

More Real Criticism Needed, Says Alexander in Article

(The following article is reprinted from the book page of the Oregon Journal. It gives the ideas of the Albany author on the situation in literary criticism in Oregon.—Editor.)

By Charles Alexander

The trouble with Oregon literature is the climate. The climate is easy and equable. If anything lush, red and alive were written the critical sun would not respond to the blase warm. When weak things are written there is no wintery chill properly to correct them. The critical climate of Oregon affords but one official season of all the year—a mild, well-intended and indiscriminating glow of approval shining alike on the justly and the unjustly deserving. This is bad, bad, bad, for the young Western writer.

Oregon literature needs a Bierce. We do not like what is good for us; likewise, thus far we have not admitted what is good for us. Were we blessed with a Bierce we should beset his path fearfully. But competent creative work cannot come up and thrive in a burrah atmosphere. Claqueurs do not lessen the determination of the prima donna, for she knows their noise is intended to lead the public, not her. How shall the young writer, in his tender formative years, understand that the murmur of approbation he hears comes from claqueurs and is inspired by habit, dangerous kindness or commercial intent?

Not that the younger in his first faltering creative steps deserves the full withering blast he may bear 20 years later. He should be judged not for what he is, but for what he gives slight promise of. Gentle, intelligent criticism he must have, if he is to grow; and if, in place of this, he is prematurely and so unwisely praised, his friends have defeated themselves.

Oregon has no intelligent criticism, at least none that is practicing. Oregon has produced in old times and in recent times an amount of genuine talent that scarcely any state has exceeded. In the early years, when the flux and ebb of pioneer civilization was in flow, the state's young talent sought elsewhere and found what it needed, criticism. The epic-minded Markham, Joaquin Miller, who lived greatly and sang, did not find their own measures in Oregon. The common attitude is that they simply were misunderstood and unappreciated by the Oregon public. The truth is that they cared little, nor does any valid worker greatly care, whether the public appreciates his formulated feelings and ideas or not.

Markham and Miller cared for and needed the trained dissent and approbation of critics. This they sought and found far away.

And long ago. For now the case is changed, and there is no lack of public gusto. Now there are claqueurs, whose leads the public follows. Upon the innocent victim who has produced and published something, the claqueurs impose a sort of lex prima noctes, thereafter arising and pronouncing him good. As for criticism, the case remains as in earlier days. There isn't any; but unfortunately, the young writer is apt to mistake the piteous claqueur for a critic, to believe him, and follow the piper into brown mediocrity.

True, we have one crowd identified apart from public and claqueurs; these are the members of the left wing, who know how to run the show but fortunately for all have no chance of putting their knowledge to the proof. These teachers and advisors degenerated, long ago, from the tribe of critics, who in turn sprang out of the side of the first writer. A writer is an it, which once was a human being. A critic is one of the same who can not create or tell how to create, but who can

tell how not to. A teachers of practical literature is less than a critic; he is one who can not write tell how not to write, or how to write, but who does the latter nevertheless.

A competent critic, with his feeling and his training for creative work, can place his finger on the weak spots where he who actually creates has faltered; and by treating them the critic helps perfect the creator. This is his capacity. He does not know how to write, but he knows when the other fellow's writing limps. He does not play ball; he coaches. He offers no lexicon of scenes, types and situations, as the teacher does, which will work for all writers inasmuch as they worked for some writers. A persistent sense of these things as adapted to his inner, and intangible, personality, is native to every writer.

The point could not be made that Oregon's lack of competent criticism is a fault of the people or the writers or the teachers; it is a detrimental condition that has prevailed and it should be cleared away. In our local mediums, the newspapers, criticism as yet has found slight foothold. Oregon's publishers have been business men engaged in developing their state industrially. They have developed or secured or permitted little intelligence save practical intelligence. For them, a smattering of erudition has cloaked an ignorance of the arts. Now after their long sleep, they roll and toss, and eventually perhaps will come awake. Why not now?

The claqueurs forever will fight bitterly to retain the forefront position they easily won by claqueing. But that sort of thing is bad for the young Western writer. Oregon now has a native literature; she will have a native literature, shouldering on strongly in the literature of the world in that time when she gives serious consideration to the obvious weaknesses as well as the patent strengths of her scribblers. As it is, we have an over-supply of native-born ballyhooing and an under-supply of decisive native work. And if a critic

should stray among us, it might prove better in the long run to consider a moment before pitchforking him and rushing up with heaps of faggots for his pyre.

Deficits Cause Breslau To Abandon Street Cars

BRESLAU, Nov. 25.—(By The Associated Press By Mail.)—Unable to bear the deficit piled up daily by the numerous lines, Breslau has suspended street car operation. The situation resulted from the depressed financial and commercial conditions. Recently street car fares were insufficient to even pay the wages of employees, and there was little chance of increasing fares because the mark's decline was swifter than the time needed to put increased fares into effect.

Similar steps have been taken in many smaller cities, but Breslau is the first great metropolitan city to abandon its tramways.

Dr. Erich Gloeden, regarded as an authority on town building, says German towns are now paying for the sins of their fathers in town building, and urges a revision in plans for future work so that all workers shall live within 15 minutes' walk from their place of business. He argues that factories built on present-day plans are not unsightly nor objectionable to be placed near residences. He would locate parks, churches and schools in the open country surrounding the industrial center.

Dr. Gloeden would not eliminate street cars entirely, but would have them operated as express lines furnishing a through service to connect the various industrial centers.

AUSTRIA RAISES HER FREIGHT RATES

VIENNA, Nov. 25.—(By Mail.)—In an effort to meet the railway deficit, Austria has increased freight rates 10 per cent. Even with the increase the rates are far below pre-war times. Advances in passenger rates are under consideration.

DEAN ALLEN BRINGS BACK GOWN WORN BY OREGON MAN AT OXFORD

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON,

Eugene, Ore., Dec. 15.—In order to give Arthur Rosebraugh an idea of real Oxford "atmosphere," Dean Eric Allen brought from the British university a "gown," which he explains is the distinguishing mark of all students. The garment faintly resembles the gowns worn in this country by students at commencement, in that it is black, and it has cloth in front and cloth behind. But it reaches only to the waist.

This particular gown was worn by Kerby Miller, a former Oregon student who won the Rhodes scholarship award in 1920, and the dean considers it a pleasing coincidence to be able to try it on another Oregon student bound for that institution. The gown or robe must be worn by students at all lectures and conferences, and on the streets at all times after dark. This is to distinguish the "Gownies" from the "Townies" for the students are governed at all times by the university, and not by the town authorities. The gowns soon reach a delapidated condition comparable only to junior cords, and the one the dean has is in typical condition.

Many quaint traditions surround this ancient seat of learning, says Dean Allen. When a student is caught by the proctor in some act not in accord with the university ruling, the thing to do is to run. The proctor, who is a dignified don in magnificent robes himself, and wouldn't run, immediately sends his two servants in pursuit. Should they overtake the student, they are not allowed to lay hands on him, but the victim is required by tradition to surrender himself, and must appear to answer for his crime the next day.

In marked contrast to the intellectual freedom at the university is the rule which states that all students must be in their

quarters by 10 o'clock at night. This rule is rigidly adhered to, as is the one requiring all students to wear the gowns. Violations result in arrest, and the university makes quite a comfortable income out of the fines.

Arthur Rosebraugh is a son of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Rosebraugh of Salem and was recently chosen Rhodes scholar from Oregon. He is now a student at the University of Oxford.

London to Near East Air Service to be Extended

MUNICH, Nov. 25.—(By Mail.)—Plans for a comprehensive air service from London to Persia were outlined by Major von Tach-udi in a recent lecture at the Munich Museum before a meeting of representatives of various companies operating airplanes commercially in Europe. A trans-European union was established which Professor Junkers and many other men prominent in the world of aircraft joined. Bavaria, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and the leading airplane companies of all these countries are represented in the union.

It contemplates the extension of the London-Cologne-Fuerth service by night flights along the Danube to Budapest in hydroplanes which will be guided by reflectors along the river. Before 1926 this union hopes to extend this service to Braila on the Black Sea, to Russia, Persia, Greece, Turkey and Spain.

The Tourist Bureau of the California State Automobile Association distributed 408,000 road maps to individual motorists during the past fiscal year.

A critic says Mr. Coolidge has an extensive vocabulary. How does he know.

OLD OBSERVERS FOLLOWED STARS

Knotty Questions are Solved Through Aid of Stars—Women Studied

PRAGUE, Nov. 25.—(By Mail.)

From time to time Prague gives up to some persistent delver in records of the past that are not without interest. For it is an ancient city and its museums and bookshelves are filled with chronicles of what its people said and did in other centuries. A recent discovery is an old book on astronomy which shows that the men of that day spent no little time in endeavors to read what they called the "enigma of the ages," in other words, their womankind.

Based on the influence supposed to be exerted on humans by the constellation of the planets in the month in which they were born, this volume analyzes girls, according to the calendar, as follows:

A girl born in January is very likely to become a good housewife. She will incline to be melancholy, but will have a gentle disposition. February girls will be good mothers, and faithful.

March maidens, however, will be loquacious, contentious and quarrelsome, while April babies will grow up to be mercurial and unsteady women.

May guarantees merry and good tempered girls, while June gives them passionate and fiery temperaments, with an inclination to superficiality.

July produces the roses among women, according to this old sage; beautiful but thorny. Born a month later they are amiable and sensible, but rather keen for rich husbands.

Girls born in September are of fine susceptibilities and always ready to help others; they will, therefore, be welcomed everywhere, but should guard against being imposed upon by selfish people. October favors the earth with creatures who surpass all others of the sex as to depth and ardor of love.

Women born in November are kindhearted and friendly; if they are not it is always the fault of somebody else, never their own. The last month of the year brings forth racy and very good-looking girls. Unfortunately they cannot be recommended to earnest men, for they are very extravagant and always on the hunt for sensations.

Rural Germany Hard Hit By Economic Breakdown

KOTTBUS, Nov. 4.—(By Mail.)—Rural Germany is suffering the same sort of disorganization and demoralization that is going on in the great cities and industrial centers. This city of 40,000 persons is located in the center of a comparatively fertile agricultural region 40 miles from Berlin. Still the markets afford very little in the way of foodstuffs.

There are no eggs, no milk, no fruit and very few vegetables of any sort to be had in the shops and markets. Farmers refuse to bring their products to town. They cannot buy anything they need with paper marks and prefer to eat their products rather than sell them for paper which is practically worthless to them.

Even in the small villages surrounding Kottbus the situation is much the same. Persons who want to obtain chickens, eggs, turkeys and potatoes make trips into the country and carry foreign money or clothing with them to exchange for foodstuffs.

A gas meter reader remarks, "Hell hath no fury like a woman when you track mud into her house."

The most satisfactory substitute for sole leather is the telephone.

Automobile Show

Vick Brothers will hold their Third Annual Enclosed car show on the afternoons and evenings of

**Next Tuesday and Wednesday,
December 18th and 19th**

An invitation is extended to everyone who likes fine cars. We will have on hand several new models that are being shown during this show for the first time in Salem.

MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT EACH EVENING

Come in during the show and see the latest in—

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