THE JOURNAL

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL.

One month	$0.35
Three months	1.00
Saturday Eve. edition, 28 to 36 pages	1.50

Delivered by Carrier.

One week	8 cents
One month	35 cents

All papers are continued until an explicit order is received for discontinuance, and until all arrearages are paid.

THE JOURNAL is published every evening except Sunday, at 47-49 Fourth Street South, Journal Building, Minneapolis, Minn.

M. LEE STARKE, Mgr. General Advg. { New York Office, Tribune building. Chicago Office, Tribune building.

WASHINGTON BUREAU.
W. W. Jermane, Chief of Washington Bureau, 901-902 Colorado Building. Northwestern visitors to Washington invited to make use of reception room, library, stationery, telephone and telegraph facilities. Central location, Fourteenth and G streets NW.

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The Wheat Acreage.

The change this week in conditions relative to farm work in the northwest has been very great. Continued good weather has brought vast improvement and greatly strengthened the belief that there will be a large increase in the northwestern wheat acreage. The country already seeded, covering probably 75 per cent of the total wheat acreage, shows a gain of 5 to 10 per cent.

The disposition to sow more wheat has remained thruout, and it is not too much to say that, had conditions from the first been uniformly favorable, a 20 to 25 per cent increase in wheat acreage would have been made; nor is it impossible as yet that there will be a big increase.

The wheat counties that lie along the Red river in Minnesota and North Dakota are so very important that it is impossible to know much about the wheat acreage on the whole until the allotments in this section are known. The acreage will be larger or smaller according to what farmers in the valley may do.

On Friday morning seeding began on high land within five miles of the Red river, and if the good drying weather continues over Sunday, the work will be general thru the valley by Monday or Tuesday next. A week of good weather or of bad from Monday next will tell the story.

From the present outlook the valley will be seeded down from end to end by May 15. This is a late start, but one of the bumper crops of the northwest was raised from seeding fully as late. There will be later maturity and geater danger of early frost damage, but in the general outlook these things are offset by the larger area almost certain to go into wheat if nothing further arises to delay the work of seeding.

Mr. Lind will have to decide when he gets home between the Hearst and the anti-Hearst elements of his party. The Hearst men are already beginning to make threats in case he decides against them. The Hearst boom is dead and it is not likely that the congressman will choose to join a funeral procession.

Money Abundant.

Complaint is now heard that the banks of the country, of the east especially, are no longer making profits equal to those of past years, and that 1904 is likely to prove a period of decreases rather than of increases in earnings. The big eastern trust companies are in much the same position. The trouble appears to be that there is too much money in the country.

How there can be too much of so good a thing as money is a little hard to understand from the viewpoint of the outsider, but that there can be a too plentiful supply to make conditions favorable for the banks is nevertheless true.

This currency question is a mighty one. Few of our statesmen have mastered it in all its multitudinous detail, and fewer still are prepared to provide proper relief measures for emergencies. One year there is a great scarcity, business is handicapped and general nervousness prevails. That the sensitive monetary centers may not be thrown into panic and all business adversely affected, we find the secretary of the treasury making full use of the discretionary power that the law allows him, and exhausting not only the various old devices, but even originating new emergency measures to move money from the treasury to the bank and prevent a crisis. Another year we hear the same bankers who cried aloud of scarcity of money and impending disaster, complaining that they cannot employ their surplus funds, and that despite unprofitably low rates and disposition to extend loans to the farthest point consistent with safety, they still find it difficult to prevent accumulation.

The day may come when our currency will have the expanding and contracting power or "elasticity" so much talked of during the last money squeeze in New York, but the day is not yet here, and while our present monetary system maintains extremes of scarcity and of plentitude will follow at intervals.

The innumerable sources of money demand may roughly be put into two classes, one commercial the other speculative. The farmer, country merchant, city retailer, jobber or manufacturer may need more money to handle a larger volume of business, hence an increase in so-called legitimate commercial demand. The speculative demand—not meaning by this speculative only in the sense in which that word is usually understood—runs with the commercial demand and there is the difficulty. When the country is about to enter upon a period of greater things in manufacturing and general business, then there is something doing in Wall street as well. New deals are on, new stocks listed, bond issues floated, financial institutions enlarged and extended, and with this comes the increased activity in the speculative division of the securities market. There is then demand from every quarter. But let the country drop off a little and the financial center is found to have anticipated this and to have retrenched. Hence the country varies from times of all-around demand to times of all-around slackening, and with barely enough money to reach around in a time of general activity there is a superabundance in more quiet times.

For the first quarter of the year there was a falling off of $3,600,000,000 in bank clearings as compared with 1903. The New England, Middle and Western states show decreases, the south and southwest show gains and our own section gained $42,000,000. In round figures the country outside fell off by $100,000,000 and New York city fell off $3,500,000,000, this last tremendous total largely representative of decline in speculative activity. Much outside money unemployed drifts into New York, and no less than 40 per cent of present New York bank deposits is country money.

Clearly there is too much money for present needs, yet if the country raises good crops this year, the railroads will be active, business everywhere will look up, speculation will have revived in some degree at least, and it will again be found, in the fall, that there is only enough to go around.

Exclusive of the $150,000,000 gold reserve a surplus of $221,167,481 now lies in the government treasury, the banks of New York have reserves of $311,547,300 or $34,203,700 more than the legal requirement and there are large surplus sums in banks of many reserve cities thruout the country.

This week may mark the end of accumulation. The Panama canal payments, preparation for which drew almost $40,000,0000 into New York, will shortly begin. Gold is already moving out of the country and gold exports are expected to continue for some time.

Some idea of the difficulties under which the Siberian railway is operated in war time is afforded by accounts of mounted Cossacks who patrol the tracks at night, equipped with portable flash lights, with which they inspect the condition of the road. Japs disguised as Chinamen threaten the safety of every train on that line.

An Opportunity to Be Improved.

Two years ago, before the state convention was held, The Journal suggested the selection by the state central committee of some member of the Minnesota delegation or some other prominent republican for the office of temporary chairman of the convention. Senator Nelson was chosen, and improved the opportunity to make a prepared address befitting the occasion.

It is desirable that this be done again. The republicans of Indiana have just held their convention at Indianapolis, and Congressman Watson, chosen for temporary chairman, made a strong argument in support of republican principles—a speech which will do much to solidify republican strength in that state, and which will be valuable to the party generally as one of the most able deliverances on the issues of to-day likely to be made during this campaign.

Why may not Minnesota pursue the same course with respect to the next convention? Naturally the choice, if made in this way, would fall on Senator Clapp. Mr. Clapp is a fine public speaker, and no doubt be able to make an address on that occasion of great value to the republican party in this state.

It is understood, however, that Mr. Dunn is opposed to the selection of a temporary chairman by the committee, insisting that it be left to the members of the convention. Of course, such a plan would make it impossible to secure the selection of a man prepared to discuss public questions in the same careful and intelligent manner in which it could be done if time had been given for preparation.

The opposition of the Dunn men to the choice of a temporary chairman by the committee with Senator Clapp as the logical choice supports the theory that Dunn's candidacy represents not only Dunn's ambition to be governor, but Mr. Heatwole's desire to secure Mr. Clapp's place. While we have no doubt Mr. Clapp would preside fairly, and while he is the logical selection for the position, and it seems to us the committee ought to tender it to him, it does not necessarily follow, because there is opposition to him, that some one else may not be chosen by the committee in accordance with precedent and common sense. Some other member of the delegation, or some other republican, capable of presenting the issues of the day clearly and effectively as they ought to be presented, would doubtless serve the same purpose.

The point of chief consideration is not deference to the preference or prejudice of any candidate for the governorship, or to the claim which any particular individual may have upon the honor, but the desirability of having the convention marked by a strong, clear and forcible enunciation of republican principles, national and state. It seems to us that it is the duty of the committee to provide for this, and that it will not have discharged its responsibility if it fails to do so.

Something of a sensation was created in Denver this week when the regular Thursday evening prayer meetings were turned into political meetings at all the churches. Committees were appointed by the pastors to see to the registration of all the members of the several congregations and to getting out the full vote of the church people on election day. Of course, the ministers were criticised for stepping out of their accustomed sphere, but when there is a clear issue of honest government against a corrupt ring, as appears to be the case in Denver, how much better is it for the church people to get out and hustle, than to be content to sit in their pews and pray over he sins of the community without making any effort to correct them.

Minneapolis' Latch String Is Out.

Why shouldn't the republican state convention come to Minneapolis in July? It will, if the state central committee consults the comfort and convenience of the delegates.

Duluth is too far from the center of population. Holding the convention there would mean a change of cars for most of the delegates, and an extremely long trip for all in the southern part of the state. There are not ten counties in the state more convenient to Duluth than to the twin cities. St. Paul, which has a valid claim to the convention, cannot furnish a hall of sufficient size, and it seems to be up to Minneapolis.

It is very true that the delegate convention was held here March 17, and the flour city has no desire to "hog things." There will be no clamor from this city if the convention is located somewhere else. Our modesty in politics is so well known as to be proverbial. The only elective state office we have is that of lieutenat governor, which pays per diem amounting to $1,000 every two years. In all probability that is the only office Hennepin will ask for at the next convention, and surely the republicans of the state will not take away from us this one poor little boon. Even if Hennepin county got both conventions and the lieutenant governor this year, it would be but a paltry share of the honors.

Minneapolis is not greedy about this convention business, but submits that the gathering should be held in the twin cities, the center of population and railroad systems, and that the only hall in these cities fit for the purpose is the International Auditorium, the historic home of the republican national convention in 1892. It is an ideal convention hall.

The Journal does not know what the state committee intends to do about it, but we know what the delegates will think if they are dragged away off to the head of the lakes or packed in a St. Paul theater.

John Mitchell has done a great deal to gain respect and sympathy for the labor movement, but he never did the cause of organized labor a greater service than when he said:

"It is sometimes claimed that no strike can be won without the use of physical force. I do not believe this to be true; but, if it is, it were better that the strike be lost than that it succeed thru violence and the committing of outrages."

This statement appears in an article which Mr. Mitchell has written for the Chicago Interior, a weekly religious paper. The tone of the article thruout is one of respect for law and order as the first essential of civilized society. Mr. Mitchell is a very influential man; he has earned the confidence of labor and the respect of the public, and what he says counts.

Curing Trust Evils.

The New York Evening Post regards antitrust legislation and law enforcement as quite unnecessary because overcapitalized trusts contain within themselves the seeds of dissolution, and because the heavy capitalization requires economical processes of production in order to pay dividends, which economical processes are a residue no matter what happens to the trust when high prices have stimulated disastrous competition. All of which may be true in some cases, but not in all. Does the Post see any signs of dissolution of the beef trust or the anthracite trust from overcapitalization or disastrous competition bred by high prices? Competition has no show against such monopolies because they have either acquired practically all the natural supply, as in the case of the anthracite trust, or have become so powerful, as in the case of the beef trust, that competition is practically impossible. The only resort open to the public in such cases is antitrust legislation and law enforcement. The Post's theory is all right till it runs up against such facts as the trusts cited.

Folk, the St. Louis prosecutor, is sweeping the rural districts of Missouri, and seems to be reasonably certain of the nomination for governor on the democratic ticket. What a nice time the convention which nominates him will have when it comes to the plank in the platform relating to the previous state administration. The voters of the democratic party, in supporting Folk are expressing their most emphatic condemnation of the boodling machine of which the state administration is the principal part.

This is opening day at the St. Louis exposition. There will be some speeches and a band explosion and other appropriate ceremonies, but the big show is a long way from ready for visitors. Bad weather and the dilatoriness of exhibitors have combined to produce a state of unpreparedness which it will take at least a month to overcome to a degree that will begin to attract visitors.

ANOTHER SHAKSPERIAN CRYPTOGRAM

George Bernard Shaw now comes forward as the author of Shakspere—this, however, it is only fair to state, merely to put to rout the scattering remnant of the Baconian forces. "If," says Mr. Shaw, "you take the titles of Shakspere's plays—just a sufficient number for the purpose—and take the fourth letter from the end of the title, you will find they spell Bernard Shaw." For example:

"MacBeth."
"Julius CaEsar."
"Comedy of ErRors."
"Merchant of VeNice."
"Antony and CleopAtra."
"Two Gentlemen of VeRona."
"Merry Wives of WinDsor."
"Troilus and CresSida."
"Timon of AtHens."
"Antony and CleopAtra."
"All's Well that Ends Well."

MINNESOTA POLITICS

Senator Clapp May Be Proposed for Temporary Chairman of the State Convention—Dunn Opposes Any Selection by the Committee, While Collins Has No Objections—Clapp's Friends Aroused to the Danger Lurking in the Dunn-Heatwole Organization—Trouble in Roseau.

There may be an issue drawn in the republican state committee over the selection of a temporary chairman. R. C. Dunn has gone on record as opposed to any such action by the committee, saying that the convention should make the selection.

Judge Collins says he has no objections to such a course. "The question has no great interest for me," he states, "but the designation of a temporary chairman is nothing new in this state. It has been done on several occasions by the central committee. I see no objection to such a course, and I know it has been a custom elsewhere. I believe the present committee to be absolutely fair, and am sure it would select an able and impartial temporary chairman for the coming convention. Senators Nelson and Clapp have both been mentioned for the position, and I should be well pleased with the selection of either of these gentlemen."

There is considerable sentiment in favor of Senator Clapp for the temporary chairmanship. Two years ago the committee conferred the honor on Senator Nelson, who made an able introductory speech and presided over the preliminaries, after which J. T. Wyman was chosen permanent chairman. This year the convention may start in with excitement at a fever heat, and there are likely to be contests from some of the counties. If the convention has to begin by electing a temporary chairman before it is known who are the accredited delegates, there is danger of a "rough house." No one questions that Senator Clapp would be absolutely fair, whatever his personal preference might be, and the friends of the warring candidates could have a fair test if they wanted to, on the election of a permanent chairman.

It is the custom at national conventions, and at most republican state conventions, for the committee to recommend a temporary chairman. This recommendation is not binding, but is always accepted.

Mr. Dunn's friends on the committee may oppose Senator Clapp. The senator and his friends were slow to believe that the Dunn organization concealed a plot against Clapp, but they now realize what Heatwole's connection with the Dunn candidacy means, and the Clapp men are lining up for Collins nearly everywhere. They are doing so in St. Paul. Former Clapp men who are in the Dunn camp are there because they prefer Dunn to Clapp. As a rule, they understand that the Dunn organization carries with it the Heatwole candidacy for the senate.

Heatwole may never become an open candidate against Senator Clapp. He will not come out openly unless his organization wins at the state convention, and gets control of the party machinery. He has tried to keep the senatorial end of the game quiet, with very poor success, on account of its effect on the governorship contest. If he loses the first round, and Dunn is defeated, he can hardly hope to win against either Clapp or Nelson, but if he should succeed in nominating Dunn, and thus getting the reins of power, he would go after Clapp. Then, as he told his Rice county friend, "if I can't make it next time, I will when Nelson goes out."

The Duluth boomers are working hard to land the convention. Millie Bunnell, the Duluth member of the state committee, was in St. Paul yesterday with J. L. Washburn, urging the claims of the zenith city. They claim to have pledges of one kind and another from members of the committee, that will insure their success. However, there is strong prejudice against taking 1,100 delegates such a long distance to a corner of the state, and the Duluth proposition may be defeated offhand. In that case, the convention is likely to come to Minneapolis, for St. Paul cannot furnish any hall where all the delegates can be seated on the ground floor.

There is very likely to be a contest from Roseau county, where there is a conflict of authority. The old county committee of two years ago failed to call the county convention on March 15, to select delegates to the St. Patrick's Day convention, and a Warroad coterie of republicans called a mass convention in that city, which selected the delegates. This convention also named a new committee to succeed the derelict old committee, and this new committee is going to issue a call for the next county convention. The old committee has waked up, a la Rip Van Winkle, and now demands its prerogatives. An effort is being made to settle the differences, but both sides are stubborn, and if they both refuse to yield there will be two county conventions and two sets of delegates to the state convention. The new committee is said to be favorable to Eddy or Collins, while the old committee is for Dunn.

Hearst and Parker men will have a clash in the third district, where the Parker sympathizers are for Senator Coller of Shakopee and Dr. J. H. Dorsey of Glencoe. J. W. Craven, former state senator, and editor of the Norwood Times, is a candidate in the interests of Hearst, and will doubtless have a running mate.

W. E. McNelly, who made a lively run against Representative Bosworth in Houston county two years ago, is announced as a candidate again, and it is understood that Mr. Bosworth will not seek renomination.

H. M. Wheelock of Fergus Falls, editor of Wheelock's Weekly, proposes Governor L. F. C. Garvin of Rhode Island as good timber for the democratic nomination for president. As the democratic governor of a trust-ridden state, Mr. Wheelock believes Garvin ought to satisfy nearly every one.

—Charles B. Cheney.

The Water Service.

To the Editor of The Journal.

What's the matter with the water department? The city goes to the expense of erecting water fountains for the benefit of the horses, yet only a few in the center of the city have been turned on. As I understand it, the supervisor has charge of this work, and instead of getting things in shape to turn on the fountains in April, he waits until hot weather is actually on us, and then it seems to take him a week to get part of them running. So far as I can see this man has long since outlived his usefulness to the public or department, and the water committee that keeps him in office should be held responsible at this fall's elections for his incompetence and neglect. —Voter.

THE BIRDS LET LOOSE

The bird let loose in eastern skies,
When hastening fondly home,
Ne'er stoops to earth her wing, nor flies
Where idle warblers roam;
But high she shoots thru air and light,
Above all low delay,
Where nothing earthly bounds her flight,
Nor shadow dims her way.

So grant me, God, from every care,
And stain of passion free,
Aloft, thru Virtue's purer air,
To hold my course to Thee.
No sin to cloud—no lure to stay
My Soul, as home she springs—
Thy sunshine on her joyful way,
Thy freedom in her wings.

—Thomas Moore.

THE GOSSIP'S WAY.

Philadelphia Press.

Miss Gaussip—It's easy to tell that a man's been drinking.

Mr. Goodart—Yes; so easy that even if he hasn't you go ahead and tell it anyway.

THE NONPAREIL MAN

Madame Schumann-Heink, the Contralto, Gives a Receipt for Voice-Building that Is a World-Beater—How the Great Singer Has Added Eight New Notes to Her Marvelous Voice—Musical Notes.

Mme. Schumann-Heink, the great contralto, has been talking to a Boston reporter—talking quite freely and charmingly. Mme. Schumann-Heink, like the president, is loyally opposed to race suicide. She is disgusted with the idea that having children is bad for the voice:

"Bad for the voice," she laughed, speaking of other singers who are childless. "Nonsense. Quite the contrary, I have had a new note for every baby, and I have eight."

"A silly superstitition, eh, Mme. Schumann-Heink?" asked the reporter.

"Nothing but nonsense. Children are the most healthy things I know. And as for the singing, well, when I had no children I could sing just two octaves, and now that I have eight, I sing all but one note of three octaves. See?"

She went to the ebony piano and struck the D of the bass clef and then herself intoned to the note to make the rumble of the piano wires sound thin, following it with a trumpet like F on the top line of the treble clef.

"That was my original register," she said, but now," and she went up the scale from the F, "I sing to there."

Lightly she took the note and it was high C. Albani's record for range was smashed to smithereens.

"A new note for every baby," she commented.

Those frail reeds who are preserving their voices at the expense of the national good, should study this interview thoughtfully.

A new note for every mite of humanity born into the world! Well, well, we are getting new ideas in music all the time. And right here we wish to remark that Apostle Joseph Smith, the Salt Lake City light, with his forty-three babies, ought to have a voice like the Trump of Doom.

The St. Peter Herald says: "When you see it in the —— —— from Le Sueur you don't know whether it is so or not." All of us daouwn 'round here come pretty near knowing 'taint so. —Jordan Independent.

And up here we would freely bet $5 that it isn't so.

That Nebraska-Minnesota baseball game showed off the kind of ball we despise—namely, the other fellow's got us down and pounded our face into the dirt. Ten to one! We can almost hear Doc Bixby's shrill hoot of joy.

The terrible fear is expressed in some quarters that Willy Hearst is just advertising for 1908. Unless something is done in the way of trust-busting before that date, the advertising may not be wholly in vain. We put in our coal yesterday.

They are going to raise the price of coal on you Monday. Talk about the tyrannies because of which we felt obliged to lick King George III. They are not a marker to the present ones.

A slang dictionary maker in New York is in despair. She has found 126 slang synonyms for "whiskers." The very latest is a detective's description of a man with red whiskers as "the man with the roan chihuahuas."

The stenographer who is trodden on will turn. A western newspaper has a letter from an ex-stenographer that tells its own story. She says:

Just a word to the wife and the business woman or stenographer. I was once a stenographer, but now I am a wife, and a happy one, and I am not a bit jealous of my "hubby's" stenographers (and he always employs pretty ones); neither did I marry my employer. I worked from 9 until 5 or 6 in the evening, and worked hard; when anything went wrong it was always my fault.

My old employer sometimes tells my husband and some of my friends what a "fine girl" I was and how much both he and his wife thought of me. Yet the truth is that when his wife used to come to the office she simply ignored me.

Well, it is all over and I would not be a stenographer again, not for $100 a week. I hope my little daughter will never have to work in an office with some old bear. I have the greatest sympathy for all of the dear old stenos, as I know what they endure. I know that my husband's stenographers like him and like his wife also, and I know they are well paid and well treated; but my advice to all stenographers is to get a nice little husband, and my advice to the wives is to treat the stenographers like somebody and not be so jealous. Nearly all the "old ladies" are a little "suspicious" of their better half, you know, and a little jealous of the girl in the office. —An Old Stenographer.

P. S.—I hope my old employer will read this, also his hateful old wife.

Well, well, dearie, as it is all over now, and as you have a "nice little husband," why be so spiteful? No matter if the "old thing" didn't recognize you when she came to the office! She was just enjoying the simple pleasure of feeling a little "swelled up" and a trifle better than somebody else. Of course, we all know how that is. When we get a little "superior" like that, everybody is "on to" us except ourselves, and we really gain nothing by it. So we ought not to feel spiteful and kind of "sniffy" at the lady.

And as for "little daughter." Perhaps it wouldn't do her any harm to work in an office with some old bear. She would probably appreciate her own "nice little husband" all the better when she got him soild, and she would be better able to understand some of the difficulties and tangles that have a tendency to make him grow into a "cross old bear" if he doesn't watch out.

We say, too, stand up for the stenographer. All up, now! —A. J. R.

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK

Municipal Ownership.

To the Editor of The Journal.

In a recent issue The Journal, in speaking of Mr. Eckels' address to the bankers, said, in closing a very able editorial:

"The essence of his address was contained in one of the closing sentences, as follows: 'I say that the indirect benefit arising from the operation of the enterprises by the corporation is much larger to the public than it can be to the shareholders.'"

The above was given by Mr. Eckels as an argument against public ownership of public utilities, and is interesting, coming as it does from a prominent man and at a time when the grasping and aggressive tactics of state-made corporations are so apparent. The excuse for the existence of corporations is, as The Journal says, the benefit to be derived by the public from their operation.

But granting that this statement from Mr. Eckels be true. What does it mean? Suppose the indirect benefits arising from the operation of the enterprises by corporations are much larger to the public than they can be to the shareholders—might not these benefits be still greater if the state or city owned and operated the properties? In fact, does it not look reasonable that they would be? The profit of stockholders is one thing, and the profit or benefit to the public is another and quite a different consideration. The two are not of the same nature and cannot be compared. A street railway may exact enormous profits from the traveling public by a 5-cent rate, as the Twin City Rapid Transit company does, and still it may be said that the railway is a great benefit to Minneapolis. And it might also be said, as Mr. Eckels said, that it is of more benefit to this city than it is to its stockholders. But what of that? How much more benefit it would be to the people of this city if they could ride at the cost price, which would only be 2 or 3 cents a fare?

—E. A. Benjamin.

Minneapolis, April 27.

THE DOMESTIC CZAR.

Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"What is the story you promised to tell me?"

"Story? Oh, yes. Well, I saw my wife about it, you know."

"Yes."

"It's censored."

DAILY ANIMAL STORY FOR CHILDREN

WHEN GERTY RAN AWAY

Little Gerty lived next door to Mrs. Thompson, who had a dog and parrot, but no children. Gerty's mother used often to let her go over to visit Mrs. Thompson, and the little girl was very fond of the dog and bird.

One morning, when Gerty went to the other house to see her two animal friends, there was nobody at home and the door was locked. Just then she saw a man pass with a trained dog and parrot; he was giving a performance in the street for a few pennies. Gerty thought the parrot looked like Mrs. Thompson's, so she ran after the man.

When they had gone a few blocks the kindly old fellow turned back and asked the little girl if she wasn't lost, and where she lived.

"I'ist lives at home wiv my muvver," she said, almost in tears.

"What's your mother's name?"

"Ist muyver."

"And what does your papa call her?"

"He calls her 'dear,'" and then the baby broke down and cried.

"But who lives next door?" persisted the old man.

"Mrs. Thompson; she lives next door to us, and she's got a dog and a parrot like yours," the little girl said, brightening up.

So the old man trudged back with his little friend, and when they came to Gerty's house they found her mama on the sidewalk, anxiously looking for her. The old man was asked to come in and give his little show for Gerty to see. I can tell you she laughed when the dog sat up at a table, with a plate before him, and refused to touch a bit of meat till his master said he might. She laughed more when the dog gulped down what was given him and picked up a napkin and flirted it over his nose. Gerty's mama said that dog had better manners than some children.

THE DOG SAT UP AT A TABLE.

NEWS OF THE BOOK WORLD

Memoirs of Henry Villard, the Man Who First Sought to Merge the Control of the Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railroad—His Story of Why He Failed to Do It—A Man Who Was Always Where There Was "Something Doing."

Only a little more than twenty years ago the Northern Pacific railroad was completed as a transcontinental line. The central figure in the railroad world at that time was Henry Villard. It was thru his efforts that the road was brought to completion and he was the host at a truly "international" last spike celebration. The whole diplomatic corps at Washington was invited, besides scores of Englishmen, Germans and others, and four special trainloads of distinguished guests accepted and traveled far out into the wilds of Montana to see the ceremony. There, surrounded by some 2,000 Indians, Mr. Villard and his company saw the last rail laid and the first spike that had ever been driven to hold down a Northern Pacific rail driven once more as the last spike necessary again to belt the continent with railroad steel. Mr. Villard himself is authority for the statement that the spike was not a golden one. The greatness of the celebration attested the importance which was attached to the completion of the enterprise, and the hero of the day was Henry Villard.

HENRY VILLARD.
Reproduction from Frontispiece of Volume II. of His Memoirs.

The Memoirs of Henry Villard, therefore, have a peculiar interest for northwestern people. It is a source of regret, however, that failing health prevented Mr. Villard from telling the story of his career as a financier with the same detail that he gave to his career as a war correspondent. Scarcely one-eighth of the 800 pages of the two volumes is given to his work as a railroad man, and that portion is told in the third person, which robs it of that direct appeal which lends much interest to the rest of the book.

Villard's Downfall.

It was Sept. 3 that the last spike driving took place. Dec. 17 following came Mr. Villard's downfall, marked by his resignation from the leadership of the great companies he had founded. He speaks of this as follows:

"His fate was certainly tragic. Within a few years he had risen from entire obscurity to the enviable position of one of the leaders of the material progress of our age. But a few months before he had reached the pinnacle of contemporaneous fame, and received on his continental journey such homage as few men have ever received in this country. But his fall from might to helplessness, from wealth to poverty, from public admiration to wide condemnation, was far more rapid than his rise, and his brief career was everywhere used to point a moral."

Tried to Buy Out Hill.

Yet it was not four years until "he was hailed as the railroad king restored to his reign," and millions were placed at his disposal by capitalists of Europe, who seem never to have lost faith in him. Things began to look promising for the Northern Pacific. But a new star was rising—that of James J. Hill. His line, the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba, was reaching out slowly but surely toward the coast. The Northern Pacific interests felt that there was danger in a rival transcontinental. Mr. Villard saw that there was only one way to cope with such a rival and that was to get control of it. (Perhaps Mr. Hill learned a merger lesson there.) He matured plans to raise $20,000,000 to effect the necessary purchase of St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba stock. According to Mr. Villard, General Samuel Thomas and Frederick P. Olcott "appeared late one evening at Mr. Villard's residence in the Tiffany House, New York, to announce that they had dined with James J. Hill and that he had positively agreed to sell a majority of shares at 120 and that they were all to meet at Mr. Villard's office the next morning to sign the papers. Mr. Villard told his visitors that he was very glad to hear the news, but he still doubted, in view of past vacillations of Mr. Hill, whether the bargain would go thru. The callers protested against this, and insisted that Mr. Hill could not back out of his promise, and that he had positively agreed to sell. An appointment was made for 10 o'clock the next morning, but Mr. Villard was the only one who kept it. After waiting an hour in vain, he called up Mr. Olcott by telephone and learned that Mr. Hill had slipped away again."

But the reader who looks for much in the way of railroad revelations in the work will be disappointed.

Significant as an index of the character of Mr. Villard is the faith of others in his personal integrity. There never seemed to be a time when he could not raise millions merely by asking for it. Once he wired his clients in Germany (this was after his downfall in 1883) that $5,000,000 would be necessary for a certain transaction. Within thirty-six hours the money was at his disposal in New York.

His Views of Lincoln.

It is hard to imagine that this man, master of millions, had, as a boy of 18, penniless and unable to speak a word of English, gone about the country seeking almost in vain for employment. He literally drifted into newspaper work, and then came his acquaintance with Lincoln and other great men of his time. He was with Lincoln and Douglas in their famous campaign in Illinois. Speaking of Lincoln as he saw him at Ottawa, he says:

"He had a lean, lank, indescribably gawky figure, and an odd-featured, wrinkled, inexpressive and altogether uncomely face. He used singularly awkward, almost absurd, up-and-down and sidewise movements of his body to give emphasis to his arguments. His voice was naturally good, but he frequently raised it to an unnatural pitch. Yet the unprejudiced mind felt at once that, while there was on the one side a skillful dialectician and debater arguing a wrong and weak cause, there was on the other a thoroly earnest and truthful man inspired by sound convictions in consonance with the true spirit of American institutions. There was nothing in all Douglas' powerful effort that appealed to the higher instincts of human nature, while Lincoln always touched sympathetic chords."

Yet Villard did not like Lincoln, for he says: "I must say frankly that, tho I found him most approachable, good-natured and full of wit and humor, I could not take a real personal liking to the man, owing to an inborn weakness for which he was even then notorious and so remained during his public career. He was inordinately fond of jokes, anecdotes and stories. There would have been no harm in this but for the fact that the coarser the joke the lower the anecdote and the more risque the story, the more he enjoyed them."

Saw Many Battles.

Mr. Villard has recounted frankly his achievements and failures, and has given interesting glimpses of the leading public men of his day, with most of whom he came into close contact. Of the great battles of the war of which he was a witness, Mr. Villard has given extremely full and valuable descriptions. He writes of Bull Run, Shiloh, Fredericksburg, Charleston Harbor and Chattanooga, as well as of Chickamauga, and adds to the clearness of his descriptions with maps.

No doubt many will disagree with him on many points. This will not, however, detract from the value of his memoirs. They are an important addition to the historical literature of the country and of the northwest. Besides they are full of narratives of interesting episodes, all told with a directness and simplicity that makes them extremely easy reading, of the life of a man who came west and grew up with the country, and who was generally where there was "something doing." —The Uneasy Chair.

BOOKS RECEIVED

MEMOIRS OF HENRY VILLARD, JOURNALIST AND FINANCIER, 1835-1900. In two volumes. Cloth, 8vo. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Minneapolis: N. McCarthy. Price $5 net.

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