Sunday Oregonian

ESTABLISHED BY HENRY L. PITTOCK.

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C. A. MORDEN, Manager. E. B. PIPER, Editor.

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A SHATTERED SYMBOL.

By April next the once powerful German fortress of Heligoland will be "one with Nineveh and Tyre." Its captains departed to civilian pursuits at the signing of the armistice; its king is a forsaken old man at Doorn; its ships that were safe and potent for evil behind the guns of their haven are many fathoms underseas at Scapa Flow. And now the symbol of military and naval might, which awed the world, is itself being slashed by oxygen torches and riven by high explosives, with German craftsmen toiling to destroy this last material evidence of the Prussian menace. Heligoland is consigned to its first syllable.

A destruction so classic brings home with renewed force the eternal truth that arms and armament are but weak reeds to lean upon, however tough their steel, however heavy their cannon. It summons as well a vision of Germany, and of other nations which suffered by her folly, as they might have been but for the feverish urge to arm. Certainly the threat of Heligoland did not avail to win the war for Germany, nor did it serve to woo the world to peace. Rather was its armored menace a challenge to strife, an incitement of vainglory and battle lust in the hearts of its builders. Yet there was squandered on that single island a fortune so fabulous that it would have belted Europe with paved highways, and on the subjugation of that which it symbolized there has been spent a multiple sum, for which the nations are yet burdened with debt.

Into the building of the fortress went taxes that were the coined sweat of the German people. To the subjection of Heligoland, by the winning of the war, were sacrificed millions of lives. Now that the great steel girders crash upon the costly and intricate mechanisms, now that the giant rifles are cut into rough sections and consigned to the scrap heap, the world is face to face with an object lesson in the wastage and futility of armament. It is well enough to say, for it is fact, that not this year nor the next will the nations be ready to disarm forever, but between the retention of modified militarism and the perpetuation of the old Prussian pride in arms there is only a difference in wastage. At the moment it is the hope of the planet that the disarmament conference will reduce the burden and the peril to a minimum.

For two years German artisans have toiled at the destruction of Heligoland. When they first undertook the work at direction of the inter-allied commission, with 1500 men employed, their estimate was that seven years would be required to complete the wrecking. Only the fact that the allies announced their intention to abandon the island to Germany, so soon as the demolition of armament was accomplished, served to hasten the work. It was then that the contractors revised their views and promised that Heligoland should be as harmless as a kitten within three years. Germany would have her unwelcome guests speed themselves at the earliest possible moment. Under the terms of the peace treaty the future fortification of the island is prohibited, yet survival in the German mind of the old notion, of a desire to build another navy, indicates that it would be wise to provide means for the enforcement of this particular clause.

The stupendous strength of the fortifications, and the costly nature of their construction, is shown by recent reports of the dismantling. Already the commission has supervised the destruction of 2400 guns, but this phase of the work is secondary and swift of progress by comparison with the demolition of the gun emplacements and harbor works. Thus one report says:

> The larger guns, mounted mainly in pairs, needed massive emplacements of concrete and steel work, with complicated machinery for revolving and elevating them. Great care had been expended to protect the shelters from shells that might be dropped from high angle fire, and some of the cupolas were solid steel three feet thick. The German oxygen drill easily penetrated them. Charges were inserted, and they were smashed to drop with all their weight on the machinery below.

It is symptomatic of the world's indifference to the lessons of the past, even to those quite near to us, that the wrecking of this powerful fortress, once the boast of an empire, has been unattended by general attention. Even while the explosive ripped and shattered the structures that were the last word in defensive genius, while the guns were hacked and ruined, and while the German fleet rusted in the depths, the nations were eagerly planning great replicas of the same futile devices, and taxing their peoples for the means. The one hopeful sign, the bow of promise, is the conference to discuss drastic reductions in armament.

As was to have been expected, there is a clamor of opposition to the proposition to mend the old Liberty bell. Yet a welder has succeeded in repairing the crack in a similar but smaller bell which suffered injury 162 years ago in a church tower in Tivoli, New York, making it practically as good as new. It was his idea that the progress we have made in a century or so in scientific knowledge of the working of metals might be turned to account, and he has done his part with excellent results. It would seem that if the mute Liberty bell now stored in a museum in Philadelphia could have its voice restored to it, the whole country would be glad. For that matter, attempts to mend it were made three-quarters of a century ago without any thought of sacrilege and it is only because they failed that it is voiceless now. There could be no more want of reverence in a similar effort attended by promise of success.

TIMELY CAUTION.

The warning given by the new president of the American College of Surgeons against placing too much reliance on radium as a cure for cancer is timely, and it is humane from the viewpoint of the friends of sufferers from that baffling malady. With the disappointments that attended the sporadic announcements of a "cure" for tuberculosis still fresh in mind, conservative scientists will be the last to wish that any hope may be fostered that is not warranted by experience and justified by sound judgment. Exaggerated claims as to the properties of new remedies do tragic harm, because they invite disregard of even such poor means of relief as are now at hand.

The physician in question, whose position gives weight to his words, says that "nothing can be looked for from radium in the future to be of advantage in the treatment of cancer." At the same time it is observed that there is a widespread revival of claims of the discovery of "sure cures," and of "painless and harmless remedies," though it is well understood by scientists that neither radium nor its companion discovery, the X-ray, have reached the state of development which warrants their being handled by any but the most expert, or more than gingerly by them. Science may not accept as conclusive the statement that radium holds out no hope, but real research workers will not be dulled by overconfidence in any alleged discovery into abandoning the quest.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS.

Children dwell in the realm of fancy. Unlike their elders, their minds are plastic and devotional. From the pages of the story steps out a hero or a heroine whose words are gospel, whose actions are to be emulated. These folk are real to the childish reader, comrades of many a pretty incident, many a splendid adventure—they are the friends of childhood. Surely it behooves all parents to see to it that this fancy is turned to practical advantage in the formulation of character, and that in books their children shall not discover such friends as they would not be permitted to play with after school. This is one phase of the necessity. Another is the need for reading that, while it relates the narratives of fact, shall instruct children in the lore of history and exploration, of flowers and fields and the varied life of the globe. To adventure with fact, in a world of amazing possibilities, is to learn that nature is the most marvelous story teller of the ages—the sweetest poet, the most profound and interesting historian, the soundest moralist and the most gifted writer of novels.

Yet the preference of parents is not entirely to be trusted in the selection of books for children, unless, as often happens, the heart of the parent is not yet locked to the mysteries of childhood. It has been said that one of the best tests of superior reading for juveniles is whether the book holds the interest of adults. This is true of many wonderful books, in which both old and young find perpetual delight. It is true of the Water Babies, of Swiss Family Robinson, of Robinson Crusoe, of Alice in Wonderland, of a great library of most charming fairy tales. The matured reader who is not refreshed by an occasional dip into juvenile literature such as this may be assured of one significant fact—the faulty perception is his, not the child's.

Yet one were remiss in duty not to feel that many books for children are idle and profitless, at least by contrast with others that are equally available. Merely to be silly and vacuously whimsical, merely to overturn all the realities and substitute carmine toadstools and vocal animals, is not to have written a good book for children. The avid appetite of childish fancy will devour all that is offered, but if nurture is to be given the offering should be literature. Here lies a broad field, bounded at one extremity by the rhymes of Mother Goose, which are adapted to the waking imagination, and on the other by such stories and veracious accounts as merge and blend with the reading of adults.

Assuredly children's book week, which begins today, has a mission—a mission that is directed more toward the parents, toward those who select books for children, than toward the children themselves. The duty is one that should be approached with sympathy and understanding, for it is an integral and important factor in the making of men and women.

THE REAL INVENTORS OF FLYING.

The so-called vindication of Professor Samuel Pierpont Langley of the Smithsonian Institution, which was asserted as the result of the reported success of Glenn Curtiss in flying with the old machine which failed in Langley's hands, loses some of its glamour in connection with the revelations of Griffith Brewer recently in a paper read before the British Aeronautical society. Undoubtedly injustice was done to Langley during that scientist's lifetime by failure to recognize the real value of his contributions to the science of aviation, and especially by the ridicule which was heaped upon him and which cut him to the quick. But it is now pointed out that in their anxiety to make amends for the past people have been inclined to deny to others, including the Wright Brothers, the full credit that is also their due.

When Glenn Curtiss took Langley's old machine from the National Museum at Washington, and "after making certain inconsequential changes," as was then reported, succeeded in flying a short distance in it, the event was hailed as a complete vindication of the Smithsonian professor. But it is important to know the precise nature of the changes which were said to have been "inconsequential" in order to arrive at the truth. Brewer, who is himself an expert, made minute comparisons of the reconstructed plane with the original, and finds that they were so drastic as to go to the root of the principle of flying. He finds that the curvature, angle and area of the wings were changed, that their method of support was corrected and that a new system of balancing was adopted. Not content with this assertion that the plane was virtually made over, he adds that he has been able to discover no evidence which would be acceptable in a court of law that the reconstructed plane did more than "hop for short distances."

It is claimed in behalf of the Wright brothers that they actually discovered the fundamental defects in the Langley machine, that they developed and tested new theories by which the machine which would not fly before did so with the new attachments and corrections, and that consequently they are the real discoverers of the principle of the heavier-than-air machine. The Wrights flew, where Langley did not fly, it is now contended, because of brilliant and original thinking in an abstruse scientific field. The discovery by the Wrights of the law governing the movement of the center of pressure on a moving plane is appraised by Brewer as the crowning achievement of the age.

It is the fate sometimes of pioneers in scientific fields not only to want for recognition of their just claims, but also to be overpraised when the pendulum chances to swing in an opposite direction. It can be hardly believed that Professor Langley himself, if he were alive, would ask for greater credit than was due him, or that he would be less sensitive to false claims in his behalf, which also belittle him, than he was to the hostility that he encountered while he lived. He would at least have been no party to a plan to make it appear that basic changes in his design were "inconsequential." There is nevertheless enough glory in the conquering of the air, which has been practically accomplished within a quarter of a century, to go around among all of the real pioneers. The steam engine, the submarine, the electric spark, antisepsis and anesthesia, and all the sciences, abstract and practical, in which the world has made progress in less than a century have owed their advance without exception to the labor of many minds. Quarrels over the precise division of the credit for their inception are at once unseemly and unjust to the memories of those who made our progress possible.

HOME OWNERSHIP.

The figures presented in a bulletin of the United States census bureau on the subject of home ownership in the United States are not a little disquieting. They show, for example, that in the country as a whole 45.6 per cent of more than 24,000,000 who were enumerated own the houses in which they live, while 54.4 per cent are renters, a proportion that is made all the more significant by comparison with previous census periods. The number and proportion of tenants has increased slowly but constantly for twenty years. In 1910 54.2 per cent were tenants, in 1900 53.9 per cent.

But there is another phase of the phenomenon which is also as disturbing as it is thought provoking. It is that while the proportion of owned homes has been declining, the proportions of those which are owned which are also free from incumbrance has also decreased. The mortgage on the home looms larger than it used to do. Were more people buying homes than formerly did, we might be able to find an optimistic explanation. It might then be reasoned that in an endeavor to increase the proportion of home ownership people were voluntarily assuming debts for part of the purchase price. A mortgage is not in itself an unhealthy sign. Much depends on the purpose for which the obligation was incurred and upon the general direction in which the movement toward indebtedness is tending. But with a smaller proportion of home owners, and also of debt-free homes, it is a fair conclusion that there is want of thrift somewhere along the line.

In respect of actual ownership Oregon and her sister state of Washington are somewhat better off than the country at large. It appears that in Oregon 54.8 per cent and in Washington 54.7 per cent of families are home-owners. So far all is well, and one would fain be content to pause at this point. But it appears that in 1920 there were 59.7 per cent in Oregon and 57.1 per cent in Washington who owned their dwellings, while in 1900 the figures were 58.1 and 53.9 per cent respectively. Nor is there any balm in the census man's showing as to the proportion of debt-free homes to the whole number of owned homes. This has declined steadily. In 1900 in Oregon 77.9 per cent were not mortgaged, in 1910 there were 70.6 per cent, in 1920 there were but 62.4 per cent. In this respect we have been a trifle better off than the whole country has been. In the entire United States the proportion of debt-free homes, which was 68.7 per cent in 1900, has declined to 61.7 per cent in 1920.

It is trite to say that the love of home is at the root of patriotism, nor do we suppose is it altogether true that home ownership and love of home are necessarily interchangeable terms. It is probably capable of proof that a good many distinguished, worthy and patriotic members of society have been born and reared and now live in rented domiciles, having elected to delegate to a landlord some of the troubles and perplexities that go with the possession of a kind of property peculiarly subject to deterioration and fitful change. Yet there can be small chance for mistake in the conclusion that thrift is a part of permanent prosperity and that the reverse of thrift is shown in a large increase in the proportion of mortgaged homes side by side with a descending proportion of ownership. It suggests further inquiry, too, into the uses to which money thus borrowed is being put and into the reasons why, in times which, broadly considered, are more productive than any we have ever known, there is not a greater tendency to cast an anchor to windward, as our fathers used to do, by having the home "free and clear." As to this the census figures are silent. But we are safe in assuming that the immensely increased sums which go for luxuries have something to do with the situation, and that behind it all there lurks a weakening will for self-denial which, more than any other aspect, warrants a cautionary word.

Let the reader be over persuaded to pessimism by the figures, it is well to observe that there are nevertheless 10,566,960 families in the United States who own the homes they live in, and that 6,522,119 of these owe nothing to the mortgage man. These are goodly numbers, representing an actual increase over twenty years ago. But the tendency exhibited by the figures is one that we might wish they did not show. Somehow, one thinks of the householder who is also a house owner, and who is also saving to get out of debt, as a desirable pattern of good citizenship.

MR. SOTHERN'S LAMENT.

Edward H. Sothern and his talented wife, Julia Marlowe, having decided to abandon the quest for an American play worth producing and to turn to Shakespeare as a refuge from mediocrity, it is fairly up to the playwrights of America to prove by their works that he is wrong in asserting that plays of strength and power are no longer written in the United States. Yet there is reassurance also in the thought that if such a play can be produced there is a patronage awaiting it. It has long been the cry of playwrights that it was useless for them to try to produce worth-while drama, because the people preferred another and more ephemeral kind.

"We have long been searching," says Mr. Sothern, "for an American drama of significance and importance. Not necessarily a poetic play, it must be of more solid substance than any it has been our fortune to find." He is plainly discouraged, but by his choice of Shakespeare as a medium he indicates definitely that he has faith in public appreciation of serious intellectual effort. The hard of Avon continues to have an able interpreter while we wait for American authors to get in touch with the muse.

A few American plays, one recently written by an Englishman, have won pronounced success. The vitality of "Way Down East," the success of "Kindling," the kindly reception accorded to "Lightnin'" are straws that show which way the histrionic wind blows. It is possible that a reaction from the exclusive programme of pictures is setting in, and that the moment is favorable for a revival of the "legitimate," if only a vehicle can be found. One thing to the everlasting credit of the best class of motion pictures is that they undoubtedly have stimulated the appetite for clean and uplifting entertainment of every kind. A thousand men and women go to amusement places of some sort where a hundred did so a few years ago. It is the experience of every art that its practice creates demand for the best that can be procured from it. The patron of cheap and so-called popular music becomes a potential recruit for the symphony. Innate good taste—and we think that it is possessed by the American people as a whole—is not permanently satisfied by the tawdry and the sophistical.

The material for the drama exists on every hand, no less in America than in foreign lands. We need no morbid "Beyond the Horizons" to satisfy our wholesome desires. Such a service as William Dean Howells performed for letters in the more restricted sense will be rewarded if it is ever performed by a writer of American plays. Theoretically, the task ought to be easier than it once would have been. The American play of tomorrow will require less sectionalism for its appeal. We are more homogeneous than we ever have been. The world war has done its part to break down the last barriers, not only between regions, but between so-called classes. There are on the other hand innumerable phases as to which the lives and problems of Americans are peculiar and distinct.

It is a striking fact that at the time when Mr. Sothern is calling for a play of "significance and importance," there exist more schools which purport to teach the art of play writing than there ever have been in our history. There is too much theorizing in proportion to results. The budding and ambitious dramatic authors of the country need to be reminded of the counsel of a certain man of letters, that "the only way to write is to write."

EQUAL TO THE BEST PORTS.

Assurance from Major Park, the United States engineer, that there is at all times of the year enough depth of water in the Columbia river channel for ships drawing thirty feet should remove any anxiety that has existed on the subject. That he takes tides into consideration in making this statement does not detract from its value, for, as he says, "tides are utilized the world over as a matter of course." The table of depths at the shallowest points, which he issued on November 1, shows a safe margin over thirty feet at high tide. The least depth at zero on that day was twenty-nine feet in the estuary, which was increased by a six-foot tide to thirty-five feet; 29.7 feet at Puget island, increased by tide to thirty-four feet. At all other points the depth at zero exceeded thirty feet and the least depth at high tide was 32.6 feet at the mouth of the Willamette. Dredges are still working to increase depth where it is least, and they will make good the promise of the Port of Portland to maintain a zero depth of thirty-one feet throughout next year.

The Columbia channel already compares favorably with those leading to the principal ports, not only of this country but of the world. In his address to the Northwest Rivers and Harbors Congress at Portland in October, 1920, Major Park summed up the facts by saying:

> A thirty-foot channel gives access to the majority of the world's commerce, which is today carried in vessels drawing thirty feet and under, and the great majority of the commerce on the Pacific.
>
> A thirty-foot channel gives access to all the shipping that has direct access to the majority of the world ports.

In support of these statements he said that San Francisco has thirty feet over the bar at low water; New Orleans slightly under thirty feet on the bar at the entrance to South Pass, and Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston, Galveston, Montreal, Liverpool have thirty feet. All these ports have a far larger commerce than Portland, while San Diego with thirty-three feet and Los Angeles with thirty-five feet have much less. Antwerp, Hamburg, London and Glasgow are world ports having no deeper channels than Portland has. The Columbia has a far wider, deeper entrance than most of the ports named, and natural forces improve it yearly.

Then Portland already by taking advantage of tides has enough depth for the 502 type passenger ships for which it has applied to the shipping board, if they should be fully loaded, and next year will have within six inches of enough depth at low water, for they draw 31.6 feet, whereas a depth of thirty-one feet will be maintained. The channel would more easily accommodate the 535 type ships, for they draw 30.6 feet fully loaded. There is no danger to safe navigation, provided we have good teamwork on the part of the government engineers, the Port of Portland and the pilots, and all these now work well together.

Attention of Portland has been fastened on ample depth of water by the long labor of gaining what we have and by the fact that our chief standard of comparison has been the deep water of Puget sound, which is an exception among ports. The ports on the sound have drawbacks which offset that advantage and, when we take into consideration other, far greater ports, we find that Portland will stand comparison with any of them, the exceptions being very rare.

This is not to say that the work of improvement should stop. We should now strive for greater width, both that ships may pass or turn with safety and that depth may be more easily maintained. Having water enough for the great majority of ships at low water and for almost all ships at high tide, we should go on to attain ample depth for any ship at any stage of tide. This can be accomplished by degrees, especially by diking at the bars, which would prevent shoaling and would thus release dredges to increase depth and width. The gratifying result, in the shape of commerce, of what has been done is the best encouragement to persevere.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE INDIAN.

It has always been the lot of the Indian to be misunderstood by his white brothers, as was recently suggested by a correspondent in discussing the defeat of Colonel Steptoe and the events which immediately followed that military disaster, and undoubtedly the whites were the more culpable because they failed to learn the lessons which experience ought to have taught them. One of the tragedies attending the advance of civilization has been the seemingly unnecessary waste of life and human endeavor that results from this blindness of the superior race to a number of easily ascertainable facts.

Popular fallacies concerning the American Indian have been almost innumerable. The very name given to the race by the discoverers of America was the first, but has not been the least among them. The early colonists on the Atlantic coast were wrong in their conception of Indian laws and customs, particularly with reference to chieftainship and land tenure, which were the issues out of which finally grew the irrepressible conflict over the settlement of the west. With more than a century and a half of experience to guide them, the framers of the ordinance of 1787 seem to have mistakenly believed that they had solved the problem of their relations with the Indians as a people by providing that the consent of the tribes should be essential to the cession of lands. As a matter of fact, there existed no responsible authority in any tribe which was empowered to make treaties which dissenters were bound to respect. Chieftainships did not partake of the nature of offices carrying delegated authority, as understood by Anglo-Saxons and others who have developed the system of representative government. An authority in the American bureau of ethnology defines the chieftainship as:

> A political office whose distinctive functions are to execute the mandates will of a definite group of persons united by possession of a common territory or range and of certain exclusive rights, immunities and obligations, and to conserve their customs, traditions and religion. . . . He exercises legislative, judicial and executive power delegated to him in accordance with custom for the conservation and promotion of the common weal.

The idea of actual leadership of the tribes by a legal executive, or so-called king, was fallacious, though it was peculiarly acceptable to the white settlers because of its obvious convenience in transacting business and especially in enforcing contracts. It enabled the early colonists to deal directly and efficiently with a single man or with a few men, rather than with a group of men—or a tribe. But the very name of tribe, with its implication of a body bound together by social ties and under a strong central authority, is of uncertain origin, another of the mismomers and fallacies that have characterized our dealings with a people incapable of dealing with the Anglo-Saxon on his own ground.

Land ownership never attained the importance of a social phenomenon among the Indians because they were not on the whole an agricultural people, and the notion that a group of Indians could, by treaty or otherwise, alienate the land, which was regarded as the property of the entire tribe has probably caused more bloodshed than all other misconceptions of Indian customs combined. Land was regarded as belonging to the tribe as a whole, and neither individuals nor families possessed vested rights, or were empowered to sell land to aliens, white or red. Recalcitrant minorities, according to established Indian custom, were wont to repudiate unpopular so-called treaties, and did so without inviting odium such as would attach to the members of a differently organized society. Attempts of whites to enforce treaties of cession have been followed by bloodshed and disaster, and by charges of bad faith which the Indians never have been able to understand because the faith of the repudiators was always held by them as never having been pledged to the transaction. The whole history of the efforts of white settlers to quiet Indian title to the soil has been marked by this universal misunderstanding.

There nevertheless were sound reasons why the Indian should give way before the march of civilization. A sounder and more humane policy than was generally adopted might have won for the newcomers a more peaceful possession of the domain, but nothing could have prevented its ultimate possession by a people who could utilize it to its last acre, as against one who employed it in economic wastefulness as a mere hunting ground. The few Indians who were early able to apprehend this economic truth were those who, like Lawyer of the Nez Perces, preferred to make the best terms possible with the advance guard of the pioneers. But those, like Kamiakin of the Yakimas, who repudiated the treaties by which tribal rights to land were ceded also acted well within their rights as tribesmen. A long and discreditable record of pledges broken by whites, of delays in making promised payments, and of want of sympathy with the red man in his difficult situation gave at least the color of justification to his resistance to the incoming hordes. We are not dealing with individual frailties or with isolated atrocities which occurred on both sides when we assume that in our dealings with the race as a whole we exhibited a woeful want of comprehension such as would have invited disaster in any other undertaking.

This much is now conceded by students of the history of all our dealings with the red man since the first while settlement was made on the Atlantic coast. There were reasons, as has been suggested, why the Indian should surrender the vast domain which he could not usefully employ according to the standards of a famishing world, but it is an interesting thought, not without a modern application, that many a tragedy might have been averted if the attempt to resolve the difficulty had been preceded by serious and intelligent study of the people with whom we dealt.

Some time ago, when the Corvallis Gazette-Times installed a new kind of press for the small-town daily newspaper, it started something. Others followed in speeding up. The latest to experience the delight of printing from a roll is the Grants Pass Courier. Mr. Voorhies may be a bit ahead of his city and region, but he knows its possibilities.

Christmas is coming in a couple of months. The postmaster has asked you to mail your parcels early enough to reach their destination a few days ahead of time. He also advises you to wrap them with two or three thicknesses of heavy paper and tie securely with heavy cord.

A man whose wife is suing him for divorce on the ground that he drinks too much says in his cross bill that she neglects his home to indulge in the vagaries of spiritualism. Both kinds of spirits seem to possess the trouble-making "kick."

Although medical beer is now obtainable in nine of the forty-eight states, there ought to be a lot of speedy recoveries from illness about the time that congress gets through with the new amendment to the Volstead law.

An American correspondent in Germany is amazed to find that the Germans do not laugh at Charlie Chaplin's films. Really, there is nothing to be perplexed about. They did not laugh at the kaiser's mustache.

We are sorry that the food experts have found that turnips are depressing to the spirits. With potatoes going up in price the turnip was being considered as an alternative that could be had at a reasonable price.

The promise is made that the conference at Washington will be guaranteed against violence by every possible means, and if the conference will only reciprocate in kind the whole world will be duly grateful.

It is a sign of coming prosperity when people stop talking politics for a while to discuss the relative merits of the Holstein and the shorthorn and the fine points of the Poland China and the Chester White.

No, the "integrity of China," which the conference may be called upon to talk over, has nothing to do with the reputation the Chinaman has for paying his debts in full on New Year's day.

Of the total volume of mail handled by the United States postoffice, 75 per cent is business matter and 25 per cent personal. Business depends more on the postal service than on any other one thing.

The debts of the nations engaged in the war are now figured at $383,000,000,000. A few ciphers more or less should not make much difference to this generation, which cannot possibly pay the bill.

That thief who stole 6000 knives and 8000 forks from the army quartermaster at Camp Lewis must be a man of pronounced "highbrow" tendencies. Otherwise he would have left the forks.

We get an idea of the picturesque elasticity of the English language when we read of a red-whiskered "Bluebeard" on trial for the murder of eleven persons in France.

Not another holiday until Thanksgiving day, which used to be an occasion for religious observances but now is the day of the grand turnout for the football games.

The people of New York are making almost as much fuss about being deprived of their milk as they did over the passage of the Volstead act.

The drive on the income tax dodgers somehow makes it seem easier to pay those forthcoming installments of the tax.

Once recruiting for the army of permanent peace is started, there ought to be no need to resort to the draft.

We still wonder what the kaiser thought about while the celebration of Armistice day was going on.

What we want is a police force that can handle the local Chinese situation without tongs.

Soon the way to get a message to your friend in another state will be to "tell it to the marines."

The Listening Post.

By DeWitt Harry.

TELEPHONES are not an unmixed blessing if we are to believe Ike Mills of Paulina. Ike has a little land up in Crook county, 12,000 or 14,000 acres or so, and has to get out and "ride range" at times. In the old days Ike and his friends could get out on trips of this character and be gone for days at a time and on their return home have an unblemished record, the only explanation being that they were "inspecting." Now it is all changed.

If a fellow wants to get away on his own he nearly has to cut the telephone wires that form a spidery web over the once open range. As a means of exchanging gossip and of checking up, a rural phone has no equal; it is the friendly method for the women's visits in a country so vast that neighbors are a day's journey away. If the men folk take a trip they are under observation from the moment they leave home. Progress reports are forwarded to headquarters, and when Ike or any of his friends get back they never have to tell where they have been or what they have done—the information has preceded them.

* * *

This liking for good weather is not unanimous in Portland. It might be an exceptional season, but it works hardships on certain classes.

Take the coffee wholesalers. They complain of business. People drink milk or cool drinks in this kind of weather. The coffee bars, where you can stand up, foot on rail, absorb a hot drink and eat a sandwich are suffering from malnutrition. Give the city a few weeks of cold, wet, dreary weather, and coffee sales will jump to the tons weekly where now they are running in pounds.

In the old days this would have been good beer weather, nickel sales, and the saloon owners, like the coffee dealers of today, would be wishing for cold and storm, so as to sell the drinks that would warm the inner man.

There's no satisfying some people. Even the bootleggers don't like this fine climate.

* * *

Many a simple soul nurses hallucinations, but a pawnbroker faces actualities. Yesterday Uncle Harry, down on Third street, entertained a client who brought in a treasure. With elaborate care the needy one deposited a violin case on the counter, confiding that he knew it was worth $6000 and that he wanted to hock it for $125. In any event, the customer was afraid to have such a valuable instrument in his home and would leave it for safekeeping on receipt.

"And it's from a big eastern factory that makes them by the hundreds," explained Uncle. "I could lend $3 on it, but could not quite make a $5 loan, and he, poor fellow, seems really to think he can get $125, and it's worth thousands. Gosh! What a salesman the agent must have been."

* * *

For years picture postcard publishers reaped harvests from stock plates showing scenes that seldom changed. Some of these old cards can yet be found in the local racks of the front of the Portland hotel showing women wearing Florodora hats perched a-top high-piled masses of hair, holding their skirts in hand as they mounted the steps.

Of late customers are becoming rather particular and refuse to buy these relics of by-gone days. Not only has this complicated the publishers' life but the constantly changing styles of late years have imposed an added burden. Take bobbed hair, so general at the beaches. Most of the girls last season went in without the elaborate rubber caps so necessary in past seasons. And the one-piece bathing suit. And the knee-length skirt. Women have cost the postcard men several tidy fortunes these last few years.

* * *

"Put and take" has a rival—"up or down." No top or expensive equipment is needed in this new game; it is played with ginger ale and beer bottle caps. Rules vary, but one day last week a bunch of newsboys were seeking excitement and a little extra money after the day's sales were complete. They tossed up a certain number of caps into the air and counted those that fell top or bottom up.

Sometimes the caps are used as poker chips, and others use them as they would a tossed coin, heads or tails determining the loser or winner. The Australians have a greatly similar game, "odd or even," that they play with coins or any like token, counting the heads and tails, odd or even.

* * *

After seeing some of the prize stock at the livestock show a sort of pity for carelessly-groomed humans seems pertinent. Breeding tells, whether it be in sow'ne or men. It is an easy matter to pick out the best animals by their appearance. True, much of it is due to the care lavished on the beasts by their masters, but any person should owe it to himself to see that his appearance, his surface signs of breeding at least, are above reproach. While not many of us can reach the blue-ribbon class, there is nothing to prevent our trying.

* * *

The liquor question in the United States is a complicated one, but James Van Cleave of Victoria, B. C., who is showing his prize string of talented horses at the livestock show, seems to realize the situation. One of his best mounts, Whisky, was left in Canada, where he seems to belong. Prohibition, another prize winner with a long and proud record, died last week. But Moderation, who came to Portland, has annexed two ribbons.

* * *

Portland is infested with short-sighted women, judging by their behavior in street cars. Ever see one stand right in the entrance, so forlorn, so helpless, seemingly unable to walk a few steps, while there were several empty seats at the forward end of the car?

His Son Is Tearful.

Passing Show (London).

Jimmy (tearfully)—Father, the d-donkey kicked me!

Father—Have you been annoying it?

Jimmy—No. I was only t-trying to c-carve my name on it.

INCONSISTENCY.

May men in their needs forgive us,
Because it is blindly true
That Meccas and shrines are many,
But the altars of love are few.

—GUY FITCH PHELPS.

A Lone Whistler.

By Grace E. Hall.

A lone whistler passes in the night,
And wakes me from my deep and dreamless sleep;
Sometimes the sound is but a mellow croon
Of some old tune I knew long years ago—
And through my half-roused mind
Drift misty visions of a bygone June—
Of moonlight in gold blotches on a gravel walk,
Of summer's sultry breath, bearing odor of the season's bloom—
And the piping voice of a near-melodious frog
In yonder bog—is still upon the air—
And ah, my lover is a god—with gold glints in his hair!

A lone whistler passes in the night
—and wakes me—
I wonder—does a policeman whistle so? But no!
How could he have sweet music on his lips
When his nocturnal duty is to hush the melancholy dog
That argues with the moon, or, hoarse and scared
At some mere mental menace in the dark,
Howls out his fear, unmindful of the neighbor's curse?
No! No! The bluecoat's not the tuneful knight
Who wakens me to dreams of other years—
For as he placates the irascible feline among the alley bricabrac,
Soothes the neurasthenic dog, and watches furtively
The rusty bolts and bars on cellar doors,
Surely no blithesome lay is on his lips as past he slips!

A lone whistler passes in the night—
and from my sleep
Awakens me to dreams and visioning—
Sometimes 'tis but a tender mellow croon
Of some old tune I knew when life was young—
And silently, in retrospective thought,
I pace with this lone stranger, 'neath the stars—
My soul keeps once again its springtime tryst—
Blotches of yellow moonlight lie aslant the path—
And Junetime perfume permeates the air—
And ah! My lover is a god with gold glints in his hair!

TOMORROW.

We are here today, boys, laughing in the sun,
We are here in youth, girls, ready for the run;
All the trees are ours, folks, all the apples and the grass,
Can it be that we shall perish, that like others we shall pass?

Oh, the sun is shining, as it shone on Job or John,
And the same sweet winds are blowing ever, ever on,
And the waves are sparkling just as gally in their glee
As they sparkled for Columbus traversing the sea.

Sun and moon and stars, boys, look down the shining heights,
Autumn chases summer with its frolicsome delights;
We are walking down the ages as our fathers walked before,
We are bearing up traditions that our valiant fathers bore.

Faster we are whirling, in our autos and our planes,
Higher we are piling bonds and stocks and gains,
And our dreams are greater in the magnitude of scope,
In the wider vision of an ever wider hope.

All together we are swinging, we who are alive,
Buzzing yet unconscious as the bees in any hive;
Out beyond us somewhere, the Master of us all
Holds us in his kindness, keeps us at his call.

Just ahead the great adventure waits our careless shuffling feet,
Just a stepping into wonder, soft and swift and fleet,
Just a waking to before us, just a sudden gladsome gasp,
As the glory of the future folds us in its breath-warm grasp.

As a babe in any cradle, born anew to God,
As a blossom springing upward from the burial sod,
As a bird leaps into heaven singing in the sun
So for us the new time opens, life is just begun.

—EVA EMERY DYE.

IMPRESSIONS.

Life is at rest;
The wind has lulled;
The leaves lay peaceful on the ground.
Gaunt trees point skyward,
Rigid, motionless, seeming to pierce
The placid clouds that hang suspended
Like balls of cotton
In empty air.

A faint whisper;
Stealthy rustles;
The last few stragglers of leaves
Hang tense with dread expectancy.
A grass blade moves—a lone bird darts.
Startled, from some secluded nook.
Far-off a train
Whistles bleakly.

Then white clouds turn
An ashen gray—
Broaden, flatten and shred themselves
With angry twistings.
A puppy quarrels with meatless bone;
His voice rises, querulous
And complaining,
Sadly bitter.

Vaguely searching,
A hurried wind
Swishes through pugnacious branches
Now quite denuded.
And then a rush, some force let loose
Destroys the spell, and with wild haste
The raindrops spatter
The window pane.

—KATHRYN EASTHAM.

A JAPANESE LEGEND.

Years agone in "The Flowery Kingdom,"
Once a pretty black-eyed maid
Wept and watched her dying lover
While most earnestly she prayed.

Till God heard her words and answered:
"I will let thy lover live
Just as many years as petals
On the flower which you may give

On my sacrificial altar
As an offering divine.
Search the gardens, little maiden,
Where the blossoms intertwine."

So she chose the white chrysanthemum,
Called the Persian daisy then.
And her lover's life was lengthened
Far beyond three score and ten.

Need I say that they were happy
In the years her love had gained?
Their devotion pure and constant
Like this flower still remained.

—OLIVE MABEL BALTIMORE.