New York, rooms 48-50 Tribune building. Chicago, rooms 510-512 Tribune building.

PORTLAND, SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1909.


## SHINING MARKS.

Since we cannot in the nature of things tabulate the distinguished births of the year 1908, we console ourselves the best we can by recounting the brilliant deaths. This is only to follow out the natural preference of the King of Terrors, who proverbially loves a shining mark. Births are always problematic affairs. Nobody can say of a man child that he will not be a Shakespeare when he grows to manhood. There is even a possibility that he may become President of the United States. That fate has befallen babes born hitherto, and it may befall others. Who would presume to select from all the children born in 1908 those who will die undistinguished? It were a bold person who should try to do so. But of those who have departed this life during the year just gone, the shining ones can be enumerated easily enough, and though their names fill a respectable space in the newspapers, yet comparatively they are not numerous. Were we to write a truthful history of Death for the last, as well as for all other years, it would consist almost entirely of the short and simple annals of the poor.

Up yonder where the books are kept doubtless they are all recorded, and it may be that the estimate of the dead in the central office of the universe is somewhat different from ours. Is it entirely certain that Gabriel or Michael, or whatever archangel keeps the records, would begin the mortuary roll for 1908 with the names of Tsi An and the worthless Charles of Portugal? The latter was hurried out of this world and may have arrived somewhat unexpectedly in the other, but one can vouch for it that his arrival made not much of a sensation. As for Tsi An, it seems likely that she will be able to take care of herself wherever she may have gone. If there was ever a capable woman born upon this earth, she was one, and we cannot imagine her in heaven or elsewhere without her wits about her and her admirable skill in disposing of obstacles, whether animate or inanimate. Were it permissible to impart suggestions to the dignitaries of Paradise, or the other realm, one would almost wish to warn them that with Tsi An in the neighborhood it might be well to keep especial guard over their thrones. The chances are that before another year rolls round she will be sitting on one or more of them.

If Tsi An's welcome in the other world was probably tinged with a shade of anxiety as to her future plans, no such feeling marred the joy of Bishop Potter's reception. He was a man who had the singular capacity of robing himself in linen purple and fine and washing his feet with butter all his life without losing his simplicity and his sympathy with the unfortunate. In outward circumstance the good bishop was an aristocrat. In his heart he was a humble follower of the man of sorrows, and like his master, he was acquainted with grief. Some bishops seem to have preempted the Lord. Their proprietorship of the Almighty is the most conspicuous of their traits. Bishop Potter, like the greater Phillips Brooks, remained the servant, not the owner, of Jehovah, and we are fain to believe that he received a seat in heaven as a humble petitioner rather than by right of eminent domain. One of the chiefest joys of the lowly when we get to Paradise will be to observe what has happened to the high and mighty who lorded it over us here. If they are absent, we shall, of course, draw an immediate and not unconsolatory inference as to their whereabouts. If they are in the city of the great white throne, will it be in the capacity of Councilmen and Mayors or as sweepers of the streets?

By a stretch of the imagination one can imagine Bishop Potter sweeping the streets of the New Jerusalem, but not Grover Cleveland. If there is an ancient and conservative seat of sacred learning within the pearly gates, there is where he has taken up his dwelling and the chances are that by this time he is edifying the angelic students with all manner of wise lessons drawn from his experiences in the White House. Doubtless the financiers of Paradise have already found him a valuable counsellor, but what sort of a figure does he cut in the choir? If he had any musical gifts on earth they remained latent. His white robe he can manage well enough, since it is but a modification of the academic garb he wore at Princeton. The crown he naturally accepts as his due. Even the wings will not embarrass one who was so deeply sensible of deserving them, but what will Mr. Cleveland do with his harp?

Edward MacDowell will be as much at home with the harp as Mr. Cleveland is with his wings. If he composes as good music in heaven as he did on earth, he will be sure of an audience to listen to it, which was not always the case here. Mrs. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps taught us long ago that poets and painters, as well as musicians, go right along with their occupations in the next world without any break and with more grace and liberty than they ever had below. In Edward MacDowell's case it is comforting to think that this is true. Now that he has left us, we are just opening our eyes to the fact that we had a composer of the first rank whom we neglected for ragtime artists and vaudeville screechers. Let us hope that in heaven they can perceive the merit of a musician without waiting for him to visit Europe and come home with a certificate of genius from the nobility and crowned heads. America may well be proud of her contributions to the higher life of Paradise during the year 1908. Religion will acknowledge a debt for Bishop Potter, politics and finance for Grover Cleveland, art for Edward MacDowell, but the warmest thanks of all will come from the elite circles of celestial society for Mrs. Astor.

## A NEIGHBORLY WORD.

It is very kind of our good neighbor, the Pacific Christian Advocate, for whom The Oregonian always entertains highest respect, to speak of The Oregonian in this way:

> While we have not always approved of the course of the editorial utterances of this great paper, we have always recognized it as one of the mightiest factors on the Pacific Coast in directing the thought of the people, in helping them to form their estimate of movements and measures and in leading public sentiment not only in political affairs, but in all matters pertaining to the development of civilization. When it is right, it is immensely right, and is a towering influence for good. When it is wrong, it is tremendously wrong, and has almost an overwhelming influence in the wrong direction.

The standard of right is sure to approve itself, finally; but it is regrettable that any departure from received or "orthodox" opinions, as to social, religious, theological or political, or other concepts, is likely to be regarded as wholly wrong. Yet amid all these currents of thought and action, certain principles have been established. On them The Oregonian believes it is "immensely right." Certainly it wishes to be so. But there are matters of opinion—not established principles—upon which The Oregonian expects some of its readers—in greater or less numbers—to believe it "tremendously wrong." History is read in different ways, by different minds; and it requires a long perspective, and some degree of freedom from prepossessions, to enable one or another to judge aright.

We are apt to grow fond of an opinion, and to call it honor, honesty and faith. Yet it may be nothing more than an opinion; which, however, may have great vogue and long continuance. But time may wear it out. The moralities are all on sure ground, but they are often misjudged, and the arguments derived from temporary interests or incidents employed to sustain them may be exceedingly weak and erroneous. In these matters we often judge each other to be "tremendously wrong," when in fact on main questions we differ little or not at all.

But The Oregonian feels that it is a little too apt to be dogmatic itself, to criticise so good a neighbor as the Advocate for its criticism of its course—whether "immensely right," or "tremendously wrong." Yet if we could separate essential from unessential things—agreeing on classification of them—we should have few differences or none at all. And then perhaps thought would stagnate and action would cease. Doubtless therefore it is best that we should all continue to hold to our various opinions, till time shall sift them, and decide between them. It is a saying of Cicero's, spread on multitudes of modern title pages, that time expunges the figments of opinion—opinionum commenta dies delet—the phrase is quite beyond any power of translation.

## CARPE DIEM.

There was published not many months ago a book of essays by David Grayson entitled "Adventures in Contentment." Intimate and personal, as all good essays are, these tell of the author's life on his farm, where he plants corn, cares for his horses, visits with his neighbors and loves his wife like other farmers; but, unlike many other farmers, from the placid circumstances of the quiet days as they slip by David Grayson manages to extract a fine quintessence of continuous happiness. A chat over the roadside fence with a neighbor driving past to town has deep meanings for this gentle epicurean. To get up in the morning early and plant corn all the forenoon in long straight rows symbolizes high intimacies between God and man. The May blooms have a value for him. He sees them as children do, gilded with transcendental gleams and shimmers, and the mild weather of the Fall is permeated with the whirr of invisible pinions. To David Grayson it is a blessed world we live in, and his book of essays tells us why he finds it, or rather makes it, so.

David Grayson is not the first to tell the secret. Horace knew it and let it out. His "Carpe Diem" is the open sesame to a new earth and heaven, if we could but believe it. Socrates, too, knew the key to the great mystery, and, wiser than Horace, he put it into the lock and opened the mystic door. Horace was a dependent, a parasite. He could not exist without his Maecenas to pad and pamper his life; but robust Socrates wanted no patron and no cushions. A drygoods box on the street corner was throne enough for him, and a row of eager young Athenians listening to his talk made all the Eden he wanted. What would we do with Socrates today? Of course we would not make him drink hemlock, but is it entirely certain that we would not send him to the rockpile?

What David Grayson has to say is an old, old story, but his way of saying it is not old. He never tells us outright that all the value of things lies in the way we take them, but that is what his slow, meditative, fragrantly bucolic pages mean. All there is of life is in its moments, and see how little we make of them, hurrying each one away to clear room for the next, and still in the next and the next forevermore finding nothing to cause us to wish them longer. Faust's bargain with Satan was that his soul should be forfeit as soon as a moment came which he would fain prolong. David Grayson would lose his soul every minute in the Summer day had he made such a compact, for he beseeches them all to stay. To him they are all good.

There have been no essays so fine as David Grayson's published since Henry Van Dyke gave us his "Little Rivers." In that enchanting volume there are three or four excellent essays, and one that is perfect. Nothing of Charles Lamb's is better, though Lamb was always up to the mark, while Van Dyke has never quite reached it since. His book of fish stories, which followed "Little Rivers," could not really interest anybody but a market man or a cook. The essay, in fact, is a difficult literary form. It was never before more popular with authors than it is now, but the consummate specimens we get are as rare as diamonds, and more precious. They are a delicate confection made of solid thought for a base, sweetened with humor, spiced with wit and leavened with the magic yeast of style. It is a cake which the gods would eat with joy in Elysium, if they could get it. But from all accounts the inhabitants of the gardens of the blest are too busy singing hymns to write essays; so the gods must do without their David Graysons.

The perfect essay is fragrant like ripe fruit. It is redolent of joy and sorrow. Always near to laughter, it is never far from tears. It is deliberate, pensive, deft and light. The witty author of the "Elizabeth Books" said she loved to read Wordsworth's "Excursion" on her vacation trips because of its delightful stodginess. That quality may be all very well in a didactic poem, but it is fatal to an essay, and, sad to say, most essays have it in overflowing measure. The reason why nobody can read them is that they are too soberly fraught with a mission to do us good. David Grayson wants to do us good, and he succeeds a great deal better than if he had opened a formal service with prayer and a hymn and continued it with a sermon. He does not preach.

His little talks are more like parables, and yet there is nothing fictitious about them. What he tells us is the genuine experience of a farmer, but not of a "horny-handed son of toil." He triumphs over his toil. His beatific vision irradiates it. The clods are not dead to him. The plow is more than an implement; it is gracious with helpfulness, it blossoms with poetry. The patient horses labor for him because they love him. How could we imagine that beautiful soul beating his dumb brother? To him the sordid bodies of his neighbors and their gross greed are never visible. All that he sees of them is the divine. But it is not illusions that make David Grayson rejoice in his fields and in the humble dwellings which he frequents. He is happy, not because he deceives himself, but because persistently and resolutely he looks at realities. It is the rest of us who are blinded by illusions. We are the ones who will not see the truth. The world is bleak and sordid to us only because we refuse to sweep the fogs away. There is plenty of sunshine outside them, and if it could get back in there would be perpetual Summer for us all. David Grayson lets it in.

## HOW TO RESOLVE.

Considering how swiftly all other fashions change, it is wonderful that good resolutions should follow the same old type year after year. Peter rises up on New Year's day and vows that he will not get drunk for the next twelvemonth. Joseph quits smoking and Henry briefly abstains from profane language. In a few days all these good resolutions are broken. Nobody seems to think that a New Year's resolution can be kept and everybody forgives the breaking of them. What can be the reason? Perhaps we promise ourselves too much. If instead of attempting a great fundamental reform, like breaking off a habit which has enslaved one half a lifetime, some little failing were attacked, success would follow, and from the slight success of this year we could advance to more important victories in the years to come. Certainly it is better to try something easy and win than to fail at something difficult. Why not abandon the old stereotyped resolutions and turn to something entirely new? Who knows what the result may be?

Suppose, for example, we all resolve to speak one more kind word, think one more pleasant thought and do one more deed of love than we did last year. That will not be very hard to keep. Nobody could possibly fall in an effort so trifling, while the consequences might be a measureless addition to the world's stock of happiness. A kind word from every adult human being on earth spoken in the course of the year means a thousand a minute. This is well worth while, and if we add to it a thousand good deeds and pleasant thoughts each minute, it makes an appreciable difference in the complexion of human life.

Moreover, the determination to speak one kind word would not lie sterile if it were fulfilled. It would lead to others, both in the man who spoke and the man who heard. It is the nature of gentleness to beget gentleness. The first thing our maker of resolutions knew he would have forgotten himself completely and be thinking of others. Then his bad habits of drinking and tobacco using would fall away from him like filthy garments, for they cannot cling to an unselfish soul.

## CHANGING PUBLIC SALARIES.

One of the first principles governing the compensation of public officers should be that no officer's salary shall be either increased or diminished during the term for which he may have been elected. That is a just rule, and failure to observe it leads to graft or political trickery. When a man has been elected to an office at a certain fixed salary, he has a right to expect that such compensation will be continued during his term. When he seeks election it is with the understanding that he is willing to accept the office at the salary provided by law, and the people have a right to expect that he will fill the office and perform the duties during the term at the fixed rate of compensation.

Whenever the Legislature or a City Council adopts the policy of raising salaries during a term, there is constant temptation for incumbents to use their official influence in the effort to secure the raise. When compensation is changed, either by making it higher or lower, the change should take effect at the beginning of the next official period. Under such a policy there will be no incentive to the exercise of improper influence and every man who runs for office will know exactly what he will receive as salary for the two or four years of his term. Fact is that most officials get as much as they are worth, and many of them who receive snug salaries would have a hard time making a plain living at private employment. If, as some of them assert, they could do better in private business, they are at liberty to resign and take a try at it. There would be no difficulty whatever in filling their vacated positions.

## BRITAIN'S OLD-AGE PENSIONS LAW.

Great Britain, in feeling blindly about for a solution of the perplexing problem of caring for her indigent aged, enacted last Summer an old-age pension law which provides, under careful restrictions, for the amelioration of the condition of penury in which such vast numbers of British subjects find themselves after their always small earning powers have ceased altogether. Carefully as the measure was devised, it is estimated that it will cost the taxpayers of the kingdom $35,000,000 annually to fulfill its provisions. The vast multitude that outlive their ability to work without having made or having been able to make the simplest provision for the winter of life is indicated in this sum, since the highest pension paid is but five shillings a week, this sum being allowed to applicants otherwise eligible, whose annual income is less than $105 a year. The law went into effect New Year's day, with several hundred thousand applications to consider, some 200,000 of which were, for various causes that conflicted with the provisions of the law, disallowed.

The question presented by the demand for old-age pensions is complex. Its economic feature is two-sided, involving as it does a compensation for labor so meager as to leave no surplus after the pressing wants of today are supplied wherewith to meet the wants of tomorrow. On its industrial side unthrift is arrayed against thrift and the latter is compelled to make up the deficit of the former. On the prudential side the tendency is toward a relaxation of all effort to get beyond the hand-to-mouth condition of living during the earning period, since by the pensions act the necessities of life are assured to the earner when he is an earner no longer, but simply a dependent old man.

Some of these questions have been waived and others ignored by the lawgivers of the United Kingdom in enacting this sweeping old-age pensions law, and the whole matter will now be left, with the resirictions that surround it, to work itself out. It is a question with a long look and its results will not be immediately apparent, except in the clamor of a vast army of pensioners who clutch eagerly at a provision that stands between them and the workhouse in their indigent age, without the necessity on their part of taking thought for the morrow.

## REFORMING THE LORDS.

Reform of the House of Lords has become a frequent subject of discussion again in Great Britain, since the rejectment by the Lords recently of the Liberal liquor licensing bill and last year of the education bill. The precedents are well established that the Lords cannot veto the Commons when the latter act as the sovereign assembly. In matters purely legislative, the Lords can exercise co-ordinate powers, but when the Commons express the sovereign will of the people, then the Lords must back down. Should the next Commons be elected on the license issue, the Lords would not dare stand in the way.

Premier Asquith has served notice that the Liberal government will present several issues to the people, among them the licensing of public houses, taxation of incomes and reform of the tax on land. This Liberal programme he expects to be welcomed by the voters and to give the Liberal government a strong lift. It will attack the Conservative Lords in their most vital part, since they represent the landed and the privileged classes that would be adversely affected thereby. But the Liberals are in no haste to go before the people on the license bill. This indicates that they doubt its strength in the issue in the popular elections, unaided by other reforms. The Conservatives on their side are calling on their opponents to take the matter before the people. Asquith has replied that he has other important matters in hand first.

It has become fixed in British constitutional procedure that the sovereign will of Great Britain shall be expressed through the Commons. It took many centuries of strife to establish this principle. It was first enunciated by John Pym about 1640, and was finally established in 1832 when the Commons forced the packing of the House of Lords, in order to secure enactment of the great reform bill. Of recent years some persons have predicted the final elimination of the House of Lords. While events may be trending that way, that outcome will probably not be accomplished soon.

In order to ward off this outcome, a committee of the Lords has proposed a reform in the membership of their body, eliminating worthless, unfit peers from active participation. This would be accomplished by allowing the nobility of the kingdom to elect their representatives in the House of Lords, just as the Scotch and the Irish Lords do now. It would reduce the membership of the House of Lords from more than 600 to about 350 and would eliminate the least worthy of its present members.

It thus appears that the liquor question is likely to raise a very important constitutional question in Great Britain—whether the Lords shall again be compelled to bow down to the Commons. Aside from the temperance aspect, the question has a very important constitutional significance

## THE WASTEFUL NORTHWEST.

There are certain fixed, definite principles of political economy which apply alike to all industries, regardless of the territory in which these industries may be located. The wheatgrowers of the Pacific Northwest have but little in common with the cotton-planters of the far South, but it would seem that to a certain extent they follow the same methods in the conduct of their business. This is suggested by a statement recently issued by Solomon Wexler, a New Orleans banker, in which he said that "the reckless extravagance and improvidence of our planters, and their suicidal policy of failing to raise their corn, meats and vegetables at home, have at last brought about a restriction of their credits by banks and commission merchants, which has created the necessity of living at home and having the storehouse on the plantation and farm instead of in Chicago and Omaha."

Mr. Wexler very wisely concludes that "This change will make the South rich beyond all expectations. We have but to keep the $700,000,000 produced from our cotton crops at home, and in a few years shall have an abundance for our further development."

Almost identically the same economic loss that is complained of by the New Orleans banker is in evidence in Oregon and Washington, where the new wealth annually created is proportionately even larger than that of the South. Walla Walla, for example, receives large sums for her wheat and fruit, and, despite the fact that there is no better country on earth for the economical production of pork, she buys throughout the year an average of a carload of Eastern pork products every ten days. In Portland, the average in the past has been about one carload per day for the entire year, with the Puget Sound cities still farther from being self-supporting.

Taking into consideration all of the other cities in the Pacific Northwest which might be supplied with the home product, it is easy to see that the vast sums annually sent out of the country for meats alone cannot fail to make serious inroads on the surplus that pours into the country to pay for wheat and other products which thus far have seemed to the farmers much more important than hogs, vegetables, butter, eggs, poultry, etc. We bring Eastern meats into Portland by the train load, and have not yet got past the necessity of importing eggs, poultry and butter at the rate of several carloads per week, while for celery, asparagus and other vegetables, Utah, Colorado and California are drawn on in carload lots.

The banks of this country do not find it necessary to exercise the credit restriction mentioned by Mr. Wexler, but it is easy to understand that, if our people would get the habit of producing and selling at home, everything that could be produced here, there would be a tremendous saving each year. Fortunately there are signs of progress in this direction, and it is only a question of time until we will note the change.

## A RELATED ADMISSION.

The Tacoma contention that the lofty Cascade range of mountains, over which traffic bound to or from Puget Sound has been lifted for the past twenty years, was not a serious drawback, has been abandoned, and the superiority of the Columbia River water-level route acknowledged. The Tacoma Tribune, in a copyrighted article by Donald Fletcher, says that "in 1910 it will cost less to haul 100 cars from the Rocky Mountains to Tacoma, or the reverse, via the Columbia River canyon, than it does to haul ten cars to Tacoma or any other Puget Sound port over the Cascade Mountains, in the same time, with less wear on equipment." With this interesting preliminary, Mr. Fletcher proceeds to fill up the entrance of the Columbia River, so that "even a steamer drawing 10 feet of water must wait many days before crossing," and, finding no outlet for traffic in such a port, the freight which comes down the Columbia canyon is hauled over the heavy grades between Kalama and Puget Sound, 145 miles past Portland to Tacoma, although, as admitted by Mr. Fletcher's copyrighted article, "rail haul costs ten to thirty times water haul per ton per mile."

Having thus eliminated Portland from the commercial map by the simple proces of filling up the mouth of the Columbia River to a depth of only ten feet, Wizard Fletcher then concludes that "Nature did not furnish a rival to Tacoma anywhere as to harbor, coal, iron and hydro-electric power, strategically, topographically, geographically and climatically considered." All of Mr. Fletcher's copyrighted article reads charmingly, and is about as neat a piece of commercial fiction as has recently appeared.

Perhaps the strangest feature of the situation is the fact that within the past four months five mammoth steamships have steamed away from Puget Sound in ballast and come to Portland, where they loaded full cargoes. The smallest of these steamers was drawing 23 feet 7 inches when she left Portland, and the deepest-draft vessel was drawing 25 feet 2 inches, the average draft of the five being 24 feet 2 inches. None of them experienced any detention, either in the river or at the river entrance. Scores of other vessels, some of them of much deeper draft than the vessels which came from Tacoma to load at Portland, have passed in and out of the river this season without detention. This, it must be admitted, is not a bad record for a port for "ten-foot steamers." The showing by comparison with that of Puget Sound does not seem serious when we note the following in the Tacoma Legder of December 27:

> Although the British ship Agnes Oswald left this port three or four days in advance of the Archibald Russell, it is a question whether or not she will proceed to sea in advance of the latter. For several days severe weather has prevailed off the Cape and the Agnes Oswald has proceeded only as far as Neah Bay, where she has been stormbound ever since. In the 6 o'clock report from Neah Bay last night the Oswald was reported anchored there. At Clallam Bay the French ship Admiral Cecille is at anchor awaiting better weather off the Cape. The Cecille has a cargo of lumber.

As the Agnes Oswald is a diminutive craft of about 19 feet draft, it would appear that a "ten-foot channel" that floats in safety steamers of 25 feet draft is entitled to some consideration, even by mountain-climbing railroads.

## STEEL TARIFF UNNECESSARY.

The trust-promulgated theory that the country as a whole is a beneficiary of the system of monopoly, as exemplified in the great industrial combinations, received a rude shock in the testimony given before the ways and means committee by E. H. Gary, of the steel trust. Mr. Gary to a certain extent agreed with Mr. Carnegie that "there are as many ways of estimating the cost of output as there are of killing a cat," but was forced to admit that under existing conditions it was practically impossible to figure the cost high enough to render the protective tariff a necessity. Testifying under oath, Mr. Gary stated that if all the duties on steel were removed, the United States Steel Corporation would still dominate the American market and make steel at a profit, adding, "But we will dominate it as a monopoly. That is the problem that confronts the committee."

This testimony is nothing more or less than an admission that the trusts have utterly failed to justify their existence by any reasons that have previously been put forward by their sponsors. The most prominent of these reasons has always been the alleged greater economies of production and distribution than were possible with small plants operating independently. It now develops by the testimony of Mr. Gary that these economies are beneficial to no one but the trusts; the public at no period in the life of the big monopoly has been permitted to share in the slightest degree in the benefits of these economies. Mr. Gary further testified that it was possible for the trusts to make steel rails $1 per ton cheaper than they could be made by the small concerns, with other products in proportion.

It is thus quite plain that the public is forced to pay not only the exorbitant profit made possible by the tariff but, in addition, must bear the burden of a number of small manufacturing concerns, which are permitted to live by the generosity of the trust and the aid of the tariff, instead of by any economic demand for their presence. In perfecting his monopoly after the removal of the tariff, Mr. Gary would of course put the small fry out of business, and, to prevent such a tragedy, he now seeks to stay the hand of the tariff reformer by explaining that such would be the inevitable result. This, however, is a matter in which the consuming public is not interested. If there is no economic reason for the existence of these small concerns they should perish. Mr. Gary in his testimony has made admissions that are fully as damaging to the cause of protection as those which were made by Mr. Carnegie, who expressed himself in favor of the removal of the tariff.

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A few days ago comment was made in these columns upon the difficulty experienced by the Oregon House of Representatives in securing a competent reading clerk. It was then suggested that the Legislature should pursue the policy adopted by Congress, that of conducting a competitive examination for the purpose of testing the qualifications of the candidates. It might be further suggested that by an appropriate act the Legislature could authorize the Secretary of State to conduct such a test a month or more before the session begins and employ the reading clerks. The Secretary of State purchases all supplies for the Legislature in pursuance of competitive bids. Why should he not also employ so important an assistant as the reading clerk, who occupies a position which few men are competent to fill. But perhaps the members would not want to give up a small bit of patronage in order to secure competent service.

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The other day Uncle Joe Cannon said that the Speaker, unless the rules should give him some control of the House, would be like a cat in hell without claws. An old simile, turned to new and good account. For 25,000 bills have been introduced in the House during the present Congress, and it is an absolute necessity to kill most of them. Whoever the Speaker may be, whether of one party or another, the rules must give him power of slaughter. Not if each day had the length of one thousand hours could the House consider them. The Speaker must be "boss" of the House.

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The text-book on geography in use in this state has a supplement devoted particularly to the geography of Oregon. It might be well to procure a similar supplement for use in textbooks on history, inserting at the end of the United States history a dozen pages setting forth the important features of the history of this state. A week's study of Oregon history would give the child a pretty fair understanding of the principal events in the life of this commonwealth.

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W. R. Stubbs is the newly elected Governor of Kansas. He was in Washington the other day, and took his little son into the gallery of the Senate. Rev. Edward Everett Hale especially interested the boy. Mr. Stubbs explained that Hale was chaplain of the Senate. "Oh, he prays for the Senate, doesn't he?" asked the lad. "No," replied Stubbs, "he looks at the Senate and then prays for the country."

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It is announced that a criminal convicted at Pasco, Wash., was sent to the County Jail at Walla Walla for safekeeping and there "lost sight of" for about six years. Evidently the jailer forgot to collect board bills, the clerk of the court lost the records and the Prosecuting Attorney forgot all about the case. Now if Jim Finch could just manage to get "lost sight of," he would be fortunate.

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The Railroad Commission in its annual report is asking for more power over the railroads, in order that the Commission can regulate them more successfully than at present. It is a question with some Oregonians whether we need more railroad regulation as much as we need more railroads. The plan of catching the hare before cooking him still has its merits.

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One of the unmistakable signs of the substantial growth of Forest Grove in recent years is that which shows that it has outgrown its public school building, while an equally unmistakable sign of the enterprise and intelligence of its citizens is that by a vote of 82 to 33 they lately decided to supplant the old building with a new one next year at a cost of $12,500.

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It seems quite possible that the candidacy of C. P. Taft for the Ohio Senatorship was merely a step in the process of effecting an agreement among the other candidates. The elimination of Foraker was coincident with the withdrawal of Taft, leaving Burton a clear field. Political methods are not always straightforward, even when they have a good end in view.

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It is not probable that the proposition for sale of bonds, to the amount of $500,000,000, for improvement of the waterways of the country, will carry. We want at least $100,000,000 of the amount for the Columbia River and its tributaries, but see no show of getting it; therefore we are "agin the whole scheme."

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Messina is, comparatively, a modern city. It must not be confounded with Messenia, of the Grecian Peloponnessus. Reggio, on the opposite side of the strait from Sicily, is the ancient Rhegium, and was founded about 750 B. C.—very nearly the time of the foundation of Rome.

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If the prices of eggs and butter keep on soaring, pretty soon the publishers of agricultural papers will suspend business and go out in the country to engage in dairying and poultry-raising.

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The Oregon basketball team lost a game at Minneapolis. Which might have been expected. Unaccustomed to the frigid climate, they expended their vitality keeping warm.

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That was a most delicate yet suggestive hint that the congregation of a Portland clergyman conveyed, in a holiday gift. The gift was an elegant traveling bag.

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It can be said to the credit of the hawker that his fruit is beyond reach of the stray dog, which is more than can be said of many a grocery display.

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Southern Lane is agitated for division of the county and may invoke the initiative. Hood River establishes precedents other than in the fruit line.

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Now come the halcyon days for the wise woman who held out some of the Christmas money for the clearance sales.

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When you get on the water wagon today, resolve not to fall off for at least a month.

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Before next New Year the East Side ought to agree upon a location for the new bridge.

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Fortunate the man who felt no need to "swear off." But he was few and far between.

## OREGON.

Green-girdled thy hills and thy valleys,
O Oregon; foaming and free
Thy rivers out-sprung from the mountains, down-journeying swift to the sea,
Where in Spring mid their undulant currents a tissue of silver is spun
As the myriad salmon swim upward, a-shine in the scintillant sun.

Green-girdled thy valleys and foothills; where cedar and hemlock and fir
In the breeze that drifts in from the ocean, with sibilant symphonies stir,
While cleaving thy gorges wild torrents are ceaselessly hurrying through
And over them poises the eagle, carved black on the infinite blue.

Green-girdled thy gorges and bastions; thy bastions built frowning across,
Plumed heavy with ferns and close-mantled with shimmering emerald moss;
And hurled from far heights, the bright waters flash by in tumultuous flight
To the depths that lie sunk underneath them—like lances of light.

Green-girdled thy bastions and forests; thy ancient and towering trees
Where the winds in the cloud-ward hung branches roll up like the surf of the seas;
And below, in the solemn cathedrals, stands Silence, enwrapt and divine,
Star-guarded, sun-mellowed and vibrant, in alternate shadow and shine.

Green-girdled thy forests and harbors; where evermore furled or unfurled
Are the banners and pennants of nations; the fluttering flags of the world;
With the hulls and the sails of stout mariners voyaging forth
To the lotus-bound shores of the South, or the bergs of the North.

Green-girdled thy vineyards and orchards; and purple and green
Where apple and grape all a-sway in the sunlight are seen,
And where perfume of odorous hours like oozing of honey slow drips
While Ceres stands circled with harvests, the smile of the dawn on her lips.

Green-girdled thy graves and thy memories; largess of years;
Thy honor-roll noble of statesmen, of soldiers and staunch pioneers;
With monuments raised to thy bravest, their green-walled enclosures beside,
That tell how when Liberty beckoned, they buckled on armor and died.

Green-girdled thy vistas wide-stretching, through distance all crystally clear,
To the Titan-etched profile of Hood, where it rises in beauty severe;
Green-girdled thy hopes and thy fame, as with open-flung, welcoming gates
Thou facest the future triumphant, O Oregon, Empress of States.

ERNEST M'GAFFEY.

Portland, Or., January 2.

## THE POSTOFFICE SURPRISE.

'Twas the time before Christmas. The Postoffice clerks
Were shuffling and dealing the mail,
When up through the noise and confusion there came
A queer little, shrill little wail.

Cried the Chief and the Deputy, "Did you hear that?"
And ran for the corridor door
And straight to the basement to look for its cat,
Followed by every clerk on the floor.

In her warm, fur-lined box was the Postoffice cat.
Cried the Chief, "She has deputies five!"
"It's a full sextet, gentlemen," purred the cat:
"I'm the happiest mother alive!"

"Get some cream," cried the Chief, "and one of you run
For the catnip and make them some tea.
They might have the colic, this weather is cold,
And one go for beefsteak, and see

That it's porterhouse, tender and juicy and thick,
And get them an eider-down spread.
Bring that office chair cushion and fit in its box,
"Twill make them a fine feather bed."

From a hole in its corner squeaked old Father Rat:
"What a fuss for six kittens, so small!
Why, Maria had seven last week and I
Didn't mention the subject at all."

"Six new kittens added today to the force,"
Wrote its Chief to its Washington man.
Sighed old Father Rat, "How I wish I stood in
On the Government-ownership plan."

MAY ALICE OGDEN.

### He Had Known Better Days.

Harper's Weekly.

Touched by his sad story, a Harrisburg woman recently furnished a meal to a melancholy-looking hobo who had applied therefor at the back door.

"Why do you stick out the middle finger of your left hand so straight while you are eating?" asked the compassionate woman. "Was it ever broken?"

"No, mum," answered the hobo, with a snuffle. "But during my halcyon days I wore a diamond ring on that finger, and old habits are hard to break mum."

### Reformed Spelling and the Poets.

From Olivx Wendl Howm's "Ritings":

I tair her tatrd nsine doun;
Long has it wavd on hi.
Nd mnnl n I has daned to e
That bana in the ski.
Beneth it rung the batl's shout
Nd borst the canon's raw;
The meller ov the oehin air
Shal sweep the clouds no maw!

From "The Poitry ov Skotlind":

Skots wa hay we Walis bled!
Skots hoom Broos hay aftn led!
Welkm to yur gawry bed
Or to viktereel

—Columbia Jester.

## A FEW SQUIBS.

Wigg—Sillicus says he is working for all he is worth. Wagg—Is that so? Then I suppose he is getting $4 a week.—Philadelphia Record.

Gushing young woman (to Baronet at garden party)—Oh, Sir James! I hear you have an artylene plant, and I simply adore tropical flowers!—Punch.

"What shall I play?" asked the organist of an absent-minded clergyman. "What sort of a hand have you got?" was the unexpected reply.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

"It takes a baby mos' two years to learn to talk," said Uncle Eben, "an' den it takes de res' ob its lifetime to learn to keep f'um talkin' too much."—Washington Star.

Wilmot—De Auber is what might be termed a modern artist, isn't he? Critleus—Yes; but he carries modernism to extremes. Why, he recently painted a portrait of Father Time pushing a lawn mower instead of carrying the conventional scythe.—Chicago Daily News.

Irate overseer (to discharged hand, again at work)—Here, I say. What the blazes are you doing here? I gave you the sack yesterday! Battered Person—Yes, I know you did. And don't you do it never no more. My missus went on somethink awful when she heard!—Punch.

Mother (viciously scrubbing her small boy's face with soap and water)—Johnny, didn't I tell you never to blacken your face with burnt cork again? Here I have been scrubbing half an hour and it won't come off. Boy (between gulps)—I—uch!—ain't your little boy—uch! I's Mose, de colored lady's boy.—Judge.

"What were your impressions of Atlantic City?" asked the reporter. "I do not understand how that could interest the public," replied the titled alien. "Why," explained the reporter, "you're a peer, and in this peerless country if a peer appears at a pier and peer, of course we'd like to know how it struck him."—Philadelphia Ledger.