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OUR WASHINGTON NEWS AND NOTES

ITEMS OF INTEREST BRIEFLY CHRONICLED.

FLEET FOR PACIFIC COAST

Plan to Send Battleship to Western Coast. Senator Perkins Urges Division of Atlantic Fleet.

A plan is under way to divide the fleet of battleships now assembled on the Atlantic coast by sending fully one half of them to the Pacific coast station. This movement is largely fathered by Senator Perkins of California, who, while expressing himself as not at all apprehensive of an approaching conflict with Japan, yet believes that our enormous Pacific coast line should not be left practically without naval defense.

There are no battleships on the Pacific coast at the present time. The principal units of naval defense there are the cruisers Charleston, Chicago, Boston, Princeton and Yorktown and a few torpedo boats. All of these vessels save the Charleston, are of old construction, and would be of very little use in a conflict with a first-class naval power. The battleship Oregon, one of the initial three battleships constructed for the navy and the battleship Wisconsin are at the navy yard at Bremerton, Wash., undergoing extensive repairs. It will be a year or more before they will be available for service.

On the Asiatic station the naval power is represented by four large armored cruisers of the West Virginia class and the old monitors Monadnock and Monterey. The Monadnock is in reserve, with a skeleton crew aboard, and the Monterey is out of commission at Cavite. Added to these are a number of more or less obsolete gunboats for use among the Philippine Islands and a squadron of protected cruisers, the Baltimore, Cincinnati, Raleigh, Galveston, and Chattanooga. These are not especially formidable either in respect to speed or otherwise.

Senator Perkins also believes the naval plants at Bremerton and Mare Island should be thoroughly equipped for the construction of battleships and minor craft, and to this end it is his opinion that one vessel of the first class should always be under construction at each of these yards.

The experiments made recently by the government in the construction of the battleships Louisiana and Connecticut by the Newport News Shipbuilding Company and the United States government at the Brooklyn navy yard, respectively, shows that despite the handicaps imposed upon government construction generally, the time occupied in the building of these two vessels and the expense were practically the same. It takes time to assemble the needed skilled labor and the necessary appliances for the building of battleships, and it is deemed the part of wisdom to have such equipment as may turn these vessels out with the least possible delay, and in time of war (able the government to repair damage sustained in conflict and otherwise with the maximum speed.

The Color of a Filipino.

The school authorities of Washington have been called upon to decide whether a Filipino is white or "colored." The problem was brought before them by Major M. F. Waltz of the United States army, who sent a communication asking that his Filipino servant, twenty-two years of age be admitted to the white school of Washington.

Major Waltz said that his servant had been denied admission to the public schools of Atlanta on account of the prevailing race feeling. After much discussion the question was referred to a committee, which has not yet reported.

Japs Do Not Seek War.

"The Japanese do not want Hawaii or the Philippines and they do not seek war," says Bishop Merriam C. Harris of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who has spent thirty-three years in Japan, and who is home on a visit.

He offered a prayer in the Senate and then went over to the House and talked with the members.

There is no hard feeling toward the United States in Japan, he said, but an exclusion act would be resented and regarded as unforgivable, and might, he said, "lead to trouble."

To Experiment With Oil.

The Bureau of Steam Engineering of the navy of which Rear Admiral Charles W. Rea is engineer in chief, has decided to experiment with oil as possible fuel for United States ships of war.

The first test will be made on the Wyoming, now at Mare Island. Should it be successful it is said at the Navy Department oil will be substituted for coal in a short time.

Beer in Soldier's Homes.

Beer halls in the several branches of the national home for disabled volunteer soldiers netted profits to the government aggregating \$165,454 during the last year, according to the annual report of Col John L. Chamberlain, Inspector General, whose annual report to the Secretary of War is one of the strongest recommendations made for the retention of the canteen features of these homes.

"The beer hall I believe to be a most valuable agent in determining the comfort, contentment, health and general welfare of the members. Nearly all members are of advanced age, their habits are formed and fixed beyond possibility of change. Their pensions furnish means wherewith to drink, and those who desire drink can and will get it. In the beer hall they obtain beer of the purest and best quality, and the amount consumed can be and now is strictly regulated. If the beer hall should be abolished the money now spent in the beer hall—in fact a much larger sum—will be spent in the neighboring saloons and dives. The profits which are now expended for the pleasure, comfort and convenience and general welfare of the members will be lost to them and will go into the pockets of the saloon keepers.

Reward for a Democrat.

The following letter was given out at the White House:

"The White House, Washington, D. C., Dec. 17, 1906.

"Dear Mr. Bonaparte—Some three years ago Sheriff J. L. Merrill of Carroll county, Ga., lost his chance for re-election by his action in beating off a mob of several hundred white people who were trying to take a negro out of jail and put him to death. Sheriff Merrill and his deputies fired on the mob, killing and wounding several men and beating the other off. Because of this he was defeated for reelection. Congressman Adams brought the matter to my attention, saying that he hated to see a man who had done such a service as a public official defeated because of the very fact that he had rendered the service. He told me that Governor Terrell had offered Merrill a place the best he had to give, which carried a salary of \$50 per month. I told the congressman that I thought I could beat that and get him a place for \$1200 a year as custodian of the grounds of the Federal prison at Atlanta. I hear he has done well. If he has done well can't we give him a promotion?"

The Milling of Rice.

A delegation representing the rice interests of Louisiana and Texas were in Washington to confer with Secretary Wilson in regard to the effect of the pure food bill, which goes into effect Jan. 1, on rice manufacture. The members of the delegation are C. S. Knapp, president of the Louisiana Rice Growers' Association; F. A. Godechaux, of Abbeville, La.; S. Ross, of Houston, Texas, and J. U. Broussard, of Beaumont.

Secretary Wilson gave it as his opinion that the present methods used by the rice millers of the south are unobjectionable and will not be subject to change under the new laws. He also stated that rice milled up to January 1 1907 will be exempt from the provisions under the bill.

An Investigation Ordered.

No advice has been received at the War Department regarding the reported firing on a car conductor by soldiers at Fort Barrancas, Fla. The matter, however, unofficially was brought to the attention of the department today, and the commanding officer of the fort has been called upon for information.

Coming So Soon after the Affair at Brownsville, Tex., which has received so much attention in the public press, army officers expressed their chagrin at the report of the latest disturbance.

Fort Barrancas, which is located a short distance from Pensacola, is regarded as one of the most important posts in the service, five companies of the coast artillery, the Seventh, Ninth, Fifteenth, Twentieth, and the Twenty-second companies being stationed there.

Fire in the Studio Building at Boston caused \$150,000 damage.

"Newspaper Sensations." Colorado Springs, Colo.—Gov. Herbert Hagerman of New Mexico, who is spending the week in this city, on his way home from Washington, characterized as "newspaper sensations" recent reports to the effect that certain politicians of New Mexico preferred charges against him, or have asked President Roosevelt for his removal from office.

BOAT EXPLOSION

KILLS MANY

BIG DISASTER ON BONDS PACKET SCOVELL.

EXACT NUMBER NOT KNOWN

But Number of Dead Between Fifteen and Twenty, Among Whom are Capt. Quackenboss, His Son and Laval Yerger.

Vicksburg, Miss.—While the Steamer W. T. Scovell, plying in the Vicksburg and Davis Bend trade, was loading freight at Gold Dust Landing, seventeen miles south of Vicksburg, the boat's boiler exploded with terrific force and without the slightest warning, killing and maiming the crew and passengers and blowing off the entire front of the steamer.

According to survivors who arrived here on board the steamer Senator Cordill, the dead numbers between fifteen and twenty. It is feared, however, that the exact number will not be known for some days, as the steamer was crowded with deckhands and passengers, and those who escaped were so stunned for a time that before assistance could be secured the bodies of many of the dead had disappeared down the river.

Dead and Injured.

The known dead are: Capt. John A. Quackenboss, master of the boat, Vicksburg; Wade Quackenboss, Vicksburg; Laval Yerger, cotton seed buyer, Jackson; Joe Smith, clerk of steamer, Yazoo City, Miss.

Mack Clarke, negro porter. Two runabouts, name unknown. Eight or nine negro deck passengers.

The injured are:

Lennie Roberts, assistant pilot, Vicksburg, Miss., injured internally, seriously. John Dougherty, pilot, shoulder dislocated. Charlie McKenna, passenger, painfully injured. Butterfield, slightly injured in the head.

Many Negroes Injured.

The number of dead and injured negroes can not be stated, but of a crew and passenger list of about fifty, about half are missing. The negro dead were cared for at the place where the accident occurred, as are some of the injured.

Vicksburg is much wrought up over the accident, Laval Yerger being very popular here, and also the two Quackenbosses, who both leave families.

The cause of the explosion is in doubt at this time. The steamer had been considered in first class condition although she was delayed here a few hours by being run into by the Belle of the Bonds. This, however, could not have affected her boiler.

The news of the explosion first reached this city by telephone to A. G. Russell, who heard of the steamer blowing up from Ashwood Landing. Mr. Russell, telephoned to Ashwood, and there John G. O'Kelly, a prominent citizen, said that he had seen cotton floating down the river and he would send a man on horseback at once to Gold Dust Landing, which was eight miles away.

Gold Dust gin is twenty miles south of Vicksburg, on the Louisiana side of the Mississippi river. The Scovell left here on her trip to Davis Bend and was returning when the accident occurred. Frank Hirsch of this city is the agent and part owner of the boat.

Steam Smothers Ories.

Wade Quackenboss was heard to call for help soon after the explosion, but, according to the reports of those who were on the boat, escaping steam soon smothered his cries. Capt. Quackenboss was not seen after the accident.

Pilot John Dougherty was blown several hundred feet into the river, but despite a dislocated shoulder, managed to swim to ash bank.

Murry Wilkinson, the cub pilot escaped uninjured. Engineer John T. Bruce was not hurt.

The accident occurred in about a mile of where the steamer Providence was destroyed in a hurricane and twenty people was lost several years ago.

Mr. Wilkinson's Story

J. M. Wilkinson, cub pilot of the

Scovell, arrived here on board the Steamer Senator Cordill with others who were on the Scovell. The remains of Laval Yerger were brought here and will be sent to Jackson, Miss., for interment.

No other bodies were brought here as they could not be found, there being, according to Wilkinson's statement, about fifteen dead in all.

He says that the boat blew up while landed at Gold Dust gin, about noon. He was sleeping at the time in the rear of the upper cabin, and when he woke he found the boat blew in half and his ear sinking.

He hurried out, and reached the bank, found the body of Laval Yerger under a log, where also lay the body of a negro named Williams Hall, who had been making a cotton-seed deal with Mr. Yerger when the explosion occurred.

Senator Cordill to Rescue. Wilkinson says Dougherty, who was at the wheel, suffered a sprained shoulder and seemed to be in a bad way, but he does not believe he will die.

A young white boy named Len Roberts, who was employed as watchman on the boat, was terribly hurt internally, and Wilkinson says that he believes he may die.

Wilkinson states that as soon as he could realize that had happened he sent a negro out to hail the Senator Cordill, which was near at hand, to come to the relief of the Scovell. The Cordill came promptly, and the crew did what little it could for the wrecked steamer. All the cargo was lost, floating down the river.

Wilkinson says he investigated the wreck and found that the boiler which blew up cut through the mastpole, blowing the entire front of the boat off and two hundred yards into a field.

The story of the accident as told by J. T. Bruce, the engineer of the boat, is as follows:

"We were lying at the Gold Dust Landing, taking on a cargo when I noticed a small quantity of water oozing through the boiler. I suspected that something was wrong and proceeded to make an examination.

On Top of the Boiler.

"About this time the Scovell broke her head line and drifted so that I did not have time to make a thorough examination at that moment. As soon as I got her back to the bank I crawled on top of the boiler and proceeded with the investigation. I had just got down from the boiler when the explosion occurred. The catastrophe, I believe, was due to a defective boiler plate."

When the Cordill arrived at Vicksburg a crowd of several hundred persons met her at the wharf. There were anxious inquiries for friends and relatives.

Owing to the heavy loss among the negroes aboard the landing was crowded with women and children of that race. The injured were taken to the various sanitariums and hospitals of the city.

Dead Men Well Known.

Capt. Quackenboss was one of the oldest and best-known residents of this city and was well known to every man on the Mississippi river.

L. W. Quackenboss, one of the killed, was a citizen of Vicksburg, well known in military circles throughout the state. During the Spanish-American war he served as a non-commissioned officer of Company A, First Mississippi Volunteers. On the reorganization of the Mississippi National Guard after the close of the war he was appointed captain and commissary of the Third Regiment and was later elected Colonel of the regiment, serving in that capacity but a short time, when he resigned.

Laval Yerger, another of the victims, was born and reared in Jackson, and was one of the best-known young men who ever went out from that city. He was a son of the late William Yerger and has a number of relatives in Jackson, among whom is the Assistant Secretary of State, Henry Yerger, and ex-Artillery General Frank Johnston. His family connection is extensive in Mississippi.

Hon. Charles Scott, one of the candidates for governor, is a relation. He was engaged in the hotel business for several years in Mississippi and Louisiana and made a host of friends.

The Scovell was built in 1895 at Jeffersonville. She is 160 feet long, 31 feet wide, 3 feet 7 inches deep. She was bought at Nashville only a few months ago by her new owners, the Vicksburg and Davis Bend Packet Company. The boat was insured for \$6000.

A denial of the report that President Castro of Venezuela is dying was issued from Willemstadt.

Congressman Bowers of Mississippi demanded the punishment of negro policemen at Washington for alleged brutal treatment of his son.

Democratic Senators will unite to oppose the policy of centralization outlined in Secretary Root's recent speech.

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LOUISIANA STATE HAPPENINGS

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM ALL SECTIONS.

AN EPITOME OF THE NEWS

Culled From Important Happenings Throughout the State During the Past Week and Reviewed in Brief for Our Readers.

House Adjourns for Holidays.

The House has adjourned until January 3, 1907. Empty desks greeted the speaker when the house convened and even among the members who remained the desire to get away for the holidays was superior to the inclination for business. Representative Mondell of Wyoming, succeeded in passing his bill extending the time in which entries can make final settlement on the Shoshone Indians reservation.

Representative Payne, of New York called up his resolution relating to the distribution of the president's annual message to the several committees in accordance with a custom that has existed since the foundation of the government.

The house resolved itself into committee of the whole with Representative Lacey, of Iowa, in the chair, and the reference of the various parts of the message to appropriate committees were discussed. The debate was perfunctory and after a half hour's discussion the committee rose.

The house then, after passing the resolution, adjourned for the Christmas holidays at 12:45 p. m.

Plenty of Help.

J. L. Knopier, Secretary of Immigration to Colonel Charles Schuler in a letter to the State Board of Agriculture and Immigration, states that it would like for farmers, contractor and lumber mills in need of labor to write him the full particulars and the terms upon which immigrant labor will be taken. Mr. Knopier writes that he has just returned from Galveston where he went to look after some immigrants coming off a foreign ship. He states that out of a total number of 125 on the ship that were not engaged when they reached Galveston, Louisiana secured fifty-four, twenty-five going to DeQuincy, ten to Labranche and nineteen to Bowie.

He states that he could get more immigrants if planters and contractors would let him know on what conditions they want immigrants, and ask that full particulars be given at his address in New Orleans, care of the State Museum. Mr. Knopier states that he expects to secure additional immigrants from the next ship to reach Galveston January 2 or 3.

Frog Industry.

A complaint has gone up from southwest Louisiana in the vicinity of Crowley and neighboring points because the frog-catching industry has been slighted, and the sale of live frogs to points in Texas is not near as heavy as it was last year. This is due to the fact that the Northern Producing Company, of Houston, Tex which hauled the bullfrog market last year, has withdrawn from the Louisiana field, because of inadequate shipping and freight facilities, which made the venture a profitless one. It is stated that frogs around Crowley and other points in that section of the state were bought at the rate of \$1.50 a dozen, and as there was little expense in catching them frog hunters made a good profit on the fruits of their labors, some of them catching as many as \$4 or \$5 worth of frogs in a night. Now that much of the Texas trade has been withdrawn the frog catching industry has had a set-back.

Experiment Stations.

Active steps towards carrying out the plans of the United States Department of Agriculture and the State Experiment Stations for the experiments that are to be conducted next year at Hammond are expected to be taken after the Christmas holidays. The Experiment Station north of Baton Rouge, under the direction of Dr. W. R. Dodson, is now conducting some experiments in the feeding of cattle, but this work will be enlarged upon in co-operation with the Agricultural Department, when the Hammond experiments are begun. These experiments will be in the feeding of milk cows and the Department thinks that they will be of great value to the dairy business of the state.

Immigration Leagues.

Captain J. F. Merry, Immigration Agent of the Illinois Central Railroad is sending a list of homeseekers weekly to the parish immigration leagues along the line that are active and are making an effort to secure some seekers. The Immigration League of West Feliciana Parish is having the list published so that planters can get in direct communication with the parties.

Ibsen may have been a mischievous

admits the Atlanta Constitution, but what he wrote was literature.

Five hundred English school teachers are coming to study our schools and wonder how the boys can smoke so many cigarettes and keep up, announces the New York World.

According to Secretary Taft, Cuba needs new laws. At the same time the island appears to have a lot of old ones that never were used much, suggests the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A chemist declares that "all the constituents of a 150-pound man are contained in 1200 eggs." But, objects the Baltimore Sun, when a 150-pound man is broke it doesn't make as much trouble as if he were 1200 eggs.

Mrs. A. S. Pope makes a plea for mere consideration of a servant by her mistress and suggests adding to the entertainment of the maid by "a pretty little sitting room with something to amuse her there always, such as books, magazines and the daily papers."

The British government has decided to draft a bill to be submitted to Parliament empowering local authorities to deal with the nuisance of noise in the streets. Commenting on this the Washington Star says: "The demands of business are worthy of recognition, and commerce must be facilitated in every reasonable way. But the streets belong to the whole people, for their decent and orderly use, and measures of noise and uproar should be squelched as promptly as any other monopolists. The normal human being has a right to pursue his way without undue molestation or annoyance."

A 70-horse power automobile has been ordered for the Grand Lama of Tibet and the comment of the Philadelphia Record is: "There are no roads in the vicinity of the Grand Lama's capital the want of them not being felt in a country where even carts are unknown; so highways will have to be constructed in order that the chief functionary may disport himself in his new toy. Thus will the means of communication, which are the advance agencies of civilization, be pushed into a corner of the world that has been hitherto abandoned to barbarism of a most repellent and unprogressive character."

Dr. Gustav Le Bon, writing of the possibilities of the American nickel, says: "Let us take, for instance, a fifth part of an American five-cent piece, which weighs one gram, and also let us suppose that we could succeed in entirely dissociating it. Now, the energy of a moving body being equal to half the product of its mass by the square of its velocity, a simple calculation gives the power represented by the particles of this gram of matter moving with the velocity we have supposed. This equation gives 519,000,000,000 of kilogram meters, a total which would correspond to about six milliards eight hundred millions of horse-power if these kilogram meters were expended in a second. If this quantity of energy were properly distributed it would suffice to move on a level a freight train reaching round the earth more than four and a quarter times. To move this same train by means of coal 2,839,000 kilograms would be required, which, at the rate of twenty-four francs per ton would cost about 68,000 francs."

Because bells in Malta are still rung to ward off the evil spirits of the storm, discussion has arisen and the issue furnished an item of cable news. It seems that in Valetta there are sceptics who have caught some modern great-city idea that bells are but brazen instruments of noise. In the middle ages nothing was better established to the satisfaction of simple minds than that the clangor from the belfries kept away disasters observed the New York World.

Out of the idea of driving away evil spirits came the ancient "passing bell" which was rung while some patient was dying and which has given place in modern times to post-mortem tolling. In old Egypt bells rang for the feast of Osiris. In every land they have sounded alarms of war and of fire. Our own Independence Bell saluted the dawn of liberty. California has a historic bell, now broken and mute, which called together the famous Vigilance Committee of 1856, and which was sounded later whenever tidings came of victory for the Union in the civil war. The belfry towers of New York, Boston, Charleston, St. Augustine, Philadelphia, are rich in bells with stories. Anti-noise may silence the tongues in the towers—should silence them at unreasonable hours. It cannot hush the voices of the bells in tradition.

There are more breadwinners among the girls than there are bread-makers these days, observes the Jewell (Kans.) Republican.

The tricky Japanese are said to be robbing Americans of their opportunities in Korea. Robbing the American whose eyesight is so defective that he must go to Korea to see an opportunity is so easy, remarks the Courier-Journal (Louisville), that it should be beneath the dignity of a self-respecting Jap.

If the prosecutors do not stop persecuting the Standard Oil company, warns the New York Press, Mr. Rockefeller may lose his patience and either raise the price of oil another cent or cut down his gifts to education by eight or ten times the amount of the fine exacted from the bursting coffers of his benevolent monopoly.

The Old State Journal philosophizes: "When the water sweetly and gently put a finger bowl before him and he dipped his digits into the granular water, he left a quarter by his plate. Somehow or other there is mystic connection between a finger bowl and a tip. It makes a fellow feel that a quarter is the merest trifle."

The responsibility of caring for his own safety and comfort rests upon the one most particularly interested in fulfilling necessary requirements, declares the New York Herald. It is how he himself feels, not what others may say. If he is cold without his overcoat, why not wear one? And even if he does not in warmer weather so much the more will he appreciate its protection when he needs it again.

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There is one particular feature of the maiming and killing as a result of reckless overspeeding and incompetency in the driving of automobiles—the fatalities are pretty impartially divided between the occupants of the machines and the unfortunates who are run down, asserts the Philadelphia Record. Out of this common peril there may come salutary amendment, more rigid statutory restraint to protect the public and more caution on the part of owners and chauffeurs.

You might say, offhand, that a young man should not make himself too useful in a certain capacity. All of us have known scores of bright fellows, notes the New York Press, who got stuck in narrow niches and were kept there for life, "because they were so useful." But most of them were not cut out for bigger things or places. They lacked initiative, and remained so long in the rut that they became victims of inertia. At forty they wanted to change, but did not. At fifty they longed to change, but dared not. At sixty they still felt that a change was their due, but could not make it. Then—Osterism.

According to "The Baltimore News," there's a new occupation in that city. Its title is "discharge." As explained by an employe, when anybody makes a complaint at a big establishment the "discharge" is called up before the complainant, and vigorously reproved. "Why didn't you deliver that parcel to Mr. Jones?" asks the boss. The "discharge" makes some lame excuse, carefully rehearsed beforehand, and gets in return a torrent of denunciation and an order to "go to the office," and receive his pay. The "discharge" gets his money, and Mr. Jones goes away happy because he has cost a man his job. Half an hour later the "discharge" goes back to be dismissed for some other angry customer.

The drainage of submerged lands in the eastern states is a counterpart of the irrigation work in the far west, and more and more attention is being given to the subject by the government scientists, declares the American Cultivator. A plan for draining swamps which has worked well in some localities is the construction of a driven well, which is sunk through the upper layers of the soil into the gravel which often underlies at a moderate depth. The difficulty, of course, is that in some swamps there is no such layer of loose soil, and water would not go off through the well opening. Where the soil is suitable the water is rapidly taken away at low cost. A three-inch well, including casing, can be driven for \$1 a foot with the ordinary well-driller's outfit. The mouth of the well should be an excavation below the bottom of the pond or swamp, and the top of the well larger in diameter than the main part, in order to increase the inflow of water. A large brick catch basin, with screen-covered openings over the top of the well, will keep out dirt, leaves, etc., without reducing the capacity of the outlet.