PITTSBURG

DISPATCH SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4,

# A YANKEE LAUREATE.

Well-Known American Writers Discuss Such a Possibility Pro and Con.

AMELIE RIVES IS NAMED

By Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Who Thinks a Woman Deserves the Honor.

OTHER CANDIDATES MENTIONED.

Some Authors Look at the Matter From a Humorous tandpoint

A GREAT DIVERSITY IN THE OPINIONS

It having been suggested, apropos of the surrent discussion regarding the succession to the English poet laureateship, that America should also have a poet laureate, a number of leading poets and authors were recently invited to give their views on this subject. Their answers follow and will be found both pertinent and timely. It will be noted that Holmes, Stedman and one or



two other leading poets have refrained from an expression of their opinions, but when it is observed that they are all prominent can-didates for the laurenteship their modesty will be understood. RUFUS R. WILSON.

Does Not Favor the Idea.

I take only a general interest in the matter of an American poet lauresteship and do not wish to stand in opposition to any post who has a chance of being selected, if the question of an appointment should be seriously considered, but my own preju-dices are opposed to such an imitation of monarchie institutions.

F. MARION CRAWFORD.

Robert W.Criswell Would Discourage Poets. It we are to have English free trade, let It go at that without sping the English custom of a poet laureate, a government office of even less use than a civil service commissioner. The Greeks, who originated the centuries ago and are all the better for it. We can see why an asthetic and sentimental people like the old Greeks should wish to include a poet in their civil list, but there is no reason why a practical people like the English and Americans should tolerate one. What we want to do in America particularly is to discourage poets instead of encouraging them. Editors have been doing this for some time by throwing them downthis for some time by throwing them downstairs; but the general public ought to assist. The poet Cinna narrowly escaped being torn to pieces for his bad verses, and yet
Cinna was a better poet than some who get
into the magazines to-day. Just at this
critical time I would suggest that we keep
extremely shady on the laureateship question. If President Cleveland were to
crown a poet, it would probably be his
soulful friend, Richard Watson Gilder, and
I do not think Mr. Gilder is much of a
poet. Indeed, his appointment would likely
result in an uprising and overthrow of the
government.

ROBERT W. CRISWELL, (Author of "The New Shakespeare.")

Lillie Devereux Blake Says "Certainly Not." A poet laureate in this country? Why, certainly not! We no more need a laureate here than we do a court jester. Such an insritution belongs only to a monarchy, and an ancient one at that-it ought to be as obsolete as the office of the strolling minstrel or the Scotch harper. What would a laureate do here? Chant the praises of "Baby McKee" or sing sonnets to Mrs. Cleveland? Would be set the McKinley bill to music, or turn the President's mes-

only to imagine one of our great poets as an appointed and paid laureate is to degrade him in thought. But the people, on yea, the people have had many laureates! How the gifted ones of our laud have tuned their lyres at the right moment, to embody in sublime poems the hopes, the fears, the passions and the rictories of the Union. Longfellow, Whittier, Mrs. Howe—they have written the burning words that have phrased the struggles, the aspirations and phrased the struggles, the aspirations and the triumphs of the nation. There is but one man who descries the title of the na-tion's poet laureate to-day Oliver Wendell Holmes. Gentle scholar, keen wit, exquisite versifier, he is the people's laureate; but to think of him as a paid official is to deface the dear image of the loyal and beloved poet. LILLIE DEVEREUX BLAKE.

No Living Poet Worthy of the Honor. Regarding a poet lauresteship in America, I would say that I do not see how such an office could be created or maintained in this country, unless it was merely an honprary title. The lauresteship is created by the crown of England, and was said to have originated in the reign of Edward IV. I bardly think the Government of the United States would recognize any necessity for States would recognize any necessity for such an office. In the Society of Amateur Journalists it has been for some time the custom to choose by competition a poet laureate every year. On this plan an organized literary society might elect a permanent laureate. In my opinion there is no living poet in America whose genius is broad enough and deep enough to fill the office. Either Longfellow or Poe in the past would have been worthy of the laurel. once. Enter Longerton of the laurel, past would have been worthy of the laurel. But if America must have a poet laureate, I would suggest Thomas Bailey Aldrich as best fitted to wear the honor.

MINNA IRVING.

Oliver Wendell Holmes the World's Poet.

Our laureate must be-is already-Oliver Wendell Holmes. He is, to-day, not only the American poet, but the world's poet. Who now ative, in any land, can compare with him for poetic imagery, for mellifluous versification, for elevated and elevating thought, for pure sentiment, for philanthropic and patriotic ferror, above all, for exquistite wit and heart-warming humor?

His "Chambered Nautitus" excels Keats'
"Skylark," and (at the other end of the
line) his "One - Hoss - Shay" surpasses
Hood's "Tale of a Trumpet."
The day of long-windedness has gone by.
This is the era of brevity—condensation.
The flash of sunlight on a sensitive plate
has taken the place of the laborious work of
the hurle on steel.

the burin on steel.

Let us crown our beloved Dr. Holmes, and do it quickly, while we can offer the laurel with a smile, for the sad day approaches when we must bestow it wet with our tears.

JOSEPH KIRKLAND.

Julian Ralph Favors Eugene Field. I had never given a thought to the possibility of America's having a poet laureate, but an instance's reflection convinces me that

I am for having one as quickly as possible.
The man for the honor is Eugene Field, of
Chicago — the most American, the most
gifted and versatile of our poets, and as
royal a fellow as ever put laurels on a poet's JULIAN RALPH.

Let Each Man Choose His Own Laurente. My impression is that we have borrowed enough of snobbery from our friends across the water, and can afford to let every American poet, who is worthy, rest content with the bay-leaves of the public opinion of a people who are the greatest on earth, when they let flunkeydom alone. Such an office is proper in England, where every man wes duty and allegiance to his sovereign. We live in a republic; ench, man is a sover-eign. Let each man's heart choose and crown his own laureste, who shall be his friend, his guide, his helper—not his Olym-pian butler. In heaven's name while we are passing laws to keep out articles of for-eign manufacture, let us place the tariff high upon offices that to us would mean nothing. HENRY C. DEMILLE.

Inappropriate, if Not Impossible.

To my mind it would be manifestly inappropriate, if not impossible, for America to sustain a poet laureateship. Our literature is far too young for the crowning of any poet with such an honor, and when we are a hundred or two years older it may be wise to consider the wisdom of such a course. By that time England will have, in all probability, dispensed with her poet lauresteship and her example will be a very good one for America to follow. EDWARD W. BOK.

Another Vote for Oliver Wendell Holmes Regarding a poet lauresteship for America, I have not given the question much thought, but it would seem as if we were too democratic in our tendencies to make the appointment of anyone to such a position advisable. But were any one of our American poets to be made poet laureste, my vote would be cast for Oliver Wendell EBEN E. REXFORD.

The Views of Ella Wheeler Wilcox. I do not think America now possesses i living poet who has written enough great

poems to merit a laureateship. The grandest poem in literary construction and richness of language written by any American poet is, to my thinking, "Herod and Miriamne," by Amelie Rives It is the creation of great genius-a genius yet in its early dawn. If it is not

crushed by the bludgeons of the mob, it should in 15 years' time fit this author for the crown of laureateship.

I do not say this because she is a woman! Indeed, my preference in all things is to see men lead. Had a man written "Herod and Miriamne," to him would I accord the same praise. "But I know of no other American poet, fiving or dead, who has so nearly approached the Shakesperian standard! no other poem so rich with remarkable and universal lines of beauty.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.

An Admirer of Josquin Miller. In regard to the American lauresteship: If it were to be given to the only American who has ever possessed the true poetic fire, who has ever crossed the border-line be tween high talent and genius, I should recommend Joaquin Miller. It is true that he has done more bad work than good; that

his best is suggestive of jevels in a dust heap, yet the divine gift goes for more than the exquisite art of the mediocrities. Following Joaquin Miller, it seems to me that the American poet who possesses the most dramatic fire and imagination is Helen Gray Cone. And of course her art is more even. But neither she nor any con-temporary poet of any land has given to letters a finer or nobler poem than Miller's "Passing of Tennyson."

GERTRUDE ATHERTON. No Man Worthy of the Office.

If America is to have a laureate he should be a man who is full of true American spirit



and destitute of buncombe. Some uncon cions pupil of James Russell Lowell would bill-I wish he would appear in JOHN HABBERTON.

J. W. Riley the Man for Poet Laurente. By all means let us have an American poet laureste! It is precious little that any Government can or will do to give encouragement to literature; and if we are ever going to begin, now is the time. Why Government, and especially this Government, should not give out of the half billion dollars spent every year, and often questionably spent, some little gratuity to encourage literature in its higher grades, is a puzzling question. Greece, Rome, England, Germany, Spain and Italy have had their writers thus rewarded. France has her Academy, and the "Forty Immortals," certainly reflect credit upon the country, quite as much as her soldiers, artists, scientific men or inventors, and much more than her politicians. Ever since Dr. Johnson, the ursa-major of English literature, refused the "patronage" that had been refused him when he was struggling in the garret of Grubb street, and was now offered him, there has been urgent need of assistance to

there has been urgent need of assistance to struggling authora.

But it will be suggested that this is not given as a charity but as a gratuity, from a rich nation to a poet who has done it honor. True enough, but the recognition of literature by a nation which is bestowof literature by a nation which is bestow-ing \$150,000,000 per year on sick and lame soldiers, suggests that oftentimes poets too have lame "feet," and march with halting step and have, most of them, been engaged in a struggle for bried and social recog-nition, quite as trying as that of the soldier. The small portion which might be granted from the salaries of the thousands of ward-bediers, politicisms, dispursances, who

have forced their way into public life through saloon influence, and over the heads of worthy men, and whose unworthy names fill the pletboric pages of the Government reports, would not be missed. A blush comes over the cheek of a true American when he remembers poor Poe, buttouing his coat up, as he handed in his MS, to hide the lack of an undergarment; or Halleck, he of "Fanny" and "Marco Boz-



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

zaris," clerk of Astor, the millionaire, wearing away time at the desk like another Lamb, on a salary that a clerk nowadays would not look at. We have hundreds of rich publishers, many of them mounting up into the rank of millionaires, but few poets who can call themselves free from financial embarrass-

ment. Government recognition of poetry as the highest art? By all means?

But do not think of allowing the poet laureate to be chosen by the public election, or it would be decided by his being a Democrat or a Republican, while a People's party man or a Prohibitionist would not stand a ghost of a chance. Neither should he be chosen by Congress, which has blundered so in its taste in art whenever it has

Oliver Wendell Hoimes, the twilight-loving Eugene Field, the gipsy-tongued Charles G. Leland, or the finished and fortunate Bret Harte. Then comes a shoal of sweet singers, full of promise, certainly as much so as "School-Miss Alfred" was when Bulwer attacked Tennyson. It is hard picking, but two come so near that "were to ther dear charmer away," we could be content with the choice—Edmund Clarence Stedman and James Whitcomb Riley. Those glorions lyries of "Pan in Wall Street" and "Phil Kearney's Ride" entitle Stedman to presculance in the context over all

the dialect poems, such as "Orphant Annie" and that rarest study, "Gladness," quite capture my sympathies. By all means let us have a poet laureste and let the State show some appreciation of literature, pure and simple, and so reflect credit on itself.

WIRT ARLAND.

Edgar Fawcett Favors the Idea. It seems to me that an American poet aureateship would be an office in every way consistent with our democratic usages, while at the same time hinting most wholewhile at the same time hinting most wholesomely and handsomely of that great literary and methetic debt which we owe to
the mother country. There is nothing
monarchial, however, in such an idea, and
it might well be made one of the crowning
graces of a mighty Republic like our own.
Of all our living singers, I should say,
Oliver Wendell Holmes first deserves the
honor. Like Horace—the lauriger Horatius
—whom in many ways he resembles, Dr. -whom in many ways he resembles, Dr. Holmes has always been the prince of "oc-casional" poets. In his noble and sweet old age the gift would be a glorious one, and from my heart I wish that his white hairs might be crowned with such a civic wreath, gathered from the bay-bushes that thrive so hardily among the dells and glades of his cwn dear New England hills. EDGAR FAWCETT.

The Office an Odlous One.

I do not see that anything is gained by the laureation of a poet; a true poet honors the laureateship; the laurel adds nothing to his art. Now that patent medicines and rival soaps have each a poet laureate the office has become odious. Poems written to order are seldom worth printing.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD,

Should the Honor Go to Stoddard? Any step which tends toward the social and literary elevation of a man, indirectly affects the social and literary elevation of a community. The appointment of a poet laureate in this country would tend to rouse an interest in versified literary work, which is, to a great extent, on the decrease. In ill matters of national interest, the poet faureate's metrical views would be looked ror expectantly. In fact, scores of acasens can be found in favor of such an appointment to counterbalance whatever objections might arise. It seems to me that there are but two men lest from the grand old group of which Bryant, Longfellow, Lowell and Whittier were representatives, and these are Holmes and Stoddard. While granting to Holmes all the sweetness and humor which is his due, Stoddard surely bears the palm of vividness of conception, dignity of thought and fluency of expression. He is thought and finency of expression. He is
the master of the ode and yet is possessed
of that versatility which makes it possible
for him to voice, in lyric song, the warbling
of a bird or the sigh of a lover. The people
of this country, it seems to me, have not
realized how true a singer this man has
been, and even at this late day to lay the
laurel of the laureateship upon his silver
hair, would be an honor to those who gave,
as well as to him who should receive.

JAMES CLARENCE HABVEY. JAMES CLARENCE HARVEY.

Grover Cleveland and Edward IV. The question of a post laureate is out of



for and preserve the best of their cflusions. Why then should the Government worry about a laureate? Edward IV. found one an advantage; Grover Cleveland would consider one a bore. It is a long cry between Edward IV. and Grover Cleveland. We might, I was going to say, have a poet censor, but a moment's reflection shows this office to be still more unneces ary. Are we not blessed with the illustrated newspapers, and do they not kindly show us every week our most obvious shortcom-AMELIA E. BARR.

Thomas W. Knox Would Vote for Stedman Under our system of government, the apcointment of a poet leureate would most probably be made on political grounds and the poet who could bring the greatest amount of influence would secure the honor, provided, of course, his views upon the tariff and other great questions were in accord with those of the ruling powers. The poet laureate of the United States should be subject to change, like the postmaster or collector of customs, in order to avoid dis-agreeable contingencies. It would be manifestly awkward for a Harrison appointee to write a Cleveland panegyric, or vice versa, and a rank free-trader could not be trusted to compose an ode to protection, even though he might be willing to write its obitnery. On the whole, I don't think it practicable to have an official poet laurated a worker. rente in America. But if we are to have one, I should vote for Stedman, who certainly stands in the foremost rank of American poets, is a genial and most agreeable gentieman, and belongs to the same political party that I do. THOMAS W. KNOX.

A Good Poet Needs No Laurel.

good poet needs none. Bo I see no logical reason for the existence of a poet laureate, either in America or in any other country. Even if it were desirable to have a poet laureate in this country, there is no practicable method of selecting him. The great poet has no advertisement upon his forehead announcing his genius to the world. In the absence of this announcement, to what official shall be given the responsibility of selecting the laureate? The kings and the prime ministers of England, with one or two recent exceptions, have made wretched selections to England's laureateship. Is it probable that American Presidents would do much better? It would be more in consonance with our institutions to have our laureate elected by a popular vote. But it is not probable that the greatest poet would be uniformly selected in this manner, for popular estimate, in this respect, is seldom sauctioned by posterity—the infallible court of final resort. Though it is desirable that American poetry should be encouraged as much, for instance, as American steamships, or American sugar, or American stea

The Honor Should Be Conferred on Holme I see no reason for instituting an official poet, but manifestly Dr. Oliver Wendell



Holmes should have the honor if it were to be conferred upon anyone.
ALBERT SHAW.

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A poor poet deserves no laurel, and a Wood street.

EDITOR BOYD KILLED By a Far-Western Woman Who Says

He Had Long Ceased to Love Her. SHE WAS HIS PROMISED BRIDE.

The Victim a Son of the Pennsylvania E.

R's Former President.

THE MURDERESS KISSES THE CORPSE

SEATTLE, WASH., Dec. 3.-Thomas Henderson Boyd, editor of the Olympian, at Olympia, was shot at a late hour last night by a woman who was first thought to be his wife who lives here. Boyd came here from Olympia yesterday and spent the evening in a saloou drinking. About 10:30 o'clock his wife came after him and took him home in a hack and 30 minutes later she shot him. The morderess was arrested shortly after the crime had been committed. In response to questions she said she shot Boyd because he had ceased to love her,

The murdered man was a son of Colonel A. P. Boyd, of Philadelphia, at one time Vice President of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Boyd, who was 35 years of age, came to Tacoma about four years ago, when he engaged in newspaper work.

Later reports show that the woman was not Boyd's wife, although she has passed as such. She was a Miss Burns, living in this city. She telegraphed Boyd yesterday afternoon to come over from Olympia, which he did, and registered at the Occidental Hotel. She met him there, and together they went to the house where the murder was committed, and where she has rooms. Hardly had the man entered the room when the woman fired four shots at him. Officers the woman fired four shots at him. Officers who heard the report of the shots responded at once, and found the murderess leaning over the dead man, kissing him and calling him husband. Miss Burns is of Spanish descent, and bears a bad reputation. She admitted that she had never been murried to Boyd, but declares that he took her from disorderly house with the understanding that he would make her his wife.

It pays to buy your holiday goods in diamonds, watches, jewelry, etc., where you can got the best selection and lowest prices, and that is at M. G. Cohen's, 36 Fifth avenue. No trouble to show goods. Store open evenings until Christmas.

Godowsky, the Wonderful Planist. Godowsky, the Wonderful Flanist.

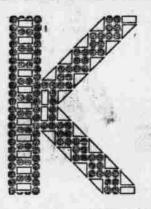
Godowsky is certainly one of the greatest living planists, and those who were fortunate enough to hear him at the last Music Teachers' Convention held in Pittsburg pronunced him to be the finestartist ever heard here. Watch papers for programme of our grand opening, December 6 and 7.

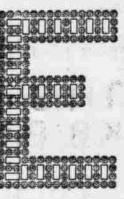
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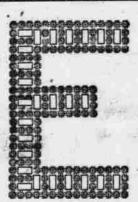
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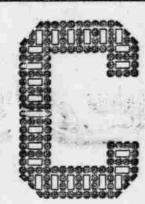
KEECH'S KEYNOTE: LOW PRICES

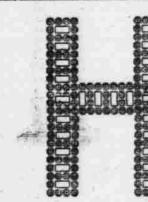
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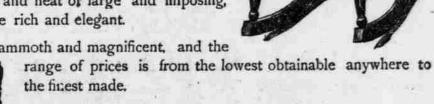
Music Racks,

Ladies' Dressing Tables, Folding Beds, Bisque Figures, Center Tables, Mirrors, Toilet Sets. Couches.

## THAT CHRISTMAS PRESENT

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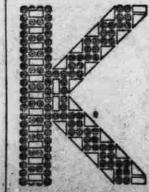
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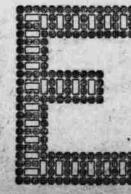
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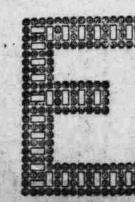
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923, 925, 927

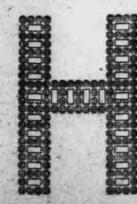
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