

# Ashland Tidings

SEMI-WEEKLY.  
ESTABLISHED 1876.

Issued Mondays and Thursdays

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Entered at the Ashland, Oregon, Postoffice as second-class mail matter.

Ashland, Ore., Thursday, Dec. 25, '13

## SHALL WE PAY OUR TEACHERS AS MUCH AS WE PAY OUR STREET SWEEPERS?

The advent in Boston of Margaret Haley, who organized the school teachers of Chicago, 4,000 strong, into a labor union affiliated with the A. F. of L., with a swift increase in wages, has given the "Athens of America" a shocking jolt.

She comes upon invitation from many classroom teachers who have decided that if teachers are to get, on an average, more pay than street sweepers, they must not await the slowly moving, generosity of soft-worded public sentiment, but must themselves get busy and force the issue.

And she is preaching to large audiences a very practical gospel, to-wit, that if there's "no money" in the school board's cash box with which to raise the pay of the teaching body, which is now the poorest paid body of skilled labor in the land, and one of the most important, it should be made the duty of the taxing authorities to get some.

She is reminding the "no money" folks that a very small annual appropriation for public purposes of the rise in land values now privately pocketed would provide abundant money not only for better pay for teachers, but also for better school buildings, better equipment and better training of the young—an investment upon which the community would soon realize.

Of course this is shocking—like a cold plunge in the morning. But when you have reacted to it, it's also invigorating.

Worth-while teaching is worth-while pay. The city that skimps its teachers hurts itself. But it is pretty much up to the teachers themselves to drive this truth home.

## COTTONTAIL CONGRESSMEN.

The situation in Alaska indicates one of the weaknesses of our government. The agitation of the Guggenheim attempt to monopolize the coal fields of Alaska, resulting in the political destruction of Ballinger, scared congressmen and senators so they were afraid to move in Alaskan matters. As a result development of this magnificent territory has stopped short off. The Pacific coast is suffering for coal, and, with inexhaustible veins lying handy in Alaska, are deprived of its advantage because the members of congress are afraid to vote either to lease, sell or mine this coal. They know that, whatever they do, some yellow journal will charge them with being tools of the Guggenheims, so they just saw wood and wait for public opinion to adjust itself. When the pendulum does swing back it will probably swing so far as to allow the very things that have caused the delay. The average congressman and senator have the cottontail beat a mile.

## THE NEWSPAPER SHOW WINDOW

Alert merchants are naturally keenly alive to the advantage of a very attractive show window. Old-fashioned glass frontage and sloppy and infrequently changed displays hurt a business.

Yet they do not hurt it as much as a failure to make a creditable appearance in the newspaper advertising, the true twentieth century show window. In the days of small towns and of no telephones people used to do shopping and marketing almost daily and buy what they saw in show windows. Now people order a great many things by telephone, and old-fashioned shopping excursions are not so common.

Only a small fraction of the people will see any given display that a merchant may make in his show window. Weeks pass during which most of them never pass, or at least never give more than a glance at his store. But daily and weekly they look to see what he is doing in the newspaper show window.

## THE PUBLIC AND AVIATION THRILLERS.

Lincoln Beachey, the aviator, says the morbid expectation of sensational accidents is the chief factor of public interest in aviation. Strangely enough, having expressed this opinion, he decided to fly again, and at the first ascension swept two girls off a hangar roof with fatal results. Whether or not Beachey is right, the public surely wants the spice of danger. A legion of public entertainers are circulating about the country doing the "dive of death," performing in the "cage of death," taking the "leap of death," and other like stunts. Managements find that there are dollars in advertising the word "death."

This puts the aviator in an ugly position. His trained eye and feeling detects perils in atmospheric conditions that the average man cannot sense. Dependent on the perfect tuning up of a delicately adjusted machine, he does not care to risk his neck until every last nut has been tested and tightened.

The average spectator sees no reason why an aviation exhibit should not be run off like the rise of a theatre curtain. He has paid down his good money, now let the performer deliver the goods and fulfill his contract. It is a little windy, all the better chance to display skill. Most aviators are not circus tent graduates. They are scientific and mechanical enthusiasts profoundly stirred by a new era of technical achievement, but who value their own necks.

To them aviation grows more interesting the fewer chances of disaster are assumed. The demand of the public for flight at any and all times defeats the entire purpose of such an exhibition. It tends to discourage them from experiments performed under s.c.l. illogical conditions.

## OREGON IN THE VAN.

Speaking of Christmas presents, the one the state of Oregon gave to its women workers—no pay envelope hereafter to contain less than \$8.25 for a week's work in a factory, shop or mill, and no employer to require in a week more than 54 hours of toil?

Bear in mind the principle involved. Oregon says to the man who wishes to make a profit out of the labor of women: "Very well; but only under certain conditions. You are not to take complete advantage of women's weakness. You are not to beat the wage level down to the point at which the neediest must sacrifice themselves in order to exist. You must arrange your business to pay a wage consistent with the woman worker's self-respect and not prolong the hours until you have destroyed her capacity to fulfill woman's highest function, wholesome motherhood. Unless you can do that your business is a cruel and destructive business, and this state will not permit it to continue."

Such a ruling comes with peculiar appropriateness near Christmas time, for it is a fine, practical expression of the spirit of Christianity.

For almost the first time in nineteen centuries we here have a cardinal teaching of the Christ written into a mandate of law.

By it the minimum pay of virtue is lifted to about a third of the average pay of vice.

## AN INCIDENT OF THE SEASON.

The other day a blind woman was traveling alone in a street car in a great city. There was something fine and inspiring about the cheery self-confidence with which she braved the risks of going about the busy city and, even more, in the quickness with which every person in the car offered such aid as he could.

When the car neared the shopping center she signalled it to stop. It was a crowded corner. Automobiles were whizzing by; and wagons, too. The keenest of two eyes in each head weren't too many to guide the pedestrian in safety. How was this lone blind woman to get from car to curb and from curb into the store to which the Christmas spirit was calling her?

It so happened that before any passenger could volunteer to assist, the conductor appeared, carefully piloted her to the street, summoned a policeman and transferred her to that husky guardian of peace and order. The cop smiled with pleasure at the novelty of the assignment and started off, as gallant as you please.

The car passed on, the vision was lost, but not the memory. Somehow it lingers as if part of the sad of the holiday season. To plan for the happiness of those we love, to be kind to the unfortunate, and for a little while to put selfishness aside—Isn't that what Christmas means?

There's a lot of credit coming to a good woman in the next world that she failed to get in this.

## THE DEFECTS OF SLEEPING-CAR TRAVEL.

It has commonly been said, in spite of all the danger of American travel, that travel by night at least attains the limit of comfort possible in confined space.

However, they don't seem to think so in California, in which state the railroad commission has just appointed a hearing, when the question of defects in sleeping-car and chair-car service will come up. Among the complaints which the board is to consider are these: How much the company figures on passengers' tips in paying porters, why upper berths are pulled down when not occupied, thus making the lower berth stuffy. These complaints are quite general all over the country.

Years ago travelers seemed dazzled by the heavy luxury of sleeping cars. The glittering crystals in the lamps, shiny ornamental iron work, ornate painting, thick plush, heavy velvets—this kind of thing conveyed an appearance of luxury and a feeling of well being.

But thick hangings and seat coverings shelter disease. Now people want a simpler style, sanitary and well ventilated. The blankets are too often heavy and clammy things, without which you are cold, and with which you are too warm.

Just why the porter should be paid chiefly by the passengers, while the company pays conductor and brakeman, is a mystery. People who are ailing or have special needs may call for some unusual service, though the porter is hired to render just such assistance.

The ordinary traveler does not depend on the porter at all. He feels the cowardly victim of graft if he gives the fee, and unfair and unfriendly if he refuses it. Travelers all over the country will be anxious to learn if California can improve these conditions.

## Unintended Results.

Youth's Companion: For thirty years Germany has had a system of national insurance against sickness and accident. Investigators have recently made a thorough study of its working, and have reached conclusions in regard to it of unexpected interest and importance.

The investigators find that although cheating is general and notorious, it can be neither prevented nor punished. No social stigma marks the man who is detected in fraud, for the public does not regard it as wrong to rob the government by making false claims for insurance. On the contrary, the offenders openly boast of the success of their scheming, and actually deem it an honor to receive government aid, no matter by what means obtained. Experienced pensioners give advice to novices in respect to the symptoms they wish to assume. They pass round rules for feigning illness and disability as people in other countries exchange prescriptions for obtaining health and strength. The system, say the investigators, is robbing the working class of self-respect and ambition, and seriously debasing its moral standards.

But the feigning of illness and accident—malingering, as it is called—is not the worst phase of the situation. The amount of actual sickness has increased. A man easily finds some ground, however slight, for making a claim, and then his imagination does the rest. The German working man falls ill more easily and stays ill longer than he did before government insurance began. The medical men of Germany have come to recognize as a disease the morbid conviction of the insured that they are entitled to the benefits allowed by the law. The prevalence of this condition of mind, which is wholly owing to psychological causes is astounding.

In spite of the great advance in the methods of treating disease, in surgical science and hygienic knowledge, and in sanitary conditions generally, the length of the illness following any given accident among the classes that benefit from government insurance has increased enormously. For example, among insured persons in Germany the average length of time required to recover from a broken collar-bone is more than eight months; formerly, in the case of young people, it was from fifteen to twenty days, and in the case of older persons from twenty to forty days.

The slower cure is not due to fraud. It is due wholly to the patient's mental attitude toward the ailment—to his morbid or hysterical desire to remain an invalid and to draw the benefit. So powerful is this desire that the German doctors are able to cure only 9.3 per cent of the nervous diseases that follow accidents, whereas, in Denmark, where insurance benefits run for only a limited time, the percentage of cures is 93.6 per cent. The difference is almost incredible; but the German investigators, patient and unprejudiced, put forth to prove their assertions facts

## The Home Circle

Thoughts from the Editorial Pen

One of the high brow magazines lately had a masterly article on intensive living, which cut right down to the core of the things that are wrong in our present economy of life. It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of the article, but to speak a few of the thoughts it invokes. For we are all prone to turn the searchlight inward upon our own personal experiences and observations when some great, vital thing is presented to us.

The important point made in the article referred to was this: that no one should live in a house too large for his own personality; that no one should possess anything he is unable to humanize—to make his own.

It minded me of two women I had known, who were sisters. One of them had wed a man who was rich in gold but impoverished in the things that really count. The other had married a man who was just the reverse of her brother-in-law.

I was in the mansion of the one for a few days once. It was rich, pretentious, ornate, and it represented the highest achievement of the decorator's art. I was shown over the entire place, and told the cost of everything. I sat at meat around what was probably the most expensive dining table I had ever seen, set with the finest of linen and glass and gold, for silver was not rich enough for this wealthy couple. The forks and knives and spoons were of gold, the table service was of gold.

The cup from which I had drunk my breakfast coffee had cost \$25. The meals were elaborate and expensive, and were served by trained and liveried servants. Yet the mistress of all this junk—for such it was—had fine lines of discontent around mouth and eyes. And she kept up an incessant nervous tapping with her foot, that caused one who was an apostle of repose in manners feel an impulse to throw a costly vase at that tapping foot.

The master of the mansion puffed out his chest and talked theoretically of their house and possessions. Yet in the light of this recent article on intensive living I can now see that they really had no possessions of any sort, poor things!

I was not surprised to learn the next year when I was in their part of the country that they had sold the mansion, lock, stock and parrel, pictures—I was about to say books, but recalled that they had no books—their Oriental rugs, furniture, draperies, napery, gold, china, cut glass, carriages—that was before the day of automobiles—horses, trappings, liveried coachman, or at least the livery, etc.

They sold for a big, round sum, too. And then they bought another mansion, of which, in time, they tired and sold in the same way. And that poor, rich woman had not one little old rocking chair that was really her own, for she never had anything long enough to humanize it—to have it become all her own.

If she had possessed a rocking chair it probably would have squeaked, for that was about all her personality ever did. Poor soul, she was too wealthy to enjoy any comfort.

But the other woman, her sister—ah, that is a different matter. One went into her home, for such it was in deed and in truth, and sat down with a sigh of pure delight. I do not know what her furniture cost—I do know that she had not one rare or expensive thing in her house; in fact, things may have been somewhat shabby, for I know there was not much of what the world calls riches.

But I know that there was peace and harmony and plenty in her home—the plenty of content. And there was not one stick of furniture, picture or a book—for books there were aplenty—that their owner had not humanized and made her own.

The last time I went into that home it was empty—empty of the best beloved. All around me were mute evidences of the presence of her who was gone—the little low

and figures beyond the reach of contradiction.

Naturally enough, the statesmen of Germany are anxious, for they realize that state insurance—although conceived in a spirit of humanity—is not only weakening the moral fiber of the nation, but is also sapping its physical stamina.

"The tragedy of all great reforms," Professor Bernhard, one of the investigators, pointedly remarks, "lies in this, that the unintended results are more powerful than the intended results."

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She had provided for this trying hour. During all the years of her life she had been shedding her gracious personality in her home, until it had become flooded with richness and sweetness and peace—even the peace that came to me in that quiet hour, alone with the things that had been, and were, and always would be hers.

Just to show their contempt for the new tariff bill, the directors of one large cotton mill at New Bedford, Mass., have recently declared a special cash dividend of \$400,000 and a stock dividend of double that sum. Or, rather, perhaps they are getting ready to be ruined by the operation of the tariff act. There are tariff beneficiaries with nerve enough for just such a frame-up as to tell a hard-luck story, following the extravagance above mentioned. That tariff graft was the most demoralizing thing ever sprung on the American people.

There was not one thing in the room that did not speak of her, sweetly and happily, as though to say, "She made us her very own, a part of her, and nothing can ever separate us from her personality."

I sat down in the room that had been hers—and behold, it was not dreary. It was not as if Death had stepped in and borne away a loved form. It was filled with her presence. The inanimate, lifeless things that she had humanized and made to live brought succor from the sense of grief and desolation which had assailed me as I had stood without the empty house, dreading to enter and find her gone.

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