

The tide of destiny is turning fast towards Florence. All sorts of accumulation of facts point that way

The West.

The habit of THE WEST is one of push, energy, pluck. It is the new granary of these mountain slopes.

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FLORENCE, LANE COUNTY, OREGON, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1894.

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"Be thou as chaste as ice and as pure as snow thou shalt not escape calumny."

ANSWER OF THE AMERICAN BOOK CO. TO ITS DEFAMERS.

A STATEMENT OF FACTS BY THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY TO THE PEOPLE OF OREGON.

A public attack upon the methods, motives, and business interests of the American Book Company, by a small subcommittee of the "Committee of One Hundred," of Portland, Oregon, has recently been published in the "Oregonian," a newspaper of that city.

The "report" embodying this attack is made up of a mass of misinformation, unsupported charges, baseless rumors, and unjustifiable suspicions.

Upon this *ex parte* showing, with no solid basis of fact or proof whatever, upon mere assertions and insinuations, our character and our business are assailed. Under such circumstances it is but just to ourselves, and to our many friends and patrons in Oregon and on the Pacific Coast, to make a full and explicit answer to these slanderous misrepresentations.

THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S CHARGES AGAINST US.

1. That our corporation was fraudulently and deceitfully organized.
2. That we constitute a trust and a monopoly.
3. That this alleged trust and monopoly had existed, as such a "combination," for many years before the incorporation of our company.
4. That we have been guilty of bribery, and that we systematically pursue our business through a policy of bribery and corruption.
5. That our elementary publications are without merit.
6. That we palm off inferior books as what the self-conscious censor style "backwoods states."
7. That our profits in Oregon are \$30,000 a year.
8. That the effect of this alleged monopoly is "disastrous to the public school system," and thereby "the public are cheated of the right to independent teachers, good schools, and good books."

Having in mind the full force of our words, we most seriously and emphatically declare that each and every one of the above charges is absolutely false, and that they are unsupported by any proof or evidence whatever, and we hereby invite an examination of them in detail.

THESE CHARGES WHOLLY UNTRUE.

Although advised by eminent counsel that the charges made against our company are clearly libelous, and would form the basis of successful suits, both criminal and civil, if they were made against us as individuals, we shall not hide behind our corporate organization or wait for the customary slow motion of the courts. We do not shrink from the broader trial of this issue by that public before whom we have been accused, as we have complete confidence in its sense of fairness and justice, and therefore make this public answer.

THE SOURCE OF THESE SLANDEROUS REPORTS.

There is but one reasonable explanation as to the source of these attacks. They emanate from some competitor in business who has the skill to make use of venal or glib persons to publish and circulate his own attacks and calumnies for him, expecting in this way to build himself up by defaming the character of his competitors. These reports, which are copied as news by the various country journals, illustrate the fine art of procuring free advertising.

A "HIDDEN MONOPOLY."

It is charged that the American Book Company was incorporated in New Jersey, with a capital of \$5,000, and that "under this modest organization was hidden one of the greatest monopolies ever known in this country." It is true that the American Book Company was legally incorporated January 9, 1890, and with the amount of capital named. But for what reason was this state chosen and this small amount of capital made use of, and what were the subsequent steps of its corporate development?

New Jersey was chosen because its laws are more favorable to manufacturing interests like ours than the laws of some other states, and because several of our large stockholders, who became directors, reside there. As is required and customary, "a principal place of business" was designated in that state. The New Jersey laws, however, are so strict that they require the money which represents stock issued to be all actually paid in, or when the money is not so paid in, that actual property at a cash valuation shall be purchased as the basis for stock issued. In this latter case the stock certificates issued for property must bear stamped on their face, "Issued for property purchased." It was therefore on simple grounds of convenience an economy that a company was at first formed with this small capital, with a view of afterwards purchasing the required property and issuing proper stock therefor, according to the statute law of that state. To have done otherwise would have necessitated the locking up, on the first incorporation of the com-

pany, of a very large sum of money in cash, to lie idle until ready to be turned over for the several publishing plants acquired, a very clumsy and expensive proceeding which no sensible man would advise.

Within four months after the original incorporation all the subsequent steps of purchasing property and increasing the capital of the company to five million dollars, the actual cost of its publishing plants, were taken and every one of these steps was official and public, and made matter of record both at the capitol of the state in Trenton, and at Jersey City, in Hudson County, the corporate seat of the company. Thus, if the whole record were quoted and published, instead of being garbled for purposes of deceiving, by publishing only the preliminary step of incorporation, we should be truthfully and fairly represented. As to the amount of our capital and the size and importance of our business we have nothing to conceal; indeed, we regard the great aggregate of our sales, spread over the whole country, as the measure of confidence of the school public in our company, and as an unimpeachable endorsement of the superior merit of our publications.

In order to make this statement complete and clear, it should be said that the purchase of all school-book property made by this company, from whatever source was upon a uniform basis of cash valuation, and according to the established rules of valuing publishing rights, plates and schools. The price paid to the Harper school-book interests was an exception to this rule. No bonus or inducement of any kind was offered or given to anybody, much less was there any undue influence or duress exercised, forming any alleged "dark chapter," as insinuated in this so-called "report."

A PUBLISHING COMPANY.

The statement in the "report" that "this combination had practically been in existence for over ten years prior to its legal incorporation" is wholly false. There had been no community of interests, no consolidation of business, nothing interfering with the entire independence of each firm, nothing that had the slightest effect upon prices of school-books, nothing that influenced or interfered with their publication and regular sale in any particular. There had been a "Publishers' Association," which attempted to restrain the evils and extravagances of agency work for the introduction of school books, but nothing that attempted any restriction of the regular business as between publishers, or as between the several publishers, or as between the several publishers and the public. The office was absolutely open and free, and it has never been otherwise. Nearly every reputable publishing house in the country was represented in this Publishers' Association or co-operated with it directly or indirectly.

Why was the American Book Company formed? The answer is the simplest thing in the world—for economy and efficiency in conducting the school-book business. It was thought that the combined skill of the most experienced and sagacious publishers, the combined judgment of the most accomplished editors, and judicious use of large capital in stimulating the best authorship, would bring the greatest measure of success; that the bringing together of these forces would tend to utilize the highest educational thought and crystallize it into the best text-books. Besides all this, there were the very obvious economies in consolidating the agency operations for placing the books, and the merchandising operations of distributing them to consumers. All these economies enable the Company to furnish the best possible text-books at the lowest possible prices. The American Book Company, by at once increasing its discount and inaugurating methods for regulating the retail prices of middlemen, greatly cheapened the cost of school books to the people; and by establishing its own depots in different sections of the country, enabled the public everywhere to readily obtain its publications at the reduced prices.

HAS A TRUST BEEN CREATED AND A MONOPOLY ESTABLISHED?

A trust or monopoly, as defined by authorities and by the United States and State statute laws, must possess three essentials, namely: Power to control production, and Power to establish arbitrary prices for all such production.

Without these elements there can be no monopoly, coercion, or oppression. In the publication and sale of school-books the exercise of neither of these powers is possible. Authors, and would-be authors, are as numerous as "the sands of the sea," and capital and press are everywhere available to print a book. There are at the present time in the United States, according to the official trade organ, the Publishers Weekly, more than a hundred corporations, firms, and houses issuing school publications, and there are nearly two thousand different volumes in current publication. It is a matter of not record among all teachers and school officials that competition between different houses publishing school text-books has never been more active than since the formation of the American Book Company, or than exists at the present moment. Competition is even stronger enough to stimulate the wildest and basest slanders against a large and successful house like the American Book Company, wherever and whenever an important adoption is being considered, as is at present the case in the state of Oregon; with the evident purpose of shifting the issue

from the merits of the books to the characters of personalities.

Stimulated by the charges of such events and sometimes virulent competition, there were brought about two legislative inquiries as to the status of the American Book Company, respectively in the states of Pennsylvania and Illinois. In these investigations and hearings the testimony of everybody was publicly invited—publishers, booksellers, educators, politicians, and public cranks. Each of the two reports, to their respective legislatures, resulting from these investigations, completely exonerated the American Book Company from being, in any sense or form, a trust or monopoly, as had been falsely alleged. At the Harrisburg hearing, all the leading publishers of New York, Philadelphia, and other cities were present, and testifying under oath, each one declared that he knew of no case where any competitor had been "crushed out" or oppressed by this company. And we hereby offer this challenge to any respectable school-book publisher in this whole country today to come forward and declare under oath that he has suffered any oppression in his business from the American Book Company, or that it is within his experience or personal knowledge that this company has ever, at any time, attempted in the least degree "to crush competing houses and destroy all legitimate competition," as charged in this "report."

WHAT IS THE POLICY OF BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION?

In this report the old stories are rehearsed that the agents of this company, in one instance in the state of Washington and in another in the state of West Virginia, attempted bribery. Where is the proof that these agents attempted to bribe either case? Observe, it is not charged that bribery was committed, but "attempted." The Washington case, after dragging along in the courts for some time, with three of the accused agents and detectives in their jurisdiction and under bail, was decided in favor of the agents. It was then appealed to a higher court, sent back for re-trial, and finally dismissed for lack of evidence to maintain it. This "report" also states that in the West Virginia case the agent "was publicly reprimanded and compelled to take back his money." Is this the usual conclusion when bribery is proved to have been attempted or committed?

These two unfortunate scandals, the results of the sharp practice indicated by a very existing competition between agents (where the "monopoly" does not seem to have "crushed out the competition,") were the results of palpable tricks set up by our agent upon another; and the American Book Company promptly disavowed any responsibility or connection with them. Among the hundreds of thousands of annual transactions of this company, these are the only instances ever cited against it, and these are alleged to have taken place within a few months after the organization of the company. And though the campaign of abuse and defamation has been actively carried on ever since, its authors and promoters have not been able to add to these old and false accusations, grown threadbare with use.

After citing the above cases, this "report" goes on to say: "These are only specific instances; but the history of this company's operations in Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, New Jersey, and other states gives us the impression that its methods are corrupt, and leads this committee to the almost irresistible conclusion that this is a well-defined policy of the company itself in the selection of some of its agents and instrumentalities."

What does the writer of this villainous attack upon honorable men know of the history of this company in the states named? Nothing whatever; and he is challenged to produce any proof of any transaction on our part inconsistent with fair and honorable dealing.

This defamatory report continues: "It will also appear that its most reckless and successful operations have been confined to what it probably considers the backwoods states of West Virginia, Mississippi, Missouri, California, Washington, and Oregon, and that in New England and many other places its success, in monopolizing the school-book business has been short lived."

We have not been accustomed to consider the states named as "backwoods," in an invidious comparison with the more thickly settled and richer portions of the country. It is well known that rural and agricultural communities are quite as intelligent, honest, and high minded in their dealings, and as capable of taking care of themselves and their own interests, as are manufacturing and trading communities. The facts are that there have been no new introductions or wholesale changes in books in West Virginia, California, and Oregon since the formation of this company, in which it could have shared. The Washington adoption occurred within a month after the company had commenced business, so that it had little share in that. In Mississippi and Missouri, under new laws, general changes in books have taken place in which this company has shared, after most active competition with many other publishing houses.

CHARACTERS OF BOOKS PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY.

The writer of this "report" has set himself up as a critic and censor of the character and merit of the school books published by the American Book Company. He says, with this company has many excellent books, chiefly confined to the academic and higher grades, it is very weak in the lower grades and in mathematics." He also says "it is cheaper for the American Book Company to print and furnish an inferior book than a good one, and its profit is greater upon the poorer one, although it may sell it at a much less price." He instances Harrington's Speller, and says it is a wretched book, made of cheap paper and pasteboard, with inferior illustrations with mistakes and inaccuracies.

That the paper, printing, binding, introduction, and marketing of a poor book costs less and give a greater profit, although "it is sold at a much lower price," than a correspondingly manufactured book of higher intellectual merit, is a statement which is simply idiotic. Anybody who knows anything about the publishing business, or who has any common sense, knows that the cost of the printing and binding—that is, the mechanical production—is precisely the same whether the book itself be good, bad, or indifferent. It is also well known that the cost of copyright is so small a share in the cost of production as practically to make little difference; while the expense of attempting to introduce and place a book poor in merit, with a certainty that it will not long give satisfaction and hold its place, would ten times outweigh the additional cost of copyright.

Harrington's Speller is an excellent book, prepared by the late very bright and accomplished superintendent of the New Bedford, Massachusetts, schools, and was first published by the Harpers, and which thus indorsed it by its great name. This book is also approved on its merits by leading educators all over the country, and so widely used that its circulation has reached into millions. The relative profit on this book, however, is not larger than the average profit on other school books.

If there is one characteristic in the American Book Company's list more pronounced than another, it is the superior excellence of its elementary books, prepared for common and grammar schools, as all teachers, superintendents and unbiased publishers who know the facts will unanimously testify. If a book is found to be faulty, it is corrected; if it has outlived its purpose and usefulness, it is discontinued. Our uniform and constant instructions to all our agents are to present and urge, in any given section those books of our list which are likely to prove most acceptable and suitable to its school work, without regard to the fact that one book is more or less profitable to us than another. Our agents are not informed as to which book is copyright and which do not; or of the relative profitableness of different publications. As a sound business policy, our object is to maintain a high reputation and secure permanency of sale by supplying books of the highest merit, and of the kind which will be most satisfactory to our patrons. A company policy of forcing poor books that are unwanted upon any state or section is as foolish to merit a moment's consideration.

IS THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY A THREAT TO PUBLIC EDUCATION?

To the charge in the report that "this monopoly is disastrous to our public school system," and that "the public are cheated of the right to independent teachers, good schools, and good books," we answer that this is a base and monstrous accusation not only against the American Book Company, but against the teachers and school authorities of the state of Oregon. It is the effect that your teachers and superintendents allow themselves to be hoodwinked and cajoled by the agents of school books. No statement more untrue or unjust to the high minded and intelligent class of our state, in his senses, would thus attack and traduce and revile a class of our public citizens, such as the supply of public education.

Refuting the infamous charge, we make this clear assertion, and call upon all intelligent men who know the history of the schools of this country to say whether or not it is true. We assert that no body of men have ever done more to stimulate popular education, foster progressive and enlightened methods of teaching, arouse educational thought, and generally promote the intellectual growth of our country, than the men who, as school-book publishers, were the pre-processors of the American Book Company, and who have constantly published all these things by incessantly producing, from time to time, the best possible school text-books. We further assert that those who compose the present management of the American Book Company are still faithful to these high traditions, and are still doing for the schools of this country, through furnishing them with good books; all that experience and capital can accomplish.

THE AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY IN OREGON.

It is charged that this company, and "the combination which has existed for many years," framed your text-book laws, and that all your school-books, "except Brooks' Normal Arithmetic and three other very unimportant books," were selected from the American Book Company's list.

The simple facts are that there never has been any such "combination for many years," or for any time, as is alleged; and that the adoption of books six years ago in Oregon took place two years before the American Book Company came into existence, and under open competition between the different entirely independent houses, as everybody in Oregon knows who had anything to do with the selection at that time.

The sales and profits of the school book business are constantly and very greatly exaggerated by those who are ignorant of them. Instead of the profits on school books being \$50,000 a year in Oregon, as claimed in the "report," this sum more nearly represents the total amount of annual sales in this state, which, in any event, is not more than \$200,000, and of course only a small portion of this amount can be reckoned as net profit.

The American Book Company has ever at any time raised so much as a finger to influence Oregon legislation in its behalf. On the other hand, what does the company actually do for the people of Oregon when it became the publisher of the books which had already been selected for use in that state? We state, known, we believe, to every person in Oregon, when we say that it uses every means in its power to render these books easily obtainable by the people at cheaper rates than ever before. To this end and at great expense it bought its business and capital to you state, and established one of its branch houses in your city of Portland. It has thus cast its lot with you and identifies itself with your community. We are ourselves, therefore, in a business sense Oregonians sharing the fortunes of your state, and entitled to fair and just treatment from our fellow-citizens. That we shall receive justice and even general approval from our fellow-citizens is assured to us by the traditions of the Pacific Coast.

AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY, By its Officers and Directors.

OFFICERS. DAVID B. IVISON, President, ALFRED C. BARNES, Vice-President, HARRY T. AMBROSIO, Treasurer, GILMAN H. TUCKER, Secretary.

DIRECTORS. HENRY H. VAIL, Chairman, WM. H. APPLETON, W. W. APPLETON, DANIEL APPLETON, HARRY T. AMBROSIO, ALFRED C. BARNES, CHAS. J. BARNES, HENRY B. BARNES, A. HOWARD HINKLER, DAVID B. IVISON, WM. R. THALHEIMER, GILMAN H. TUCKER.

Dr. Price's Cream Baking Powder Awarded Gold Medal Winter Fair, San Francisco.

CHURCH DIRECTORY.

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Florence, Oregon. Sabbath service, Sabbath-school, 10 o'clock a. m. Preaching 11 o'clock a. m. and 7 p. m. Sacramento of the Lord's supper on 1st Sabbath of January, April, July and October. Everybody is welcome to all the services. Pastor requests Christians to make themselves known. I. G. KNOTT, Pastor.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH service. Preaching at Glenada every 4th Sabbath. Sabbath-School every Sabbath at 10 a. m. Prayer meeting every Thursday evening at the church. Everybody cordially invited. G. W. QUIMBY, Pastor.

NOTARIES.

A. R. BUTTOLPH, Notary Public, Surveyor and Collector. Office two doors west of Florence Hotel. Florence, Oregon.

JOE MORRIS, Jr Notary Public, Land Agt Florence - Oregon.

ATTORNEYS. A. C. WOODCOCK, Attorney at Law, Eugene, - Oregon.

L. BILYEU, Attorney at Law, Eugene, - Oregon. Office over First National Bank.

L. R. JOHNSON, Contractor and Builder. All my work will be warranted to give satisfaction. Call on or write to me at Florence, - Oe.

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FLORENCE DRUG STORE. O. W. HURD, PROPRIETOR. C. D. THOMAS, MANAGER. FLORENCE, OREGON.

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