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William Farnum in "Fighting Blood" at the Vining Wednesday, May 24.

The People's Forum

Criticisms, Accusations and Gossip.

I am looking out upon a forest of gigantic firs. Directly in front of me stands one old tree with bare limbs, black, desolate, dead. And I said to the Forest, "There stands your critic in his last stages." And the waving branches of a thousand trees answered, "Yes, but we are too happy to hate it. It is too contemptible to notice." We just forget it. And soon it will pass to oblivion.

Dear reader, what is your conception of the critic, the accuser, the gossip? Whatever may be your estimate of him, or her, let me assure you of one thing, he or she has entered upon the path that leads to destruction; and at last his soul must stand, as that old blackened tree, desolate and alone, swept by the fires of bitterness and malice, blackened in character, dead to all that is good, forsaken, forgotten. By an infallible law of justice, all the filth they have ever thrown at others rebounds upon themselves and will bury them from the face of all good people.

And why is this so? Because the attitude of soul which impels one to criticize, find fault, gossip, spread scandal, etc., is a destructive attitude. It consumes the one who indulges it. It is a moral cancer eating away the vitals of the soul. Its impulse is to injure others; but its end is self-destruction. Its malignant arrows aimed at others, rebound invariably and carry their poison into the soul of him who sent them forth.

Now, the above statements are not intended as fine figures of speech. On the contrary, they are statements of literal, scientific fact. Let us see if we can analyze this fault-finding, gossiping spirit and so discover its deadly character.

1. The fundamental prompting to gossip, slander, and all manner of evil speaking against our fellow beings is a deep, underlying sense of guilt, or moral culpability in our-

selves which we are trying to cover up or excuse. And, strange to say, by some infallible law of Nature which has been noted by Wise Men ages ago, the very crime, fault, or weakness which we most frequently find in others, and which we condemn in the most clamorous tones, are the very weaknesses which we ourselves possess in the greatest degree. Thus a wise and beneficent Creator has so ordered the psychology of individual character that the chronic faultfinder and gossip, the retailer of filth—did he but know it—only advertises his own soiled character. Every evil word he utters against the character of another only proclaims to the world that he himself has that identical fault, or a similar one. For example, a woman eagerly runs to her neighbor and in breathless whispers tells her that old Mrs. Jones has just told her that old Mrs. Smith has just told her that a "Certain young woman who lives not more than fifty miles from here, whose name you can guess, has gone wrong. She has been caught! Actually caught! Now, what do you think of that?" This is a form of gossip most common. Now what is back of it? Why did this particular "respectable" lady want to run to her neighbor with the news? Why did she not in shame keep it to herself and feel pain that a sister woman should have departed from the Path? What prompted her to rush to her neighbor with the news? Did she expect to do any one any good by it? No, indeed. As sure as God liveth, as sure as any natural law has ever been discovered, the thing that prompted her was her own unworthy character; for she herself, together with both the old gossips who passed the story on to her, have each and all either been guilty of the actual thing of which they accuse the young woman, or they have had it in their minds and hearts to do so, if the favorable opportunity had been offered. This is no idle dream. It is a conclusion based upon a careful study of the subject running back through the ages.

2. Envy, jealousy, self-pity,

hatred, revenge, added to the above fundamental character, often prompt men and women to say, to invent, or to repeat all manner of accusations, slanders, gossips, or evil reports against any one who happens to be the victim. Such talk, then, is simply the means of indulging their own evil impulses. It is the same law that impels the libertine to indulge his passion, or the drunkard to drink, the thief to steal, or the murderer to kill. In each and every case it is the evil impulse in the individual which impels him to give expression to evil. Out of the corrupt heart comes forth corruption. The soul which is filled with all manner of mental and moral filth seeks every opportunity to pour it out onto others. This is the law by which disease spreads. Gossips and scandal-mongers are like swarms of flies which have fed upon the filth of typhoid excreta and then carry it forthwith to the next house where they can find a window open. And the door of every house in the land should be more rigidly closed to all gossips and peddlers of evil report, than we close our doors and windows to disease-laden flies.

Shall I define a gossip, a chronic fault-finder? It is an individual whose moral nature is perverted, who loves filth as his mental food, and who seeks to pour out his accumulated and contaminating much into the sweet streams of human thought all about him. He is the moral leper of society. He is the perpetual menace of mankind. Let me here declare with all the firm conviction of my soul that any one who tells an evil tale of another, who peddles that which injures another's good name, is guilty of a worse crime than murder, is a more deadly menace to society than all the dreaded evils of intoxicating drinks and opium, and is lower in the social and moral scale than the common prostitute. Such a person stabs the innocent in the back, robs them of their good name, turns their neighbors and friends against them, and often sends them into the world helpless and ruined for life. Sometimes nothing but death can repair the terrible ravages of this vile and merciless enemy of human life and happiness.

Some who read this will ask, "Are we, then, never to mention any of the weaknesses of character and the glaring misconduct of which we know personally? Are we never to speak of bad men and their dark deeds?" In reply, let me ask, Why do you want to speak of them? Frankly, what can be your purpose in repeating such things? If you will but examine your inmost motives, your secret impulses, you will doubtless decide that your only reason for repeating anything evil of another is, in practically every instance, to gratify some unworthy impulse of your own.

There are just two conditions, and only two, under which one may be morally justified in repeating anything which could be construed to reflect discredit upon another person's character, motive, or conduct. What are these two conditions? Note

1. When required to do so in a court of justice.
2. When it becomes necessary to do so in order to warn and protect the innocent. And in this latter case the matter must be presented only to the parties immediately in danger, or to their guardians and legal protectors. Not to the public in general.

Even in both these cases one has no right to speak unless he has the facts before him and knows with absolute certainty the truth of every word he utters.

I hope to live to see state and national laws enacted that will make it a penitentiary crime, equal to that of highway robbery, for any person to utter one word against another

person's character, good name or conduct, or in any way publicly or privately to reflect upon another, except under the above two conditions. All such criminals should be branded by law and by public opinion as among the lowest of human degenerates.

I must close this article with a reference to a great principle in Nature which bears upon this subject and is of the most vital concern to the gossip and the tale-teller. It is the law of justice. This law is not of man, nor does its execution rest with man. It is self-acting, and under it every wrong which any responsible individual inflicts upon another must be paid for to the last farthing. There is no escape. Forgiveness? Do not delude yourself. Do you think you can steal your neighbor's good name and poison his whole life and then calmly fold your hands and say a little prayer and escape from all further consequences yourself, while your victim may be an innocent sufferer for a lifetime? Never, while there is eternal Justice; never while life lasts, either in this world or in the next; never can your soul go free from that bond until you personally make the matter right with the one you have wronged, if possible; and if not with him, then by an equivalent service to some one else who needs that service. The automatic action of this law leaves the scar upon each soul the moment an evil word is uttered against another. Every such word darkens your own soul, poisons it, weakens it, and sets in motion therein Nature's destructive processes. Every such act forges around your own neck an iron chain and collar of servitude, and that iron chain will hold you fast to the foul body of your own sin until by your own efforts you melt its links apart in the fires of loving kindness and unselfish deeds.

JULIAN P. JOHNSON, M. D.

Telescope for Tourists.

Ashland, May 15, 1916.
Editor Tidings: Some years ago there was organized in the city of Ashland a hiking club under the name of the Siskiyou Hiking Club, if I remember rightly. This club purchased a very powerful telescope for the purpose of viewing the country from the high points that their tramps might take them.

This club is now unorganized and has been for some years back, with no prospects of ever being revived, and the above mentioned telescope is, in all probability, boxed up for safe keeping, for a time indefinite. Now, why don't the remaining members of this club get together and donate, loan or lease to the city this instrument that some benefit might be derived therefrom? Arrangements, no doubt, could be made with the city or the springs water commission to provide a suitable shelter and protection for the instrument on the top of the so-called Roper's Bunlon. This would give an unrivaled view of Mt. Ashland, the Siskiyou and, in fact, all of the surrounding country that would be well worth the time and climb of anyone.

I believe that if we hear the sentiments of the members of the Siskiyou Hiking Club, together with the cooperation of some of our civic bodies, it will not be long before we have this known all over the Pacific northwest as "Inspiration Point" or "Observation Point."

SUBSCRIBER.

The famous "Silver" shirts at \$1 and \$1.25 in either soft or stiff cuffs. Mitchell & Whittle.

Special sale and special values. Suits to order this week for \$18.50 at Orres' Tailor Shop.

Bellevue Notes

(By the Language Classes of Bellevue School.)

A. D. Moore and family motored away up Frog creek Sunday and spent the day. While up there they met up with Mr. and Mrs. George Hargadine, some old friends. They report a good time.

Charles Swartzfager and family and A. D. Moore and family spent Sunday evening at the home of Chester Jensen.

C. E. Gray and family spent Saturday in town visiting at the home of their uncle.

School closes Tuesday, May 23. The event will be celebrated with an all-day picnic. The Murphy and Neil Creek schools have been invited to attend and take part in some field and track events.

Miss Skeen spent the week-end visiting her sister at Montague, Cal.

The Parent-Teacher Circle met in regular session Friday evening, the special number for the meeting was a lecture by the Rev. Doran, rural mail carrier on route No. 1, on the subject, "Personality." To say that this lecture was well received is putting it very mildly. It is a lecture for grown-ups, and not one calculated to interest children, yet it seemed as if every one in the room, children and grown people, were held in rapt attention from the beginning to the end of the lecture. We have heard less able features from some high-priced men sent from afar.

Chautauqua board, please take notice: "With Ashland trade (and lithia) is Ashland made."
Mr. Gowland, wife and son Richard spent Sunday at the Spur.
Miss Olive Howard is visiting at the home of Delphia and Capitola Beagle.

W. A. Cooper and J. A. Kelts left Friday morning for Mr. C.'s ranch the other side of the summit. Mr. Kelts is helping Mr. Cooper repair fence. Mr. Cooper expects to remove to his ranch soon.

There is joy in the eighth grade class, as all have passed and will receive diplomas, except one, and he is conditioned on an easy subject. Having finished her last test at high school, Capitola Beagle visited at Bellevue Tuesday afternoon.

A gun was taken from the home of Frank King last week, presumably by a tramp.

Mrs. J. H. Beagle visited at the home of Mrs. Elbert Davis Monday.

William Olen of Hilt, Cal., visited at Bayles Thursday and Friday of last week.

Wilbur Beagle and Frank Harden are working for Fred Homes.

Ivan Farmer bought six goats from Mr. Davis a few days ago.

Merritt Randles is hauling gravel for the hotel work.

County Reports

Found in Woodshed

The grand jury finished its work Wednesday. Its report is as follows: "We, the grand jury, respectfully report that we have examined all matters of a criminal character brought to our notice and as a result of said examination have returned into court seven true bills and one not true bill.

"That we have examined the county jail and other county offices; that we find the jail well ordered, sanitary and clean. We find that many valuable old records of the county are kept in a garret of a woodshed to the rear of the court house in a most disorderly accumulation, endangered by fire and subject to theft or indiscriminate removal; that election supplies such as ink, pens and pencils are littered about said place in a most wasteful and disorderly manner. We also find that many valuable records in all departments of the county are without vault room and in danger of loss by fire, a condition that ought to be remedied.

"An examination of the county farm shows it to be well kept and the patients properly cared for and well treated.

"The other offices of the county are all orderly and well kept, so far as we are able to observe from the limited examination that we have been able to make.

"S. S. SMITH, Foreman."

SISKIYOU HEADLIGHTS.

Several camps are now established at Siskiyou in connection with highway paving work, as the families of men employed and in charge have come up for a summer of outdoor life.

Mrs. Bowman is visiting her mother at Alameda, Cal.

Mr. Tom Davis, superintendent of the paving work to be done over the Siskiyou this summer, was up again last week, planning work.

Siskiyou school closed on Friday

so that the school might attend the spelling contest at Neil Creek. Spelling teams were there from seven districts representing nine schools. The day was perfect and all enjoyed the getting together, the program, the sports and the feast. Grace Smith and Marie Hartley of the seventh grade were the Siskiyou team and were among the last to "spell down."

A program and box supper is to be given at the school house on Saturday evening, May 20. This is to raise money for last payment on the school organ. All friends are invited to come.

Roy and Harry Hartley journeyed to Ashland to hear Senator Cummins.

A sheriff's posse was up after a runaway auto late last Thursday night, but did not overtake it.

Mr. Ben Hays reports successful rearing of his one hundred baby chicks from Petaluma. They are Rhode Island Reds.

Verne Dollarhide and George Inlow have been running the road scraper for two weeks past. They are leveling hubs and ruts all the way from Steinman to the California line.

S. F. Starr left today for Klamath Agency for an indefinite stay.

Classified Advertisements

TOO LATE TO CLASSIFY.

WANTED—Apparatus for dispensing soda drinks. Walter Keene, care Tidings. 1t

FOR SALE—Transplanted tomato plants, \$6.50 per thousand. C. Carey, Talent, Ore. 104-1mo.*

FOR SALE—Alfalfa hay in the field or delivered. W. D. Booth, 996 Oak street. Phone 291-R. 1t

FOR SALE OR TRADE—Baldwin upright piano, walnut case; cost \$500; will sell cheap or consider trade. Household goods for sale also. James Croxall, phone 325-J. 104-1mo.*

FOR SALE—One Studebaker wagon with half truck wheels; one McCormick mower, five-foot cut, second hand; one set new team harness with breeching. Apply to G. S. Butler, 41 Granite street. 104-1mo.*

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WANTED TO RENT—A piano. Telephone 39. 104-3t

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