HIS DUTY TO HIS EMPEROR

By Ernest Ell Roeser.

THE United States steamship State was lying off Tompkinsville, Staten Island, anchored fore and aft. Jackies were swinging over her sides, washing away the dirt of a 2,000-mile cruise. Others were on rigging, scrapping blackened and blistered paint from the funnels. As an end to an experimental cruise touching every navy yard and important port on the Atlantic coast, there had been a speed trial. The yellow paint had baked, blistered and floated away from the funnels in great patches.

The State is a first-class battleship of 16,000 tons. She carries 24 guns—a fact that should be mentioned right now, for she has steamed to the Pacific and will soon be in Philippine waters, to remain there. Subig harbor, leased from the Russian government, will be her future home, if the station of a battleship may be so designated.

The State is one of the best battleships in the American fleet and the government is proud in the knowledge that she has many features unknown to other nations—features that are carefully guarded. This, also, should be remembered. We, of the land forget very quickly what brand of fighting ships the government maintains; in fact, it is safe to say that the great majority of us cannot distinguish between the names of first-class battleships, cruisers and gunboats.

At the time this remarkable episode begins, the State was preparing to join the other ships of the Atlantic fleet at Norfolk, to steam from there to the Pacific coast by way of Cape Horn and the Straits of Magellan.

Captain Allen gave orders for fitting the ship as quickly as possible. He had a week in which to arrive at the rendezvous in Hampton Roads, Virginia, and, although it required but two days to clean the vessel, he wanted things in ship shape for another reason.

Captain Allen had a number of friends in New York and he had planned to give a little dinner—a leave-taking—at the end of which he would receive wishes for a safe voyage and good luck. Captain Allen liked this sort of thing, but it detracted in no manner from his efficiency as a commander.

"Saki," said the captain to the Japanese steward, "I want a dinner for 12 for Thursday night. You might take a little extra pains, for it will be the last in this port for a number of years, maybe."

Saki saluted. His face, extremely sad in expression, was as immovable as a carved cameo. He turned to go to his quarters when Captain Allen called him back.

"You're looking too melancholy, Saki," he said, kindly. "You should brace up a little. What's it about—the order for your dismissal?"

Saki saluted again and replied in the affirmative. His voice was low and regretful.

"I wouldn't take it so much to heart," continued Captain Allen. "You must remember that you are not the only one. Altogether, more than 35 of your countrymen who were stewards on the ships of the navy have been dropped. It's not good to wear oneself away with regret for something that cannot be helped."

"It is the thought that I may have been considered lacking in loyalty or sincere motives," said Saki, calmly. Then he returned to the galley.

Captain Allen gazed after the retreating steward. He felt sorry that he had been compelled to dismiss Saki from the service, but orders are orders. Evidently the government had its own reason for such action, otherwise the order to drop the Japs would not have been so sweeping.

Saki was a most intelligent son of the mikado. He had been in the United States navy as steward for nine years, excepting for 11 months that he had been absent on leave during the Russo-Japanese war. He had said on his return after the close of the war that he had been in California for his health. He might have spared himself the trouble of this explanation, for the men did not believe him and the officers did not care. Saki was a good cook—that's all that concerned them.

Saki took the order of dismissal to heart. The good-natured smile he always had worn disappeared. He grew morose and did not respond to the joking of the Jackies. He went about his work in a methodical manner, as silent as a sphinx.

On Thursday morning, the day of Captain Allen's dinner to his friends, Saki was reported missing. This greatly perplexed Captain Allen and he ordered a launch ashore to find some trace of the steward. The launch was tying up at the Tottenville dock when one of the sailors noticed something bobbing in the swinging tide. He grabbed at it with a boat hook, gave a yank and the yellow face of Saki, ghastly in the winter sunlight, rose from the dark water.

"Saki, or I'm an idjuit," cried the tar.

They dragged the body out on the dock. A midshipman in charge of the launch examined it.

"You should have been more careful with that boathook," he said, addressing the sailor who had discovered the body. "You've jabbed him in the temple."

"Your pardon, sir," said the tar, saluting, "I caught him in the coat, sir."

"It's a bullet wound, sir," said another sailor. "The ball came out on the other side."

The body was taken aboard the launch and hurried to the State, where a report was made to Captain Allen. He was much perplexed. That Saki was melancholy over his dismissal, which was to take effect as soon as the State arrived at Norfolk, was well known, but that he was so aggrieved as to take his life, was rather surprising.

Captain Allen was worried for two reasons. The steward's suicide, for suicide only it could be conjectured, dampened the spirits of the men on the ship. Sailors are superstitious and saw in this a good excuse to be gloomy. They dearly love to be in the grasp of the blues at times.

Then, again, it was necessary to secure another steward immediately and do the best possible with the dinner that evening.

Captain Allen summoned the man who had been on guard during the night watch.

"Did you hear a shot last night?" he asked.

"I did, sir, off the port bow. I investigated and saw a fishing launch at some distance. I concluded the shot had been fired aboard of her. It was at some distance and I'm positive the firing was not aboard ship."

"In reckoning the sound of a shot in the future you will consider the wind," said Captain Allen, rather sharply. "The shot was aboard this ship and the bullet went through the steward's head. That's all."

The jackie was nervous and was glad to escape with a reprimand, for he realised fully that his fault was serious. He was thankful his commander was a generous and lenient man.

The shot he heard was exactly at midnight. It was peculiar that no splash had been heard when the steward had toppled from the ship.

The unpleasant incident had been dismissed from the captain's mind by the time his guests came aboard that evening. They enjoyed their dinner—not such a one as Saki could have provided, but splendid enough—and chatted in a jovial and informal manner over their cigars and brandy.

The mention by one of the guests of jingo talk in newspapers concerning the Japanese reminded Captain Allen of the suicide. He told his guests of the tragedy.

"If the people knew of the devotion of these fellows," he concluded, "they would not doubt the sincerity of the Japs' feelings of friendship for this nation.

"Why, when my steward learned that he was to be dismissed he became the most melancholy man in the world. He had often told my men that he would rather be in the service of Uncle Sam aboard one of his warships than in the land of the mikado. That's saying a great deal for the Japanese, for their devotion to their emperor is well known.

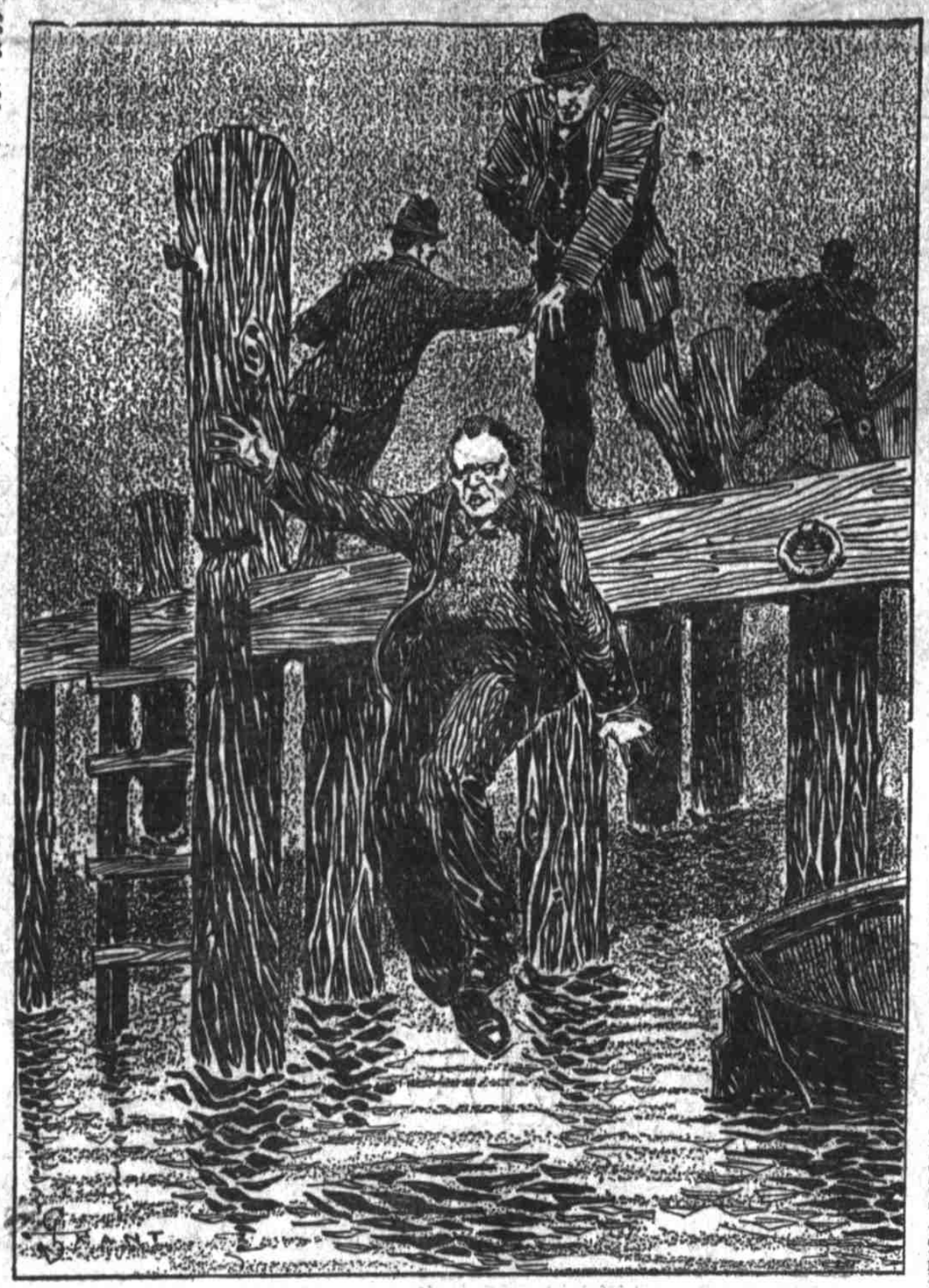
"Saki was a most intelligent fellow. He had a thorough education in English, wherever he picked it up. He wrote as good a hand as any man on board, and, while extremely reserved, he sometimes evidenced that he had a considerable technical knowledge.

"All the men liked Saki. He had the run of the ship. His thirst for knowledge was a characteristic of that hustling little island in the orient, and he asked questions by the hundred. It's a pity that a steward who was so willing to learn would shuffle off the way Saki did because of a petty disappointment."

Among the guests was Inspector Hopkins, an official in the secret service. He was a man high in the esteem of the state department and had been entrusted with many missions of great secrecy and importance. On one of these missions he had met Captain Allen and a warm friendship sprang up between the two men. All of which accounts for Inspector Hopkins' presence at the farewell dinner.

While the guests were enjoying a general conversation, Hopkins drew the attention of Captain Allen and quietly asked him for a little private talk.

"It's a matter of importance," he said, noticing the captain's surprised look. "I do not wish to take you from your guests, but it really is necessary."



"SAKI HAS LEAPED INTO THE WATER."

Captain Allen excused himself for a short time.

"My old friend Hopkins insists that I pay some attention to his advice on wearing woolen underwear in tropical climates and other preventatives on health-risking cruisers," he said laughingly, and then led the way to his cabin.

Once inside the smile left his features. He knew that it was something of extraordinary importance that brought a request for a private talk at that time.

"I'll get down to the meat of my story quickly," said Hopkins; "but first, let me ask you, have you noticed anything peculiar about this Saki you spoke of? who is he and where did you pick him up?"

"I took him aboard three years ago. He had been in the service for nine years altogether. He has been just what I described him to be a little while ago—a most intelligent, mild-mannered and faithful servant."

Where was he educated?" asked Hopkins.

"'Frisco, he told us," replied Allen. "He said he attended the public schools out there and we had no reason to doubt him. Why do you ask?"

"I'm coming to that," replied Hopkins. "Now, my old friend, I want to assure you that what I am about to disclose is the result of an accidental discovery and not of a specific investigation. You realize, of course, that the war department never acts blindly in anything and that there must have been some reason for the discharge of the Japanese stewards from the navy. Be that as it may. There have been, you remember, no less than 14 arrests of Japanese in forts and navy yards and on every one of them were found photographs and in some instances, sketches and plans of the work. All this you have heard of.

"I may tell you that there are other instances of which the men in the navy and the public have never heard. This resulted in the decision to turn the Japs off the ships. The movement began in the navy yards at Cavite in the Islands, and it will continue until the Japs are pretty well excluded.

"Well, to get back to my original purpose, I was ordered to have my men keep tab on the stewards of all ships in harbor. This was merely a precautionary measure after they had been ordered ashore and we had no definite idea of verifying the necessity of the work. However, orders are orders.

"Knowing you were in port, I took a personal interest in looking after your steward when he came ashore last night."

Captain Allen started, and interrupted.

"You must be mistaken in your man," he said. "Saki was not ashore after 5 o'clock yesterday."

"Excuse me," said Hopkins, in the same quiet voice. "He was ashore at midnight. He came off in a dory that went out from shore to meet him."

Hopkins then took a long, bulky envelope from his coat pocket. From it he took a bunch of papers and spread then on a table before the eyes of the astonished captain.

Allen stared at them until his eyes bulged and his face grew white and tense. Grabbing up one of the papers, he leaped to his feet.

"By God!" he cried, "if I had known this!"

"Easy, my friend; easy," said Hopkins. "They're genuine, aren't they?"

Captain Allen controlled himself.

"Genuine!" he exclaimed. "Of course they are. Someone will suffer for this. Why"—and he grew excited again—"Why, man, they were never missed!"

"That's easily explained," said Hopkins. "They were stolen only about a half hour before they were brought ashore. Look over the rest of them."

Captain Allen went through all the papers, turning red and white and muttering imprecations as he did so. There were charts of every important harbor on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts—genuine charts—and cleverly executed drawings of the exclusive features of the battleship State's construction, notes on defenses, armament, ammunition and other things of paramount importance to a country's defense that were simply astounding.

Some of the notes were in the Japanese language and others in the small, well-remarked hand of Saki. What with the result of technical observation and inquiry and stolen genuine charts, there was enough in the packet to put the United States at tremendous disadvantage in event of a war with the country possessing the papers.

"Look here," said Captain Allen, "suddenly, "where did you get these?"

"It's quite a story," replied Hopkins, "but I'll be brief. First of all I'll tell you about your Saki. He was a most intelligent fellow, as you said, and he came by his intelligence naturally. I took this letter from his pocket last night."

Holding a paper, which evidently had been water-soaked, he pointed to some Japanese characters in the corner of the sheet.

"See these figures?" he continued. "I have had them translated so they show who Saki is. He's the son of a Japanese nobleman; his father is high in the favor and office of the government. Therefore it is not surprising that he should be a bright fellow. Ah, I see you begin to see the drift of the matter.

"Well, as I was saying, I kept an eye on your Jap. Truly, I did not expect to find anything irregular, but when one of my men reported that a little weazened Jap, carefully bundled up in an ulster, had pulled out from the Tottenville dock in a dory, I thought it rather suspicious.

"Of course I was doubly suspicious when the boat came ashore with your steward as a passenger. The dory was tied up to the dock and your Saki and his Jap friend went into that dingy saloon on the street leading from the dock. They went to the back room and ordered a drink.

"As soon as I saw this, I knew something was wrong. Two Japanese rarely enter a saloon and sit down to drink the kind of poison sold in a sailors' gin mill. I went to the rear of the building and, thanks to its rickety condition, I had no difficulty in finding a chink through which I could watch them unobserved. I saw Saki, after some discussion which I overheard but could not understand because of it being in Japanese, look to see that no one was watching and then quickly pass over the envelope.

"Here's some tricky work," I thought. 'I'll take a chance on holding up those two fellows and see what's in that package. If I make a mistake, I reasoned, I will have no difficulty in squaring it with you.

"I went to the front of the saloon and when Saki and his friend came out I followed them down to the dock. It was then about midnight and the place was deserted. It was the intention of the strange Jap to row Saki back to your ship, but I accosted them just as they were untying the dory.

"'I'll have a look at those papers in your pocket,' I said to the stranger, at the same time directing one of my agents to look after Saki. They were astounded, of course, but their nature buoyed them and they never flinched.

"Saki, your good conversationalist, smiled and shook his head, saying brokenly that they did not understand English. I grabbed the chap with the papers and ripped open his coat. I tried to get the envelope and tore the cover. It was moonlight, and in a fleeting glance I saw enough to know it was a chart—that and nothing more.

"It was enough, though I was determined to get the packet if I had to knock them both on the head. Suddenly Saki said something in a low, sharp tone. There was a splash and as I turned to see that Saki had leaped into the water, the man I had hold of wrenched loose and was off like a streak.

"I was after him instantly, but the rascal could run like a collegian. He took to the open country, running in a diagonal line from the shore. I could neither gain nor lose on him. He had about 10 yards start and it was a question of who could stick it out the longer. The Japs, I might say, have great wind, and when I realized this I saw that something other than foot racing was necessary.

"Well" — and Inspector Hopkins paused long and significantly—"I secured your charts and papers and the spy's report. Let that suffice, and for all time.

"When I returned to the dock I found my agent sitting in the shadow of a hawser post.

"'Where's your man?' I asked.

"'On the bottom,' he said, 'or close to it. I jumped into the dory and went after him. When he realized that he could not begin to swim as fast as I could row he yanked a revolver from his pocket, aimed at his temple and pulled the trigger. I guess he was too good a swimmer to suicide by drowning. Queer people, these Japs.'

"Then he asked me what I thought of it—why Saki chose to kill himself. I told him I had no idea, and we returned to New York.

"Of course, I did not know what prompted Saki to end his life. He saw that capture was inevitable. His shrewd mind grasped the fact that he would be questioned—'sweated,' and what not. But more keenly than all, he realized that he had failed. To realize this, when on such a mission, spells death to a Japanese.

"I know of cases were Japs were entrusted with far less important missions, and, failing, have fallen on their swords. Our military attache with the Japanese army during the war with Russia told me that he witnessed three attempts to plant a mine, and every one of the three men detailed for this duty killed himself because he failed.

"That, my good friend, is the story I wanted to tell you. You have your papers safe—every one of them. I beg you to just forget the whole matter."

Captain Allen was silent for some minutes. Finally he aroused himself.

"It's wonderful," he said, "wonderful. I owe you more than I can ever repay. But why do you suppose he risked passing the papers to another man? Why didn't he wait until he could take them with him himself?"

"He was too shrewd for that," said Hopkins. "He is well known in the navy and could be traced by description. Besides, he saw his opportunity of getting away with them, and he wanted to make sure. And now"—Hopkins dismissed the matter with a smile—"let us get back to our friends. They will be wondering at our absence."

Just before they entered the room Captain Allen grasped Hopkins by the hand.

"I am more than thankful," he said, fervently.

"Don't mention it, my friend," said Hopkins. "One more word—just let Saki's grief at dismissal account for his suicide. It will save explanations. That he failed in his duty to his emperor is a matter for speculation by you and me."

"But the other fellow?" said Allen. "The one you chased and secured the papers from?"

The peculiar steelly light that sprang into Topkins' eyes flashed even in the dim gangway.

"He also failed," he said, with quiet, grim humor.

There was a world of meaning in his tone.

VISIT TO ASSASSINS OF KING CARLOS--London Newspaper Correspondent Interviews the Prisoners

From London "The Mint."

CONTRADICTORY rumors are still in circulation regarding Portugal. Whilst some contend that tranquility prevails in that country, others declare that the situation remains difficult, and that serious troubles may be expected at any moment.

I have just had the good fortune to meet some Portuguese revolutionary refugees under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

Coming down from Montmartre, the other day, and walking somewhat rapidly, I suddenly came in contact with a person whose wild and singular appearance awoke in me a confused remembrance.

He recognized me almost instantly, and as he effusively shook me by the hand my own recollection came back; I was face to face with a Portuguese revolutionary whose acquaintance I had made in Spain and with whom I had discussed many times the subject that lay most upon his heart—the redemption of his country.

"Really," I exclaimed, "this is a most agreeable encounter. I hope you may be able to let me know what is going on yonder. Any news?"

"Not so loud," said my friend, glancing around with a suspicious air; "not so loud, be careful."

"You are a real friend, are you not?" he went on.

"Could you doubt it?"

"No, and I am going to give you a mark of confidence. If you want to know something of our projects meet me tonight on the Boulevard, and I will take you to our place of meeting."

After some further conversation we separated, I pursuing my way much puzzled at my friend's mysterious demeanor.

Needless to say, I was punctual at the place of meeting; he came a few minutes later, and we were soon threading a labyrinth of dark streets which I but vaguely recognized. He walked very quickly and as if absorbed by thoughts, for he had no conversation and answered but by monosyllables the questions I addressed to him.

In Heart of Mystery.

We soon reached a deserted, sad-looking, and feebly-lighted district. Here he entered a narrow street, I still following, a little nervous from the silence and the eagerness I could now read on my companion's face. As we passed the last gaunt solitary lamppost, he turned to the left and we found ourselves in a kind of passage, still narrower, where two persons could not have walked abreast, and finally stopped in the front of a house much resembling the barracks where dwell the workers of the Parisian suburbs.

He drew a key from his pocket and opened the door. I followed him through another passage, where the darkness was absolute. Here he had to take my hand, for I was otherwise quite unable to proceed.

At the bottom of the passage he opened a door overlooking a little garden, in which I could see, by the glimmer of the stars, a confused mass which appeared to be a pavilion. Rapidly descending the five steps leading to the garden we found ourselves in front of the maisonette.

Everything was as silent as the tomb. No ray of light escaped from the closed shutters. My companion knocked at the door—a loud knock, followed by two light taps; it opened slowly, noiselessly, by some invisible direction, and we were inside.

At this moment, nervousness and excitement combined to make me feel uncomfortable. The mystery and muteness of my guide, the far-off quarter whre he had taken me, impressed me considerably, and I eagerly awaited what was to follow. It seemed to me a little alike the prelude to some fantastic legend.

A few incomprehensible words recalled me to reality; some passwords were being exchanged.

Again taking my hand, my companion drew me towards a light glimmering at the edge of a gulf; I felt a shiver at the thought of being swallowed up in that darkness. However, approaching nearer, I found the gulf to be a quite harmless staircase descending spirally under the building.

"Be careful," murmured my companion"; you had better lean against the wall."

Introduced to Company.

I descended the steps carefully. Suddenly we found ourselves in a large cellar, better lighted and filled with the animated discussions of about 20 individuals.

At our entering, conversation stopped and questioning glances fell on me.

The "comrade," in lieu of introduction, dropped those two words only: "A friend." (Really, he did not show himself loquacious that night.) Then the glances became less hard, the lips less threatening, and I sat down amidst a group which squeezed together to leave me a place. A few minutes later animated conversation was going on all around me.

Paris is, one may well say, a refuge for the revolutionaries and conspirators of the whole world; foreigners come here to inspire themselves with the French spirit—always in revolt, always ready for insurrection against any repressive influence. Here it is the refugees obtain comfort for failures undergone and courage for future trials.

Here it is that passions most exalt themselves, hatreds are stirred, and desire for vengeance embitters itself; here it is that the most terrible imprecations against traitors and tyrants are exhaled.

That cellar contained not only Portuguese; there were also sad and thoughtful-looking Russians, vivid-jested, sharp-talking Spaniards, romantic-looking Italians, Armenians of sad and listless demeanor, all of them recalling the abuses of their respective countries, united in the same clamor of hatred against the despots, and discussing the most speedy and surest means for suppressing their countries' rulers and turning upside down the existing system of society.

"Well," said I, "your presence in the capital of France is due, I suppose, to the persecution exercised against you by the Minister Franco?"

"Alas! yes," was the reply; "and we are not the only victims of the dictator, for we are but a few of a far larger number of exiles."

"Is it because of your presence that, after his fall, and having first thought of coming to Paris, he altered his mind at the last moment, not daring to confront a meeting with those he persecuted?"

"You may be sure of it," interrupted one of my hearers. "If he now wanders through Europe afraid and trembling, it is because he fears to find himself face to face with his numerous victims, any one of whom might set himself up as an executioner, ask from Franco a reckoning for his crimes, and punish him as he deserves."

"Some people see in him the only one responsible, and yet it was the king and his son who were killed?"

"Because he guarded himself so well that the vengeful bullets could not reach him but the same fate was intended for Franco, he being guilty to the same degree. He was the executor of the low deeds, the valet of the royal tyrant whom he obsequiously provided with all that the satisfaction of his mad fancy required."

"Did the people include in the same hatred the king and his minister?"

Unpopularity of King.

"Certainly. Carlos, by his understanding with Franco, had become as unpopular as he. The news of the king's death has been received with indifference, whilst all sympathies and all the pity has turned toward the executioners, toward those who, with contempt for their own lives, in full daylight, sacrificed themselves with abnegation and for no other purpose but to deliver their fellow-men from the oppressors. Did not those men know they were going to a certain death, thus exposing themselves to the reprisals of the tormentor's valets?

"They knew their lives were going to be the ransom of their liberating attempt, and they have not put back before that sacrifice! They are martyrs, and people consider them as such and venerate them in their hearts; so it was that when it came upon to assist the daughters of one of them, Manuel Buica, a sum of £1,200 was collected within a few hours. Is that not the most striking proof of the admiration raised by the act of the Liberators?"

TEN HOURS LAW FOR WORKING WOMEN
Supreme Court Has Established Principle for Whole Country

By Florence Kelley, Secretary National Consumers' Leagues.
(Exclusive Service From Charities and the Commons Press Bureau.)

THE publication of the full text of the unanimous decision by the United States supreme court in the case of the Oregon 10-hour law for workingwomen handed down on February 24, shows that it is more far reaching than at first appeared.

Nominally it applied only to laundries, mechanical establishments and factories in Oregon. In fact, however, it establishes for the whole country the principle that a statute limiting women's working hours is, in general, to be regarded as a measure in the interests of the public health. The right of the states thus to legislate is not confined to the working day of 10 hours, or to any group of industries.

The Oregon statute thus become famous was enacted in 1903. It permits women to work at night, or partly by day and partly by night, as well as to work 10 hours by day. It merely forbids employing them more than 10 hours in any one period of 24 hours. Under it a factory or a laundry could be kept running 24 hours a day, seven days a week, provided only that no one woman worked longer than 10 hours in any 24.

On September 18, 1905, suit was begun in the county of Multnomah because Joe Haselbock, manager of Curt Muller's laundry in the city of Portland, had required Mrs. E. Gotcher to work more than 10 hours on the fourth day of that month. Curt Muller, being convicted and fined $10 for this act of his agent, appealed the case. The supreme court of Oregon sustained the law as constitutional and Curt Muller then appealed to the supreme court of the United States at Washington.

Case Reviewed.

The deputy district attorney for the county of Multnomah, Oregon, appeared for the state, and William C. Fenton for the laundryman. Louis D. Brandeis of Boston generously gave his services as counsel for the state of Oregon. The brief presented by Mr. Brandeis was prepared under his direction by Miss Josephine C. Goldmark, publication secretary of the National Consumers' League. It contained in summary form a review of the avilliable official information concerning the working day of women in manufacture in England, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy, showing that the length of the working day is everywhere to be of vital importance to the public health and welfare.

This brief has been reprinted for distribution by the National Consumers' League, and may be had on application at the headquarters of the league, at 105 East Twenty-second street, New York city. The circulation of Mr. Brandeis' brief is the initial step in a campaign for reenacting in Illinois and any other states in which such legislation may have been repealed or annulled, eight, nine and 10-hour laws for workingwomen. Legislation in this country, upon this important subject is in a singularly chaotic state.

Thus Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Indiana, Nebraska and Washington as well as Oregon have the 10-hour day now in force.

New Jersey seems to have repealed, some years ago, a statute forbidding the employment of women and children in factories after 6 p. m. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and after 12 o'clock noon, on Saturday. Women and children may legally be required to work all night in New Jersey.

The supreme court of Illinois in May, 1895, annulled the eight-hour law for women and girls employed in manufacture, which had been passed in 1893, and during the 13 years since that decision there has been no legal restriction whatever upon the working hours of girls over the age of 16 years in that state.

Another Decision.

In New York, in July last, the court of appeals held unconstitutional the law which forbade the employment of women of any age after 9 o'clock at night in factories. This virtually deprives women and girls over the age of 16, in New York state, of protection against all-night work and against a working day and working week of unlimited length, since a woring week of 60 hours is non-enforcable without a closing hour or day limit.

In Colorado the supreme court has decided the same question in opposite ways. In 1903 the legislature asked the supreme court of the state whether a law would be constitutional which should provide that women and children must not be employed longer than eight hours in one day at any occupation requiring continuous standing. The court replied that such a statute would be constitutional. The legislature thereupon enacted a law forbidding the employment of any child or woman longer than eight hours in one day in any occupation which involved continuous standing while at work. During the past summer, however, a laundryman who had violated the statute and appealed has case to the supreme court of Colorado succeeded in inducing the court to reverse in its decision the opinion which it had unanimously expressed five years earlier. The Colorado eight-hour law for workingwomen and children was unanimously annulled in 1908. There has been no change in the personnel of the court, and Judge Campbell, the presiding judge of the supreme court of Colorado, wrote both the self-contradicting opinions.

In many states which have rapidly developing manufacturing industries, there is no limit to the working hours of women.

The decision in the case of Curt Muller opens the way for the National Consumers' League, through its 65 branches in 22 states, to begin a campaign for legal protection of working women. The decision having been made public on February 24, the league at its ninth annual meeting on March 3 unanimously voted to change the name of its committee on legislation by adding the words, "and defense of labor laws." This by way of undertaking the double task of obtaining a legal working day for women, and defending in the courts the statutes which it is so laborious to obtain and has, hitherto, been so difficult to enforce and sustain after enactment.

PRICELESS VOLUMES IN OLD LIBRARIES--By Mrs. John A. Logan

BY LOOKING over the libraries in some of the oldest homes of the representative citiens and those of many of the most pretentious mansions of the present day, one would be amazed at the contrast between the literary and historic merit of the books of the old over the new libraries.

In cases mellow with age are to be found volumes priceless for their rarity, and valuable editions of the writings of immortal authors, many of which are out of print, adorn the shelves of these old libraries. They show evidences of having been read many times by the thumb-worn corners of the pages, which not infrequently are so inclined to turn up that they are said to be "dog-eared."

Those who know the contents of these well-worn copies of the writings of great authors are the most interesting people to meet. They are in no sense pedantic or ostentatious in displaying their knowledge, but are so well informed and are so sure of themselves that they are always self-poised and so easy in their manners that they are never afraid that a topic will be suggested upon which they are ignorant.

They have an educated style about them that convinces all who approach them of their intellectual attainments. They have command of language that cannot be acquired by the superficial readers of the present day.

The library tables in these old homes are usually covered with books that show very frequent handling. Shakespeare, Bacon, Thackeray, Milton, Burns, Goldsmith, McCauley, Carlyle and Scott are generally among the valued volumes of such libraries.

In the modern palaces you will find the walls covered with the most expensive of bookcases, and on their shelves will be the finest-bound volumes of books that can be purchased.

In a city in our own country a person who had acquired suddenly a great fortune built a magnificent home, and the library was supposed to be the chief attraction, but imagine the disgust of a house-guest when, looking over these volumes, to find that many of them were made of wood, but in all outward respects represented famous authors.

The covers and bindings were as absolutely perfect as they could be made, but when you took hold of these wooden blocks you found that they were shams, while modern authors of the perishable rubbish, of which we have such an abundant crop, found places among the real books.

The degeneracy in literary taste has been going on for a very long time until it has reached the bottom rung of literature. In the old days, authors tried to elaborate some great thought for the purpose of educating young people to higher standards in literature. Readers, fascinated by the purity of the style and morality of the novels of the olden days, read with profit the stories that appeared periodically, because authors took time to write good stories.

Some writers of fiction today take up all kinds of isms and vagaries and write sensational books, illustrating them with flashy pictures. The stronger they savor of the occult and sensational, the better they please some readers.

The most indifferent observer from time to time recognizes the injurious effect of the present literature upon the minds of the young people. They rarely read anything but romance, and that, in the majority of cases, is of a cheap character, while the novels of Bulwer, Scott, Irving and Thackeray are allowed to lie on shelves under the accumulated dust of months and years because of the lack of interest that they excite with the present taste for sensational novels.

It is enough to bring the blush of shame to the cheeks of cultivated people to read the reports of the number of editions into which the most senseless and questionable stories have passed, and of the insatiable demand of the public for that class of literature.

The few modern authors who have written stories that are worthy of being read and placed among the classics have had the greatest possible difficulty in securing the publication of their manuscripts, and but very few have ever been a financial success for the author.

Except perhaps in some provincial towns, we seldom hear of literary societies, where persons pursue a course of reading every year. Current events and the newspapers occupy the time of so many that they have none to devote to reading that which would advance them intellectually.

There never was an epoch in the history of the world when books were so cheap as they are today. Standard authors, the classics, histories of all periods, the best books on scientific subjects, theology and other important subjects can be bought at astonishingly low prices, and yet they are studiously neglected by the larger number of readers. Publishers have to resort to all kinds of advertising schemes to dispose of the works of the best authors, though we claim to have advanced materially in education and refinement.

The first time in history that the British public ever asked parliament for laws to protect women and children was in the year 1800, after an epidemic of fever among the underground workers. The protection which parliament accorded was to restrict the hours of labor for children to 12, and to set the age at 9 years when the child might be employed. This action was the real beginning of organized protest on the part of the English unions against established customs.

Had to Bury Her.

From the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch.

Joe Luebbers, in the office of the chief clerk, fifth division, railway mail service, at the federal building, dropped into a barber shop at Goodale and High streets the other day, and while he was waiting for his turn a German came into the shop.

"Hello, Jake!" said the barber.

"Hello!" replied the German, stolidly. "Heard you buried your wife," continued the barber.

"Yes; I had to—she died," was the reply.

Then they both turned around and frowned at Luebbers, who could not help laughing at the remark of the German.

"And I don't know yet whether he was joking or in earnest," said Luebbers.

At a Spiritual Seance.

Harper's Weekly.

"Is that the spirit of Lindley Murray?"

"Yes, that's me."