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Official paper of Clatsop county and the City of Astoria.

WEATHER.

Western Oregon, Washington
and Idaho—Rain.
Eastern Oregon—Fair.

IDLE ALARMS.

The instance of officers of the president's cabinet suspending the statutes of the United States, because, in their judgment, harm was being worked under them, has excited little attention in this age when men seem to be too busy to guard their liberties. Before the civil war, Congress would have demanded the dismissal of those responsible. Some months ago Secretary Hitchcock and Secretary Wilson withdrew land in the Indian territory from allotment, after it had been opened by Congress. For this step, they had no more authority than the Ahkond of Swat. They merely seized upon an interim of a congressional session to commit an act of anarchy. They explain now to a Senate committee that in their opinion the best interests of the Indians demanded withdrawal of the tracts in question. This may be so; but far more important than the material interests of any inhabitants of the United States is the question whether the statutes of Congress and the constitution of the United States bind the action of the president and his cabinet. The occasions on which Mr. Roosevelt has ignored the constitution without rebuke are numerous. Believing him to be right in purpose the people have not murmured. Suppose that in a matter in which the people do not believe him right, the same disregard of law should be evinced. What then? The incident proves merely that common prejudice exists, not common deep-rooted respect for the law. The day may come when a subservient, patronage-seeking Congress, bowing before an ambitious, usurping President, will change that form of government under which the Polytot Americans shall live together in amity and prosperity—Butte Inter-Mountain.

A MANY-SIDED QUESTION.

The freight car shortage which is so troubling the country and is agitating Congress and the administration, is by no means a thing for which the railroads are alone to blame. It is held by some of the prominent railway men, gathered in New York, last week, that the trouble rests more with the shippers and consignees than with the railways, and least of all is it blameable on larger trunk lines. The purchaser orders from the consignor, say, twenty-five cars of products or goods, to be shipped in successive shipments covering weeks of time. The shipper, anxious to make sure of his sale, puts in his requisition for twenty-five cars, holds these until he can load, and ships the whole twenty-five often within a week or two. As a result the consignee, who is overwhelmed with goods to be taken care of or disposed of, has to take advantage of the situation as best he may, by payment of demurrage or otherwise; while the railway company at the receiving point, anxious to oblige a large patron, holds these cars for him even on the per diem penalty. Thus the freight cars held are turned into temporary storage houses for the benefit of shippers who simply serve their own selfish interests regardless of the convenience of the general public. Mean-

while the railways are held responsible for car shortage and unequal distribution. Josh Billings was right—peepul is curus.

WILL DO AS HE PLEASES.

So it seems while the President, as such, has agreed not to interfere with the accustomed manner of spelling "pub. docs.," which, of course, he had no real right to do, he will continue the Skibo method as far as his own letters from the White House, private or to the White House, are concerned. There appears to be nothing in our comprehensive Constitution which prescribes a man's literary likings, and it is therefore his privilege to spell a la Roosevelt or a la Josh Billings, if he so desires. His letters will naturally go to make material for curious hunted in the future. Should he write any more books they will also rank as curiosities for the bibliophiles, if he maintains the "nu" style. This arrangement will be acceptable and the public business can now proceed Selah!

THE HANDY HATPIN.

That peculiar article of feminine wear, the hatpin, is not merely ornamental, nor is its usefulness limited to securing the headgear of midday when she takes her walks abroad. A Chicago shopgirl held off five bold, bad, broad-daylight burglars with one the other day, and caused the arrest of two of them. In the hands of women entirely up-to-date, the pin is mightier than the sword. The moral is no woman should ever venture abroad where bad men roam without her hatpin. Per contra, the useful hatpin may be abused as in the case of the woman charged with causing her husband's death with one.

EDITORIAL SALAD.

Dun & Company claim to have discovered that it costs more to live than it ever did before. They must have been listening at the keyhole.

One thing is certain, we cannot put the Philippines in Japan's Christmas stocking, for she says she wouldn't take them as a gift.

Adam may have been, as a Philadelphia minister claims, a negro, but we are inclined to believe he was not as black as he is painted.

Now that the sugar trust has paid \$168,000 in fines, is it likely to go out of the fine sugar business?

The New Yorker who considered his wife's refusal to keep lemons in the house a sufficient cause for divorce, should learn to take his straight or cultivate some professional mixer.

Now that the President of the Omaha Coal Exchange has been convicted of violating the state trust law, it is suggested that his fine will surely knock the profits off a ton of coal!

The congressional champions of complicated spelling are in the dumps at learning that, after all, the President expects to use the simplified spelling in his private correspondence.

An exchange tells us that an Ohio man married six sisters "consecutively." Which shows the amount of relief from anxious suspense that can be thrown into one little adverb.

It seems to have bothered some of New York's distant exchanges to make out whether "The Allen" is a noted gambler or a New York apartment house.

Those "whither-are-we-drifting" orators will kindly stop talking about the country for a few days till the American people finish figuring whether they can come out about square today by borrowing a little from some other fellow.

Rhode Island is to have a sort of bachelor's paradise in her State Capitol. The new governor-elect is unmarried and has announced that all his staff appointments will be the same. If all his State functions are to be "stag parties" we shall probably hear of a revolt among the women of Little Rhody. Moreover such functions would be likely to become monotonous.

The most interesting thing in connection with the fight between the liquor interests and the Personal Liberty Organization on one hand and reforms on the other, however, is the announced declaration of an intention as a final resort, to invoke the blue laws of Illinois if the broad principle that the cosmopolitan population of Chicago has a right to drink its beer Sunday if beset too sorely.

SOCIETY AT THE NATION'S CAPITOL.

(By Catherine Allen.)

WASHINGTON, December 24.—The spirit of the holidays, subtly inspiring, is in the atmosphere, and the social whirl waxes fast and furious as the days go by. Dinners and dances, theatre parties and little suppers, luncheons and teas, receptions and musicales follow in quick succession until one is lost in the bewildering maze of social pleasures. American people have lost the art of amusing themselves and are constantly feeling from their own thoughts and from the dull spectre of boredom that steals upon the unwary in their leisure hours. The little old-fashioned courtesies and simple pleasures in which our forefathers took delight have no place in up-to-date living, for who has time to think, or cultivate repose? It is fashionable to be strenuous in all things, social as well as political and commercial, and social successes are achieved by carefully planned campaigns, and astute strategems.

The state dinners are in full swing and will continue uninterrupted for the next eight weeks. Among the guests of honor at a recent dinner given at the White House were Hon. Henry White, recently appointed Ambassador to France; Commander Robert Peary, lately returned from the Arctic expedition; Governor and Mrs. Winthrop of Porto Rico, and Honorable and Mrs. Theodore and Miss Shonta who have been the house guests of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt's toilette was an exquisite yellow satin brocade trimmed in point lace with which a white diamond necklace and ornaments were worn. The floral decorations were beautiful. The long table laid for forty-five covers, held in the center an enormous silver bowl brimming over with Crimson Liberty roses, while branching candelabra capped in silver and crimson rose, and white carnations in crystal bowls set in clusters of farfense ferns relieved the long expanse of snowy damask and dazzling plate.

Ambassador and Mrs. Whitelaw Reid have been the guests of Secretary and Mrs. Elihu Root and were present at the State dinner given on Thursday to the President and Mrs. Roosevelt. They will be the guests of Rear Admiral and Mrs. William Sheffield Cowles over New Year's Day and will lend their presence to the brilliance of the scene at the White House reception, which is one of the notable large affairs of the year. On that day the diplomats appear in court costume and some of them, especially the Chinese and Persian ministers, give a touch of color that is worth enduring the crush to see, to say nothing of the gowns and gems worn by the ladies.

The Prince and Princess Cantacuzene is well known in Washington, where she has visited frequently since her childhood days. She is the only daughter of Gen. and Mrs. Frederick Dent Grant and shares with the second daughter of ex-President and Mrs. Cleveland the honor of being the only person living who can claim the White House as a birth place. Mrs. McLean gave a large luncheon in their honor on Sunday at their superb country home, "Friendship."

Miss Evelyn Chew, debutante daughter of Mr. John Chew, and granddaughter of Mrs. Titian Coffey, was guest of honor at the first cotillion of the winter, given by Mrs. McLean in I street. The spacious mansion was decorated throughout with Christmas greens, while garlands of Southern pine tied with scarlet satin ribbon curtained the wide doorways. Mrs. McLean and Mrs. Chew received in the famous ball room where the decorations consisted of but two immense laurel and holly wreaths which crowned the life-sized portraits of Mrs. Washington McLean and General Edward Beale, the mother and father respectively of the host and hostess.

Miss Chew wore a dainty gown of white satin and tulle. The sixty couples participating in the cotillion were almost exclusively from the debutante set of this and last year, while the younger dancing men of resident and diplomatic circles were mostly in evidence. Among the few married people present were Prince and Princess Cantacuzene; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Howard and Representative and Mrs. Longworth. The favors were dainty effects in gauze and paper—fairly wands, caps, sashes, fans and gay colored parasols.

The Walshes have opened up their place on Massachusetts Avenue, and are again entertaining, having laid aside mourning for their young son who was killed in the auto accident which so seriously injured the daughter of the house, Miss Evelyn. Miss Walsh is entertaining a house party of young girls and it is supposed that these hospitable Westerners will give more notable affairs. Their ball room is one of the largest and most beautiful in Washington, and has, in

addition, a grand pipe organ to make inspiring music for the happy dancers.

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