

Daily Astorian.

JOHN T. LIGHTER, Editor.

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Commodore Watson was Farragut's flag lieutenant, standing beside the brave old salt when he damned the torpedoes, and went ahead in Mobile Bay. He will be a good one to rattle the Spanish at Cadix, or some other interesting Andalusian seaport.

English criticism on the assault at Santiago is remarkable for its correctness and fairness. The difficulties of the situation and the splendid courage of our troops seem to be as well appreciated there as in our own country. There are not a few Americans, too, who enthusiastically agree with all they say to the propriety of Secretary Alger's publication of Shafter's call for reinforcements and Miles' sloopover on the "drawn" battle. It really looks as if our English cousins take almost as much pride in our successes as we do ourselves.

Congress has passed a bill, and it is now a law, providing for the establishment of a labor commission, the members to be appointed by the president, by and with the advice of the senate. England settles many labor disputes in this way, and some of the eastern states, through boards of arbitration, have averted many outbreaks between employer and employee. The new law will give the same principle a wide scope, and, with the right kind of men in the commission, a better understanding will be arrived at between capital and labor.

The American people are beginning to realize that this war is not the trivial affair so many imagined it would be. The movements around Santiago show that every step is to be stubbornly contested. The broken country, the dense tropical chaparral, render attack difficult as well as hazardous, and enable a vastly inferior force to hold the ground against an attacking party of twice or thrice its numbers. We have, as a rule, underrated the strength of the Spanish army in Cuba, and the fighting qualities of their men. The work of conquering the Spaniards is now seen to be a task of enormous difficulty. Santiago is not to be taken by the simple assault of a few thousand men. Every hilltop has its blockhouse, and every slope has its line of rifle-pits, protected from infantry assault by barbed wire fences. The men in the pits have the range accurately, and an assault will mean heavy loss to the attacking force. The same general conditions will prevail in the attack on San Juan de Porto Rico, and on Havana. Already it is plain that it will be months before the Spaniards are subdued and these islands conquered.

The Astorian has several times answered Mr. Woodward's statements in yesterday's paper. Briefly summarizing, we again state that there are many ends to be obtained for which our people have subordinated the railroad. We know now more surely than heretofore that only by rail connections may we accomplish these ends. Our merchants are at present anxious to obtain through rail service for all commodities, and particularly so with shipments of salmon to eastern markets. Cars loaded at Astoria with salmon destined for eastern markets have been refused by Mr. Woodward's company at Portland and accepted by the Northern Pacific railway company and Southern Pacific system at the terminal rates. This is the first request our merchants have made upon the O. R. & N. company since the completion of the railroad. Its refusal constitutes their first grievance. The answer is plain—"unless you give the O. R. & N. company the entire haul from Astoria to eastern points, its officers can not do any business with you whatever." If our merchants act upon this alternative, the Astorian would inquire what service the railroad can be to us in attaining those higher aims for which we have labored these many years.

ONE TRUTH-TELLING SPANIARD

Spain has in her service at least one truth-telling officer of high standing, Captain General Augustin in command of Manila, reveals the real gravity of the situation there to his home government. He does not in so many words ask permission to surrender to Admiral Dewey,

but he sets forth the facts in the following dispatch to Madrid.

"The situation is still as grave. I continue to maintain my position inside the line of blockhouses, but the enemy is increasing in numbers, as the rebels occupy the provinces, which are surrendering. Torrential rains are inundating the intrenchments, rendering the work of defense difficult. The number of deaths among the troops are increasing, making the situation very distressing and causing increased desertions of the native soldiers."

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