

The Daily Astorian.

PUBLISHED BY
Astorian-Columbia Publishing Company,
ASTORIA, OREGON:
ASTORIAN BUILDING, - - - CASS STREET

Terms of Subscription.
DAILY.
Served by Carrier, per week..... 15 cts
Sent by Mail, per month..... 50 cts
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Free postage to subscribers.

THE ASTORIAN guarantees to its advertisers the largest circulation of any newspaper published on the Columbia River.
In future all items of local interest forwarded to this office must be addressed to the CITY EDITOR.

TODAY'S WEATHER.

Portland, April 16.—For Oregon and Washington, continued rain, slightly warmer.

Local weather for the twenty-four hours ending at 5 p. m., yesterday, furnished by the U. S. department of agriculture, weather bureau:
Maximum temperature, 49 degrees.
Minimum temperature, 33 degrees.
Precipitation, .33 inch.
Total precipitation from July 1st, 1892, to date, 65.73 inches.
Excess of precipitation from July 1st, 1892, to date, 2.73 inches.

KEEP ON STRIKING

There are a great many in this city who say, that they think it would be better if all saloons were intoxicating liquors are sold, all gambling, and all places that keep for sale that which should not be sold, were prohibited, or abolished.

But they say, if these things cannot be prohibited, it would be better to make them contribute something to pay the expenses of their society.

If they are "pulled," there follows, perhaps, imprisonment and expensive trial fees, and finally if the party is convicted, they are still more imprisoned and this last punishment makes a further expense, which is not earned by the guilty party, but has to come out of the innocent taxpayers.

If prohibitory laws are to be for the government of this city, let them be enforced, else they are but a farce.

The sheriff and the chief of police have commenced arresting those who may be found breaking the law. Let them continue so long as they are able to find a single person transgressing.

If there be those here who think this course is doing harm, let them not ask the officers to discontinue, for they are simply doing their sworn duty. It wouldn't be right to ask them to stop.

The sheriff and chief of police have just been getting a good ready this last two or three years, and nothing can stop them now but a change in the law.

If the law is not changed they must keep right on striking the evil does until this becomes a mighty lonesome town in some parts.

Laws must be suited to the community for which they are enacted. If they are too rigid, the attempt to enforce them will be a demoralizing failure.

One of the most successful educators in the state said to the writer not long since: "I do not try to suppress all the mischief there is in the boys in my school. Every boy that has any snap or spirit in him is bound to get over the traces once in a while. The boys will play tricks on one another that, strictly speaking they have no right to do. But if I should succeed in crushing this out of them, I would have a school of automatons."

This teacher recognized the principle that it is better not to make rules or laws that can not be enforced without defeating the purpose for which laws should be made, viz: prosperity of the community.

The shrewd, practical commonsense man does not shoulder a burden he cannot carry; he does not utter a command he cannot enforce; he avoids a battle he cannot win.

The best way of dealing with the vices that exist in this city is a matter for present discussion and the subject is an important one in which all are interested.

Council meetings are being held every week in order that municipal legislation for the matter may be

hastened. Councilmen are desirous that there be a free expression of opinion by our people, and that the matter be fully discussed in all its bearings. This will enable them to act intelligently in enacting laws that will be enforced by officers who will be sustained by strong public opinion.

The Astorian's columns are open to those who have something to say on the subject in a respectful manner.

Correspondents should bear in mind that in order to give all a chance to be heard, the articles should not be of great length, as it might be impossible to put them all in type.

The result of yesterday's trial before Justice Cleveland, as given in another column, demonstrates the futility of prosecutions in such cases, and the responsibility for evils of that nature rests where it belongs—not on the shoulders of the state or county officials—but on those of the people. Sheriff Smith did his duty in making the arrests, and the people whose prerogative it is to see that the law is enforced or not as they may see fit, have assumed the responsibility of acquitting the accused, and their action proves the impracticability of at least one law in its application in this community.

A Novel Idea
Is Being Tried.

While saloons and gambling houses are attracting present public attention in the city, the following from yesterday's Oregonian will be read with interest by many, as presenting some ideas that are somewhat novel at least:

South Carolina is the first American state to adopt a modification of the Gothenburg system of controlling the liquor traffic. One town in New York has decided to experiment with it, by giving but one license under strict regulations, the license being given to a citizen interested in temperance instead of a regular saloon-keeper. In Massachusetts the question is before the legislature, but will probably not be settled at this session. South Carolina, however, has been committed to the experiment, unless he law be declared unconstitutional by the supreme court.

Attorneys for the liquor dealers have advised them to obey the law, as they believe it to be constitutional, yet a test case will doubtless be made. If the law is upheld, after the 1st of July all liquor lawfully sold in the state will be vendored by state officers in state saloons. How far the principles of the Gothenburg system have been adopted in this new law is not certain, in the absence of the text of the measure, but there is doubtless strict provision for purity of the liquor, hours of its sale, methods of managing business, class of persons to whom it may be sold, price disposition of the profits, etc. In Norway, where the system was imported from Sweden a number of years ago, the profits are expended upon the public highways, and the "drink roads" that wind up the mountain sides of that country are specimens of fine engineering and cost far more money than would ever have been expended upon them by direct taxation.

Here is a suggestion to those American states, like our own, whose miserable public highways are in an almost impassable condition several months in the year, and never as good as they should be. A great deal has been said about making new and better roads, but the enormous cost of such roads as should be built prevents the taxpayers from undertaking the task. The profits of the liquor business, above a fair interest on the capital invested, would in a few years griddle the entire country with rock-based turnpikes as lasting as the Roman roads of England. By taking the liquor business out of miscellaneous hands and intrusting it to special companies, as in Norway and Sweden, or to state officials, as South Carolina has decided to do, the profits of the business could be diverted to the public treasury, not only for the building of roads, but for the reduction of general taxation. The elimination of the saloon as a political factor would not be the least of the benefits of this system of state control of saloons.

In Sweden and Norway the sale of liquor is let under bonds to incorporated companies, and all profits above 5 per cent are paid into the public treasury. The stock of these companies is held a little above par, since 5 per cent is a good return for capital there, and it would be held higher still were it not for the right possessed by the municipality to buy it at par at any time. The bar-keepers are all employed on salary, and have no interest in working for an increase of consumption. It is claimed for this system, that it decreases drinking, prevents carousing, banishes low dives and grogeries, keeps liquor away from boys, abolishes

the saloon as a political factor, and turns the profits of the business to public use, rather than to such channels as have an interest in stimulating the business and promoting the consumption of liquor. These are certainly desirable objects to obtain. The working of this ideal system in Norway has been made the subject of a general report by Consul-General Mitchell at Christiania. It has been claimed for Norway that the devotion of the profits to road work tended to stimulate the traffic than the Swedish plan of using them to reduce general taxation. He finds that the five per cent profit is of itself enough to induce the shareholders to promote the business, and that the social and political power they hold by reason of their monopoly establishes a strong drink influence. There is rivalry between companies, and there is a public tendency to make all possible out of the business. Possibly the South Carolina plan of state saloons may cure some of these evils, though it may breed others of its own. Mr. Mitchell says drunkenness is still quite common, though the total consumption of liquor has largely decreased. It seems that even adulteration of liquor has not been stopped. Possibly this might be done with the state in control, though not if there would be personal profit to be made from adulteration. It is a business whose followers do not inspire personal confidence, and in buying and selling for the state there is such a chance for leakage, that the state agents may well be expected to make more than their salaries. The whole question is one upon which a little practical experience is worth cart loads of theory. South Carolina is doing the country a favor by making the experiment.

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