

THE SPRINGFIELD NEWS

Published Every Thursday at Springfield, Lane County, Oregon, by THE WILLAMETTE PRESS H. E. MAXEY, Editor

Entered as second class matter, February 24, 1903, at the postoffice, Springfield, Oregon.

MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATE One Year in Advance \$1.75 Three Months .75c Six Months \$1.00 Single Copy .5c

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1931

GERMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Having been over a great part of the devastated areas of France and Belgium we do not sympathize with the agitation to release Germany from reparation payments.

Germany was untouched, except for the loss of her man power, by the great war. She has been allowed to become the world's greatest borrower following the war and much of this money has gone into public improvements and into loans to individuals to build factories, apartment houses and store and office buildings.

Germany is now trying to wriggle out of both her borrowed debts and the reparation payments. Threats of Bolshevism are hurled at the world. The German people have too much sense for this in our estimation.

WHO PAYS THE TAXES

The valuation of the taxable property in Oregon for 1931 was \$905,847,238.52, according to the state tax commission. This is a decline of about 35 million dollars from the previous year.

Table with 2 columns: Property Type and Value. Includes Tillable Land, Non-tillable Land, Improvements on Deeded or Patented Lands, Livestock, Town and city lots, Improvements on lots, Public Utilities, and Timber lands.

An analysis of the above figures will show that farm property is about 32 per cent of the total state valuation, city property over 42 per cent and public utilities, timber lands and miscellaneous about 25 per cent.

Only nine amendments to the United States constitution have been adopted since 1791 out of over 2000 proposed. Even a Democratic congress will have a hard time putting anything permanent over on us.

Japan is some times called Nippon. We wonder if this comes from her prolonged relations with China.

Way of Life by BRUCE BARTON. Includes a portrait of Bruce Barton.

PROPHETS

A man who was an officer in France told me this story, which is interesting and may be true.

He said that on November 10, 1918, a friend of his went into our headquarters and stopped beside the desk of an officer who was engaged in statistical work.

The visitor said to him: "Well, I guess it's about all over."

"What do you mean?" asked the statistician.

"Why, the armistice will be declared tomorrow."

"Nonsense," the statistician exclaimed. "This war is going on for another five years."

Here's another story, told me by a banker.

In November, 1930, the ten leading economists of the United States held a secret convocation and took a ballot on how long the business depression would last.

One of them said it would be over in six months.

Four said it would last from one to three years.

The other five said it would last from three to five years.

"If they are right, the outlook is pretty gloomy, isn't it?" I said it certainly was.

"There is just one joker in the story as I told it," he added. "That the meeting was not held in November, 1930. It was held in November, 1920. And that depression came to a close, as we now know, in August, 1921."

Looking back over history, we can see that prophecy has always been a dangerous business. But as between the optimistic prophets and the pessimistic the balance is in favor of the optimists.

Old Mother Shipton, in the early 1500's, prophesied that "Iron upon the sea would float as easily as a wooden boat."

John Law, of Mississippi Bubble fame, sold shares in his vast concessions on this continent. Speculation ran them up to wild prices, and the ensuing panic ruined thousands.

I do not intend to join the ill-fated company of prophets. I merely record my general agreement with the late P. T. Barnum, who said:

"If the truth were known I think it would be found that in this wide-awake country more people are fooled by believing too little than ever were fooled by believing too much."

SIGHT UNSEEN by MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

FIFTH INSTALLMENT

SYNOPSIS

Six people, Horace Johnson (who tells the story), his wife, old Mrs. Dane, Herbert Robinson and his sister, Alice, and Dr. Sperry, friends and neighbors, are in the habit of holding weekly meetings. At one of these, Mrs. Dane, who is hostess, varies the program by unexpectedly arranging a spiritistic seance with Miss Jeremy, a friend of Dr. Sperry and her professional, as the medium.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

When I told him it was a case of suicide, he remarked, philosophically: "A lot of people get the bug once in a while, they come in here for a dose of sudden death, and it takes watching. It's a matter of the point of view," he continued more cheerfully.

"And my point of view just now is that this place is darned cold and so's the street. You'd better have a little something to warm you up before you go out," Mr. Johnson.

I was chilled through, to tell the truth, and although I rarely drink anything I went back with him and took an ounce or two of villainous whiskey, poured out of a deep into a graduated glass. It is with deep humiliation of spirit I record that a housemaid coming into my library at seven o'clock the next morning, found me, in top hat and overcoat, asleep on the library couch.

I had, however, removed my collar and tie, and my watch, carefully wound, was on the smoking-stand beside me.

The death of Arthur Wells had taken place on Monday evening, Tuesday brought nothing new. The coroner was apparently satisfied, and on Wednesday the dead man's body was cremated.

"Thus obliterating all evidence," Sperry said, with what I felt was a note of relief.

"But I think the situation was both ering him, and that he hoped to discount in advance the second sitting by Miss Jeremy, which Mrs. Dane had already arranged for the following Monday afternoon, following a conversation over the telephone, Sperry and I had a private sitting with Miss Jeremy in Sperry's private office. I took my wife into our confidence and invited her to be present, but the unfortunate coldness following the housemaid's discovery of me asleep in the library on the morning after the murder, was still noticeable and she refused.

The sitting, however, was totally without value. There was difficulty on the medium's part in securing the trance condition, and she broke out once rather petulantly, with the remark that we were interfering with her in some way.

I noticed that Sperry had placed Arthur Wells's stick unobtrusively on his table, but we secured only rambling and non-pertinent replies to our questions, and whether it was because the Wells matter did not come up at all I found a total lack of that sense of the unknown which made all the evening sittings so grisly.

I am sure she knew we had wanted something, and that she had failed to give it to us, for when she came out she was depressed and in a state of lowered vitality.

"I'm afraid I'm not helping you," she said. "I'm a little tired, I think."

She was tired. I felt suddenly very sorry for her. She was so pretty and so young — only twenty-six or thereabouts — to be in the grip of forces so relentless. Sperry sent her home in his car, and took to pacing the floor of his office.

"I'm going to give it up, Horace," he said. "Perhaps you are right. We may be on the verge of some real discovery. But while I'm interested, so interested that it interferes with my work, I'm frankly afraid to go on. There are several reasons."

I argued with him. There could be no question that if things were left as they were, a number of people would go through life convinced that Elinor Wells had murdered her husband. Look at the situation. She had sent out all the servants and the governess, surely an unusual thing in an establishment of that sort. And Miss Jeremy had been vindicated in three points; some stains had certainly been washed up, we had found the key where she had stated it to go, and Arthur had certainly been shaving himself.

"In other words," I argued, "we can't stop, Sperry. You can't stop. But my idea would be that our investigations be purely scientific and not criminal."

"Also, in other words," he said, "you think we will discover something, so you suggest that we compound a felony and keep it to ourselves!"

"Exactly," I said dryly. . . .

It is of course possible that my nerves were somewhat unstrung during the days that followed. I awakened one night to a terrific thump which shook my bed, and which seemed to be the result of some one having struck the foot-board with a plank. Immediately following this came a sharp knocking on the antique bed-warmer which hangs beside my fireplace. When I had sufficiently recovered myself, I turned on my bedside lamp, but the room was empty.

But on Thursday night of that week my wife came into my bedroom, and stated flatly that there were burglars in the house.

I got out of bed and went down the stairs. But I must confess that I felt, the moment darkness surrounded me, considerably less trepidation concerning the possible burglar than I felt as to the darkness itself. Mrs. Johnson had locked herself in my bedroom, and there was something horrible in the black depths of the lower hall.

We are old-fashioned people, and have not yet adopted electric light. I carried a box of matches, but at the foot of the stairs the one I had tried to light another match, but there was a draft from somewhere.

The second match went out before I had time to glance about. I was immediately conscious of a sort of soft movement around me, as if something had passed and re-passed. One it seemed to me that a hand was laid on my shoulder and not lifted, but instead dissolved into the other shadows around. The sudden striking of the clock on the landing completed my demoralization. I turned and fled upstairs, pursued, to my agonized nerves, by ghostly hands that came toward me from between the spindles of the stair-rail.

At dawn I went downstairs again, heartily ashamed of myself. I found that a door to the basement had been left open, and that the soft movement had probably been my overcoat, swaying in the draft.

"But I believe, told Herbert Robinson of what we had discovered, but nothing had been said to the women. I knew through my wife that they were wildly curious and the night taken from Arthur Wells's room, and after the medium was in trance he placed it on the table before her.

The first questions were disappointing in results. Asked about the stick, there was only silence. When, however, Sperry went back to the sitting of the week before, and referred to questions and answers at that time, the medium seemed uneasy. Her hand, held under mine, massaged the table with a candle and a chair had been placed behind a screen for Mrs. Dane's secretary.

I am sorry to record that there were no physical phenomena of any way as at this second seance. The room was arranged as it had been at the first sitting, except that a table with a candle and a chair had been placed behind a screen for Mrs. Dane's secretary.

There was one other change. Sperry had brought the waiting-stick he had taken from Arthur Wells's room, and after the medium was in trance he placed it on the table before her.

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"Do you know to whom that stick belongs?"

"A silence. Then: "Yes."

"Will you tell us what you know about it?"

"It is writing."

"Writing?"

"It was writing, but the water washed it away."

Then, instantly and with great rapidity, followed a wild torrent of words and incomplete sentences. It is inarticulate, and the secretary made no record of it. As I recall, however, it was about water, children, and the words "ten o'clock" repeated several

pleasures were not so abounding as they are at the present time, and the highly specialized aids to comfort did not exist. In the old days much that is now done by machinery was accomplished by the individual. Exercise and open air activities were a necessity and fact. Riding, walking and outdoor life in general occupied the attention of everyone either by compulsion or choice. That the disease rate was much higher in the good old days was not based on a lack of exercise but upon the inability of science properly to cope with the communicable diseases of infancy and early childhood.

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