

JUNE 1908

PRICE 15 CENTS

*the*  
**PACIFIC  
MONTHLY**



*"Portland's Feast of Roses"*

*By Charles Erskine Scott Wood*

*Paul de Longpre*

THE PACIFIC MONTHLY CO.  
PORTLAND OREGON

SEATTLE

SAN FRANCISCO

LOS ANGELES

Here Wood announces the 2<sup>nd</sup> Portland Rose Festival,  
which he helps incorporate as a non-profit in 1908



# Portland's Feast of Roses

Charles Erskine Scott Wood

**S**hall China have her Feast of Lanterns and Japan her Feast of Cherry Blossoms and all Europe its Feast of Fools (a festival no place really need be without), and shall not Portland have her Feast of Roses? She calls herself the Rose City, but she is three thousand years behind the times. Ancient Rhodes, by her very name, was the Rose City. The rose was her emblem, and upon her coins was beautifully minted a half-opened rose. Imperial flower, badge of contending York and Lancaster, and so far as history can run and with every nation, the Queen of Flowers. He whom we know as Anacreon, "Boast of the Ionians," sang:

*Roses (Love's delight) let's join  
To the red cheek'd God of Wine,  
Roses crown us while we laugh  
And the juice of Autumn quaff.  
Roses of all flowers the king,  
Roses, the fresh pride of spring.*

In truth, the real Anacreon, like the real Sapho, only comes to us in a few fragments—remains which have for centuries made the generations to cry out that better had whole cities been lost than the inspired words of star-eyed Sapho and rose-crowned Anacreon. Cities have been lost and nations have perished, yet these fragments still live and are cherished more than nations or cities. Life is short, but Art is eternal. And Sapho herself gave to herself a crown of roses when she said to the wealthy and patronizing social leader of her time:

*But thou shalt lie forever dead,  
Nor shall recollection be  
Of thee or any word of thee,  
For thou bast not upon thy head  
The roses of Pieria.*

Roses of Pieria, flowers of genius, blooming exultant over Sapho's burning brow. The arrogance of perishable wealth met by the contempt from immortal genius. What flower but the rose could it be in which Shakespeare makes Viola image the ravages of love upon her rosy cheeks. She says, speaking to the Duke of a feigned girl, really herself,

*"She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm I' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek."*

A damask rose, rose of Damascus — another city of roses, pearl of the desert! What could be more beautiful than this suggestion of the rosebud and the rosebud, maiden, with a cheek like the damask rose, but paling under grief? And he has said only a few lines before:

*For women are as roses whose fair flower  
Being once displayed doth fall that very hour.*

yet commentators have made it "damask'd cheek," as if she used rouge. Out upon all commentators!

Indeed, it is hard to conceive what the poets would have done without the rose. Roses lie prodigally strewn along the pathway of every poet of every language. White roses are like the bosoms of fair women and red roses like their cheeks. Dewy roses and rosebuds are like the maids and full-blossomed roses and their fragrance are like to noble women, and roses falling to pieces upon the ground are like shattered virtue and the end of beauty.

When old Homer sings his Hymn to Venus, her bed is a bed of roses; rosy the misty drapery around her, through which glows her rosy flesh.

And Horace, poet prince of haughty Rome in her highest magnificence, says:

*What slim, much-scented youth is he  
Who now reposes  
Pyrrha, in some cool grot with thee  
On bed of roses?  
For whom with careless grace arrayed  
Dost thou thy golden tresses braid?*

And in his Ode to Dellius he exhorts the Virgins to make haste and gather their roses while yet they may, which Ausonius phrased:

*Collige virgo rosas dum flos novus et nova pubes  
Et memor esto aevum sic properare tuum.*

And Spenser:

*Gather, therefore, the rose while yet is prime,  
For soon comes age which will her pride de-f lower;  
Gather the Rose of Love while yet is time;  
Whilst loving, thou mayst loved be with equal crime.*

And Herrick, singing to the same theme, made his oft-quoted Address to the Virgins:

*Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying;  
And this same flower that smiles today  
Tomorrow will be dying.*

Always when the imagination of the poet is seeking a simile for freshness, fragrance, beauty and perfection, it seizes the rose. A whole book could be compiled of such songs.

Herrick again and Ronsard and a procession of French troubadors and poets. And as for the poets of the Orient, they seem to know no other flower. The tulip, the lily and the narcissus get occasional mention; but it is roses, roses everywhere. Sadi calls his entire book *The Rose Garden*. Jami calls the world the Rose Grove and says of his lover, "She is a rose garden of beauty."

And Hafiz, to the one who has inspired him again unto poesy, sings:

*Oh, rosebush, enjoy while you may the fruit of pleasure,  
For beneath thy shelter I became the nightingale of the  
garden of the world.*

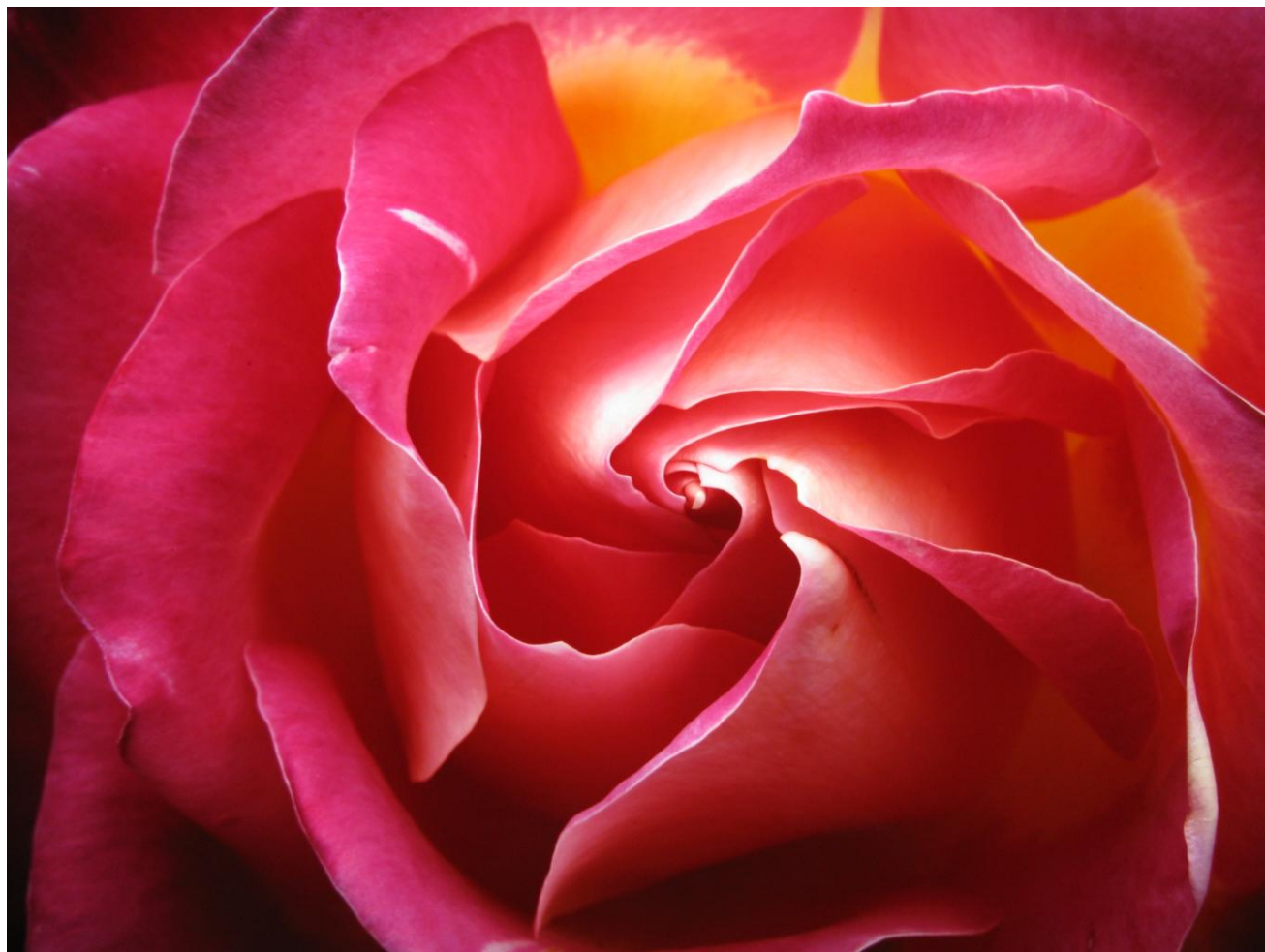
And, like old Omar, he ever exhorts to joy, saying:

*It is the fresh spring, strive to be of joyous heart,  
For it will see many roses, while thou shalt lie beneath the earth.  
I went forth into the garden to gather the rose of the morning,  
When of a sudden sounded in mine ears the song of the nightingale;  
Unhappy as myself, tortured with his passion for the rose, he filled  
the sword with the voice of his singing.  
The rose became the friend of the thorn, though the nightingale  
was still the constant lover.  
Many a rose hath bloomed in this garden, yet no one hath  
plucked a rose without being wounded by the thorn.  
Oh, Hafiz, cherish no hope of happiness in this world,  
For it can display no perfect excellence.*

So, in the song of all love songs, the young bride seeking the image of perfect sweetness and beauty exults: "I am the Rose of Sharon." And the Prophet cries out that the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

Back of Portland, the Rose City, on the other side of the Cascade Mountains, lies the Great American Desert, no longer a desert, but covered with cities, hamlets, farms, orchards and islands of grain; and now those parching plains, which until today were considered to be in truth desert, rejoice and blossom as the rose, and are green with alfalfa and pink with apple-blossoms. The Snake River and the lesser streams have been partly diverted, and in silvery threads led out into the desert to give it life.

Portland! It might have had a better name and got in a better way than by Pettygrove and Lovejoy tossing a copper coin to see whether it should be called Portland or Boston. As if there were no other names; no new names for the new country and the new city and the new life. But we are not a people of the imagination; not a people of poetry and art, but an unimaginative, plodding, utilitarian and commercial people. And yet the name has a special significance after all. Port Land, where the seaport and the great continent meet; the highest point to which great ocean vessels can come to meet the land; and this it is which will make the Rose City the queen city of the Northwest, if not of the Pacific Coast, and for this she is wise to choose for her emblem the queen of flowers. Portland sits where the waters of the Willamette and the great Columbia meet. The drops of water which pass her gates, come from the snowy peaks of the Rockies in British Columbia by the resistless Columbia, one of the great rivers of the world; and from the crest of the Rocky Mountains near the Yellowstone National Park by the Snake River, whose springs are but a few minutes' walk from the sources of the Missouri; and from the snow peaks of the Cascade range by the Willamette River, flowing north to swell the Columbia. The water drops in these rivers not only can bear traffic; but as they flow, so in inevitable economy must all the trade of this great inland empire roll down hill to the door of Portland. The great economic struggle to which the Rose City must gird herself is whether this inconceivable volume of traffic shall find the sea at her harbor, or roll further on to find it on Puget Sound. The only gap in the entire Cascade range of mountains at tide level is that magnificent rending of the mountains through which flows the Columbia. I am informed by *Reminiscences of an Old English Civil Engineer*, just printed by Robert Maitland Brereton. C. E., that the natural drainage area, tributary by the law of



**Backyard Rose #1, Ron Cronin © 2012**

gravity to Portland by way of the Columbia River, whether by water, or by rail following water grade, is 225,000 square miles, 195,000 of which are in the United States, as against 60,000 square miles tributary by watershed to San Francisco.

The whole problem lies in a forty-foot channel over the Columbia River bar and a thirty-foot channel to Portland, both of which all engineers unite in declaring easily practicable, merely a question of money, and not a prohibitory sum of money either.

**B**lessed by the gods, Portland sits like a Young queen awaiting tribute. The whole World lies at her feet. Golden seas of grain are at her back which last year furnished nearly sixty million bushels of wheat and over twenty million bushels additional, barley and oats; and the country not yet touched. Orchards which produce apples, cherries and pears unrivaled in the world. Forests and mines, and the latest discoveries in Eastern Oregon indicate gas and petroleum. She sits truly crowned with roses. Her summers are Eden and her winters are only the fresh warm weeping of the skies; no storms; no freezing; no bitter winds. Health waits upon her, and she is foremost in the world in that blessing without which all else is naught.

The whole population of Oregon a little over thirty years ago was less than one hundred thousand people. Today it is something over six hundred thousand, of whom about two hundred thousand are in and around Portland, and there is a population in that great area naturally tributary to Portland of about a million, though it is easily capable of sustaining in comfort and happiness more than fifteen million people.

These are some of the thoughts which lead her lovers to place upon Portland's brow the queenly wreath of roses.

I am reluctant to boast of age myself, and certainly I am no pioneer. When I took station at Fort Vancouver in 1875, Portland Was but a straggling town of frame buildings. I remember hearing Mr. Lloyd Brooke boasting to a friend, an army officer who before the war had been stationed at Vancouver with Grant, that Portland had twelve thousand inhabitants exclusive of Chinese, and regretting that the friend had not put some money into Portland real estate years before. But the Portland of those days was practically only three or four streets

back from the river. The business district was on Front and First Streets from Pine to Yamhill. Second Street was Chinatown, and the residences were on Third, Fourth and Fifth. Captain J. C. Ainsworth lived where now is the Ainsworth building, and Mr. C. H. Lewis. Dr. R. B. Wilson. Dr. R. Glisan, the Burnsides and Saviers and Captain Flanders lived on Fourth Street north of Stark, and during the high water of June, 1876, visits in this quarter were conducted by means of skiffs,—Venetian days. The only river-crossing was the Stark Street ferry, and a muddy road ran across the Peninsula through farms and fir timber to the Vancouver ferry on the Columbia. Among the hotels were The Cosmopolitan, at First and Stark Streets, and The Occidental, at Ash Street, both two-story frame buildings, and on First Street, near Morrison, was Thompson's "Two-Bit House," to which the prospector, the trapper, the immigrant and the flat-broke were charmed by the witchery of poetry:

*Thompson's Two Bit House,  
No deception there.  
Hi-you, muck-a-muck,  
And here's your bill of fare.*

Then followed the bait for the day, such as: "Eggs with coffee and biscuit, 25 cents. Chops and potatoes, 25 cents," etc., ending with another flight of the poetic imagination in homely English and unfettered spelling:

*Now is the time to take the rinkles  
Out of your bely after the hard winter.*

Certainly none but a serpent could have resisted this.

Communication with the outer world was by stage from Roseburg over the Siskiyou to Redding and Sacramento, and by the weekly wooden steamers *Ajax* and *Oriflamme* to San Francisco. On steamer days Portland's business hours did not end till the sailing of the steamer late at night. Her coming was heralded from down the river by the boom of her cannon, and she found the whole town at the dock to greet her: merchants for their mail and invoices, expressmen and hackmen for jobs, many to meet friends and others just for the excitement of the thing.

If Portland seems to me to have burst the bud like a rose touched by the summer sun, how must it seem to those still living who remember the Rose City as, in

1847, a forest of firs out of the shadows of which stole a few frame shacks along the edge of the Willamette; a bakery on the north side of Morrison Street, which street was named for J. L. Morrison, who had a little store at the foot of it. Pettygrove's store, at the foot of Washington Street, a log cabin at the foot of Burnside (on Captain Couch's donation land claim), Job McNamee's log house at Front and Alder, Terwilliger's blacksmith shop on Main Street, between First and Second; the salmon fishery at the foot of Salmon Street, and on the corner of Taylor and Front the most superb structure in Portland, Waymire's double log cabin. On the bank of the river was his sawmill, a whip-saw operated by two men, one in the sawpit and one on the log. Humble beginning for the city which today manufactures more lumber than any city in the world; chief city of a state which holds one-sixth of the timber of the United States, more than three hundred billion feet, with twenty-three billion feet additional from that part of Washington tributary to the Columbia. Metropolis of a territory two hundred and twenty-five thousand square miles in extent. If only Tallantyre and Waymire, the two whipsaw lumber mill men of Portland sixty years ago, could stand as I have stood on the heights above the city on a sparkling autumn morning and mark the straight columns of steam rising all along the river like great altar-fires, blending with the pearly clouds and reflected in the river so that earth and sky mingled in one vaporous mystery, what a dream it would seem. To the silence of these heights rises the constant drone of the great band-saws which are slicing up five hundred and fifty million feet of lumber a year. Perhaps to these pioneer sawyers it would seem even more a dream if they were brought face to face with one of these great mills with its acres of stored lumber, its wilderness of electric lights at night, the scream of its saws, and the rumble of its chains and rollers; its giant log-ways, the Titanic power which snatches from the river, as a monster seizing its prey, logs five feet, even six feet and more in diameter, and rolls, shifts and adjusts them to its maw as if they were straws.

Like our great counterparts the Romans, we are, as I have said, a commercial and a utilitarian, not a poetic or artistic people. Our genius, too, is for construction; construction in institutions as well as in stone and mortar. Our art finds its place in skyscrapers and bridges. The dreamer has no place with us, though all which truly

lives forever has begun as a dream. Three hundred billion feet of timber in Oregon are impossible figures to count on the fingers, but they are easily grasped by arithmetic. It is no trouble to divide them by Portland's own cut of lumber (which is only a part of the total cut), five hundred and fifty million feet a year, and to guess at the day when the Oregon forests shall not be. The City of Roses carved from that forest will have to take its visitors even now far to show them so much as a few acres of an unbroken forest, and it is so everywhere. The dollar rules, and except for the Government reservations there has been no thought of preserving a specimen of what mysterious Nature was a thousand years in building into infinite beauty with infinite patience. When I see a dead giant rising from the river and placed dripping and naked before the saw, stripped of its armor of rugged bark to which the lichens and mosses clung lovingly till the last, I am foolish enough to think of the past ages and the future, and to believe that it is not necessary all should be wiped off clean, and when I hear the shriek of the log at the first bite of the saw I am Greek enough to think of Daphne and the dryads and the hamadryads, and I like to think of the shadowy aisles of an untouched Oregon forest, where the sky is blotted out by the dark and over-arching roof of green and into the sky, smooth and clear and round, for one hundred, two hundred feet, rise the great solemn columns of this cathedral. I smell the balsam and feel the soft carpet of needles and of moss and look into those bluish depths where the giant trunks become almost ghostly and, behind that veil, it seems to me still lingers the Great Spirit of Creation. There brooding Silence shuts out the world and in these temples there is perfect rest. It seems to me that this great beauty and solemnity is perhaps as valuable as the shriek and clamor of the mill. It is a pity to have all this majesty of antiquity wholly destroyed. Man cannot restore it. It cannot be rebuilt by Nature herself in less than a thousand years, nor indeed ever, for it never is renewed the same. Nor do the Government reservations preserve this to us; they, too, are wholly utilitarian and their plan contemplates the gradual sale and destruction of these Titans. There is no spot where the primeval forest is assured from the attack of that worst of all microbes, the dollar.

But Portland in her Feast of Roses is to throw commerce and the dollar to the winds. For one week at least she invites you to joy and beauty. To open your eyes





**Backyard Rose #2, Ron Cronin © 2012**

and see the world you live in. King Rex—which sounds tautological to say the least, but perhaps it is spelling Wrecks as Thompson spelled wrinkles—is to lead the festal procession, and with him it will be as with Brown-ing's patriot:

*It was roses, roses all the way  
And myrtle mixed in my path like mad.  
The house-roofs seemed to heave and sway,  
The church spires flamed the flags they had.*

And no veering of the fickle populace with King Rex on the scaffold at the end of his journey.

**T**he city will be gay. It is a good thing, for tomorrow we die. The wise and inscrutable Celestial will hang out his great diaphanous lanterns with splendid red letters and invite you to his Orient-smelling shop, or serve you chop-suey, delicious tea, almonds and ginger and kumquats in syrup on the balcony of his restaurant. The ships which carry wheat and flour and canned salmon to feed the world will flutter their many-colored buntings and perhaps the battle-ships—those wastrels of the Nation in which the people persist in taking delight—will sit upon the bosom of the Willamette like sacred swans. *Themmes* had his Spenser and the Willamette, its Sam Simpson. Get his *Beautiful Willamette* and read it if you read poetry. No one does. The Willamette is one of her jewels which Portland will show you. Her very own. She shares it not with other states or even other nations, as she must the Columbia. The Willamette, more gentle than the mighty Columbia, sings sweetly to its banks of green as it comes from the Southland.

Today (the end of April) the maples, hazels, alders and willows make a bright, bright new green with their young leaves, so that the river is all emerald and sapphire. The wild currant bushes make spots of coral pink along the bank and the hills are gay with dogwood blossoms scattered like stars. Sylvan, crystal and beautiful, like a bride pacing down an avenue of blossoms, the Willamette comes to Oregon City and there, wild and disheveled, plunges over, scattering for our uses in its plunge one and a half times the power given by the Mississippi at the Falls of St. Anthony; and then, as if subdued, our beautiful river flows more broadly to Portland, decorated with verdant islands and guarded by hills of bluish green which cast their reflections into the water, giving it where it mingles with the sky, the liquid and

changeable beauty of the peacock's breast. Portland will decorate her streets for her Feast of Roses, but if you would truly see the beauty she has to offer, go upon her hills. The city lies in an amphitheatre surrounded by hills seven hundred and a thousand feet high, soft with green of many hues.

From these hills the city itself takes its place as only a bright and scattered spot in the landscape; its spires and towers rising above the common level; its smoke and steam wreathing about it; its houses half-concealed in trees and shrubbery, and the river lying like a silver ribbon through this house-clustered area which lies like a dotted rug upon the scene. Blue to the south is the valley of the Willamette; blue to the north the valley of the Columbia; blue to the east the great Cascade range, toward which roll the lesser hills, paling as they go and bright with villas and villages. Set into this blue, like pearls upon a sapphire girdle, glow the great snow mountains: Jefferson to the south; Hood full in front, sometimes it seems just across the river; St. Helens, also, full before us, like a pearly bubble of the world, and above the horizon the peaks of Rainier on the Sound and Adams away up in the Yakima country. This is a picture never the same, nor ever was from Time's beginning, nor ever will be, and not the same hour by hour. I have watched Mt. Hood and, all in a single hour in the evening, have seen it pearly white afloat in blue; then delicate rose upon amethyst; then, when all the earth had fallen into deep purple shadow, above it, against a rosy sky, flamed the great snow-peak, glorious in the rays of the sun, which it alone of all the earth still caught in full effulgence. At such a moment the great mountain seem to glow with an internal fire, as if it were a molten mass of metal sending out light straw color, orange, cherry red; and then in a moment it is gone. The shadows have climbed quickly to the summit and the cold mountain becomes a sentinel of the night. And cool caressing night comes with gentle step and healing finger tips, the earth vanishes and fairy land appears. Far as the eye can reach the lights of the city glitter like a lower heaven, and on clear nights it is as if the sky had fallen or the world was one vast starry and sparkling space. To these hills the birds resort in the evening, making a carnival of song till slumber hushes them. Here are leafy thickets of hazel, wild currant, plumy spirea, the orange-blossom syringa and wild rose. Groups of dogwood trees, white in the spring and red in the fall. Wide-spreading maples and young firs with ar



omatic smell. But the giants are all gone. In the middle distance, down the Willamette River, is a small white block with a black line of smokestack. It is one of the boasts of Portland, the Portland Flouring Mills, which grinds for that wise people we are pleased to call the heathen, three-quarters of a million barrels of flour a year, and is the head of a system which grinds nearly two million barrels. But among these hills, with the plaintive warble of a thrush sounding from a grove and the great snow-peaks looming into the sky, the mill seems only a very small white speck on the face of Nature.

Here is a sweet breathing-place which should be secured for the toilers and the moilers before the city is too large.

*Upon these heights lies Peace, with parted lips  
And far-fixed eyes. Here at her feet I lie  
And watch the silent pictures of the ships  
Which float upon the mirror of the sky  
Down by the city's wharves. Columns of steam  
Which everywhere, like giant incense white,  
Up from the busy hives straight godward stream,  
Or on the winds take soft and curling flight.  
And far across the city, heaven-kissed,  
The snow-crowned mountains, so serenely pure,  
Afloat upon a sea of amethyst,  
There to remain while Time shall yet endure.  
When I and all this city, too, shall cease,  
Still on these heights shall dream eternal  
Peace.*

And yet it is good to come down from the heights to the haunts of men; good to strike hands together; to laugh and if need be weep together. But there shall be no place for weeping in Portland's rose festival. It shall all be gladness and fragrance and roses, roses all the way; rose-chaplets and rose-bowers and rose-wreaths, and if any have not a rosy wreath to send to his fair one let him read to her old Ben Jonson's "Song to Celia," which I give in the original spelling, not only as a protest against the worthless art of spelling, but as carrying with it somewhat of the flavor of the time:

*Drinke to me onely with thine eyes  
And I will pledge with mine,  
Or leave a kisse but in the cup  
And I'll not looke for wine.  
The thirst that from the soul doth rise  
Doth aske a drinke divine,  
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,  
I would not change for thine.  
I sent thee late a rosie wreath,  
Not so much honoring thee  
As giving it a hope that there  
It could not withered bee.  
But thou thereon didst onely breathe,  
And sent'st it backe to mee.  
Since when it grows, and smells, I sweare,  
Not of it selfe, but thee.*



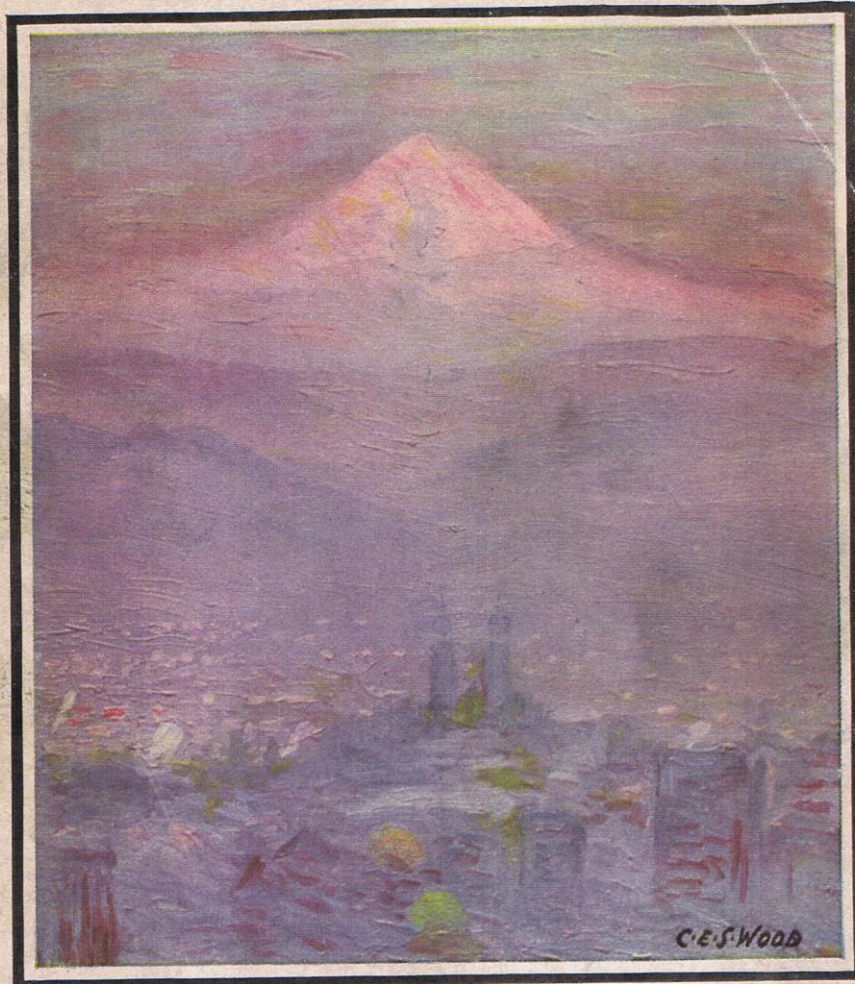
Backyard Rose #3, Ron Cronin © 2012



JULY 1911

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE  
**PACIFIC**  
**MONTHLY**



*How Washington Women Regained the Ballot* C. H. Baily  
*Save the Pueblos!* Charles Francis Saunders  
*A Day with the Round-Up* S. S. Metzger  
*Confessions of a Reporter* Howard Ardsley  
*Impressions—Woodrow Wilson* Charles Erskine Scott Wood

THE PACIFIC MONTHLY COMPANY PORTLAND OREGON  
SEATTLE SAN FRANCISCO LOS ANGELES

**This issue features a Wood cover image wrapping his profile of New Jersey Governor Woodrow Wilson, a year before Wilson's election as president**