

Miss Marlowe claims that one of her chosen instrument's most attractive features is the opportunity it offers the player to improvise within the scope of the written music. So many combinations of stops and registers are available to the harpsichordist that two musicians will play the same work note for note and make it sound like two different compositions. Jazz enthusiasts who have always criticized the restrictive nature of classical music will be interested in this flexibility, which offers the musician an opportunity to add his personal touch to the touch of the composer.

Miss Marlowe feels that the harpsichord's plucking action makes it perfectly suited to the needs of modern composers, both popular and classical. The prospect of a harpsi-

chord on the stage of New York's Paramount Theatre taking a few hot licks with a dance band does not seem at all ludicrous to her.

The delicate, crisp percussive effect is similar to that obtained by plucking the strings of a violin sharply. Béla Bartók used this device frequently. Those who follow current trends in contemporary music know how highly modern composers value this combination of brittle accent and sharply defined melody. Many of our outstanding contemporaries — de Falla, Poulenc, Delius and Virgil Thomson, to name a few — have already composed modern works featuring the harpsichord as a solo instrument. This "new" medium deserves careful consideration by other composers who are searching for original outlets to express their musical thoughts.

## SINGULARITY

BY DAVID MORTON

Observe the single crow,  
Motionless and dim  
In the thick-falling snow. —  
What's to become of him?

The night is shutting down,  
Thickening with the snow,  
Across the end of town. —  
Where is he to go?

A window, here and there,  
Lights travellers home in snow . . .  
But what the crow must bear,  
Only the crow will know.

# THE STATE OF OREGON

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

It is probably too simple to say that the state of Oregon is 97,000 square miles of sobriety situated on the West Coast of the United States between the lush, heady realtors' paradise of California and the politically rampant soviet of Washington. But Oregon is indeed a sober-sided commonwealth, and its efforts in the greatest art of the American West, which is boosterism, are quite feeble. This is one of the many reasons why Oregon is the most civilized place to live in all the West.

Yet, all is not well, and many of us who live here because we love the state are troubled. Since 1940, we are told, the population of Oregon has risen by more than 49 per cent, and now comprises a grand 1,545,000 people, one third of whom are settled in the northwest corner of the state, in and around Portland. Worse, all indications point to a continued influx, and no one can tell where the business will stop. It is probable that nothing can now stem the tide. A great many additions are coming to Oregon in the form of new industries, so much so that the vaunted Federal electric-power project at Bonneville Dam on

the Columbia river is already overloaded, and has to be rationed among the scores of newly erected plants.

Little wonder that decent men who really love Oregon toss in their sleep, with visions of a second New Jersey here among the tall firs and the cattle ranges. Another huge dam, for power and irrigation, is being built; and seven more sizable and similar projects are under way on Oregon's Willamette river. Oregon waited a full hundred years for what most Americans call "development," but it is here now, in full-gospel strength, and with its coming are the ills and harassments of commerce and industry.

The nearly 50 per cent increase in population in eight years has taken place with scant benefit, one is proud to say, of blatant boosting. It is true that the state, and various chambers of commerce, have raised their voices in praise of the region, but their voices are faint compared to the extra-loud speakers to our north and south. The so-called development of Oregon has come pretty much because of the state's obvious natural advantages. Refugees from Oklahoma, Texas and

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STEWART H. HOLBROOK'S *excursions into the lesser known and more colorful areas of American history and folklore are familiar to MERCURY readers. His latest book is Little Annie Oakley and Other Rugged People. This is the seventeenth in a series on the states.*