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### ASTORIAN PUBLISHING COMPANY.

#### INTERVIEWING A MERMAID.

The modern newspaper man is put to many severe tests. He must be up and doing at all times and nothing must escape his eye or his pen. He must be familiar with every branch of industry and trade, well up in social matters, thoroughly posted politically and a veritable encyclopaedia of knowledge. He must be equal to any emergency that may arise, whether it be the handling of a great fire, the reporting of a political or religious convention, or an interview with some distinguished foreign visitor. He must essentially be an all-around man.

Wexford Jones, of the Oregonian, fills the bill. Jones hails originally from Ireland, where he "learned readin' and writin'" and acquired a knowledge of the Celtic language. Finding it inconvenient to take Ireland with him, he left the Emerald isle and came to America, afterwards going to Portland. He has been providing the humor for the editorial page of the Oregonian, occasionally going out to interview some foreign visitor.

Not long ago Jones ran across a mermaid down on the Portland "waterfront." The mermaid had climbed or flown up to the wharf and was complacently regarding herself in the silvery Willamette when Jones came along. It appears from the narrative that the mermaid belonged in American waters for we have her assurance, thanks to Jones, that she hadn't seen Neptune for a long time, because "Nep," as Jones familiarly calls him, spends most of his time in the Mediterranean. Jones admits he had never before seen any mermaids, but that did not deter him. He confidently approached the visitor and without the slightest hesitation proceeded to converse with her in her strange language. He even induced her to remain on the wharf while he sent for Lute Pease to come down and make the necessary photographs. An animated conversation ensued and appears duly recorded over Jones' signature.

Now, that's what we call good newspaper work. Ninety-nine out of every 100 newspaper writers on earth would have squaked at the very sight of the mermaid, and not one in a million would have been capable of speaking her language. Yet Jones, with rare foresight, told her that she had pretty hair and that her scales were on straight, and otherwise coaxed her into waiting for Pease, who showed up with his camera in due time. This was indeed a rare newspaper feat, beside which John Fleming Wilson's interview with the microbes in Salem's water supply pales into insignificance. Jones is just the man Portland needs and will prove a valuable adjunct at the Lewis and Clark fair, where many strange situations will materialize that must needs be explained.

#### ALASKAN LIGHTHOUSES.

Captain Jarvis, collector of customs for the district of Alaska, is very hopeful that congress at its present session will make further provision for the erection of lighthouses in Alaska, and may make a separate lighthouse district of Alaska, says the Post-Intelligencer.

At the present time, from Cross sound, in southeastern Alaska, to Point Barrow, on the Arctic, there is but a single lighthouse, although another one is in course of construction. This is a coast line considerably greater than the Atlantic coast line from the Mexican border to the northernmost extremity of Maine, with the coastline of all of the great lakes thrown in for good measure, which is substantially without any of the ordinary and customary aids to navigation to be found on every fishing village along the Atlantic seaboard.

Nor is it because the coast which is thus lacking in ordinary aids to navigation is not frequented by vessels that this condition of affairs exists. There is a fleet of very large proportions plying to Alaska at all times. The number of vessels which depart from the various coast ports to Alaska, principally from Puget sound, runs to nearly 500 a year, and each of these vessels naturally returns to her port of departure. Thus in the course of a year there are

probably 1000 vessels plying Alaskan waters, coming from points outside the district. This is in addition to the local vessels plying from one Alaskan port to another.

The total number of passengers carried by these various vessels during the year must approximate very closely to 100,000, although statistical information on this subject is hard to obtain. Furthermore the value of the cargoes carried to and from Alaska exclusive of local commerce within the district, is in excess of \$30,000,000.

Of course, the bulk of this trade is with southeastern Alaska, but even southeastern Alaska has but the merest pretense of proper aids to navigation in four lighthouses now finished.

Nowhere in the civilized is such a stretch of water carrying such a commerce and such a number of passengers, so woefully lacking in all aids to navigation as the waters of Alaska. It is high time that congress takes earnestly in hand the matter of erecting lighthouses in all of the waters of Alaska and at all of the harbor entrances. The present condition of affairs, while a decided improvement on conditions which existed but a few years ago, is still disgraceful to the federal government.

#### WANTED—A LEADER.

"I feel quite confident—knowing from my own experience what a brave and clever fellow the Chinaman is—that were I accorded the necessary power and given an absolute free hand in the Chinese government, I could, in the space of two or three years, provide the Chinese empire with an army that would be second to none in the world."

So declared Lord Wolseley, the famous British general, who spent many years among the Chinese and studied their manners and customs carefully. Commenting in his autobiography upon the possibilities of the Chinese race, Lord Wolseley said:

"There is no nation numerically as great as China whose customs and modes of life are so common to all parts of their vast empire. To me they are the most remarkable race on earth, and I have always thought and still believe them to be the great coming ruler of the world. They only want a Chinese Peter the Great or Napoleon to make them so. They have every quality required for the good soldier and the good sailor, and in my idle speculation upon this world's future I have long selected them as the combatants on one side at the great battle of Armageddon, the people of the United States of America being their opponents."

Yet this great nation of 400,000,000 people is today the bone of contention between two nations that are not nearly her numerical equals. Russia's population is 129,000,000, while Japan's is but 45,000,000. They have gone to war over the division of a great nation that has been rendered helpless because she lacks a leader.

Some day, perhaps, there will rise up a great Chinese leader, who will establish an educational system, provide army and navy and hurl back the foes who now seek the disintegration of the Chinese empire. The present deplorable condition of China may be attributed primarily to lack of educational facilities, which has kept the empire in the dark age period while all the other nations of the world have advanced.

There are, according to Leslie's, about 200,000 doctors in the United States, or about one for every 350 people. It has been approximately estimated that the average yearly income of these men is \$750, or that the public in the country pays \$150,000,000 annually for medical attendance, omitting entirely the money spent for patent medicines, which brings millions of dollars to manufacturers, or the amounts spent for doctor's prescriptions or paid to quacks and commercial doctors. The preparation for the practice of medicine that gives a man a good standing in the profession means an expense of literally speaking, \$4000 for four years in a reputable medical school, \$1000 for general expenses during two years' hospital service, and perhaps another \$1000 for setting up in practice. A year or two in Europe is also a help.

The Portland Tradesman offers the following bit of excellent advice: "All pull together for the good of Portland, every town and city in the state and Oregon in general. Be Oregonians, first, and Portlanders, Astorians, Baker Cityites, boomers afterwards. There is hardly a citizen in the state who can be consistent and oppose the progress of any industry within any city in the state. Pull together for the general good of the whole state and all its people."

Salem Statesman: An observing exchange, noticing that the name of the president of Astoria's Commercial Club is Pye and that of the Portland Commercial Club is Cake, concludes it quite a coincidence. On the surface it may appear so, but remembering that the principal business of these and similar bodies is to raise the dough for local improvements, there was certainly a modicum of design in the selection of their presiding officers.

## London Press Is Strong on Japs

### Sorry They Were So Hasty but Believe They Are in the Main Correct.

London, Feb. 8.—The editorial articles in the press this morning universally justify Japan in breaking off diplomatic relations with Russia, asserting that Russia had exhausted Japan's patience.

The Daily Chronicle, however, while admitting this, says it thinks it a pity that Japan did not await actual receipt of the reply because, in the not possible event of a close war and the powers negotiating a settlement, some of them may be inclined to guide their decision by the fact that Japan took the initiative.

For the rest the Japanese feeling is very strong in the British press which dwells upon the great need of the utmost efforts to localize the conflict.

The Daily Telegraph concludes its editorial article with these words: "Upon Great Britain and France

rests the great responsibility of averting universal dispute among mankind, and that is a common task which every incident of friendship, reason and duty must move them to fulfill."

#### Nurses Ready For Far East.

New York, Feb. 8.—A score of nurses from Bellevue hospital will in all probability leave for the far east as soon as the fighting begins and it is not improbable that the hospital ship Maine, which under the direction of Mrs. Cornwallis-West, rendered valuable service in the South African war, will again be put into service. Several nurses who served on the Maine are here and anxious to go to the front.

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8:00 a m	Portland Union Depot	11:10 a m
7:00 p m	pot for Astoria and Way Points	9:40 p m

ASTORIA

7:45 a m	For Portland and Way Points	11:30 a m
6:10 p m		10:30 p m

SEASIDE DIVISION

8:15 a m	Astoria for Warrenton, Flavel, Stevens, Hammond and Seaside	7:40 a m
11:35 a m		4:00 p m
5:50 p m		10:45 a m
6:15 a m	Seaside for Warrenton, Flavel, Hammond, Stevens & Astoria	12:50 p m
9:30 a m		1:20 p m
2:30 p m		9:25 a m

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