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## THE SOCIETY'S LIBRARIAN

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ALFRED POWERS

THIS TOO BRIEF PAGE is about Miss Nellie B. Pipes, librarian of the Oregon Historical Society, and the two honors that have come to her this spring.

Miss Pipes just thinks she has seen her duty and done it. So she has, but how magnificent and how sustained have been both the vision and the function. The Oregon Historical Society's incomparable collection would only be lifeless and static and cobwebby and ever so dusty without the organization of it and the complete familiarity with it—and always the eager assistance to its use—on the part of the librarian. For nearly 24 years, Miss Pipes, beyond any other, has made it dynamic.

A Pacific Northwest history, whether written in Portland or New York or Los Angeles or Chicago, almost inevitably includes the name of Miss Pipes in its acknowledgements. Scholars and writers of western history all up and down the land, know from immensely satisfied experience that the Oregon Historical Society has a librarian who is prompt, indefatigable, endlessly accommodating, with a prodigious memory animated and directed by a rare intelligence.

An important man is doing a learned, world-wide thesis on wolves. He puts into the rooms of the Oregon Historical Society on the chance of making some additions to his enormous lore. Miss Pipes confronts him—and gladdens him—with piles of information on the Wolf Meetings. A school girl essayist wants help. An overalled worker wants to know when he was born. The Maritime Commission wants names for Liberty ships. Just samples, these, of continuous services to the public. The scores today merely make her that much more efficient to assist tomorrow's scores. And, withal, her buoyancy and zeal never diminish.

Still she couldn't understand why two important honors should come to her this spring.

One of these was christening the *S. S. Robert Newell* on May second. She broke the bottle of champagne against the fleeing prow—and she broke it! Milk bottle practice, you see, trained her aim beyond peradventure. When the Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation presented her with a small silver chest containing fragments of the broken bottle, the official explained it had been hard to find enough fragments. At the luncheon for about 100 guests, the tops of two cakes bore this legend: "Miss Nellie B. Pipes, Sponsor, *S. S. Robert Newell*, May 2nd, Hull 684."

Her second and greater honor came on May 30. On that day the University of Oregon granted her the degree of Master of Arts in Public Service. To but few has this been given in recognition of specially distinguished achievement for the people's good.

It was a happy, happy day for the Oregon Historical Society and the public which it serves when Miss Pipes became librarian on September 2, 1919.