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OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY OF PORTLAND

BETTER ASSESSMENTS NEEDED.

ANOTHER deficit is in sight. This fact will, of course, be used by some people as a foundation for an argument that the city should have kept in partnership with the gamblers, and obtained a little money from them monthly, but the better judgment, and that of the great majority will be that the city can and should get along without this gamblers' money; and moreover, can and should pay its bills, and arrange to meet its current expenses, without incurring an annual deficit. It is doubtless true that a deficit is more troublesome than a surplus. The careful, intelligent business man looks out that a deficit does not show up against him at the end of a year or of any month, and a city should and can make the same sort of record.

The city government is somewhat handicapped, however, by its legal connection with the county government. It would be better if Portland were coterminal and coincident with a county, and if a new county were created, with a separate county seat at Gresham or Troutdale or Fairview. We have to rely for taxes on the valuations and assessments of a county assessor, who has many temptations. The time has come when there should be a full, fair, just and accurate assessment of the property of this city. The present assessor, who does not go out of office until next January, has done rather good work, as compared with that of some of his predecessors, but there is a chance for a big improvement yet. We shall be very much pleased if the new assessor is a man capable of well filling that very important position. Since the city has to depend in an important sense on a county officer, the city has a right to hope he will do his duty.

There ought to be a full assessment of property, a careful calculation of the amount of money needed—and more will be needed next year than ever before—and then a straight-out assessment sufficient to cover the amount. And then no money beyond the estimates, except in the case of some unusual emergency, should be expended. This is the right, reasonable, straightforward way of doing business, and there is no reason why a city should not do it, as well as a banker, merchant or mechanic.

There are various ways in which the city can economize, too, but there is not much present hope of relief by that method; what is needed besides that is the right sort of an assessment, and a levy that will yield the amount needed. A "deficit" is no better than a school boy's excuse.

THE CZAR'S SON AND HEIR.

COMPARATIVELY trifling things sometimes exercise the profoundest influence on mighty events. The birth of one male child in Russia may alter the destinies of the nation and appreciably affect the wellbeing of millions of people.

A son is born to the czar; he is the fifth child in the family, the four first having been girls. The prestige of Nicholas as well as the succession to the throne hinged on that event. Nicholas possesses neither the strength of will nor the physical force to withstand the pressure so constantly urged in governmental affairs by the oligarchy which is really ruling the nation. So long as there was a strong probability or even possibility that the succession would, in the natural order of things, pass out of his immediate line he was more or less at the mercy of the powerful coterie that surrounds him. But with a male heir in his house he has all the cards in his own hands if he is able to play them and can, if he will, become complete master of the situation.

To what degree he will attempt to dominate it is impossible to say, but judging him by his character as the world understands it, while the arbitrary power rests with him, it is likely to be exercised openly, covertly or by indirection, yet exercised, by some powerful favorite and from it all it may be too much to expect that there will be much change in the spirit of the governmental institution which has provoked such deep-seated prejudice all over the world.

Nevertheless it is pleasing to note that any man is gratified in any laudable ambition and the birth of a son to the autocratic czar may, and it is hoped will, have a more or less beneficent influence upon the whole system of government.

RAISUL'S PARSONS.

The Stealing of a Man and the Coming of a Fleet.

If you look out of your bedroom window to the west, says Edgar Wallace, writing to the London Mail from Tangier, under date of June 13, you will see the hills of Andalusia quite close at hand. And Andalusia is Spain, and Spain is quite European, and almost civilized. If you turn your head ever so slightly to the right you will see at your feet Tangier, which is Darkest Africa and the mysterious east all rolled into one. Also, it is the first or second century—or, rather, it is before the Christian era. Mohammedanism is almost a modernity. The electric light, flickering feebly at the corners of dark passages, may pass for a miracle. The hotels are improved caravansaries, and need not count.

Perhaps it is the food, or the methods, or the rooms, but, whatever it is, there is nothing in the average Tangier hotel that clashes with that prevailing spirit of antiquity which is Tangier's very own.

Low hills, all olive green, circle the blue bay. A thin golden ribbon of beach separates the blue and olive of land and water, and, perched uncomfortably at an angle of 20 degrees, Tangier, all of a jumble, sits with her feet in the sea.

Tier on tier, roof of glaring orange overlooking flat roof of washed-out blue, a white, bright yellow Jerusalem of a town, it rises—Tangier, ancient, unchangeable, unvanishing.

It is eastern; the east one reads about in one's callow youth; the turbaned east, the east in jalloh and fez; the east that carries spears and quail, long-barreled, queer-stocked guns; the east that says its prayers on Liberty carpets, and goes to the mosque at all sorts of inconvenient hours.

Laden donkeys stagger through the cobble-paved passages that serve for streets. Coal-black negroes, all these and perspiration, jog past you with tinkling bell and bulging, dripping water bag. Grave Jews in black, shaven-headed, blissem all in rags, curious visitors from Pers— you know the curiosity that is expressed by a scowling and slovenly soldier in soiled tunics pass and repass you every second. Blanketed ghosts of women, their faces muffled, shuffle awkwardly from street to street.

A bored little boy leads a hideously blind old man to a group of idlers in the thronged market place. The old man thins his formal, and the little boy, with his eyes fixed on a group of acrobats, repeats the appeal mechanically: "In the name of God, who will buy me a little oil for my supper?"

For my supper? pipes the boy, abstractedly.

But the begging bowl goes unfilled. A hissing objurgation in Spanish from one, "Go away, can't you?" in English from another; only a Moor stops in his stride to search a capacious leather bag at his side, and throws five centimes into the outstretched hands. "In the name of God."

A babel of voices around you, in this same market place. Arabic mostly, then Spanish, then French, and sometimes English.

"Say: American 'jackey,' as bright as a baby's smile and as incongruous a vision in this out-of-the-world spot as an automobile in heaven.

"Say!" Where's this English post-tot?"

He has a little group of Arab boys about him. Open-mouthed, abashed little boys, filled with the wonder and awe of youth for mankind in uniform.

Little English, riding fiery Arab sticks, and armed with deadly accurate bamboo canes slung at his back with strings of cotton, cease their marauding, and the hissing, infantile Ferdinand seizes the opportunity of making his escape.

Debonair and happy-go-lucky, with a smile on his wind-beaten face, the man who has come to stop Raisul's greater game passes down the ill-paved streets, followed by the awe-stricken youth of Tangier.

"Inglies?" asks a villager from Fahs of the seller of coal.

"Americo," answers that wise gossip, and spits reflectively. "I think that this is the only dark spot on Raisul's otherwise irreproachable reputation; the only point of which Tangier—the real Tangier that lives on fish fried in rancid oil—is not prepared to see with an eye with the popular hero of the moment.

Tangier is beginning to think that perhaps Raisul was a little indiscreet in his selection of a victim. It was, says Tangier, sitting cross-legged on a green divan, with his shoes left at the door. It was very foolish to take the Americans. Had it been only an Englishman!

ELECTRICITY SUPERSEDING STEAM.

EVEN the big steam railroads are turning to electricity as the best motive power. The rapid displacement of steam by electricity as a motive power on several eastern lines is engaging the attention of the foremost railway men of the day. Some well informed men predict that at no far distant time the steam locomotive will have for the most part disappeared, and that all principal railroad lines will be equipped with electric motors.

Among the railways that have recently decided to substitute electricity for steam is the celebrated West Shore road, which is about to turn its line between Canastota and Rochester, N. Y., into an electric road, with rolling stock of the latest and most modern kinds. Similar changes have been made on portions of the New York Central lines. These are perhaps experimental as yet, but it is confidently expected and predicted that the experiments will succeed so well that electricity will be used more and more. For suburban and branch roads the electric system is rapidly coming into favor. Its use gives a more frequent and agreeable train service, free from the discomforts of smoke and cinders, and enables a train to make more rapid time. The Southern Pacific railway, it has been recently reported, expects soon to use electricity between Portland and Forest Grove, and doubtless that and other western roads will gradually substitute electricity for steam along all their suburban reaches, at least. And yet this, if it should happen, will not prevent the construction of many other electric lines in thickly settled portions of the country.

Roads centering in Chicago are preparing to use electricity, referring to which the Chicago Journal says:

The substitution of electricity for steam will not only gratify the patrons of such lines, but will be hailed with delight by everybody as putting an end to the smoke and noise produced by the present steam locomotive. It is gratifying to learn that the officials of such local lines as the Illinois Central and Chicago & Northwestern roads, having an enormous suburban traffic, are already engaged in devising plans for operating all their trains in and out of the city by means of electric motors. When such changes shall have been made Chicago will have the greatest suburban train service in the country, as well as the cheapest and cleanest.

The growing use of electricity will revolutionize the traffic of well populated portions of the country, and do much to add to the population and products of many suburban and rural districts. Electricity is easily the king of forces.

A VALUABLE SERIES OF ARTICLES.

THROUGH an arrangement with the Chicago Tribune we begin today the publication of a remarkable series of articles by the noted correspondent, John H. Raftery, on the question of Canadian reciprocity. They will embrace a series of first-hand views gathered not alone in the United States but in the principal centers of Canada itself.

In the initial article the proposition is laid down that Canada is no longer a suppliant for our commercial favor, and if Chamberlain's colonial preferential tariff plan should carry, that country would be perfectly independent of us. The principle of reciprocity received warm and hearty advocacy at the hands of the late President McKinley. Since his death it has been relegated to the shelf, and while there have been those who have paid it generous vocal tribute no one is deceived into the belief that there is any present intention to carry the matter one bit further unless public opinion becomes so insistent that it can no longer be withheld.

For this reason, among others, the whole subject takes on an added interest which will be intensified by the local concern in the outcome. The letters, coming as they do from a strong Republican source, will undoubtedly attract widespread attention and at the same time furnish the country a mass of interesting information which will be exceedingly valuable in the discussion of the subject of reciprocity, but more particularly as it is specifically applied to our commercial relations with Canada.

MIGHTY GOOD FOR CORN.

From the Council Bluffs Nonpareil.

When you get up in the morning from your superheated couch With a brain all hot and addled and a temper full of grouch, When you wander to your office with a dull and fishy eye, 'Neath a sun that's gaily blazing like a furnace in the sky, Oh, it's hot, but don't you mind it, though you're written and forlorn; It's a little tough for mortals, but it's mighty good for corn.

When you stagger home so dinner in a dazing glare is best, And you smell the burning leather of the shoes beneath your feet, When your mouth is full of cotton and your collar's on the run, And you bake and fry and fizzle like an oyster in the sun, Don't cuss about the weather and don't mope about and mourn; It's a little breath from hades, but it's mighty good for corn.

When you spend the humid evening full of anger and despair, Chasing 'round with cots and pillows after cooling breaths of air; When you're hot and damp and sticky and you think with mortal dread Of that little hot air oven that surrounds your waiting bed, You may contemplate resigning from this torrid earth in scorn, But you're foolish if you do it—this is bully for the corn.

SOFT OF A SLOW ROAD.

From the Louisville Herald.

"I missed an important engagement through the slowness of the—well, I won't say which road it was, but it was one that runs into Louisville—today, and was reminded of a line that runs through Arkansas and is noted for being the slowest road in creation," said M. J. Fellows of Dubuque, Ia.

"This road was so slow that the hogs in the little country towns would beat it foot races, and one day one of its trains stopped out in the wilderness of an Arkansas cornfield and did not move for nearly an hour. It was a blazing hot day, and the passengers were in a perfect fidget. Finally the conductor came into the car, looked cautiously about, and singling out a passenger, went up to him and stealthily whispered: 'Have you got a piece of string about you? We've broke down, and I want to fix the engine.'

Small Change

Now is the time to harvest your burdocks.

Root, hog or die.—(N. Y. Republic-Loana.

Kuropatkin has been wounded in his feelings. The anti-thistle law should be better enforced.

The mining congress must be well cared for.

Straw votes are about as valuable as straw ball.

Port Arthur is winning a reputation for real meanness.

Oregon is in luck again—has no state election next fall.

Closing the St. Louis fair on Sunday was a big mistake.

But they say that Candidate Davis is young for his age.

A handsome woman has no grudge against the mirror trust.

A man who prefers peace to war is not necessarily a coward.

The place to keep a street clean is right in front of your house.

Some men looking for a job wouldn't work under any circumstances.

When a person gets a reputation, any sort of a dab on Jingle will do.

Tom Taggart can't become president anyway; he was born in Ireland.

When Grover Cleveland calls on Judge Parker he will not be accompanied by William Jennings Bryan.

Two hundred and thirty-nine electoral votes will do the business. Anybody can figure them out, and elect his choice.

An Iowa girl has been selected as teacher for the nephews of the Chinese emperor. Maybe she will become the successor to Tsi An.

Chicago News: There are no lemonade stands or beer tunnels in Manchuria, but the beer tunnels when it is 100 in the shade is to fight.

What the newspapers want is a really decisive battle in Manchuria. If they don't get it before long they are liable to go to war themselves.

Anybody can figure out anybody's election. Just write down the list of states you need for your candidate, with the numbers of their electoral votes, and—there you are.

It is evidently the silly season in New York, when the papers make a great sensation about Uncle Jim Hill "buying" his way to the White House. They must be having dog-days back there, sure enough.

"Will the next Republican legislature cut down the big grafts?" inquires an exchange. Will the interlocutor enumerate a few such grafts.—Salem Statesman. Never heard of them before, did you? What happy, childish innocence!

Philadelphia Ledger: Governor Warfield is again advising girls not to marry until they are 25 years old. The governor will have a good deal of influence in this matter as he would if he tried to stop the sun—girls will continue to marry when the right chance comes.

Minneapolis Tribune: A young woman of Philadelphia, annoyed at the insulting attentions of a ferryboat masher, kicked the water into the top of his hat the other day and then bit her lips until his ears rang for the ambulance. This remedy is rather more spectacular than the use of the hatch, but it must require some training.

ELECTRIC ROADS ARE COMING.

The vast influence which they will exert on the future.

From the Corvallis Times.

A proposition for an electric road between Corvallis and Eggers is a natural product of these days of progress and development. The present promoters may or may not be the people, and the present may or may not be the occasion to install the line, but an elaborate system of electric roads to thread itself between the Willamette valley is a condition that the future, and in all probability the near future, will establish. Water runs down hill, and the electric road will be a step in the same direction, and whether we expect them or not, they are to be.

The Willamette valley is especially well suited to a profitable operation of a complete system of electric roads. The wonder of many eastern people arriving here is that intricate lines of the kind have not already been established. Cascade mountain streams present an inexhaustible supply of power, so conveniently situated as to be the cheapest in the world. Capital in the east and west by millions, but ill-delivered to the west, are attracted by the immense profits that always come from transportation enterprises, is keen for investment of the kind. The immediate question with such investors is not the profit of the moment, but the return to come in the future to the pioneer who first gets foothold in the region and gradually gains control of the system. Thus, there is certainty of a future Willamette valley, with an intricate network of electric roads, connecting all the principal towns, threading all the more densely populated farming communities, transporting persons and products cheaply and swiftly, and forming a regular and necessary part of the daily life of the time.

A MISSING \$10,000 BILL.

From the Minneapolis Tribune.

Nearly 15 years ago a man entered the First National Bank of Denver and walked into the office of David H. Moffat, the president of the bank. He had a bottle in his hand that he said contained nitroglycerin, and threatened to blow up the bank unless he was given a large sum of money. Mr. Moffat sent for the money, and among the bills was one of \$10,000 denomination. Recently the government called in all \$10,000 bills, and the one given by Mr. Moffat sent for the money, and among the bills was one of \$10,000 denomination. Recently the government called in all \$10,000 bills, and the one given by Mr. Moffat sent for the money, and among the bills was one of \$10,000 denomination.

From the Jeweler's Circular Weekly.

The most extraordinary pearl—or rather, cluster of pearls—known as the "Southern Cross" is owned by a syndicate of Australian gentlemen, who value it at \$80,000. So far as is known, it occupies an absolutely unique position. It consists of nine pearls, naturally grown together in so regular a manner as to form a perfect Latin cross.

The pearl was discovered by a pearl fisher at Roebourne, West Australia. The first owner regarded it with so much superstition that he buried it; but it was discovered in 1874, and five years later was placed on exhibition in Australia.



August 12—A gentle breeze from the south carried us along 10 miles, when we stopped to take a meridian altitude, and sent a man across to our place of observation yesterday. He stepped 974 yards, and the distance we had come was 18 1/2 miles. The river is wider and shallower than usual. Four miles beyond this bend a bluff begins, and continues several miles to the south. It rises from the water at different heights, from 20 to 150 feet, and higher as it recedes on the river; it consists of yellow and brown clay, with soft sandstone imbedded in it, and is covered with timber, among which may be observed some cedar; the lands on the opposite side are low and subject to inundation, but contain willows, cottonwoods and many grapes. A prairie pool came near the bank and barked at us; we attempted unsuccessfully to take him. This part of the river abounds in beaver. We camped on sand island in a bend to the north, having made 20 1/2 miles.

PASSAGES FROM BOOKS THAT SELL

(Compiled by Ambrose Bierce.) As they strolled along the Rivera the setting sun was just touching the summit of the Alps and firing them with an electrical glow. Turning to her, he looked into her beautiful eyes and thus expressed himself: "Dearest, am I about to make an important statement?" She almost instantly divined the character of the communication that he referred to, and it affected her with considerable perturbation. It was so sudden, "If," she remarked, "you could postpone the statement above mentioned until a more suitable occasion I should regard your forbearance with high satisfaction."

"Very well," he replied, with coldness, "I will wait until we are not alone." "Thank you, ever so much," she blushed, and was silent. Later in the evening he explained to her the trend of his affections, and she signified the pleasure that she received from his preference.

The booming of the cannon awakened him with a start. Vaulting into the saddle with remarkable grace he was soon in the thickest of the fray, and many a foe's helmet fell beneath his flashing steel. Yet even in the terrible din and confusion of battle his mental processes were normal, and he thought of the white and black, and of the death dealing about him. Suddenly he was roused from his reverie by the impact of a battle axe upon his helmet, and turning his eyes in the direction of the blow, he beheld the sneering visage of De Grammont on a black steed.

Here was an opportunity that might satisfy his ambition, while it afforded an opportunity to rid his country of a traitor and himself of a rival; to serve at once his ambition and his love. His noble and many a foe's helmet fell beneath his flashing steel. Yet even in the terrible din and confusion of battle his mental processes were normal, and he thought of the white and black, and of the death dealing about him. Suddenly he was roused from his reverie by the impact of a battle axe upon his helmet, and turning his eyes in the direction of the blow, he beheld the sneering visage of De Grammont on a black steed.

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Oregon Sidelights

Condon is improving.

Going to the regatta?

Fifty The Dalles! It is to have a fair.

Morrow county raises fine peaches also.

Send says it is becoming a second Spokane.

Several good new houses are going up in Albany.

Much irrigation development