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Official paper of Clatsop county and the City of Astoria.

WEATHER.

Oregon, Washington, Idaho, - Showers.

PORTLAND TO TAKE STEPS.

It is credibly reported that Portland thinks Astoria altogether too slow in launching the contest on the legality and constitutionality of the Port of Columbia law; that we will not get at it in time to permit the organization of the commission at the end of the ninety days that must elapse after its filing by the Governor.

Alright, let her get at it, and if the result does not suit us, the right of appeal still lies with us and we may prosecute our issue to the court of last resort, when it becomes necessary.

She is not at all sure, herself, of the probity of the measure under the law and the constitution; there are signs abroad that she really feels she has bitten off too much an dmay have to gag some of it back; that, for once, she has over-stepped the bounds of equity and drawn down upon herself the logical stricture of all right-thinking men.

One of the cardinal elements of proof that the bill was, primarily, wrong, was the utter absence of support in the columns of the Portland Oregonian during its pendency in the legislature. There was never a more loyal paper than that for anything that was honestly right, and good for the metropolis; it has never failed in a single instance during its half-century of existence, to stand firmly by all things that were designed to uplift Portland, from inception to consummation, but in this particular instance, it never uttered but one short half-hearted editorial for this wrong thing, until the responsibility for its actual existence was shouldered by the legislature in the haste, confusion, and worse, attendant upon its closing hours.

Astoria and Clatsop county care nothing for the attitude of Multnomah county in the premise, it does not make a farthing's difference whether she fights or fondles, the Port of Columbia law; we have our own ideas about it and they are very deeply fixed in the public mind here and only the edict of a court, far removed from the purview and influence of its bearings, pronouncing it equitable and wholly within the constitutional intent, will satisfy us. And we are equally indifferent as to who shall bring the issue to the front.

The Oregonian did not approve nor bolster it, as a measure; the Governor did not sign it as a law; we reject it in both phases, and will accept it only when we have to.

STRIKE OF ALL STRIKES.

This week is like to see the inauguration of the most stupendous of all strikes in the history of organized labor in the United States.

From fifty to sixty thousand men in the railway service of the West are to be involved, and hundreds of millions of property, fixed, real, and in

transit, are to be tied up, and rendered fruitless and perhaps, sacrificed to the issues pending between the great forces engaged. For nearly a year a new scale of time and wage has been under discussion in the offices of the railway unions and the managerial offices of the lines, and the conferences had almost eliminated the initial cause of dispute. The trainmen demanded an advance of 12 1-2 per cent in the wage scale, and a day of nine hours duration. By degrees the companies had conceded all but a 1-2 per cent of the money demand, and had altogether refused the nine hour day.

This is the status of the controversy now, and it will eventuate in the usual alternative, a strike of immense proportions and of incalculable loss to all concerned, as well as to hundreds of thousands of outsiders who are not parties to the mix-up in any way save that of patrons of both, employes and companies.

Every line west of the Rockies is wrought into the huge scheme of contention, and only the Canadian Pacific is left to break the onus of the tie-up and that is not to be counted on for any sort of real resistance as it has just closed a deal with the O. R. & N. to use its tracks this side of Spokane into Portland, and the sympathy of its employes is likely to be very largely engaged with the men making the fight.

We are not conversant with the merits of the matter, and can only hope the cause of justice will be served whosoever it may lie, and that the trial of strength and endurance will not be long borne by the trainmen, the companies nor the public at large.

TRIAL IN SIGHT.

It is with a sense of positive relief that the western public notes the fixing of the date and place of trial for Moyer, Heywood and Pettibone, charged with the murder of Governor Steunenberg of Idaho. These men, through their attorneys have juggled with all the processes of the law that would contribute in any manner to the policy of delay and have consistently put out pleas and programs and charges against all courts and officers charged with their detention, laying the blame of dalliance upon them rather than upon themselves. We do not know to what extent, if any, they are guilty, under the charges preferred, and we want to see them get the fullest measure of justice, including freedom and vindication if they are due; but we are infinitely glad the issues are to come to a head and the courts are to unwind the snarls and bickerings that have made the names of the trio a household word in the west.

They might long ago have been released had they suffered their cases to go before the tribunals, especially in the earlier hours of the deadly controversy, when prejudice had hardly awakened, as it has most thoroughly since.

If they are guiltless they will be able to prove it; if they are guilty they will be made to realize the burden of such guilt. Those are questions of law and evidence, of court, jury and attorney; it is up to them at last, and the whole Pacific slope is heartily glad of it, for the sake of the men at bar, as well as for the cause of justice, and public surcease from the eternal harpings of the names of these three men; for whatever of genuine public interest and sympathy was theirs at first has been flattened to expressionless inertia, to the distinct disadvantage of the men who might have made better use of it.

EDITORIAL SALAD.

As soon as a man falls in love with a pretty girl he becomes food for the alienists.

The country has outgrown the Wall street speculators. Their Black Fridays no longer affect the general calendar.

The strike of the street-car men in Louisville, was put out by the flood. Everything that originates in Kentucky yields readily to the water treatment.

The speaker of the Massachusetts house introduced Mr. Bryan as "from Missouri." But this is as accurate as Mr. Bryan's reference to Nebraska as "my state."

Grover Cleveland passed the scriptural age limit yesterday, but isn't safe to assume that anybody can take liberties with him in a match at hurling big words.

Wireless messages have been exchanged between Point Loma, on the Pacific Coast, Pensacola, Fla., and the

battleship Connecticut in New York harbor. It will not be easy in the next war to steal a march on a competent wireless department.

Last April the McKinley system knocked at the door of St. Louis. April is almost here again, and the respectful application is still unanswered.

A man is as old as he feels; and Mr. Cleveland's refusal to have a celebration of the 70th anniversary of his birth indicates that he doesn't feel at present like joining in any festivities on the ground of venerable distinction.

J. Pierpont Morgan proposes to bestow \$1,000,000 on an art museum at Hartford, Conn., his native city. Experience teaches that art museums are always lucky in attracting important gifts in money and famous productions.

England's latest armored cruiser, just launched, the Indomitable, is longer and swifter than the Dreadnaught. She is to have two mates of the same class, the Invincible and the Inevitable. These big ships cost nearly \$9,000,000 each. A discussion about disarmament usually winds up in this fashion.

The utter impossibility of keeping a good man down is again illustrated in the case of William J. Oliver, who has just been elected to the presidency of a trust company. Clipping coupons on a mahogany table, under the soft caresses of an electric fan, will prove a much easier task than running a scraper through the baked clay of Panama.

The Anarchist

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John Cunningham had been governor of Dartmoor prison for thirteen years, and during that long interval not a convict had succeeded in making his escape. The governor flattered himself on this fact. He lived four miles from the prison, and the less he visited it the better things were run.

Governor Cunningham finally decided to write a book on criminology. That was a perfectly natural thing; since he had so many specimens at hand. He meant that book to be a standard and to contain matter to astonish the world. He was entirely ignorant of his subject, but he went to work like a man who means business. To get his data he had to have prisoners brought before him to be questioned and to have their heads examined. The governor had boasted more than once that he could tell a predisposed criminal ten rods away.

One of the prisoners called before the governor was James Broughton, who had received a sentence of five years for embezzlement. The family was a respectable one, and this was the first offense for a hundred years. Broughton himself had anything but criminal tendencies. He was well educated, well appearing and was remarked for his intelligence. The governor found in Broughton the same for which he sought. He put him down as a man who was born with the instincts of a thief. He did not credit him with ordinary intelligence. He found him a victim of homicidal mania.

Broughton had entered prison determined to make his escape if it was within the possibilities. After a year's good conduct he was named for the agricultural gang, the trustees who mowed the meadows and raised a share of the fresh vegetables consumed in the prison. He had friends outside to aid him in so far as furnishing him a suit of citizen's clothes and a small sum of money. He had made up his mind to go to South America, and he must have several hundred dollars. The fact that he knew not where to raise the money prevented his escape for months. It was not until after the governor had made him a choice specimen of criminology that a brilliant idea came to him. As the agricultural gang marched back to prison one evening Broughton was missing, and the alarm was given. He had found the suit, had been met by a friend with a horse and buggy, and by the time the guards were scouring the country for him the convict was at the governor's house.

A rather queer thing had happened to the governor ten years before, and as the incident had been published it was common property in prison and out. He had made a trip to Russia, aided an anarchist without knowing what the man was, and after being shut up in a fortress for a month he had been given his liberty and escorted to the frontier. This humiliation rankled in his breast, and he was not backward about saying to freeman or convict that he would do most anything to get square with the Russian government. He had been so outspoken that he had received a hint from his own government to moderate his speech. He took warning by it, but he still chafed. The telephone called the governor up to inform him that a convict had escaped, and while he was fussing about it the card of a stranger was brought in. The name was that of a Russian, and the governor at once thought of anarchists and nihilists and arbitrary measures and became hot.

There was a confab lasting an hour. The Russian did not hesitate to confide in the governor. He informed him that a plot was on foot to overturn the government and raise a republic on its ruins. He was asked to assist in the conspiracy. He knew that such action would make him amenable to the law, and yet he remembered the dreary days and nights in that cell in the fortress. He had never talked with a more intelligent man. He had never met with another foreigner who spoke the English language so correctly.

The warning received by the great man was ringing in his ears, but he thought of the miserable food, the wet straw and the manner in which he had been bounced out of the czar's dominions and warned to stay out. The telephone gave him the particulars of the convict's escape and inquired about offering a reward, but he was too busy to attend to such trifles. He first said no, but as the Russian rose to leave the house the governor brought out a bag containing \$500 in gold and placed it on the table and turned his back and began to hum the air of a tune. The Russian tumbled to the subscription and murmured his thanks. With the gold he picked up one of the governor's cards. An hour later a train was bearing him to Liverpool. He was stopped on the way and stopped again as he went aboard a steamer for South America, but that card of the governor carried him through.

The search for Broughton was thorough and long drawn out. As it was the first escape from Dartmoor under Governor Cunningham's reign, he was overzealous for the man's capture. In the course of a month fifty different men were arrested in different parts of England, but of course none of them proved to be the person wanted. Not until Broughton reached South America and knew that he could not be extradited did he give himself away. Then there was fun in the big prison and at the governor's mansion. The convicts laughed among themselves, and the press roasted the governor for an ass, and the result was a resignation and the abandonment of the interesting study of criminology for all time to come. M. QUAD

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