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WEATHER REPORT.

Portland, Dec. 16.—Western Oregon: Rain, cooler. Western Washington. Fair. Eastern Oregon, Eastern Washington: Occasional rain, snow in mountains and foothills.

RADICAL DIFFERENCES.

There is a radical difference between the financial statement with which the Board of School Directors of District No. 1, (the City of Astoria) goes before its people, and the fiduciary report of the city officers lately made to the Common council, and through them to the citizens. Both constituencies are identically the same, to all intents and purposes, and a careful consideration of each statement must convince the taxpayers that the agents in charge of their school affairs are better equipped to do the real thing than the municipal staff. The School Directors go back to the people they represent with a surplus of nearly $10,000, while the city officials have been compelled to announce a shortage equally as large. It is idle to comment on the situation. It speaks for itself. The same conditions of excellent control and management attach to the results of the Astoria Water Commission as shown by its recent report, and so it goes. Brag and bluster are all right in their places, but dollars and cents to the public credit outclass them in the long run. The Democrats will correct all these things in good time, NIT. Of course, the Republicans are wholly responsible for the deficit just announced in the city budget; they are the popular scape-goat just now, but that kind of thing wears out after while and it may occur to the thinking citizen and taxpayer some day soon, that the onus of this discrepancy in the municipal balance belongs elsewhere; that perhaps there is an overweening adherence to Democratic advice and counsel that is chargeable with these things; when this conviction does arrive, please do the Astorian the belated, but righteous justice to remember that it warned you months ago of the trend of affairs and named the actual source of responsibility.

DEMOCRATIC TACTICS.

The Astorian desires, once for all, to place itself on record as to its political distinctions in this bailiwick. There are but two political organizations in Astoria, at this day and time, whatever the future may develop; they are Republican and Democratic Parties. We concede the splendid adroitness of the Democratic leaders in warping the "Citizens'" movement to their camp and bidding; it was a masterly and successful movement, and absolutely unquestionable in its results. it makes them supreme in local affairs, and if you don't believe it, watch their program unfold itself between now and the June election day. Every man and purpose will be of Democratic persuasion and tendency, and the alleged "Citizens" will do the work of the minority party and do it well and obediently, as they did it last week. It is up to Democratic leadership to open the town, swell its revenues, appoint its officers and tell the rest of their contingent what to do and when and how it is to be done. The work of buncoing the ordinary careless citizen is complete, except for the "cinching up" of the Democratic girths to make the seat of the Democratic "boss" secure in the stolen saddle. All right. This is the hypothesis upon which this paper will conduct its future treatment of public questions and issues in this city and it will do so uncompromisingly. It is Republican versus Democrat from this day on, alleged Republican members of the Citizens' party to the contrary notwithstanding.

RUSSIA'S HEAVY BURDENS.

The Russian empire is now threatened with dismemberment. Poland is clamoring for autonomy, if not national independence, and seems prepared to fight for it, and the Baltic provinces, according to the dispatches from Riga, have thrown off the imperial yoke altogether and established a provisional government. Riga is the ancient capital of Livonia and is the greatest maritime city in Northern Russia. It is the commercial and political center of Livonia, Courland and Esthonia, which comprises the former principality of Lithuania. The inhabitants are mainly of Teutonic stock, the Scandinavian blood predominating.

Formerly the Baltic provinces, including Finland, were fiefs of the Swedish crown, but passed under the dominion of Russia as a result of the crushing of the Swedish power by Peter the Great.

So long as the Livonians and Courlanders were permitted to retain their local laws and institutions and given a reasonable latitude for industrial and commercial development they prospered and were fairly content under the rule of the czar.

But of late years they have been harassed and roused to bitter antagonism by the Russification policy which found such a strenuous protagonist in M. Pobiedonostseff, late procurator of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox church.

AUSTRIA'S PREMIER.

Baron Fejervary has put his hand to the plough and will not turn back nor look back. The Magyars are raging against him for his universal suffrage proposals but he persists in them and will drive them through with whip and spur. Logic is on his side. The Hungarian demand is for popular rule. Then, replies the grim old minister, let all the people rule. There is, he holds, no more reaon why Slovak and Croat should be dominated by Magyar than why Magyar should be dominated by German. So he will first restore order, with an iron hand, and then dissolve Parliament and elect a new House of Representatives on the basis of secret universal suffrage. That will mean a new era for Hungary, and, despite the forebodings of the Magyar aristocrats, there is reason to believe it will be a better era.

ENGLISH CABINET.

The new British Premier has surrounded himself with a Cabinet of such obvious individual merit as at the beginning to dispose of the idea there are no men outside the Conservative party sufficiently able to carry on the government. John Morley and James Bryce are famous abroad, and most of the others have established reputations at home. There is something picturesque about the rise of John Burns, who was educated in night schools, had a hard struggle for a living and has been for a long time a labor representative in Parliament. His appointment is all the more a vindication of his constituency in that he is of course not called to the ministry for the purpose of recognizing that interest so much as because his abilities will make him a useful administrator and are expected to add strength to his party in the House of Commons.

MILLS HOTELS PAY.

Mills Hotel No. 3 has been contracted for, and its total cost will be $1,500,000 In its construction and equipment there will be no hotel in New York more modern or scientific. In fact, some of the innovations which will be introduced, according to those in charge, will open the eyes of hotel managers all over the world. The location of the new hotel is in the heart of the theater district, and it will be surrounded by some of New York's best hostleries. It goes to show that the eight years' experience which Mr. Mills has had in operating low-priced hotels for men is of a character to warrant the multiplication of them.

AN EXPLANATION.

(Judge.)

"I was surprised to see you with that sensational paper in your hand."

"Oh, I don't read it, I only write for it."

A LITERAL APPLICATION

By LOUISE J. STRANG

"You shall never marry her on the face of this earth!" Aunt Eliza delivered her assertion autocratically, and swept from the room, closing the door with an emphasis that made tearful Kitty shriek.

The young man whose temerity had evoked the declaration gathered the little figure in a comfortable embrace, saying coaxingly, "Look here, girlie, what's the use of caring whether she consents or not? You're eighteen. Let's be married anyway."

"But—but papa gave her control of me and my property till I am twenty-four. You know she—she can keep me from having a penny all that time."

"She's welcome to. We won't need it. But as for waiting six years—that's out of the question, and we are not going to do it. Besides, she declares I shall never marry you anyway, and we will have to do without her consent in the end or give each other up."

Giving each other up was not to be considered at all, Kitty agreed, but she had not the courage openly to defy Aunt Eliza, and the only thing seemed to be to wait.

But as the weeks passed the waiting policy appeared only to strengthen Mrs. Stratton's opposition to her niece's marriage with Frank Renfew. She grew distinctly tyrannical, finally prohibiting the young man's visits, and forbidding Kitty to recognize him at chance meetings. Then the girl flared up and demanded some good reason for her aunt's unexplained attitude of hostility to Frank. There was none, really, except the willful desire to dominate affairs.

But she told Kitty sharply: "He is not at all the man to contribute to your happiness, and he has not the ability to manage your property successfully. In plain words, he isn't burdened with any too much smartness."

"I am the best judge as to my happiness, and I'd trust Frank's 'smartness' with every cent I have!" Kitty retorted.

"I wouldn't and won't! I consider the matter settled and shall expect you to act accordingly, else you may find yourself in school again."

She sailed away, thus securing the last word, as was her habit, but the threat made Kitty rebellious, and she went out immediately and purposely to

"SILENCE! SILENCE! A WEDDING WILL NOW TAKE PLACE."

meet Frank. As he was on the watch for such chances, she was soon pouring out this new grievance to him in the shelter of the park.

Frank seized the moment to urge their marriage at once, but in spite of her indignation Kitty could not quite make up her mind to take that step. She felt that she could not bear to be utterly estranged from her only living relative because of her disobedience. Something might happen to change Aunt Eliza—and anyway, she was determined to see Frank when and where she could, and she would be true to him always. She sobbed a little and dabbed her eyes with her handkerchief, swelling with pride at the similarity of her position with that of her favorite, persecuted heroine.

Frank had preserved a moody silence, his eyes fixed on a distant billboard just now being spread with flaming posters. Suddenly he started up alertly, a broad smile chasing the gloom from his countenance. The smile increased to a wide grin, a chuckle, and presently, to Kitty's astonishment, he broke into a gust of laughter.

"Girlie, I've got the greatest idea ever! We'll be married and not run up against auntie's veto either!" He gleefully explained the scheme that had flashed into his mind. "There's a sort of negative consent in her declaration, though she never dreamed of it, of course, but she'll see it herself," he asserted.

Kitty reflected gravely, saw the point, was suddenly and completely convinced of its legitimacy and added a rippling chime to his guffaws.

They arranged everything down to the smallest detail and decided that during the intervening time they would conduct themselves as if in submission to an adverse fate; therefore Miss Kitty was demurely deferential to her aunt's wishes and sweetly if somewhat mournfully obedient, in so much that that austere lady's really kind heart gave her some uncomfortable moments. She became more compliant, and, as Kitty seemed disposed to mope, exerted herself to interest the girl, even sacrificing her dignity to the extent of proposing that, dressed plainly, they should join the herd of sightseers and witness a circus parade, tight rope walking and balloon ascension. Aunt Eliza's presence on the street that day was peculiarly desirable, and Kitty acquiesced with secret joy.

Frank passed them once with a stiff bow, and Mrs. Stratton's keen eyes could detect no cloud on the rosy face beside her. Kitty was becoming reconciled.

A few girls joined them, and it was Aunt Eliza herself who further smoothed the way unconsciously by offering to remain seated on a dry goods box commanding an unobstructed view, leaving Kitty and the girls to run about unhampered by her slower movements. Kitty promptly lost her companions and joined Frank at the prearranged rendezvous.

"Really, it is taking a mean advantage, Frank. She has made it so easy!" she exclaimed.

"Never mind. It was wholly unintentional on her part and she will probably more than make up for it afterward," he comforted.

"I suppose so," Kitty giggled hysterically.

Frank looked at her anxiously. "Brace up, girlie! Take a tight hold of yourself and don't be afraid. They're waiting for us, and it'll be over soon."

He pushed through the jam to the big balloon swaying on its stout cables. A slim, severe young man in clerical dress was already in the car, looking dignified disapprobation. He had not realized the extreme publicity of the position, and only Frank's prepayment of a large fee prevented his withdrawal.

Clinging to Frank, trembling and frightened, Kitty was helped in, the balloon set afloat, and a man elevated above the crowd bellowed through a megaphone.

"Silence! Silence! A wedding will now take place in the air above your heads! Silence!"

A quiet ensued, and in the stillness the clear voice of the minister dropped down upon the multitude the old yet ever new words of the ceremony uniting two lives in the bonds of matrimony. Just at its conclusion Aunt Eliza, who had gaped in open mouthed, petrified astonishment, scrambled to her feet upon the box, waved her umbrella and shrieked wildly: "Kitty! Kitty! Stop this instant! I forbid it! I forbid it!"

"Too late, ma'am!" yelled the megaphone man, with a laugh that set the spectators off in delighted cheers.

"You're a pretty pair of underhanded cheats!" Aunt Eliza exploded when the bridegroom finally had fought his way through to her with his shrinking bride. "It can't be legal—such a perfectly disgraceful thing!"

"Oh, yes, it's all right enough, auntie," Frank grinned. "And we were obliged to do it, disgraceful or not, for I was determined to have Kitty, and she would not disobey your mandate prohibiting our ever being married on the face of this earth. Forgive us and let me be the best nephew to you that I know how." He held out a conciliatory hand.

Aunt Eliza glared, remembered, accepted her defeat, shook hands with him and turned to the bride with a sniff.

"I guess he's smart enough, after all, Kitty. Come along and help select a proper outfit for your bridal tour."

An Array of Thirteens.

Superstition seems to be a part of the mental composition of every one, and it commonly centers to a rooted antipathy to the number thirteen. This first of the teens has had to stand for many an action that was ridiculous, and yet there is hardly any person who would sidestep an inch or mournfully rail at fate should he spy a silver quarter dollar on the sidewalk. In fact, he would be only too eager to place it gently in his pocket. Have you ever taken the trouble to scan closely this small piece of silver? If you have not you may be surprised to find on the eagle side that there are thirteen arrows in the bundle which is clutched in the left claw, thirteen laurel leaves on the branch in the other claw, thirteen stars at his head, thirteen letters in the Latin inscription "E Pluribus Unum," thirteen letters in the words "quarter dollar," thirteen stripes on the shield, and on the front of the silver piece are thirteen stars surrounding the Liberty head and thirteen leaves in Liberty's crown. This array of thirteen is in commemoration of the original thirteen states which comprised the Union. Despite its many thirteens the quarter is not considered unlucky.

Impassable.

I can get by a football tackle,
I can get by a scouting line
Or a crowd of cronies awaiting
To stick me sure for the wine,
But the woman who waddles widely
And takes up the whole sidewalk
(And half of 'em do, by jingo!)
Doth all of my efforts balk.

I go to the side to pass her,
And there she is blocking the way.
I make a dart to the center,
And there is the devil to pay.
To the opposite side I hasten,
And the obstacle old I meet,
Till at last I am glad to dive in
The danger and dust of the street.
—New Orleans Times-Democrat.