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FELL INTO WILLAMETTE

Rotten Beam Breaks and Sidewalk Falls.

TWO PEOPLE ARE DROWNED

Spectators on Morrison Street Bridge to See Swimming Feat are Victims.

Portland, August 1.—Seven tons' weight of shrieking humanity dropped from the eastern end of the Morrison-street bridge in Portland, to the Willamette at five minutes before 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon.

Two persons were drowned. At least 50 were more or less injured.

Miss Lottie E. Cameron, aged 16, and Eddie Shank, aged 13, were the victims.

Without warning a rotten 5 by 12-inch timber broke short off at the point where the bridge walk adjoins the roadway. It was the central support of 40 feet of the walk on which were crowded fully 140 people, largely women and children. The break occurred on the south side of the bridge, opposite the Portland Rowing Clubhouse.

A great throng had assembled to see "Professor" Lutz, the "armless wonder," swim the river from Kellogg's boathouse to the Rowing Club's float. From end to end the Morrison-street bridge was crowded with spectators. As the swimmer neared his destination, surrounded by a fleet of launches and rowboats, the crowd naturally surged toward the eastern end of the bridge to see the finish. No such numbers were assembled, however, as to cause danger, had the bridge been sound.

Lutz was about 60 feet from the float, swimming easily in the midst of the swarm of small craft. The antics of four sportive Italians in a skiff had diverted the attention of the crowd. This joyous quartet had just given a burlesque exhibition of a rowboat upsetting, in front of the boathouse, when a scream was heard from the bridge.

The people seemed to drop in lump, as a load of coal is dumped into a cellar.

The fall from the top of the walk to the surface of the water was about 20 feet. It was broken by two scows, or small, floating boathouses, directly underneath. With a fearful crash the section of walk and its screaming, scrambling load of men, women and children, smashed through the roof of these. The walk seemed to fall squarely, thus preventing people from being crushed underneath. A few people slipped off the western end of the fallen walk into the river, but were quickly dragged out. A lot more were tumbled in a heap on top of the debris aboard both floats, but fully one-third plunged in a bunch between the floats, which were separated by about five feet of open water. That so many people could have fallen in such a space without stunning or thrusting a number of those underneath deep into the water, so that in rising they would be caught under the floats, seemed incredible, though for a time it was thought no one was drowned. The river here is about 20 feet deep.

DISCOVERS A NEW METAL.

Merlin Metallurgist Endeavors to Produce Gold.

Merlin, Or., Aug. 2.—A rumor of a startling discovery along the lines of the transmutions of metals is rife here. J.

La Rix, an eccentric individual, a resident of this place for ten years, who has been the subject of much curious comment, a man known to have a knowledge of chemistry and metallurgy, and of an experimental turn of mind, fell under the suspicion of counterfeiting, and was compelled to explain to the secret service men the causes and results of certain experiments.

It transpires that he has worked constantly for ten years, unknown to his neighbors, upon the theory of the expansion and contraction of the atom by the addition or subtraction of the iron. He explains thus: The gold atom contains when pure, about 135,000 ions to the atom, while silver contains about 78,000 ions to the atom, hence the difference in density and weight. He says he is able to reduce the number of ions or electrons in gold, to about 50 per cent. or in other words, to transmit gold into silver, but he will neither affirm nor deny his ability to increase the ion or electron in the atom, which is necessary to transmute the baser metal into that more precious.

From his notes, which were surreptitiously scanned by the Government inspectors, it seems he has developed a new metal from commercial slate, abundant here, which has an affinity for the atom of gold or silver, which he calls rixum.

The theory he has been working upon is the disintegration of the atom into unit ions and the subtraction from gold and the addition of rixum ions to the silver atom. The process consists of a strong acid solution combined with powerful electric currents and long exposures to their action, causing the destruction of a portion of the ions in the atom by electrical conveyance into a similar solution of rixum.

Whether the reverse of the electric current would transfer the ion of rixum into the atom of silver treated similarly, is not known. If such notes were in existence, they were most secretly cherished by Mr. La Rix, as they were not found with the others, nor would threats or persuasion induce him to say one word upon the subject. He is furious that his private affairs have become public gossip.

BLOCKS THE WAY.

O. R. & N. Oppose Building the Portage Road.

The O. R. & N. will not grant right of way to the state portage railroad below Celilo. This was the upshot of a conference yesterday between officials of the company and the State Commissioners. President Mohler declared that the O. R. & N. had none too much land along the Columbia for the growth of traffic, and that the concessions asked for by the state would constrict the expansion of the trackage facilities of his company.

Governor Chamberlain announced last evening that the state would at once proceed to acquire right of way by condemnation.

"It looks pretty blue for the portage

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railroad," said the Governor. "But we need not give up. We can at least try to get the road, and nobody knows what he can do until he tries. We shall ascertain just where the line of the portage survey fringes on the O. R. & N. Then, if we cannot secure right of way from the company, we can bring action to condemn. By this procedure we shall ascertain whether we must build over or under a mountain, in order to get around the O. R. & N. Perhaps the portage road could be built outside of the O. R. & N. holdings by expenditure of sufficient money, but if it should cost say \$1,000,000 to do this, the project is entirely impracticable, in view of the funds available. If we should have to pay the O. R. & N. a sum which was suggested at today's conference, as possibly sufficient to make good what the company would give up, I do not see how we could go ahead with the enterprise. I shall insist that before we begin construction we shall be absolutely certain that the cost can be held down to the amount of the appropriation, that is, \$185,000

CATCHING BIG FISH.

Delayed Run of Salmon Comes Into the River.

Astoria, Or., July 31—The first genuine big run of salmon for the season is now on and the greatest benefit from it is being derived thus far by the gillnetters. While the catches made by the fishermen drifting about the mouth of the river have been gradually increasing during the past few days, it was not until during the past few days that the big run came in. Some of the boats made catches of nearly two tons each, while all drifting in the lower harbor are estimated by a man who is in a position to know to have averaged 1500 pounds.

The traps are also reported to have done well and more encouraging reports are received from the up-river seining grounds. The latter are expected to make as the fish proceed upstream. While none of the plants have been blocked both the canneries and cold storage companies have as large forces of men at work as they can secure.

The salmon resemble in every particular the big run of last season, which was then called a delayed June run. They are large size and excellent color. As was anticipated, the price took a slight tumble as soon as the big catches were reported, and, with the exception of the Talant-Grant Packing Company and S. Schmidt & Co., all are paying 5 cents per pound flat. These two companies are still offering 5 and 6 cents, the figures that have prevailed for some time.

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