

THE OREGON SCOUT.

VOL. II.

UNION, OREGON, SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1886.

NO. 30.

THE OREGON SCOUT.

An independent weekly journal, issued every Saturday by

JONES & CHANCEY,
Publishers and Proprietors.

A. K. JONES, Editor. B. CHANCEY, Foreman.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION:

One copy, one year, \$1.50
Six months, .75
Three months, .40
Invariably cash in advance.

Rates of advertising made known on application.

Correspondence from all parts of the country solicited.

Address all communications to A. K. Jones, Editor Oregon Scout, Union, Or.

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CREMATION IN ENGLAND.

How Lady Dilke's Body was Incinerated—Sir Vernon Harcourt's Opposition

Among the clergy one of the most enthusiastic advocates of cremation is the Rev. H. R. Haweis, of London, who has just sailed for home from this city. When the question was first agitated, or rather revived, about ten years ago, Mr. Haweis wrote a novel entitled "Ashes to ashes: A Prelude to Cremation," in which the arguments in behalf of the reform are presented by the hero of a story, a brilliant young French doctor. Mr. Haweis recently received a *Tribune* reporter, at the house of Courtlandt Palmer, and in response to any inquiry as to how the movement is going forward in England, he said:

"Cremation has had a curious history with us. About a dozen years ago Sir William Thompson wrote an article in favor of the measure, which was published in the *Contemporary Review*. It excited a great deal of discussion among all classes and bitter opposition particularly from the clergy. Shortly afterward the Cremation Society of London was formed. Its membership included Sir William Thompson, who was made president, Sir Spencer Wells, myself and various other representatives of literature, science and art. For the purpose of ascertaining whether there was any legal obstacle in the way of the practical adoption of cremation, the society opened a correspondence on the subject with the Home Secretary, Sir Vernon Harcourt. We were informed by him that any attempt to put into practice this mode of burial would be immediately stopped by the Government, and also that he would oppose any bill introduced to legalize cremation. But the reform was received with favor by the public and was progressing favorably until the burning of the body of Mr. Charles Dilke's first wife at Berlin. Lady Dilke had expressed a desire to be cremated, and accordingly after her death, her body was taken to Germany for that purpose. It was distinctly understood that the incineration should be strictly private, but notwithstanding this, a few scientists were admitted to the building. The retort doors were opened during the process for their inspection, and they took notes of the burning. This fact leaked out, and the *Times*, which was then inimical to Sir Charles Dilke published a paragraph in reference to his wife's cremation, which created a storm of public feeling against Sir Charles and the burial system itself. Pamphlets of a vulgar character, condemning the scheme, were hawked about the streets and widely circulated. My book had been published shortly before this, and already had run through three editions, but after this unfortunate occurrence its sale was completely stopped. In short the entire movement had received a paralytic stroke in England. For the next six or seven years all efforts to arouse public interest in the matter were futile, and to all appearance the project was doomed to prove an utter failure. The society continued to hold meetings from time to time, until Sir Wm. Siemens built for us the present crematory at Working Cemetery, which is about thirty miles from London, and in it we experimented with the carcasses of sheep and other animals."

"With the Siemens incinerating apparatus are you able to reduce the entire framework of the body to fine white ashes?" inquired the reporter.

"Oh, no. Pieces of the denser bones, such as the femur and humerus, generally remain, and have to be crushed to powder. But this can be done easily. It was not until last year that our movement received a fresh impetus in a rather curious way. A singular being in Wales, who called himself a Druid, undertook to cremate his child with petroleum in an open field. The neighbors interposed and had him arrested. He was taken before a magistrate, but the court held that the act was not illegal, and he was discharged. All legal objections against cremation being thus removed, the society resumed operations, and the first human body, that of Mrs. Peckersgill, was burned last year at Woking. The question of disposing of the dead is of much greater importance with us than with you, owing, of course, to the thickly settled condition of the Old World. Still I think cremation is rapidly becoming a necessity in all of your large cities."

"Do you agree with the Italian cremationists and others who say that graveyards throw off a dangerous amount of mephitic vapors?"

"I did hold that doctrine some years ago, but personal investigations have caused me to change my belief somewhat. I think the earth not only decomposes the gases arising from the decaying bodies, but also renders them innocuous. In excavations which were

recently made at Horn Bay, the bodies that had been buried from five to twenty years were found to be entirely in odorless. The greatest danger from graveyards is the pollution of the water courses in their vicinity, and in villages, where the burying-ground is often situated in the center of the town, the historic village pump becomes a fruitful source of disease. I consider vault burial the most dangerous of all the methods in use, for no attempt is then made to disinfect the dangerous gases. Yes, cremation is gaining strength, not only in England but all over Europe. An elaborate new crematory is under way in Paris, and others are being erected in the great continental cities."

"Did the Greeks and Romans adopt cremation for sanitary or superstitious reasons?"

"I am inclined to think that they practiced the custom from their habit of sacrificing animals and the like to the gods. Doubtless there was something practical in this system with them as with us, but they made it a sort of religious exercise, and performed it with all sorts of sacred ceremonies. It was natural to them, used as they were to offering frequent burnt sacrifices."

"Do you think the Hebrews practiced cremation to any extent?"

"They burned the bodies of some of their kings, as is recorded in the Scripture, and also the bodies of animals in the Valley of Tophet, outside of Jerusalem, but it was not their regular mode of burial."—*New York Tribune*.

Where Canada Leads the States.

"In speaking of Canada and everything pertaining to the country, including the government, Americans generally make the remark that we are one hundred years behind the age," said a prominent Canadian police official to a reporter for the *Detroit Free Press*.

"There may be some truth in the statement," he continued, "but in the administration of criminal justice I am of the opinion that Canada leads Michigan, if not any of the states in the union. Last March when Ashman, Kuhn and Bowles escaped from the house of correction at Ionia, I among others received a circular from Warden Watkins, offering \$225 reward for their capture, or \$75 for the capture of either of them. Unfortunately for me, however, they did not come my way, but a few days after the escape were captured by Chief Bains and the Windsor police. The annoyance and expense attending their extradition and return to the United States were very great, but that was not the fault of the Windsor authorities, who did all that was possible to get rid of the desperate trio. When they were safely caged at Detroit, and the time came for settling the bills, Chief Bains received a check for \$75, one third of the promised reward, and since then has heard nothing more of the men, except that Bowles and Kuhn were back at Ionia and Ashman stands a good chance of being sent down for a long term."

"There is no just reason why the Windsor police should not receive the remaining \$150 due them. They performed all that was required of them, and the money should be paid. Escapes from Ionia are not infrequent, and as a rule the criminals cross the river at the first opportunity. If the prison officials desire the co-operation of the Canadian police they should fulfill all promises, even if they are expensive. Otherwise they can not expect any assistance from us in the future."

BIMETALLISM.

Its History in the United States—The Silver Question.

"The History of Bimetallism in the United States." By J. Lawrence Laughlin, Ph. D., assistant professor of political economy in Harvard University.

The history of the gold and silver coinage of the United States is an interesting story of fluctuations. From 1792 to 1853 gold and silver circulated side by side without clashing. In 1853 gold was abundant and silver scarce, California having been found auriferous, and discoveries of gold having been made also in Russia and Australia. The gold product reached its highest amount soon after 1851. "It is not too much to say that almost all the bimetallic discussions of recent years would not have arisen had not this unexpected and astonishing stream of gold from the mines of both the new and old world been poured upon the market. From its date almost all our modern problems relating to gold and silver, and we cannot discuss the silver question of to-day without reference to this extraordinary production of gold. From an average annual production in 1840-1850 of about \$38,000,000, the gold supply increased to a figure beyond \$150,000,000 after 1850. The value of gold was lowered. * * * Having enough gold, the country did not care for silver. At the existing and only nominal mint ratio of 1.16, the silver dollar could not circulate, and the act of 1853, regulating the coinage, practically ignored it. It is therefore to be distinctly remembered that in 1853 the actual use of silver as an illuminated legal tender equally with gold, was decisively abandoned. Under any conditions then existing a double standard was publicly admitted to be hopeless. The main animus of the act, therefore, is to be found in what is not included in it—that is, in the omission to insert any provision which would bring the silver dollar again into circulation."

In fact, at no time after the act of 1853 until the civil war was the silver dollar of 412½ grains equal to less than 103 or 104 cents of our gold coins, and, consequently, it was never seen in circulation. The country had willingly acquiesced in the practical adoption of the single gold standard. Silver was only used for small payments, and all large values were based upon gold. Up to this time there was no trouble in our coinage system. It worked naturally, and therefore admirably. All adjustments were made without friction.

The civil war brought a momentous change, and we have been wallowing in a stormy sea of financial theories and practices ever since. As soon as the United States legal-tender acts were passed, Gresham's law came into operation that when two metals are both legal tenders the cheaper one will drive the dearer one out of circulation. As United States legal tenders depreciated gold disappeared. Even the small quantity of subsidiary silver held went out of the market. When gold was at par, silver at 96, and United States legal-tender notes at 84, the paper money rapidly dislodged both coins. Even the smaller silver change disappeared, and its absence called into existence tokens, tickets, checks and substitutes of every description issued by merchants and shopkeepers, and Congress was obliged hastily to authorize a currency, originally based on the likeness of postage stamps, but which finally resulted in the simple issue of what was known as "the fractional currency."

It was while the legal-tender currency was in use that the "demonetization of silver" took place. The act of 1873 reads "that the silver coins of the United States shall be a trade dollar, a half-dollar or 50-cent piece, a quarter-dollar or 25-cent piece, a dime or 10-cent piece." The coinage of the standard silver dollar is not provided for. We give Mr. Laughlin's explanation and comments: "In the act of 1873, we find a simple legal recognition of that which had been the immediate result of the act of 1853, and which had been an admitted fact in the history of our coinage during the preceding twenty years. In 1853 it had been agreed to accept the situation by which we had come to have gold for large payments and to tolerate silver to a limited service in the subsidiary coins. The act of 1873, however, dropped the silver dollar out of the list of silver coins. In discontinuing the coinage of the silver dollar the act of 1873 thereby simply recognized a fact which had been obvious to every one since 1849. Silver was not driven out of circulation by the act of 1873, which omitted the dollars of 412½ grains, since it had not been in circulation for more than twenty-five years. * * * But while the act of 1873 had little importance in changing existing conditions, it had an influence of a kind which, at the present time, can scarcely be over-estimated. We are now in the course of our story approaching the year 1876,

in which occurred the phenomenal fall in the value of silver. Had the demonetization of the silver dollar not been accomplished in 1876 and 1874, we should have found ourselves in 1876 with a single silver standard, and the resumption of specie payments on January 1, 1879, would have been in silver, not in gold, and 15 per cent of all our contracts and existing obligations would have been repudiated. The act of 1873 was a piece of good fortune which saved our financial credit, and protected the honor of our country."

This fall in the value of silver above referred to is one of the most important events in our financial annals, and deserves a full explanation of its causes.

A committee of the English House of Commons in 1870 reached these generally accepted conclusions on the subject:

"Your committee are of the opinion that the evidence taken conclusively shows that the fall in the price of silver is due to the following causes:

"(1.) To the discovery of new silver mines of great richness in the State of Nevada.

"(2.) To the introduction of a gold currency into Germany in place of the previous silver currency. This operation commenced at the end of 1871.

"(3.) To the decreased demand for silver for export to India.

"It should be added, (4.) that the Scandinavian Governments have also substituted gold for silver in their currency.

"(5.) That the Latin Union, comprising France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Greece, have since 1874 limited the amount of silver to be coined in the mints yearly of each member of the union, suspending the privilege formerly accorded to all holders of silver bullion, of claiming to have their bullion turned into coin without restriction.

"(6.) That Holland has also passed a temporary act restricting, except on account of the Government, the coinage of silver, and authorizing the coinage of gold.

"It will be observed that two sets of causes have been simultaneously in operation; the increased production of the newly discovered mines, and the surplus silver thrown upon the market by Germany, have affected the supply. At the same time, the decreased amounts required for India and the decreased purchases of silver by the Latin Union have effected the demand. A serious fall in the price of silver was therefore inevitable."

Thus the Committee of the House of Commons—a very clear and comprehensive statement, and one generally accepted. Mr. Laughlin points out, however, some fundamental causes, which lie below these more immediate ones. First, the increased use of gold, consequent upon its abundance from 1840 to 1870; second, its convenient use in the large transactions of commerce of late years, giving rise to an enormous demand for that one of the two precious metals which has the greatest value in the smallest bulk.

Now, says Prof. Laughlin, at this precise time, when not a State in Europe dared open its mint to silver, "the United States stupidly came forward and made an attempt to support the value of silver quite by itself. It is recorded that a very muscular and willing workman engaged with several others in raising a huge stone to its place by means of ropes and pulleys, observed that others had let go their hold on the ropes, and that the heavy mass was beginning to fall. Confident of his strength, he, by himself, laid hold of the rope and tried to sustain the weight by his unaided power. The momentum of the falling stone was more than he could overcome; he was thrown upward, flung to the ground, and injured for life. The action of the United States was of a similar character. It undertook to do what all the world without us was not able to do—namely, to keep up the value of silver in the face of the increased supply of gold. We may break the fall of silver, but we shall imperil ourselves. We shall lose by buying millions of a commodity which we must sell at a great sacrifice—the greater as we sell the more. So bold and daring an attempt, so utterly unwarranted by any financial wisdom, seems almost inexplicable to the student of financial history."

Prof. Laughlin goes on to give the facts of our silver legislation, tracing its source to the "greenback craze," the unreasonable desire for relief from the business depression of 1873, especially in the debtor West, and the shrewd tactics of the owners of the silver bullion produced by our mines. The story is more recent, and we will not follow him further. That we are overburdened with silver, and that the people want but a certain small quantity of it, is too patent for discussion. What amount we have on

hand we must, of course keep, having bought it, and as to this, the prospect is that our citizens will have to take 80 cents on the dollar. But as so ably set forth in President Cleveland's message, in the future it is absolutely necessary in the interest of every class of the community that the "compulsory coinage of silver dollars directed by the law passed in February, 1878," should be suspended. That is the first thing. Reflection and discussion, it is to be hoped, will bring a sounder and safer basis of legislation thereafter.—*Baltimore Sun*.

A THREE-DROP DRINK.

A Strong Imagination Helps a Man to Exhilarate on a Very Little Liquor.

"I've been a barkeeper now for about fifteen years, but I'll be blued if I wasn't knocked out this morning," said an old and popular member of the calling, who hangs out in a Fifth Avenue saloon.

"How was that?" asked a reporter, who had dropped in to light a toby.

"Why it was when I first opened up, and I was sort of fixing things, when I came a nice-looking, middle-aged man, with a mustache and goatee. Hard-liquor, and straight," says I to myself, for I've got away from sizin' up, as you might say, just from their appearance."

"Give me some brandy, says he, rather short, like all old regulars who take what they call an 'eye-opener' before breakfast. I handed him the bottle and pushed over a glass of water, to take the taste out of his mouth. Well, that duck just took the bottle, and putting his thumb over the top dropped three drops on his tongue an' then set the bottle back an' didn't say a word.

"What's the matter with it?" says I, kind o' riled, for we keet as good stock as goes over a bar in this town.

"Nothing at all the matter with it, sir," he said, as he threw down a quarter and started out. "Stranger," says I, 'if taint intrudin' on good nature, I'd like to ask you why you didn't pour out some o' that brandy and drink it?"

"I did," said he laughing. "That's my way of drinkin'. I claim that I get more out of three drops of brandy than most other men do from a whole glass. Now I drop it on my tongue and shut my mouth tight. I've got all the taste of it that a man could get if he drank a pint. Then I take in a good long breath and let it out through my nose. That carries the fumes of the brandy to my brain, and I get all the effects that I would from a large drink. 'It wakes me up and makes me good natured. My pulse beats a little faster, and I have an appetite for breakfast. Now, if I'd drink a gill or a half gill it would have been a positively injury to my stomach, especially as I had eaten nothing. Instead of being exhilarated I would have been slightly drunk until it wore off. Now I claim that my way is the only way to drink heavy and strong liquors.' With that he went out, an' I've been thinkin' of it all day, an' I think he was kiddin' me. I've seen people drink in all kinds of ways, but his was a new one to me."

So people have different ways of taking the same kind of drink have they?"

"Well, I should say so. Now with whisky. There is one old business man who, to my certain knowledge, has taken three gallons of whisky a day for over ten years. He always comes in at the same time each day, pours out his glass about a third full, squeezes a little lemon into it and sips it down as if it tasted good to him. He will be two or three minutes drinking it."

"That same man," continued the barkeeper, "has a son who is a steady, hard drinker. He always takes whisky, and has for three or four years. He pours out a glass almost full, but won't smell of it if he can help it. He acts as if he didn't like it. Sometimes he won't drink it for three or four minutes, and then he swallows it as if it was medicine. He tells me he hates the taste and smell of it. It always sickens him, and I've seen him walk away and leave it after it was poured out. He's clear down now, poor devil, and he has tried time and time again to break off drinking. You wouldn't believe it, but young men just learning to drink take whisky straight oftener than the old rounders. Think it manly, you know, to order 'whisky straight.' There is a great difference in the way people drink beer. Germans sip it, and a glass of beer will last one of them an hour. Fact: I've seen two Germans come in and sit down at a table with a glass of beer apiece and a little rye bread and cheese and have an hour or two good solid enjoyment over it. People who don't learn to drink beer when they are children don't drink for the taste, though, as much as they do for the effect. They are the kind who get drunk on beer, drink gallon or two of it at a time. This isn't much of a city for fancy drinks. Plain whisky and beer catches most of the natives, and they want a good article. You can't work poor whisky off on a Pittsburgher."—*Pittsburgh Dispatch*.