

THE FERMENT OF POLITICS.

The political aspirants for Washington's fat offices, who fancied that everything would become lovely for themselves if they could succeed in securing statehood for men with disfranchisement for women, have learned, since trying the treasonable experiment, that a graver conundrum than woman suffrage confronts them now. I gleaned this information from the tone of the newspapers I perused as a transcontinental train carried me across their state a few weeks ago, when I seemed to hear, above the rumbling of wheels and snorts of locomotives, the harsh disclaimers of disgruntled candidates, who have found themselves, after all their scheming as state makers, stranded helplessly among the "outs," instead of being safely housed, as they had planned, among the "ins" of office. I was led to pursue these reflections further as I found myself lazily ruminating upon mundane matters, with ample leisure ahead of me for several consecutive days. How evanescent seem the ambitions of man, as face to face with the majesty of Nature, he spans her mighty distances and realizes his own pigmy proportions by the prodigious contrast. And yet, how mighty is man, even in his littleness, since he can control the elements and compel them to do his bidding, even though he fail to control his fellow beings!

"You touch a button and we do the rest" is the mute signal of the electric bell at every elbow; and the sleepy, but obliging, porter literally does all else for you but the said "button act," as, in the depths of these great mountain gorges you allow yourself to be made thoroughly comfortable as you read the papers on the "installment plan," or gaze, as inclination dictates, upon the wonderful panorama of your journey, visible from the Pullman windows.

What a ferment of news the Washington papers reveal, to be sure. The "outs" of office are worse disgruntled than the disfranchised women, for the latter know that the day of their reinstatement is at hand, and as their cause is just they can afford to wait. The "ins" sit insecurely in their places, too, not knowing how soon, or for what reason the wheel of politics may turn backward, or stop stock still and dump them overboard, after the manner of a Chinese irrigating machine, with its leaky buckets and unceasing grind.

Why, oh, why, big brothers of our overgrown sister, Washington, do you not cease belittling your older sister, Oregon? She is slow and pokey enough in all conscience, and needs occasional stirrings up; but you ought to commiserate her unfortunate victims of the mossback element, and at least permit them to endure their usury law and mortgage tax in silent misery. We feel sorry enough about the short-sighted policy of our antediluvian legislators, heaven knows; but we do wish you'd have a little mercy on us, and spare your ridicule, even if we do deserve it. Your big sister, Oregon, sits serenely beside you on the opposite side of our common artery, the Columbia river, which unites the two great states in what ought to be a community of interests. Our mutual, natural interests are sufficiently diversified to insure domestic tranquility if you would but pause and behold "how peaceful and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." Oregon is proud of Washington; she is our own, saucy, big sister, and she is quite willing to see her brag and strut. But other states, not members of the family, are less considerate—hence this admonition to cease quarreling.

While the scribe has been moralizing, the iron chargers have cavorted through the Cascade mountains, and here we are in the bunch-grass regions of Kittitas and Yakima. Numerous settlements show signs of steady growth in the narrow valleys; and yonder, as I "keep my eye on Pasco," I behold a widespread sage plain, where, at the confluence of the Columbia and the Snake, this little city sits, with an oriental air about it peculiarly its own. Here we get more newspapers, and again we get *en rapport* with the throes of politics. The "Squire" men and "Calkins" men are not yet cooling down from their last winter's legislative "scrap," and dire threats of future happenings peep out from between the lines, under the thin veneerings of patched-up editorial amnesties. We pass Cheney and Spokane in the darkness and are soon out on the panhandle of Idaho.

Even worse than the mutterings of discontent that fill the political air of Washington is the commotion that agitates the "gem of the mountains." The "Dubois" men and "Claggett" men have each refused to give up the senatorial row, and each contestant has decided to pursue the fight "to a finish."

As a woman has no voice in governmental matters, that is, outside of Wyoming, where there is political peace, I feel over this "scrap" a good deal like the woman who looked on while her husband and a bear were in a fight, and said she "never did see a fight before without caring which whipped." Yet I can't help getting interested sufficiently to inquire after the "under dog in the fight," and am coolly informed by two or three gentlemen who have discussed the matter in my hearing across the aisle, that "nobody can guess which one of the contestants has the ghost of a chance." Only think of it! Those would-be senators, who for long months prior to the legislative efforts that elected too many of them—so there is a surplus stock on hand—are now compelled to see their hopes for a final settlement of their case deferred until December. So they must wait in helpless expectancy for a decision which, when made, can only accommodate one of them! What an uncertain trade is politics, and how like an *ignis fatuus* does it deceive the vast majority of its pursuers! And yet, the science of government ought to be the noblest, as it is the most far-reaching, science under the sun. Liberty, finance, art, industry, invention, literature—everything upon which a nation subsists, and all a mighty people may obtain in the way of intellectual improvement, is based upon the proper administration of governmental affairs.

But, while we are moralizing thus, the train has spanned the "panhandle" and carried us into Montana. Here we see the same general topography which marked our progress through Washington and Idaho. We note the growth of her cities, the length of her fences, the character of her public buildings, the height of her mountains and the vast expanse of her mining possibilities, and we say, "Surely here is a place where the people are too busy to wage a relentless war upon each other in the political arena." But the Montana papers come aboard and belie the assumption. The very first paragraphs we read denote internal broils, quite in keeping with the partisan ferment of the neighboring states. Even "precinct 34," a mountainous succession of heights and gorges through which we pass, and which would delight the heart of a Tennessee "moonshiner," has made an ineffaceable mark upon the politics of the times. Gentlemen and ladies have joined us at Missoula, Helena and Anaconda, and our conversation takes a wide range, bringing us all at last to the one conclusion that there is no use in creating new states to relieve the plethora of office seeking, since all such efforts increase the supply of aspirants in inverse ratio to the vacancies created.

I haven't seen anything the republican party has said or done for the last year or two that so nearly makes it honest with itself as the following associated press dispatch which is self-explanatory:

BOSTON, March 23.—At the convention of the republican state league of Massachusetts today resolutions were introduced declaring that the women voters of Boston have for three years kept the school committees in the hands of the republicans; that Wyoming, in which women vote, is the only western state wherein the republicans met with no reverses at the last elections, and setting forth that these facts suggest the importance of extending full municipal franchise to qualified women voters, and of inviting the aid of Massachusetts to secure the ascendancy of the republican party in this commonwealth. The resolutions were referred to the republican state convention. Major McKinley and Hon. John M. Thurston, of Nebraska, delivered speeches, and resolutions were adopted discussing in a broad way the issues of the day, and laying down a strong platform of republican principles.

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HILLSBORO, OREGON.

The county seat of Washington county, Oregon, is the thriving town of Hillsboro, now brought into special prominence by the fact that it will be the point where the Astoria & South Coast railroad, now in process of construction from Astoria to the Willamette valley, will form a junction with the west side division of the Southern Pacific's Oregon system. This line will run through the fertile Nehalem valley, one of the finest agricultural sections of the state, and penetrate the largest body of first class timber reached by any road in the west. It will also open up the coal measures of that region, whose importance to the state can not be estimated. Hillsboro is already a prosperous business town, but under the impulse of this addition to its importance it must grow and thrive. Surrounding it is a great area of that undulating valley land that has given the Willamette valley such a reputation for the production of fruit and cereals, and which is capable of supporting a far greater population than that now occupying it. As a base of construction of the new road, Hillsboro has already begun to feel the effects of the new movement.