

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON: TUESDAY, FEB. 22, 1881. D. C. IRELAND, Editor.

Editorial Correspondence.

PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO, Feb. 7th. 1881.—When our old friend A. Booth awoke this morning to find the snow disappeared and fast disappearing, as though a veritable chinook wind had crossed the continent, rains descending leisurely "as at Astoria," he wondered; and musing to himself he said: "What webfoot has come amongst us today?" At half past ten we were in his cosy office corner of Lake and State streets, smoking the pipe of peace and thanking Providence for such fortuitous changes in the weather. It is so surprising! Yesterday at this hour the weather was becoming cold, business paralyzed, men and women stunned, today—"my gracious"—no better weather could be picked out, and as a consequence all trains leave on time, and your humble correspondent sails away for the national capital in time to be there by the time set to sail yesterday. We have not accepted the invitation to take a sleigh ride to-day for the very simple reason that there is not any sleighing. However unacceptable the word Faith, may become to naturalists, and to scientists generally, one thing is certain we have to-day more faith in an unobstructed run to Washington than we had last night when we turned into the arms of morpheus for sweet repose. But you will say we write only of the weather—weather it is proper or not, weather is all there is to write about here just now. If time would admit of it we should go over to the chamber of commerce and interview our old purser friend of the Cowlitz, Williams; but we anticipate his answer, as we do our ride to Washington to-night, "dull and uninteresting"—so long,

The Search for the Jeannette.

It is no time, when human lives are in peril, to stand by and count the cost of saving them. Acting on this principle, the people will not object to the passage of the bill under consideration in the house, to appropriate \$100,000 to a search for the Jeannette. But the inquiry will naturally arise as to the number of expeditions of this kind that are to be searched for. The Jeannette herself went in search of some whalers, and we have had one search already for the Jeannette. It is possible that whatever vessel congress may send after the Jeannette will, in turn be searched for. The Arctic ocean has held many victims, and remorselessly starved them to death. If the reports of some of the survivors are true, speculators, who fitted out at least one of the expeditions, were in league with the ocean to inflict upon these unfortunate explorers the pangs of hunger, and, finally, of death. The Jeannette was supposed to be fitted and provisioned for the voyage, without regard to cost. She was said to be supplied with everything that money would buy to insure the health and comfort of her crew. But there is a doubt if a wise oversight has directed all her subsequent movements. At least the following, from a Washington special to the Chicago Times, indicates that a fatal incapacity has imperilled the success of the voyage: It is known that when the Jeannette touched at the port Michaelovski, in Alaska, some time in the summer of 1879, her people were in a demoralized condition. The naval officers had been unable to preserve the discipline so necessary to the success of a desperate undertaking. They were not judicious in the choice of supplies, and had actually the temerity to dare the gloomy prospects of the pole without having secured native dog-drivers, an omission calculated, beyond question, to destroy all hopes of their success, if not of their safe return. They were furnished with sledges constructed in London, and taken altogether, went about their business in a crude shape.

Dangerous Men.

Editorial Cor. ASTORIAN.

CHICAGO, Feb. 7.—An article on political science, written by Henry George for the Christmas number of the Sacramento Bee, contains some thoughts on political quacks that are very suggestive. The very striking and original work of political economy by Mr. George, entitled Progress and Poverty, entitles him to speak on this subject with a certain authority. After discussing the changes that are going on in the modern world tending to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, and the need for some counteracting influences, the writer says: "The men of whom I am most afraid, are not the men who think the existing state of things all right, and set their faces against any change. It is the men who want to proceed to action as soon as they get an idea half way into their heads; the men who jump to conclusions without making sure of the intermediate steps; the men who, feeling that something is wrong, are for anything for a change." It is true. In all fields of American politics, especially those that touch commerce, manufactures and finance, the men of half ideas have been most dangerous. The democratic party abounds in reformers in tariff protection and finance, whose danger lies in a certain ability in advocating half ideas and whole fallacies. The public health is more endangered by zealous ignorance than prejudice, passion, or even corruption. The rapid changes that are going on in the business world follow one another so swiftly that it is not easy to see their full significance. It is an age of combinations and consolidations, in which the number of controlling powers is decreasing, the number of the controlled is increasing. Railroad combinations are going so rapidly that in a few years at this rate there will be only a few great consolidated lines and their ramifications. One corporation controls the petroleum trade; another is not far from controlling the anthracite coal trade. The sugar refining trade is following the same path, and so on through other fields of industry. The large concerns swallow up the smaller. Middle men and jobbers are at an ever-increasing disadvantage, and the manufacturer and importer, operating through agencies, come more and more in contact with the customer. The tendency is to concentrate wealth and power more in the hands of a few great corporations and to reduce the small traders and manufacturers to the condition of employees. Some may consider this an advantage, others a disadvantage; but there can be no question of the fact, and very little question that the process will go much further during the decade which we have recently entered. It is equally undeniable that the concentration of wealth goes hand in hand with the diffusion of poverty and wretchedness. Wherever the most enormous fortunes are found, side by side with them will be found the extremist destitution. The greater the power of wealth, the greater the dependence and helplessness of the operative. In some parts of Europe the process of consolidation has entered the ownership of lands. The number of land-owners in Great Britain, particularly in Scotland and part of Ireland, is decreasing. Small farms disappear, swallowed up in enormous estates. The condition of the agricultural population is more and more hopeless; the rent may be so apportioned as to swallow up all the profits. The land troubles in Ireland have their source in this, and there will be trouble in Scotland and England that may be more troublesome still. Our vast expanse of unoccupied lands has thus far prevented land consolidation in America, but the process may begin before long. This republic is better fitted than any other form of government to deal with great problems of this sort. The free discussion of all public

affairs brings common sense to the surface in the long run, though society, in adjusting itself to the changes going on with accelerated rapidity, must undergo some modifications. The danger is from quacks—from men who are ready to act on half-ideas, and who, feeling that something is wrong, are ready for "anything for a change."

There is one feature of the appointment scheme before congress that puzzles people; and that is, why the southern states should gain four or six or any other number of members relatively to the north in the new house. The population of the sixteen southern states and the twenty-two northern states in 1870 and 1880 and the gains of each section in the decade compare as follows:

Table with 3 columns: 1870, 1880, Gain. Rows: North, South.

Excess of northern gain, 1,266,294. Why should the north, which has gained absolutely nearly 2,000,000 more in population than the south, be given but two or six more members under the new appointment, while the south is given six or twelve? The explanation of the phenomenon is that the south has increased in population relatively a trifle more than the north, and also that small states gain relatively over large states in a small house, and the south has more of the former comparatively than the north has.

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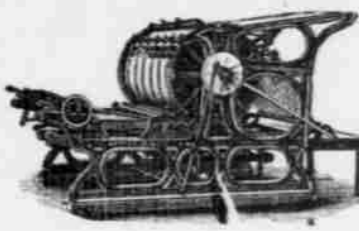
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