

# OREGON PROFESSORS PUZZLED BY GIRL

### Educators Tell of Vivid Imagination of Opal Whiteley.

### DATES HARDLY AGREE

### Love for Mother and Insatiable Desire for Things of Woods Recalled by Teachers.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, Eugene, March 6.—(Special.)—Opal Whiteley's diary, "The Story of Opal," in the March Atlantic Monthly, and the short biography by the author which precedes it, are being read with great enthusiasm by the faculty members under whom she studied when in the university. From the fall of 1916 to March, 1918, of her life before coming to the university they have little knowledge except that she seemed to love her mother very much and spoke of her often to them.

"Of the genuineness of the biography I cannot speak, for I have no way of knowing whether it is true; but I do think Opal was sincere in what she said there," said Dr. Warren D. Smith, head of the department of geology, today. Dr. Smith was Miss Whiteley's major professor, and knew her better than any other faculty member. "There are three ways of interpreting the biographical matter. Either it is all genuine, or Opal has written what she believed to be true, after creating it in her own imagination, or it is all false."

**Age Causes Question.**

When she registered in the university, Opal gave the date of her birth as December 13, 1897, which makes her older than stated in the Atlantic. She wrote "Charles Edward Whiteley, of Cottage Grove," in the space which called for the name of "father or guardian," not designating which he was. She gave her birthplace as Cotton, Wash. Although the editor of the Atlantic says she was born "where, we have no knowledge."

Opal always spoke of her mother as her best friend. She must have meant by this the woman she now speaks of as her foster mother, since she said in March, 1918, that her "mother had gone to homegoing a year before." She said at this time: "My dearest girl chum was my mother. In my love of music, art, poetry, biography, the drama, history, she was in close sympathy with me and we had many wonderful twilight hours together."

Opal Whiteley, according to all faculty members, was a most remarkable and unusual girl. She lived all alone in a tiny house on the outskirts of town. Here the few rooms were filled with her 16,000 specimens of all sorts of rocks, plants, butterflies and insects and her books. She did a huge amount of reading, not only in history, art, biography, music and the drama and had the record in her freshman year as doing more reading than any other woman in her class.

**Club Formed for Self.**

"One of the things which bothered her most," said Dr. Smith, "was the fact that she had no intimate contact with other students."

Opal did not take a part in student body activities, except in a Phisias Philol "lovers of nature" club which she organized herself early in 1918. The club did not have a chance to make much progress before she left college, at which time it ceased to exist.

As state superintendent of the Junior Christian Endeavor for two and one-half years, Opal had an opportunity to know many of the children of the state, in whom she was much interested.

Dr. Smith would express no opinion as to the genuineness of the diary.

"I knew Opal as a student in geology," he said. "She was very irregular in the way she worked, but had unbounded enthusiasm and a strong personality. I never worried whether she was doing her work according to rule or not, but wanted the spirit and not the formula. Her work was distinctly not standardized, but it would be a mad world if all work was standardized. She had a wonderful fund of information, although it was not systematic."

**Girl Called Genius.**

"Her work was never scientific," said Dr. John Howard, head of the department of zoology, under whom Opal studied bird life. "She is a child in her mind still and extremely imaginative. She is a genius in her way."

Dr. Howard intimated that he believed that she had received help in the preparation of her diary, although he said this was only his belief.

"I have not seen enough of the diary really to tell anything definite about it," said Professor A. R. Swanson, head of the department of botany.

"I think that by piecing the diary together, she can give to it any rendition she chooses. She always lived entirely in another realm."

Opal is now living near Boston.

# REMARKABLE OREGON GIRL WHOSE CHILDHOOD DIARY CREATES SENSATION.



OPAL WHITELEY.

## LASSIE'S DIARY FAMOUS

### COTTAGE GROVE GIRL'S STORY FEATURED IN MAGAZINE.

### "Story of Opal" Linked With Whiteley, Lover of Great Outdoors—Incident Doubted.

(Continued From First Page.)

aged her about the lines which her unusual nature was bound to follow and who expressed a natural parental fear of the results of so abnormal a development.

**Talents Attributed to Parents.**

Now like a thunderbolt from the skies comes Opal's diary in which she attributes her unusual talents to parents who died when she was a little tot and in a fascinating manner she relates how she came to be substituted for another Opal Whiteley who was brought to Cottage Grove from Washington, where the Whiteleys had been and where the tot whose place the diary has her take is supposed to have passed as the other little girl whom many Cottage Grove people had known before.

It is admitted that Opal kept a diary, that she was ever writing in it and that she has woven in a most fantastic style the portion of the diary which has so far been published. That the greater number of the events related in the diary, about which she has painted word pictures that are most weirdly remarkable, sometimes pathetic, childishly yet supernaturally told, are in the main true beyond doubt, but the father, who is yet employed in the lumber camps, is apparently too much grieved and too much worried about Opal's welfare, when questioned upon this subject, to leave any doubt that he believes Opal to be his own child, and none but a finished actor could act the part taken by the Grandmother Scott, unless she thought she told the truth, when she explains how impossible is this astounding revelation in "The Story of Opal," as related in Atlantic.

**Substitution Is Doubted.**

On the trip from Washington to Cottage Grove when the alleged substitution was supposed to have taken place, with only her mother, but there were a few weeks between the time Mr. Whiteley preceded Mrs. Whiteley and the arrival of the mother with the child.

Could Mrs. Whiteley have made a substitution and hidden from the world the death of her own child and found another whose resemblance to the other Opal was so remarkable as to fool even the father? No mother will believe that anything of this sort could have happened.

No father will believe that such a substitution could be made without discovery. No one can doubt the sincerity of Mr. Whiteley's grief when he speaks of this most unusual denial of parentage and says that the child he left with the mother was the one who arrived here. Opal has a remarkable resemblance to pictures of Mrs. Whiteley and a characteristic resemblance to other members of the family.

Mrs. Whiteley is no longer here to speak for herself.

**Childish Dream Suspected.**

That Opal believes that she is the daughter of angel parents who were great lovers and students of nature, highly cultured and wealthy, is equally almost beyond doubt. Is the unusual story of her substitution a childish dream upon which her mind has worked until she has come to believe it?

Is the entire story the child of a most inventive imagination, or does it partially reveal an inexplicable mystery?

That probably is the most talked of question in Cottage Grove, where so many know Opal and are interested in her every act, particularly in her arrival as a writer able to get her story into the most prominent position in so exclusive a magazine, and so remarkable a story, so un-

believable, yet so realistic, woven about daily events in such a manner as to give it all the earmarks of truth and accuracy—written, so the editors say, in the cramped and painful print of a child of six, an age when it would seem impossible for a child to invent a piece of fiction which would be so unusual.

**Joan of Arc Story Similar.**

The only story like unto this that comes to mind is that of the peasant maid, Joan of Arc. She, too, heard voices, and they directed her life and actions along a path of glory. Few persons in modern times believe that she really heard those voices, but the maid believed that she heard them and the things they directed her to do, and which she did do, were very real.

Can it be that at about the age of six, that at the time of the removal of the Whiteleys from Washington to Cottage Grove, the nature of the little Opal was changed, that the nature which was that of her parents left the body and flew to a spiritual world in the great unknown and that another nature took possession of the deserted tenement of clay, that the new Opal not remembering the parents of the other Opal, thought that a substitution of body as well as of spirit had taken place and that the parents, having had charge of the body and not the spirit and the nature, did not know of this substitution which did not charge the form or features or family resemblance?

**Day Dreams Cause Real Falls.**

Those who believe that the spirits of the dead are about us might easily work out such a theory, for the Opal which we have known, while apparently naughty, as her diary relates, yet seemed to be from the world apart, a being of another world. She seemed often even herself to forget her own bodily presence here when in day dreams she would fall from trees and other high places.

Many who have always known the Whiteleys scout the idea that is set down in Opal's diary. The parent and other relatives, apparently sore at heart, characterize it as the vagaries of a mind that has been abnormally developed along unusual lines. A few believe Opal's story and nearly all believe the Opal herself is sincere in its telling.

It is a most remarkable piece of literature, and is a fulfillment of the prediction of her many loving friends that Opal would attain a high goal if she did not wreck her health with overwork, which she frequently has come near doing.

### Return to Germany Not Required as Condition of Release From Internment Camp.

### ALVENSLEBEN IS PAROLED

SALT LAKE, March 6.—Alvo von Alvensleben, German financial baron of the Pacific northwest before the world war and interned at Fort Douglas here since May, 1917, was granted a conditional parole today and it is expected he will leave for Seattle soon to gather together what may remain of the fortune he had invested in mines and timber lands in that region.

It is not believed he will return to Germany, as this was not stipulated in the parole conditions.

During the world war, von Alvensleben is claimed to have been an active agent against Canada. He was a former lieutenant in the German army but left that country because of a quarrel with a superior officer. His claims that he is a cousin of the ex-kaiser have never been proved, but it is believed much of the money he invested in the northwest was furnished by the former monarch.

### TEUTONIC FINANCIAL MAGNATE CONDITIONALLY FREED.

### HONOLULU MAYOR DEAD

### Hawaiian Started as Stevedore and Rose to High Place.

HONOLULU, T. H., March 6.—(Special.)—Joseph J. Fern, a Hawaiian who rose from a stevedore on the water front to the position of mayor of Honolulu, died here on February 20 from pneumonia. He was Honolulu's first mayor in 1910 when the town became a city and he held the position with the exception of two years until the day of his death. He was born on the island of Hawaii and came as a boy to Honolulu. From a stevedore's job he graduated into that of a shipping master. He was married three times and leaves a family of 14 children. His successor has not yet been chosen although Supervisor Jonak Kumale, manufacturer of ukuleles, is looked upon as the most likely candidate.

Fern was one of the few big Hawaiian men of affairs who had never visited the mainland.

### Voluntary Exit Denied

### Reds to Be Deported to Have No Chance to Return.

### WASHINGTON, March 6.—Proposals made by Charles Reht, counsel for

### Recruiting Officers to Take Advantage of Ad Club Convention.

### OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, March 6.—Orders have been communicated to the commandant general of the western department of the army at San Francisco to have some reconnaissance guns and machine guns join in the caravan of Pacific coast advertising clubs, state highway commissions and automobile associations to the convention of the Pacific Coast Ad clubs at Stockton, Cal., in May, Senator McNary was advised by Adjutant-General Harris today.

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### In his letter to Senator McNary the adjutant general said:

### "The army recruiting officers through whose districts the caravan will pass are those at Seattle and Portland, Or. It would be greatly appreciated if the Pacific Coast Advertising Clubs' association could keep these recruiting officers informed as to itineraries and dates, to the end that, as you suggest, advantage may be taken of the opportunity to stimulate recruiting for the army."

### CARNEY GETS TWO YEARS

### Radical Leader Guilty of Trying to Obstruct Enlistment.

### DULUTH, March 6.—Jack Carney, alleged radical leader, was today sentenced to two years in the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kan.

### Carney was found guilty by a federal jury of having attempted to obstruct enlistments during the time of

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## TWIN FALLS EXPECTS 500

### City is Preparing for Convention of American Legion.

TWIN FALLS, Idaho, March 6.—(Special.)—Plans are maturing for the state convention of the American Legion to be held here early in April. Local business men are working for the success of the convention and the various committees of the Twin Falls Legion are doing their best in making arrangements.

It is expected that fully 500 people will attend. Representatives from approximately 100 posts throughout the state are planning to be present and many of the men will bring their wives.

### High School Debate Abandoned.

HOOD RIVER, Or., March 6.—(Special.)—Illness of students and Miss Evangeline Hubbard, English teacher of the high school, who has been quarantined for scarlet fever, has necessitated Hood River forfeiting a debate with The Dalles high school. Miss Hubbard was in charge of the drilling of students in tryouts for the debate.

### Elks Plan New Building.

MEDFORD, Or., March 6.—(Special.)—The local Elks lodge has grown so rapidly the past year that at the last meeting it was decided to put up a \$7000 extension at once. This new extension will be used principally as a restaurant. In the past year over 200 new members were taken in, making total membership of approximately 800, believed to be the largest Elks' organization within a radius of 200 miles.