

WOMAN SOCIALIST TELLS TALE OF ABUSE

Dr. Marie Equi, Now in New York, Gets Space in Great Daily Paper for Story of Street Speaking Fuss in Portland.

Dr. Marie Equi, of Portland, is advertising the city in the East; that is, if stories printed in the New York World can be considered as advertising. With a picture of the fighting street speaker a story was printed Sunday, April 5, which makes good reading for the real estate booster who is spending good money to "induce" immigration. The fact that Mrs. Equi gained publicity for the low wage scale and the bad conditions which were shown up in the fight should interest the men of the Employers' Association who forced the city administration to ride down citizens on the street. The World story in part follows:

A blue-gray eyed woman, with a strong, feminine, kindly mouth, sat up in a bed in one of the rooms in the home of Dr. James P. Warbasse, 384 Washington avenue, Brooklyn, and received a reporter for The World. Mrs. Warbasse sat on the side of the bed, now and then pressing her nervous hand with the sympathy that one woman is somehow able to convey to another by a mere touch. The woman who sat bolstered up with pillows was Dr. Marie Equi, forty-one years old, of Portland, Ore., who had come East to consult specialists upon nervous disorders, attributable to the part she took at Portland last Summer in behalf of underpaid women in the cannery industries. She is suffering from injuries to her spine and other complications, which she believes are the result of beatings she says she received on the streets while trying to exercise the American right of free speech, and from shocks she encountered while undergoing the Coast variety of what is called the third degree, as administered by officers of the law.

Dr. Marie Equi is a New Englander, born in New Bradford, Mass., of an Irish mother and an Italian father. From her gray-eyed Irish mother she got humanitarianism and from her blue-eyed Italian father, a Garibaldian sympathizer, she got energetic spontaneity and a love of freedom. The age of eighteen found her living in The Dalles, Ore., with a girl friend who had taken up a homestead. She graduated from the Oregon University and began the practice of medicine. Her father being an old-time Knight of Labor and her three brothers American Federation of Labor men, she through association naturally interested herself in social problems.

When a strike was on among women working for 4 cents an hour in a cannery shop on the East Side of Portland, an Italian woman fell ill and sent for Dr. Equi, who on her way encountered the pickets set around the shop by the girl strikers.

"I stopped to look at them," said Dr. Equi, "and these girl strikers promptly suspected me of being a spy. Some of the girls who had been my patients recognized me and asked me to get upon their tar barrel and speak and help to get the rest of the girls out of the shop to join them. The girls had walked out without any union as a demonstration against starvation. That was the beginning of my being a socialist. After that I went down every night to speak to them, for I had looked into their grievances. The Chamber of Commerce and a powerful manufacturers' association were back of the shop and, to carry out their will, they had an old-fashioned chief of police, who believed in old-fashioned methods.

"One of our women, Mary Schwab, was arrested four times in twenty-four hours. The strike dragged on and Governor West came down and investigated. I learned so much during this struggle that after it was over I joined the Radical Socialistic party. They accused me of using vile language in my speeches. I have never used anything but good, forceful English, and that is forceful enough for any one. They kept arresting the women and we kept bailing them out. All the men who were arrested for sympathizing with us were sent to the rockpile."

"Every day I held forth from the top of the tar barrel, and we got out all but twenty-seven of the girls in the shop. Our free speech was stopped again and again, but our attorneys said we still had the right. The sheriff swore in deputies, many of them. There came a night which proved the crisis. We had twelve or fourteen speakers. The sheriff was bound we should not speak. We were bound we would. It was a hot July night. The street was crowded with people who wanted to hear us talk. We had arranged a soap box as a forum, with sections of small gas pipe to support the lights. We took it to the place where we were to speak. They had taken woman after woman off the box, using their clubs indiscriminately on the crowd.

"An Indian girl got on the box to speak. She was about to become a mother in a few months. The mounted police would lean over from their horses' backs, hitting the heads of workingmen in the crowd. When they pulled that girl from the box—that was where I went wild. All the fighting Irish blood and the fighting Italian blood rose in my heart. I got on the box and said things. They took the Indian girl to the court house. I followed and got in, though I was struck in the street again and again in get-

ting in, and was thrust boldly into the street several times. I demanded they give the girl to me and they did.

"The next night it was repeated. We were in the street setting up our platform. The police told us we could not hold a meeting. They threatened to split our heads open. The mounted police rode us down again and again. There were so many deputies that they clubbed each other. They arrested me. They arrested many others and took them to the city prison. There the 'Red Flag' was sung. The police were furious. It was a miniature revolution. They took five to the county jail and put the Indian woman, Mary Schwab and me in the men's cells. The next morning they booked me on five charges. They let all go but Mary Schwab and me. Later, when my friends appeared, the officers took me out. I know now they wanted me to be taken out of the state by my friends. There was a taxicab there, I refused to go, saying I would stay and be tried. I was taken back to the cell. Then they gave me the third degree.

"What I underwent I cannot tell you. I am too much of a woman to want to go into the details of it. I could not tell it to you. Three hours

of torture, during which my womanhood revolted and every now and then I was asked if I would now go to California. Then they took me to a woman's cell and threw me in. A woman physician was sent to examine me and reported that I was all right mentally, but asked what had caused my bruises.

"Finally Miss Charlotte Whitney, the second vice-president of the National Suffrage Association, came at that time to my aid from California. They wanted to keep me another night, but I was let out, and in six weeks I left for Seattle to investigate a matter of the destruction of property belonging to Socialists by sailors of the fleet. "Since then I have been more or less interested in the cause of improving the conditions of the working people. My health is still delicate as the result of what I went through and the shocks I received in that fight for the working women of Portland."

Welfare Work.

"Muriel says the poor are hard to help."

"How now?"

"She has been tramping around all day trying to give away two tickets to a cantata."—Pittsburg Post.

The Supreme Court and Portland Harbor

By J. B. ZEIGLER.

As intimated in my last letter, the thing that is keeping the people out of the use of their public harbor properties and compelling them to pay private monopolists enormous sums for the right to improve them, is not the law. Two thousand years of water commerce and its needs have evolved very benign laws on the subject. They are hardly specific and emphatic enough to control the tremendous energies of modern commerce, so that the contending units of this commerce are left in a somewhat uncertain and anarchical condition.

Especially is this true of the title of terminal properties connecting land and water highways. The systematic development of these for modern ships and rail trains is a new enterprise. The law has not been firmly established in all the details necessary to protect the public rights at these points against monopolistic seizure. There is in this country no other such glaring failure to establish the public legal rights in these, as in Portland; and if the people were fully aware of the enormity of the crime being committed against them, they would not stop until every official and official evasion responsible had been utterly eradicated.

Our trouble is not the law, but an anarchistic force, usurping the execution of the law, and then systematically destroying it. Our courts are destroying our law and robbing the people of their public properties. We must cease to be stupefied by the assertion of mere theoretical and personal rights. Commerce dominates the United States, as well as the rest of the world now. Its power rests on its basic properties. Where these are, the power, even of government, will reside.

The people cannot preserve control of government without possession of these great basic and strategic commercial properties. Theoretical democracy, with these in the hands of a commercial aristocracy is of no avail. Theory without substance is always of no avail. The theoretical "Jus publicum" adjudged by the Oregon Supreme Court, in the dock suit, to mean merely the placing of no obstacles in the channel below the wharf line, is thus entirely obliterated, in about half of the natural area of Portland harbor, and the riparian claimants remainder right, by law subject to the public right, is expanded until the public is compelled to pay the monopolist usurpers \$850 per front foot, amounting to some \$60,000,000 throughout the whole harbor. That is, the substance has been construed totally out of the public right until it is an empty husk.

And that is not the only or greatest loss, but the development of the port is hampered, retarded and permanently restricted. By such violence to the legal rights of the public it has come about that Portland harbor where the area is most needed has become the most restricted and a natural width of 1600 feet (U. S. Engineer's report of 1892), has been reduced to 800, and the narrowest point at the site of the old steel bridge from 800 to 600 feet.

It is by such violence that the port funds are being used to narrow the port and fill the area behind the wharf line, making upland for the Port Commissioners, six out of the seven being large waterfront owners.

It is by such violence that it is proposed to bond the city for \$5,000,000 to dredge out Swan Island, some 280 acres, and fill in a larger area of the shallow waters of the harbor next the shores and give it, and the filling, done at public expense, to the riparian claimants.

Now the undisputed law is that, if the public need this area for commerce and navigation it is theirs for that purpose. In the face of the need conclusively shown by the proposal to dredge out Swan Island, how does the court create the public right in its navigable waters for that very purpose and allow them to be evacuated to monopolists.

Again, if the wharfage right is entirely abandoned to the private monopolists, it puts the water highway in as complete control as if they owned it. Indeed, the Supreme Court's con-

struction that the "jus publicum" and the state's trust is confined to the navigation channel alone, gives to the upland owners all of the harbor area which they could possibly use; since, if they owned the whole harbor they would necessarily have to leave the channel open to all ships. It is only when the cargoes touch the land that private corporations possess the means to monopolize the distribution.

That is, a title to the navigation channel would be of no avail to private monopoly. They have secured by the grace of the court all they wanted or could possibly use. This is the glory shed upon us by our Supreme court. Our commerce fettered and chained wherever a link would be of any service to our monopolistic masters!

Monopoly is contrary to the genius of this nation. It is only tolerated as an expedient to concentrate individual enterprise upon some industrial point, where the ordinary individual action is too weak, and the Government too sluggish to act. It must then be closely controlled and subjected to public rights. Our Supreme Court seems to have failed to apprehend that important duty. They seem to suffer from some lesion of judgment due to the barbaric weakness for aristocratic assumption of special privilege. They are medieval, and not in sympathy with the democratic spirit and needs of modern civilization. They have not yet learned the primary lesson that the "whole is greater than any part," and that Oregon cannot keep the pace unless Portland shall be permitted to use all of the area of its small harbor for a public port for the benefit of all, instead of hamstringing it by turning over half for the benefit of private and subordinate interests.

It is the business of government and the object of law to give every

citizen the utmost freedom, with the least possible burden, that each may have opportunity to become the strongest possible unit in the general asset of citizenship. Corrupt privilege and dejected slavery were the faults of the past. Modern civilization has no place for a monopoly that would reintroduce them.

If our court wants to learn the beauty of free ports, with public waterfront, let them look at New York, New Orleans and San Francisco, the only ports in the United States where the "jus publicum" in the fore-shore has been fully established. They will then see our three greatest ports each dominating one of our three coasts, while one of them is the greatest in the world. Aristocratic Privilege vs. Free Democracy! The Graveyard vs. the Busy Mart!

J. B. Z.

Study Problems of the Blind.

Of the 100,000 sightless persons in the United States, 40,000 are needlessly blind, in the opinion of many men who devote their lives to caring for those to whom night and day are meaningless words. For that reason the most important discussion to be had before the first National Conference of Workers for the Blind, which opens in Washington, D. C., April 16, will be on "The Prevention of Blindness." The conference will last three days.

Addendum.

The man who once most wisely said, "Be sure you're right then go ahead," might well have added this, to wit: "Be sure you're wrong before you quit."

—Charles E. Ellis.

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