

As matters now stand with the Union Pacific, however, it is not likely that any building westward will be done under the management of that system.

### ARMORPLATE AND SHELL.

In the struggle between artillery and ship-building, cannon have been for years made larger and larger and armor plates thicker and thicker in order to determine the question whether the thickest practicable plate will be able to resist the heaviest practicable shot. One of the most interesting experiments was made recently by our government, and judging by the results obtained, the problem would appear practically settled in favor of the armor plate. A piece nineteen inches long and eighteen inches thick and costing \$20,000 was exposed to the fire of two heavy guns at Indian Head. It was mounted on a backing of solid oak three feet thick, there being twenty-six three-inch bolts through it. The guns were only 300 feet distant. The first shell hurled against this target was an 850-pound projectile driven by 249 pounds of powder, with a velocity of 1,465 feet a second. The enormous instrument of destruction penetrated the plate only six inches, causing the surface surrounding the point of contact to blister somewhat but leaving the armor practically without further damage. Another shell was hurled against the plate with a striking energy of 21,885 tons. This penetrated ten inches, but was completely flattened and melted and welded together with the resisting metal through the heat developed by sudden collision. Next, the target was attacked by the greatest of naval guns, hurling a shell weighing 1,100 pounds. This projectile struck it with a power of 25,000 tons and was completely pulverized—the plate itself remaining practically uninjured although the wooden backing was reduced to splinters.

The belief is expressed by government officials that a ship protected by such armor would be practically invulnerable to any gun now made, and if this view is correct, manufacturers of naval ordnance would have to construct still more gigantic engines of destruction or consider themselves outdone by the engineers whose energy and skill are devoted to the defense.

### HAD A LITTLE SENSE.

The treasurer of the Jersey City suicide club has just been expelled from the organization for doing about the most sensible act of his life. When the lot fell on him, under the club's rules, to kill himself, he displayed evidence of moral sanity by refusing to commit the murder which his companions expected of him. His action in this respect may be accepted as a partial atonement for ever having joined a fools' organization. The crime of suicide is among the strongest evidences of moral debasement and physical cowardice, even when committed under the mental depression which follows extreme misfortune. Then the vic-

tim usually is alone in the legal responsibility, therefore cannot be punished by the law. In the case of a club such as the one referred to it is different, and should be taken legal cognizance of. Every member of an organization who subscribes to rules by which the act of suicide is imposed on any individual, is an accessory before the fact to the crime of murder, just as thoroughly and completely as if the fatal weapon were to be aimed at a person other than the one who wields it. The members of such clubs, when known, should be taken into legal custody for the crime of conspiracy to commit murder, or if a death has been the result of their combination should be held for the higher offense. There should be no more condonation of the crime of suicide in human legal procedure than there is in the divine law. It is murder, and though the victim is out of reach of mortal courts, those who willfully aid in its commission, by rules or agreements such as have been referred to, should not escape the legal responsibility because the murderer held the weapon. The Jersey City club treasurer had some sense left when he refused to abide the rules of the organization. His fellow members ought to be taken care of either in jail or the asylum.

### THE SHORT LINE RECEIVERSHIP.

The question of the receivership for the Oregon Short Line and its connections outside of Utah having been settled, and the appointment of John M. Egan as receiver having been confirmed, the next point of interest, which attracts considerable local attention, is the action to be taken by the Utah court. The question as to whether Mr. Egan will have charge over the Utah lines or whether there shall be a separate receiver, will come up before Chief Justice Merrill on Thursday of this week. In the hearings east and west, the courts decided against the Union Pacific main system. In the proposition to segregate the Utah lines therefrom there will arise some new questions, but it is probable the same results will be reached, though there is the matter of a special receivership for the Utah lines to consider, on the basis of certain Utah stockholders' wishes and of special government interests in connection with the operation of the main line. Those who favor the latter proposition claim that if a separate receiver is appointed the headquarters of operation necessarily will be in Utah, probably at Salt Lake City; but on the other hand there is little room to doubt that such location is almost equally a certainty with Mr. Egan as receiver.

We have never been among those who anticipated evil or business misfortune should the Short Line receivership for all the branch lines become a certainty. Such a move has seemed to us to promise added benefits and development to all intermountain interests. The further the matter progresses, the more certain does this promise appear. As to Salt Lake City receiving injury through the possible establishment of head-

quarters at Portland—we have never been able as yet to cultivate the least particle of alarm. The Short Line's interests all require that it cherish the friendship and secure the business of this section of country; and we have given the manipulators of the present movement credit for common sense enough to see it. "Where the MacGregor sits, there's the head of the table," and whoever gets the bulk of the Utah and intermountain trade gets it as passed along from Salt Lake City.

Under the changes that are impending a battle of the giants seems inevitable; it will be a railroad contest royal. Some of the roads that anticipate great benefits to themselves may and no doubt will be disappointed; but Salt Lake City's prospects are materially brightened and the improvement in her business under whatsoever change may come cannot be overlooked or hindered. The more solid our relations with the great and growing Northwest the firmer and more enduring will that improvement be; hence the folly of antagonizing the agency that must surely help us, and of shutting ourselves out from the benefits by a scheme of petty managements over small systems which while it is true that they radiate from here, have the great misfortune of ending in the air.

### THE LATEST FROM MARS.

The interest in our celestial neighbor, Mars, continues unabated and the great question still is whether that planet is inhabited by intelligent beings or not. Among the results supposed to be obtained some are evidently contradictory and others are, as far as can be judged at present, bordering on the fantastic.

During the recent favorable opposition four observers at Mount Hamilton were closely watching the luminary. One of these, Professor Campbell, studied in particular the spectrum of Mars with a view of ascertaining whether the globe is enveloped in an atmosphere. His supposition was that the solar spectrum, if observed after having passed through the supposed atmosphere of the planet, must show some modification. Whatever lines there might be, not solar or terrestrial, would be of Martian origin. The result of his most careful observations was that there was no more evidence of aqueous vapor or of an atmosphere on Mars than there is on the moon. Lakes, oceans, irrigation canals, snow caps, inhabitants and signals, all vanish, if the dictum of the spectroscopist be accepted, notwithstanding so much has been said about these things recently that laymen in general commenced to look upon them as facts. Professor Campbell himself regards it as very satisfactory to have been able to sweep away what he calls a fabric of assumptions barring the path to true knowledge, but whether he approached his scientific instruments with preconceived ideas or perfectly unprejudiced is not quite apparent from the published accounts at hand.

Percival Lowell, another eminent astronomer, takes a different view.