

Morning Oregonian

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HOMICIDE GONE MAD... The homicide record for 1921 in twenty-eight American cities, just compiled for the Spectator, an insurance journal, contains much material for reflection.

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circumstances in particular cases. The new English law makes it an offense punishable by penal servitude for twenty years to be caught in unauthorized possession of arms. Its design is to make the carrying of firearms so costly that "every motor thief and burglar and violent criminal, knowing that if caught with a revolver on him he will infallibly go to penal servitude for at least ten years, will leave his revolver at home."

It comes then to an issue of responsibility of the people in the mass, which does not greatly clarify the situation or present a constructive solution. Undoubtedly it will be desirable to awaken the public to an understanding of the essence of crime is the intent to commit crime, that by going armed and by being willing to commit murder if thwarted in a lesser design the criminal forfeits claim to consideration and that the interests of people who live in homes or walk the streets are paramount to those of any plotter against the security of life and property who ever lived.

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would come, but no more of the class that we most desire. The law might well be amended to avoid division of families, but the literacy test would better be more severe, and greater precautions are needed against admission of criminals and defectives. Employers who call for immigrant labor should remember that their worst labor troubles, growing into destructive conspiracy and open insurrection, have sprung from that source. Better be short of labor and grow more slowly than open the gates to the kind of labor which would work overtime to overthrow the republic.

HOW TO STOP MURDERS... A contemporary which has waded many a tear over the brutality and vulgarity of capital punishment has now moved to admit that a life sentence in the penitentiary "has come to be a mere joke. Almost before the body of the victim is in the grave the guilty murderer begins to anticipate a pardon." It is further regretfully observed that "that is one reason why Oregon has a capital punishment."

When Governor West made his sensational last minute rescue of Jesse Webb from the gallows, by a commutation of sentence to life imprisonment, he required a definite verbal contract from the murderer and his family, that the state would never ask for a pardon, and would discourage any such offer by their friends. Yet the movement to release Webb from prison was actively under way before West retired from office, a year or more later. It was a clear sign of the general opinion that no one can be behind prison bars in Oregon, Jesse Webb served eleven years. The average for convict guilty of murder is seven years, or less.

The Oregonian has never insisted that capital punishment is more of a deterrent for crime than life imprisonment. But it believes in justice, and thinks that the man who slays in cold blood of righting his wrong, or the life, or the ax, which he plans to wield, or the enemy, knows consciously or subconsciously that even if he is discovered the chances of acquittal are favorable.

If juries would convict and if governors would not pardon, life imprisonment would be a reality, and crimes of the blood fewer. But governors are human, and will not to the end resist persistent appeals for clemency. The pardoning power is a great privilege, but it is also a great burden. Most governors would be glad to be rid of it.

It might be of service to the effective administration of justice if the right to pardon in capital crimes were to be taken from the governor and placed with the supreme court, to be exercised only after formal public hearing.

SENATOR BORAH'S FORWARD STEP... Senator Borah's proposal of an international conference on both the economic situation and disarmament recognizes the close relation between the two subjects and the necessity of carrying agreements to reduce armament farther than was provided by the Washington naval treaty. Through the three principal powers signatory to that treaty have begun to dismantle capital ships that are obsolete and though some have halted construction of those on the ways, they postpone carrying out the program in full until France and Italy ratify. Britain improves guns and armor to the limit agreed on, both Britain and Japan add auxiliary armaments on which no limit is placed, and the navy department of the United States submits a program for ships of that class in order to keep on even terms with them. If France or Italy should refuse to ratify, the hopes that the treaty has raised will be blasted, and if both should ratify, a new race will begin in improving guns and armor of battleships, building cruisers, destroyers, submarines and minelayers, to which the war gave added importance.

Evidently limitation is impossible unless France and Italy participate. It may give slight relief if they do participate unless it is extended to auxiliary craft. In order that the five leading powers may thus extend it, others must join in the agreement, for the minor powers would be able to build a disproportionate number of less costly ships, and several of them might, by uniting their fleets attain equality with one of the great powers. Hence the Washington treaty may prove to have only prepared the way for a compact covering the whole field of armament, to which practically all maritime powers, great and small, would be parties. The broader the scope of such an agreement and the larger the number of nations that must necessarily be parties to it, the more will be the national hopes, fears, ambitions and grudges that will stand in the way of its accomplishment. Obstacles delay the consummation of the Washington treaty, in which only five powers are concerned. How much greater obstacles would a treaty encounter that must affect the entire naval force of many more nations.

No reasonable doubt exists that France hangs back in hope of gaining an equivalent advantage from the United States. The French navy has been terribly reduced, and France feels need of its expansion until secured against danger of war. France would need warships to protect transports bringing troops and munitions from distant colonies, to protect its merchant ships and to guard its coast. Italy insists on equality with France or any other Mediterranean power, and though willing to disarm, Washington treaty, would not act upon it unless France should ratify. Though all navies should be limited as to all types of ships, the greater part of the disarmament problem would be untouched so long as armies were not reduced. So far are many nations from being ready to reduce armies that a protest from France sufficed to exclude them from consideration at the Washington treaty. Until the disarmament problem would be untouched so long as armies were not reduced. So far are many nations from being ready to reduce armies that a protest from France sufficed to exclude them from consideration at the Washington treaty. Until the disarmament problem would be untouched so long as armies were not reduced. So far are many nations from being ready to reduce armies that a protest from France sufficed to exclude them from consideration at the Washington treaty.

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CAN YOU ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS? 1. Can you identify from enclosed drawings, the insect represented?

2. Do they still get older down from duck's nests and how much down will a duck give at a time? 3. Are any fishes nocturnal?

Answers in Monday's nature notes.

Answers to Previous Questions. 1. How did codfish get their name?

Some writers go into a rather indirect explanation to connect "cod" with the Latin name of Gadus, which means a rod or stick. The most plausible suggestion we know comes from the fact that the word "cod" in which the Saxon "codde" meaning a case containing seeds. (The old-fashioned "pease-cod" is an example of this use.) The fish, Thorax things, might have acquired the name from the resemblance of its body to a codde or pod; or from the amount of spawn the cod contains, which might suggest a pod full of seed.

2. Do vegetable-eating animals ever consume their own young? I ask because our young rabbits suddenly disappeared.

Animals do not often kill their own young, but not to eat them. The object is to dispose of them when apparently some foe threatens. In the case of the rabbit, it is more likely a rival rabbit than a predator that kills the young. Rat parents might actually eat the young they had killed.

3. How big is the sparrow hawk and does it live on sparrows? About ten to 12 inches, smallest of our hawks. It kills various small birds, a robin, cat, pigeon and beetles or similar insects of any size, and mice. Considered very beneficial, and should be protected, as it keeps the cat and pigeon balances the bird part of its diet.

WHERE TO START MORAL WAVE Better Crime Curative in Schools Than in Marriage Restrictions.

CANBY, Or., Dec. 21.—(To the Editor)—Dr. Owens-Adair's article on the "crime wave" is indeed interesting, but it is distinctly a physician's point of view.