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ATHENA, AUGUST 29, 1905

"The Athena Press and the Weston Leader also 'knocked' the Tribune on the shortage. We do not ask them to apologize, but we will accept their greater respect as we know it will be forthcoming."

The above is to be found in Saturday's Pendleton Tribune and relates to the shortage of \$9,051.88, in the sheriff's office, the portion for Taylor's term being \$3,479.76 and for Blakley's \$5,572.12. Apologize! What for? For calling the callow and immature editor of the Tribune down to the level of fairness and fact, when he made the untruthful statement that the sheriff's office was short over \$20,000 when \$12,406.75 tax money was in the custody of the office, instead of in the hands of the county treasurer, only for the reason that the rolls had not been balanced? Apologize! For standing by an honest official, whose only fault (and he paid for it by personal check to the county in the sum of \$3,479.76) is that he placed too much trust in a subordinate? If Mr. Dodd ever gets an apology from Clark Wood or Fred Boyd it will not be in the "good old summer time;" for the apologies will be congealed in icebergs of such magnitude that the employes of the Pendleton cold storage plant will be shoveling smoke in Hades and every locomotive on the Harriman system will be coughing hail and frost in place of sparks and steam. Greater respect! For ability in mixing a news story that reeks with the ulterior motive of blenching the character of an honest man whose implicit confidence in another was misplaced; or for the political capital the Tribune editor endeavors to make out of the matter—which?

The Portland Oregonian is conducting a war on the Portland Journal in a way that is peculiarly its own. Here is one of its uppercuts. What a straight poke would be can be imagined:

Little Billy Ladd, who inherited his father's property and therefore is a great man, moves his so-called newspaper, subsidized with money got from franchise grabs, to vilify the Oregonian. He does it through subs and scrubs and jours whom he can hire; but it deceives nobody. Little Billy Ladd is great—in his ancestors. Through his nameless hirelings he takes particular delight in attacks on the Oregonian. But it doesn't signify; it doesn't matter. Never before was the business of the Ore-

gonian Publishing company comparable with the business of today. Little Billy Ladd would better operate his little tin cup bank, and let the Oregonian alone. He and his group will work up no more \$6,000,000 franchise grabs in Portland. They print their monopolistic, plutocratic, holier-than-thou organ in vain. The Oregonian is not making this year any \$6,000,000, as franchisers do; but it is making enough to buy beef and bread and potatoes, and to pay taxes. That will do.

Contracting for the domestic wool clip of 1906 is reported to have begun. One Boston firm is said to have secured 1,000,000 pounds in Wyoming within the last two weeks at from seventeen to nineteen cents, as against sixteen to seventeen cents paid last fall for this year's clip. Boston houses are reported to be also operating in Idaho and to be willing to contract extensively. Growers, however, are hard to deal with, and there is too much risk involved for dealers to pay a great advance over the prices that ruled on this year's crop.

In the course of a column account of a wedding a correspondent of the Coquille Call says of the bride: Miss May M. Boyrie, formerly, is one of Coquille's fairest daughters, and one of the best of the "bunch," being born and raised in the Coquille valley, the only valley on earth noted for pretty girls and ugly men, is well and favorably known in this part of the country. Laird may well congratulate himself in being able to fool this young lady in consenting to link her futures with his.

If a traveling peddler comes along and tries to sell goods, ask him if he will take your butter, eggs, hides and other farm produce.

New York is threatened with a second insurance scandal. Skeletons seem to take up most of the closet room in that town.

All in vain will be Burbank's effort to protect the potato until the average cook learns how to boil it right, and then get the water out.

The war is costing the mikado a million dollars a day, or enough to enable him to live at a fashionable New York hotel.

Italy's Dowager Queen is coming over here next autumn for a visit. She is fond of autoing, and will keep the elite awake.

A few more Lord Milner verses from Rudyard Kipling and Alfred Austin will have to look to his laurels.

POLITICIANS WORK CRAFT.

(Chicago Tribune.)

Milwaukee has a municipal garbage cremation plant which is not working satisfactorily. It was built in the wrong place to begin with, and \$12,000 was paid for valueless patents. As the city runs the plant, there are about eight times as many men employed as are needed. Places had to be made for friends of ward bosses. This experiment in municipal operation of public utility is admitted to be a dismal failure. It is proposed that the plant be torn down and a better one erected, although a new one under political management will be no more economically managed than its predecessors.

A few years ago the city of Escan-

ba went into the lighting business. The citizens were assured that it would be a profitable venture, but it has turned out to be a losing one. The city council recommends that the people vote bonds to the amount of \$60,000, five-sixths of the proceeds to be used for the enlargement and improvement of the plant, and the remainder to free it from debt. Many taxpayers admit that the experiment of municipal lighting has been a failure so far, but the voters may insist on throwing away more money.

Last spring the Elgin council disposed of the city's electric light plant. It did so because it had been a plaything for the politicians, had been slowed to run down, and was losing instead of making money. As there was no prospect of a reform in conditions and of the plant being run in accordance with business principles, the council acted wisely. Yet there was a popular protest against the sale from unthinking people, who did not understand that if a city did not operate a public utility so economically and efficiently as private enterprise can it ought to let that utility alone.

One of the many objections of municipal ownership and operation of public utilities is the difficulty of letting go after the experiment has been proven to be a costly mistake. There are always a number of people, usually not taxpayers, who insist on going ahead and spending more money. They are not troubled because the business is not self-supporting. The politicians who stuff the pay rolls of the city plants with their friends dislike to lose patronage, and say that it would be shameful for the municipality to confess to a failure. It is difficult for a community to shake off a public utility "old man of the sea" which has got astride its shoulders.

For that reason, every community which permits its municipal government to be run by politicians who carry political methods and mismanagement in everything, ought to stay clear of municipal ownership and operation of the public utilities which the professional municipal ownerites are most anxious to lay hands on. It is easy to enter on the downward road, and hard to retrace one's steps.

THE AMERICAN BIRTH-RATE.

(Oregonian.)

We have had it, over and over, that in our country, the birth-rate from mothers of American nativity is small and growing smaller, in comparison with the birth-rate of mothers of foreign nativity. It scarcely needed the details furnished by the census reports to show us that. It is a fact, apparent to every observer. Children are born, in greatest numbers, of parents who are poor, who have no prospects or expectations, who accept humbler ways of living, and who do not expect to better them. Foreign immigrants are largely, but by no means wholly, of this class. Our own people, in pioneer days, belonged to it. Many do yet. As a rule, large families belong to those who are content with a low grade of living, and who do not expect to improve it.

It is an enigma, a paradox. For if the human race could raise all its members above the conditions and requirements of lowly life, its own decline would begin at once. The whole basis of progress is in those who work on the lower levels. These continually supply the materials for new advancement. "High culture" continually "runs out." From one or two children in the family, it will descend to none. Thus, the race must be recruited continually from the lower classes.

The human race, then, in trying to improve itself, steadily exhausts itself, and is forced to begin anew. This process is going on through all times, and has been going on since the beginning of history and civilization. France is the highest present exemplar of the prudential or small family system; and France, great as she has been in history, great part as she has borne in spreading the ideas and arts of modern civilization, now stands still. Under her present sociological system France can proceed no further. She has reached the limit. We shall reach ours, so soon as the idea shall become general among us that families must be restricted in order that the standard of living may be maintained. For such an idea will surely defeat its own object.

The "best families," devoted to this idea, steadily commit suicide. They have few descendants, or none, and leave the world to a rude yet vigorous proletariat—hungry yet ambitious. Yet this is the way the world goes on, and the way democracy steadily makes its gains over privilege, plutocracy and oligarchy.

The "better classes," then, through the very methods they employ for their preservation, tend continually toward extinction, or contribute to their own superseding by the proletariat. Increasing luxury, late marriage, or few or none, the notion that it is imprudent or vulgar to have children, take the future out of the hands of the "first families" and pass it on to the "common herd." The selfishness that refuses to be "troubled with children" and sends young married couples to boarding houses, will be revenged through the extinction of those families who think themselves above the "common rabble."

And it is well. It is the way, and the only way—through operation of nature—to reduce calculated selfishness and insufferable insolence to the extinction they deserve. It is the way human society gets on.

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