

THE OMAHA DAILY BEE.

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TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION. Daily Bee (without Sunday), One Year, \$1.00. Daily Bee and Sunday, One Year, \$1.50. Illustrated Bee, One Year, \$2.00. Sunday Bee, One Year, \$1.00. Saturday Bee, One Year, \$1.00. Twelve-Monthly Farmer, One Year, \$1.00.

OFFICE. Omaha—The Bee Building, South Omaha—City Hall Building, Twenty-Fifth and Broadway. Chicago—160 Unity Building, New York—222 Park Row Building, Washington—301 Fourteenth Street.

STATEMENT OF CIRCULATION. State of Nebraska, Douglas County, ss. George B. Tschuck, secretary of The Bee Publishing Company, being sworn, says that the actual number of full and complete copies of The Daily Bee, printed during the month of December, 1902, was as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Number of copies and Total. Rows include Daily Bee (without Sunday), Daily Bee and Sunday, and Total.

The suspicion is growing that the coal bonans are simply playing for time—and winter time at that.

Just now a municipal coal pile would be more satisfactory to men out of work than a municipal stone pile.

All of which leads us to remark once more that there is no improvement Omaha needs quite so badly as a new first-class fireproof hotel.

The legislative committee on revenue and taxation will soon grapple with the question whether wireless telegraph lines should be assessed by the state board of assessors.

Why should Marconi want to erect his experimental plant for wireless telegraphy between Italy and Argentina? Is he afraid the line might be overworked?

No gallery visitor ever ventures to cry out "You lie" at meetings of our municipal legislature. That privilege is reserved for the city councilmen themselves.

The Postoffice department will make an allowance for horse feed for the mounted letter carriers at Lincoln. Wonder if it would pay for fuel and repairs if the carriers discarded horse locomotion for automobile transportation.

For a good county officer a four-years' term is none too long, but for a bad one, two years is more than plenty. If the term is to be lengthened, some quicker way should be provided for getting rid of incompetents or crooks than present impeachment methods permit.

President Eliot of Harvard insists that before long none but educated men will rule the government. It behooves us all, then, to get into the educated classes, and with universal education in free public schools there is no reason why such a rule should bar any one out.

One thing the Colorado legislators are doing most successfully—they are laying up a whole lot of material to form the groundwork for a healthy junketing committee of investigation when the credentials of the new senator come to be fought over in the United States senate.

Venice is spending a quarter of a million of dollars in an effort to save its historic buildings from old age destruction. Most of our progressive American cities would be improved if they would spend a like amount hastening the destruction of their most historic structures.

The bee keepers of Nebraska have held their winter meeting at the state capital, but if all the keepers of The Omaha Bee were to swarm to the capital city they would outnumber the permanent as well as the transient population in the vicinity of Salt creek by several thousand.

It is said that enforcing the law for the removal of the fences illegally erected on the public domain in the cattle raising district would work a hardship disproportionate to the benefits that would accrue to the public. The non-enforcement of the law to which the illegal fencing of the lands is due is what has worked the hardship.

Manager Konyba of the South Omaha stock yards and managers of stock yards in other Missouri river cities are wasting a great deal of valuable time in rectifying the wrongs to which shippers and communities are being subjected on the part of railroads by reason of their anxiety to get the long haul from points west of the Missouri to Chicago. The Interstate Commerce commission will listen patiently to their tale of woe, but there it will end in smoke. The commission does not have as much power to enforce its findings as a justice of the peace.

SENATE FILE NO. 1.

The compulsory waterworks purchase bill has been railroaded through the senate without discussion as an emergency measure. While strictly local in its scope and affecting only the taxpayers of Omaha and South Omaha, this bill violates a fundamental principle of self-government. It is, in fact, an indictment of the intelligence and integrity of the citizenship of Omaha and a public declaration in favor of placing Omaha in the hands of a receiver, or appointing a guardian to protect it from itself.

The salient features of Senate File No. 1 are that Omaha must either buy the existing waterworks or build waterworks of its own by legislative mandate. With this end in view the governor is empowered and directed to appoint a water commission composed of six citizens, clothed with unlimited power to negotiate for the purchase of the waterworks now existing or to proceed with the construction of new waterworks, and when the purchase or construction is completed to operate these works, purchase the supplies therefor, collect the rents and in fact become a government within the government, responsible to nobody and removable by nobody after they are inducted into office.

With the exception of issuing bonds already voted and voting more bonds hereafter for the consummation of the proposed purchase by the commission, Omaha is to have nothing to say about the management of the waterworks, which will involve an outlay of anywhere from three to six millions until after the expiration of four years, when the governor-appointed commission is to give way to a commission elected by its citizens on the gradual installment plan.

The darkey in that woodpile is the provision requiring the governor-appointed water commission to appoint a water commissioner at any salary it may see fit to pay, and we betray no secret in saying that the pro-proginitor of this scheme and author of Senate File No. 1 is to be the beneficiary with an income anywhere from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year. That this is to be the outcome if the bill should become a law in its present form may be judged from its context, which provides only such qualifications as Mr. Howell believes himself possessed of. In this regard Senate File No. 1 is decidedly ingenuous. The creator of the commission expects, of course, to be favored by the commission, and to make sure of this result he makes it the paramount duty of the commission to appoint the water commissioner immediately after its organization, although by reason of litigation, or by a failure to secure popular endorsement of the bonds the commission may have no waterworks to manage or to plan for from six months to two years after the induction of the high-salaried water commissioner.

If the people of Omaha can be trusted to elect an honest and capable board of water commissioners four years hence, why are they not equally competent to elect an honest commission before the negotiations for the waterworks are submitted for their ratification? Why should the citizens of Omaha be deprived of the right of home rule in the selection of a water commissioner so long as they have a right to elect their mayors, treasurers, comptrollers, police judges and city councilors? If it is right for the governor to appoint a water commission for Omaha why not also empower him to appoint a water commission for Lincoln? Why not empower him to appoint the mayors and councils of all other towns in the state so as to insure nonpartisan government, on the lines laid down by Senate File No. 1? There might be some excuse for governor-appointed police commissions on the plea that the public safety demands the extension of police powers over large cities. But no Nebraska legislator has ever sought to deprive the citizens of any town or village of the right of self-government, which is at the base of our entire fabric.

Incidentally, and quite apart from its anti-American spirit, Senate File No. 1 is crude and seriously defective in many particulars. It contemplates the purchase of waterworks on the three appraisers plan, which would expose the city to the risk of paying from one to two millions more for the works than they could be duplicated for, or force it into the quicksands and shoals of new construction on engineering estimates that may fall millions short by the time the city got through building. It ignores and rejects the right to purchase the plant by the condemnation process under eminent domain that would give the city the privilege of appointing all the appraisers and rejecting the appraisement in case it is deemed too high.

Under the provisions of the bill no appraisement of the works can even be submitted to the people without the approval of the governor-appointed water board. If this board should be induced, by fair means or foul, to balk the negotiations for the purchase of the works, no proposition could be submitted to the people. While the bill empowers the board to compel the mayor and council by mandamus to submit a bond proposition, there is no power given to the courts by the bill to compel the water board to take action in the premises. They are constituted a trust unto themselves. Not only is this close corporation to be above the mayor and council and citizenship of Omaha, but above the governor even.

After it has once been installed all vacancies are to be filled by it, and not being removable for misdemeanors in office by the governor, or by anybody, it may be depended upon to hold the fort until the job which Mr. Howell is trying to secure for himself has been anchored. Under the provisions of Senate File No. 1 the water commissioner cannot be removed after the first year except for cause by less than a vote of two-thirds of the full board.

There are other holes in that waterworks skimmer which should be plugged before the bill passes the house. The bill grants authority to the water commission to operate ten miles beyond the corporate limits of Omaha at its discretion, but nowhere does the bill make provision for accountability to South Omaha in collecting water rents, planting hydrants or extending water mains. That omission alone insures sufficient litigation to complicate the negotiations and acquisition of the waterworks for months if not for years.

The safe plan for the house of representatives would be to indefinitely postpone the bill or to recommit it to its parent for reconstruction on the lines of home rule and popular sovereignty.

THAT BOUNDARY QUESTION.

In the national house of representatives on Tuesday, during the debate on an appropriation bill, a democratic representative took occasion to discuss the Alaskan boundary question and to denounce the course of the State department as a cowardly surrender. He charged that the United States had truckled to Great Britain in the matter of the boundary dispute and stigmatized as pusillanimous the provisional arrangement entered into by our government with the British government.

There are a great many who entertain this view, but it is erroneous and unjust. As a matter of fact there has been no surrender of American territory in Alaska and it is safe to say there will not be. When the Anglo-American commission failed to reach a decision on this question or to agree upon arbitration, and the situation in Alaska became so acute as to threaten very serious trouble, the matter was taken up by the American and British governments. The diplomatic negotiations resulted in an agreement by which the existing status was to be maintained temporarily, or pending a final adjustment, which it was understood would be sought at the earliest time practicable. In this our government yielded no part of the American claim and made no surrender of territory. It pursued a conciliatory course, as the circumstances called for, but there was no truckling to Great Britain. It would have been an easy thing at that time to have aggravated the dispute, but we think every one who is capable of taking a fair and reasonable view of the question must conclude that the course pursued was the wiser one, as it is not to be doubted time will demonstrate. Before that agreement a collision in Alaska between Americans and Canadians was imminent. There was a very bitter feeling on both sides and a very grave condition of affairs. Since the agreement peace has prevailed and there has been very little complaint. Meanwhile our government has been prosecuting investigations with reference to the boundary line, with results generally tending to more strongly confirm its claims.

In the course of the house debate a New York representative expressed the opinion that there was no doubt of the title of the United States to the disputed territory. We know of no American, certainly none in public life, who doubts it. Secretary Hay, who carried on the negotiations by which the existing arrangement was effected, undoubtedly believes that our title to the disputed territory is good. The present administration, there is no question, so regards it and no one need have any fear that it will favor the surrender of a single foot of American territory in Alaska.

This question ought to be finally settled and disposed of in the near future. While not at present a source of irritation, it may become so at any time, therefore it should be removed from controversy. The course of our government in regard to the dispute has been conservative and conciliatory, but never truckling.

NO RETROACTIVE EXTENSION.

The state association of county commissioners has endorsed the proposed enactment of a law extending to four years the term of office of county clerk, county treasurer, county surveyor, county commissioner, county supervisor, county judge and sheriff. In other words, the legislature will be invoked and pressed hard to grant a retroactive extension of terms to all the county officers in the state, excepting alone county attorneys, justices of the peace and assessors.

On broad gauge lines all back-acton legislation is pernicious and vicious. When the people elect an officer for a fixed term, he is entitled to serve out his term, if he behaves, but he has no rightful claim to a back-door extension by legislative enactment. With the exception of county and city treasurers, all municipal and county officers are eligible to be re-elected. The people rarely turn down a good officer for a second term, and often re-elect county and city officers a third or even a fourth time if they are exceptionally competent and efficient.

The only plausible excuse for the retroactive extension is that it would reduce election expenses and improve the breed of office holders, but inasmuch as the state constitution requires one general election every year, we fail to see where any saving can be effected by retroactive extension. The proposition to change two-year terms into four-year terms for the sake of increased efficiency by reason of experience is more than offset by the disadvantage of retaining an incompetent, shiftless or disreputable official for four years when under the present system he can be got rid of in two years.

Good men in public office are soon found out, and the people always prefer

plate and are willing to reward honest service well done, but they reserve to themselves the right to extend the term of any man they deem worthy and retire any man whose service is not satisfactory.

Why should the school board make a supplementary coal contract when the regular contractors are obligated by their agreement to supply all the coal needed at the prices bid or to stand the difference? The ordinary procedure where a contractor fails to live up to his contract is to procure the goods on the open market and hold him for the excess over his figure. If the school board's contract is not drawn so as to be binding, it is high time to get an attorney to draw up forms that will stick.

There is no question that the labeling of Nebraska in the geographies of twenty years ago as "the great American desert" retarded its settlement. And the constant advertising of semi-arid regions where it takes twenty acres to feed one animal is equally subversive to population expansion. The truth is that only a comparatively small part of western and northwestern Nebraska is semi-arid to that degree, but it will be difficult to get possible immigrants to look into the subject that closely.

It is much easier to create new offices than to abolish old ones. The proposed creation of the office of matron of the penitentiary is simply another attempt to create a sinecure for somebody's sister, cousin or aunt. There have never been ten female convicts in the Nebraska penitentiary at any one time and none so tender as to require the care of a special matron.

If the belated passengers of the ocean liner St. Louis succeed in securing damages from the owners for failure to make the passage promptly, it will open up the same question with reference to delayed railway passengers where the railroad has no reasonable excuse for not keeping schedule time. What's law for the steamship will be law for the passenger train.

No haste seems to be manifested to have that inventory of property belonging to county, city and school district made. An inventory with proper records and checks might be an obstacle to the loaning of grading machines, school books, stationery, chairs and desks belonging to the taxpayers to special friends of the authorities in charge.

It is proposed for the city of Lincoln to take the school board out of politics by vesting the appointment of members in a commission named by the mayor. It is noteworthy that the idea that non-partisanship can be secured only by destroying home rule, and turning the local government over to the governor has not yet permeated the state capital.

The First Step.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat. As soon as government ownership of railroads shall be determined upon, the first step should be to take possession of the coal roads. The rest will come easy.

Give the Reeper a Show.

Baltimore American. The Cleveland doctor who claims to "have discovered the power of restoring life should be looked after. The possibilities of some kinds of people living indefinitely are too appalling to contemplate with calmness.

Successful Assimilation.

Indianapolis News. Our fellow citizen, the sultan of Jolo, had died, it is up to us to forward our condolences, in wholesome lots, to his sorrowing widows, who have suffered such an irreparable loss. His ways were not our ways, but no doubt he paid dearly for his perversity.

Finest in the World.

Chicago Chronicle. That grand old patriot Gen'l Grovesover asseverates with emphasis that our consular officials are the finest in the world. From the sultan's point of view this is probably true, since, according to Congressman Slayden, our consular representatives abroad can drink more whiskey, man for man, than the agents of any effete despotism on the map.

From Frying Pan to Fire.

Minneapolis Journal. After all, why shouldn't the cattlemen put up packing houses and sell the finished product to the public? They have the cattle and the hogs and they have the capital. If they can make the prices right the public will patronize their \$1,000,000 combine in preference to the little \$500,000 beef trust. The consumer may be jumping out of one trust into another, but the intermission of fair prices will be worth while.

Divorce Industry Checked.

Philadelphia Press. The decision of the United States Supreme court again upholding the divorce law of any state in regard to residents of that state is very encouraging. A Massachusetts citizen who went to South Dakota and remained there six months to obtain a divorce, and who married again, died and his second wife claimed the right to administer the estate. The supreme court decides that she was not his wife, as the laws of Massachusetts, in which state he lived, did not recognize the divorce as legal. That is satisfactory in every way, as it upholds the Massachusetts courts.

TRAGEDIES OF THE RAIL.

Killing Apparatus of Steam Roads Working Overtime.

New York World. Accident Bulletin No. 5, just issued at Washington, shows that in the three months ending last September 253 persons were killed and 2,513 injured in train accidents on the railroads of this country. In the first quarter of 1902 the corresponding dead numbered 212 and the injured 2,111. For the last three months in 1901 there were a death toll of 274 and the injured were 2,085.

These returns, which come from the Interstate Commerce commission, do not include victims of accidents other than train wrecks. These multiply by three or four the death totals quoted. For instance, the grand totals in the quarter ending with September last were 845 killed and 11,162 injured.

The lesson of these figures is plain. Careful conduct and safety provisions do not keep pace with expansion in our great carrier systems.

KEEP IT BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE.

Nebraska Railroad Assessments—What They Have Been—What They Are—What They Should Be.

What They Have Been—What They Are—What They Should Be.

Table with 3 columns: County, Assessment for 1902, and Assessment for 1903. Lists 91 counties and their respective assessments.

Total \$29,339,631.00 for 1902 and \$30,559,092.70 for 1903. Average assessment per mile, 1902, \$5,897.66 and 1903, \$6,161.57. Fairly assessed, would be \$9,222.14.

The figures above presented are carefully compiled from reports of the state auditor, the bulletins issued by authority of the railroads and the reports to their stockholders published within the past year. These documents afford conclusive proof that the aggregate true value of railroads in Nebraska based on net earnings, less a fair and taxes paid, exceeds \$32,000,000. An inspection of the table herewith presented shows just how much each county has lost by gradual reduction of the railroad assessment within the past ten years, the aggregate apportionment of railroad assessments to each county for the year 1902 and what the aggregate assessment should be if the railroads were assessed at one-sixth of their value based on net earnings. The apportionment of railroads that have not reported net earnings, which constitute less than one-sixth of the entire railroad mileage in the state, is based upon the value of their tangible property.

BITS OF WASHINGTON LIFE.

Minor Scenes and Incidents Sketched on the Spot. Senator Vest signifies his approaching retirement from public life by tendering to the library of the University of Missouri a bound copy of every public document which has come to him during his twenty-four years in the senate. The gift will embrace 500 volumes of the most valuable publications issued by the government. In that the collection is a complete set of the Congressional Records, from the beginning of the government until this time, the earlier numbers being now out of print, and many historical, scientific, agricultural and books upon subjects, many of which cannot now be purchased anywhere.

"While I had the right to sell these books," said Mr. Vest, "I do not think it proper, after my term of office expires, to appropriate to myself the proceeds of such sales, as the intention of the act of congress was to furnish senators and representatives with information which would enable them to legislate properly. Under the circumstances I thought the most appropriate disposition of these volumes was to donate them to the State University of Missouri, where 1,500 young Missourians can obtain from them a complete history of our government and its workings."

Representative Fitzgerald of New York had the pleasure of escorting a bride and bridegroom—"two constituents of mine," as he designated them—about the city the other day. They had come to Washington on a wedding trip from Brooklyn, and were desirous of seeing all the sights. After the rounds had been made Mr. Fitzgerald threw out his chest with some pride that he could make such an offer, and then remarked with careless recklessness: "If you would like to see the president of the United States I will take you to the White House and introduce you. Not the slightest interest was awakened by this offer. The bride looked at the bridegroom with a quizzical expression of indifference, and the bridegroom shook his head. 'We don't know who the president is,' he declared in the broken English of a Norseman, 'but we would much like to see Senator Knute Nelson. He, we know, is the biggest man in the government.'" Mr. Fitzgerald lost no time in calling Senator Nelson into the Marble room, and there the bride and bridegroom were completely happy talking their native tongue with the statesman from Minnesota.

A New England senator's fair constituent is engaged with him for not hurrying her pension claim, reports the Washington Post. She has written him a tart letter, wherein she expresses herself in this terse and picturesque fashion: "This beautiful government, for which my husband gave his health and for which we lost our home, requires a good wife and mother months and years to keep swearing and swearing to even her marriage and other things too numerous to mention. I wish the whole Pension department was obliged to go, as I do, without their overcares or decent underclothes. I wish I held the reins to keep their rightful pay from them until they were purple as an old damsel."

Of course, the senator will now "hump himself" to secure this fair constituent a sufficient pension.

Last winter Miss Alice Roosevelt was compelled by her delicate health to decline many social invitations, but this season she is making up for lost time. The other morning about 2 o'clock a solitary policeman was patrolling near the west gate of the White House. The rain was coming down in torrents and to cheer himself the officer was humming, "Alice, Where Art Thou?" A passer-by hailed him. "Oh, Miss Alice is out again," said the policeman, and I have to wait until she comes home, for this gate can never be closed till the family are in the house. More's the pity, she's out nearly every night now."

A vinegary old woman called Senator Morgan to the Marble room to ask about a claim. As the senator stood talking to her he noticed Senator Mason chatting gaily with half a dozen young women.

"How is it, Barney?" asked Senator Morgan plaintively of Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Layton, after his visitor had left. "That shavette saw all the old hens when Mason sees the young chicks!"

BLOW AT DIVORCE MILLS.

Dakota's Thriving Industry Gets It In The Neck.

Chicago Inter Ocean. The United States supreme court's decision in the Andrews case would seem to have dealt an indirect but severe blow to the divorce mills of South Dakota and some other states.

The contest arose over Massachusetts property bequeathed by Charles H. Andrews to the wife of his son, Charles S. Andrews. Annie Andrews, the second wife, and Kate H. Andrews, the alleged divorced wife, claimed the estate.

The Massachusetts courts held that since Charles S. Andrews had gone to South Dakota merely to get rid of his wife, the courts there never obtained jurisdiction over this citizen of Massachusetts, and that Kate H. Andrews was never divorced at all, and was the heir of her husband's father.

The United States supreme court swingingly affirmed the exclusive control of the states over the marriage and divorces of their citizens. No temporary change of residence for the purpose of evading a state's laws, it held, could deprive the state of that control.

It also held that the Federal constitution was in no way involved, for the reason that congress never had been given power to regulate marriage and divorce. Hence the agitation for a national marriage and divorce law is evidently futile, since a constitutional amendment would first be required.

States which disbelieve in easy divorce can evidently make the decrees of the South Dakota and other divorce mills practically worthless to their citizens. Under the Andrews decision it is open to either party to such divorces to attack its validity at any time in any state from which the other party may have temporarily emigrated to secure the decree.

PERSONAL NOTES.

No member of congress is so successful in keeping his views out of the papers as Senator Allison of Iowa.

Pullman sleeping cars are now numbered instead of named. The breakfast foods have copyrighted all of the pretty names.

Adrian C. Anson, the well known base ball captain, is a candidate for state treasurer of Chicago on the democratic ticket.

European countries are complaining of the increased number of old maids. Next to grass widows the old maids now constitute the largest part of the old world population.

Chicago has at last found a legitimate reason for civilized man's settling in its neighborhood. The death rate for 1902 has reached the low water mark of 13.88. Pure water and hard work did it.

Andrew Langdon, president of the Buffalo (N. Y.) Historical society, has presented to that city a copy of the bronze statue of David, by Michael Angelo, which will be erected in one of Buffalo's parks.

Five American ambassadors to foreign courts are graduates of Harvard. They are Joseph H. Choate, Horace Porter, Charles D. Conover, George Von Meyer, Benjamin Storer, who represent the United States respectively at London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Rome and Vienna.

A massive and costly monument to mark the last resting place of Bret Harte has just been erected in Frimley church yard, Surrey, England. His grave is in the north-eastern part of the church yard and around it have been planted a number of young fir trees. The monument is a massive slab of white granite, weighing two and a half tons, on which is placed a block of Aberdeen granite, rising upward in the form of a cross. Simplicity itself is the inscription: "Bret Harte, Aug. 25, 1837; May 5, 1902; Death Shall Reap No Braver Harvest."

SMILING REMARKS.

"Where are you going for the winter?" "Newbery. I can get enough of it here—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Her Friend—Don't you play an engagement at Saratoga last summer?" "Saratoga—Oh, rather. Why, say, it was a fine place. The death rate for 1902 has reached the low water mark of 13.88. Pure water and hard work did it."—Chicago Tribune.

"Do you take this internally?" asked the customer as he put the bottle in his pocket and handed over the check. "Met" said the druggist's new assistant. "Great Scott, no! I sell 'em."—Philadelphia Press.

"My wife was nearly scared to death last night," said Jinks. "Just before going to bed we discovered her in the house." "Lucky man!" exclaimed Jinks. "In the cook stove or the heater?"—Indianapolis Sun.

"Yes, father, when I graduate I am going to follow my literary friend and write for money." "Humph, John, you ought to be successful. That's all you did the four years you spent in college."—Punch Bowl.

"Is he such a poor shot, then?" "Poor shot?" exclaimed Dangerous Dan scornfully. "What other club has he? It is just as soon have him shoot at me when he's sober as when he's drunk."—Chicago Post.

"It's all your own fault," exclaimed the deacon to the minister who was complaining that his salary was not large enough. "If you had preached enough and the sermons you preach you have only to shorten the sermons."—Washington Star.

"Whew!" exclaimed Nured, "what's the matter with this prince piece?" "Nothing," replied his wife, who was a white ribboner. "I followed your mother's recipe, except where it qualified me. I put root beer in instead."—Philadelphia Press.

CINDERELLA ON SKATES.

Minna Irving in New York Times. In a worn satin hood and a shabby old cloak. And a dress that had long been outgrown. Apart from the gilt in their feathers and furs. She quietly skated alone.

They laughed at her quaint little figure she made. And passed her with glances of scorn. 'Till she darted away like a swallow through cleaves.

The intricate blue of the morn. As swift as an arrow she gracefully sped. Over the smooth, shining floor of the lake. Leaving crosses and stars, and the lines of her name.

On the glittering ice in her wake. The scant woolen skirt in its shortness. The trimmest of fairylike feet. And the fur-bordered hood was a frame for her face.

That was as pink as a rose and as sweet. The lady as they looked led the circle of girls. To follow the faded blue hood. And the tallest came forward to walk with her home.

Through the shadows and snow of the wood. He wedded the lass, and in sables and silks. She rides in her carriage today. But she tenderly treasures a blue quilted robe.

With a moth-eaten border of gray.

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