

# The Oregonian.

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TODAY'S WEATHER—Fair and slightly warmer; northwesterly winds.

YESTERDAY'S WEATHER—Maximum temperature, 72; minimum temperature, 55; precipitation, 0.60.

PORTLAND, FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1901.

## STATUS OF CUBA.

It seems not probable that Cuba will desire for any length of time to maintain her pretension to national independence. It is pretension, indeed, rather than reality; since she has accepted the Platt proposals and will make them a part of her fundamental law. A writer in Guntton's Magazine sets forth with perfect clearness the actual status of Cuba under this convention. It will be that of a state having local autonomy, but not having national independence. "We have purposely," he says, "called Cuba's agreement an acceptance of autonomy on her part. Genuine independence it is not and cannot be. It may be the best possible settlement of the Cuban problem, but we only need to apply the case to ourselves to see whether we have really given Cuba independence or autonomy under a protectorate. Suppose England, during the Revolutionary War, had offered to withdraw its troops and let us set up a government of our own, on condition that we would never make any treaty with a foreign power regarding ownership or control of any part of this country, nor contract any debt beyond our capacity to pay, but give the English the perpetual right to intervene in our domestic affairs whenever they might regard it necessary to protect life, liberty and property; surrender to them a certain place of territory; and sell or lease to the British Government lands necessary for coal and naval stations. Suppose, then, we had accepted these conditions; would it have been independence? Would we regard ourselves now as an independent nation if any foreign power possessed any such rights with reference to American affairs?"

In fact, therefore, Cuba will not be an independent state. Her independence will be but nominal, but she will have local self-government and civil liberty, under protection of the United States. Very soon there will be important reasons why she will desire to abandon her status of nominal independence and become a state of the American Union. She will soon see the need of free commercial intercourse with the United States. Her desire for independence was but a sentimental one, as we see from the fact that she was willing to enter into a convention that makes it only nominal. Without free commercial intercourse with the United States, the business of Cuba will be too great to be borne. She is to be in fact a dependency, any way, and her demand for unrestricted trade will soon cause her to seek incorporation with the United States.

## IS THE ACT VALID?

The third section of the ordinance passed by the Common Council for acceptance of the Portland Library by the City of Portland provides that the control and management of the library shall be in the board of directors of the library, and that the board of directors shall be composed of five members, one of whom shall be a citizen of the city. This provision is in conformity with the statute; but whether the statute is not at variance with the constitution may be a question.

The constitution declares that "No county, city, town or other municipal corporation, by the vote of its citizens or otherwise, shall become a stockholder in any joint stock company, corporation or association whatever, or raise money for, or loan its credit to, or in aid of, any such company, corporation or association." Now the question is whether the act under which this money is to be raised does not become through this ordinance an act to "raise money" for the Portland Library Association.

But there are other questions. How can the present Common Council of Portland bind any future Common Council of Portland to levy a tax for ten years, or for any number of years? And where is there any lawful authority for the Common Council to enter into contract with this association, or with any other, for more than two years?

It is a good thing, no doubt, to leave the control and management in the hands of the present directors. There will be better administration of the library than the city would be likely to get through election by the citizens. But the other matters are not so clear.

The city doubtless may operate a library. Whether it can do so on this plan may, however, be a question. It may, indeed, if nobody objects; but there is a habit in most communities, and this one is no exception, of declining to pay any tax that may be resisted.

Already the Portland School District

has turned over to certain persons, unknown to school laws, a sum of money for support of kindergartens. Many make inquiry where such action is to stop. Shall we have music, and amusements of various kinds, provided by the city, through contract, and paid for out of the public funds? Or newspapers delivered to citizens by contract, and paid for in the same way?

The Oregonian is not questioning the policy of establishing a public library. But there does seem to be a question whether this method, if attacked, will be held valid; and whether kindergartens, public libraries, and whatever else is supported by public taxation, should not be administered by officials duly appointed by the state and under its control.

## ASTORIA'S PROBLEM.

In another column we reproduce from the Astoria News an article that seems to show some conception of the causes that have operated to put Portland where it is, rather than at the mouth of the Columbia River. These causes are, in brief, as The Oregonian so often has pointed out, connected with the configuration of the country, and rest primarily upon the fact that Portland is the handiest meeting-place of the various highways of trade in the Columbia Basin. Each of the tributary regions, the Inland Empire, the Willamette Valley, Western Oregon and Western Washington, exert their influence to pull their common center of trade in their direction. Just as a planet is drawn upon by attraction of surrounding bodies in the system of which it forms a part. Had Western Oregon and Washington possessed a greater trade volume, they would have drawn the meeting-place nearer to themselves. Had the Willamette Valley been insignificant in its trade, it could not have availed to draw the Upper Columbia command across or around the peninsula to Portland. All these streams of trade, from the Columbia and Snake, from the Willamette and Cowlitz, from the Lower Columbia and Tillamook, find their natural convergence here, and here they continue to find it.

Astoria, at length, may be depended upon to see this, as the News now does; yet it is believed that the "common point" on grain were granted, the ships that enter the Columbia would be loaded at Astoria with grain brought in cars, without breaking bulk, from the farms of the Columbia Basin. There has never been any disposition on the part of The Oregonian to oppose this "common point." Upon occasion, upon repeated occasion, it has been favorably spoken of. Yet it must be remembered that in nearly the whole range of transported articles, Astoria already has the common point. On all merchandise from the East it has the same rate as is paid by Portland, Seattle and Tacoma. By the Northern Pacific and Burlington it has common rates on both fir and cedar lumber into and out of the city, and it is no less elsewhere. Yet this has not moved the lumber mills of Portland to Astoria or to the mouth of the Cowlitz. Business continues to center here, as at the most convenient place. So it might be with the "common point" on grain. What ever the rate should be, it would still cost something to carry the grain from the coast to Astoria, and if it were cheaper to carry it in the hold of the vessel than by rail, in the vessel's hold it would still be carried.

The demand for a "common point" on grain is virtually a demand that the railroads bringing grain to Portland shall carry it on to Astoria for nothing. Whether the proposition is to be carried, or whether it is to be carried, is its business, is certainly not the business of the Oregonian. It is a railroad problem, to be solved by the railroads. They will do what seems to them most profitable in the long run. What is objected to here, and most seriously, is the attempt to advance the "common point" contention by attack on the river channel between Portland and the sea. To abandon such attacks for the reasonable course outlined by the News would be for Astoria very wise. For upon the maintenance of that channel Portland is fully determined. The advantage involved in the "common point" is doubtless exaggerated in the Oregonian's mind, but it is not, nor is there no way can be devised to achieve it than to make war upon the river channels between the Upper Columbia and the sea.

## A PRISONER BY COURTESY.

Oliver Schreiner, an English woman whose long residence in South Africa has made her familiar with the lives and customs of the Boers, and whose sympathy for these people has in recent months been expressed in most vigorous language, is, it is charged, held as a prisoner by the British in Cape Colony, and her freedom of movement is being restricted by the British. The statement is denied, except in so far as it applies to the fact that she, with her husband, Mr. Cronwright, is in Hanover, Cape Colony, which being under martial law, limits their freedom to the military control that surrounds the town. There is little reason to suppose that Mrs. Cronwright's pen is idle, and less to suppose the statement that she is subject to harsh treatment at the hands of the British military authorities. Her pen is too vigorous and her use of language too forceful to permit this as a possibility. She has lived in South Africa many years with wide-open eyes and comprehensive understanding. Her sketches of the Boers, prior to the present war, were anything but complimentary to these people, whether in social, religious, political or industrial lines.

The status of these people as presented by her portraiture was that of dense ignorance, unfeeling bigotry, rank cruelty to animals and natives, and a stolid intolerance that enriched its possessors by forcing the care of their flocks and herds upon enslaved Kaffirs. A vigorous champion of her own sex, the utter disregard of the simplest rights of the Boer women by their masters was made, no doubt, the basis of her denunciations of the Boers, which, published in an American magazine some months ago, attracted general attention and comment. Her championship of the Boers is separate and apart from her estimate of their character as oppressors of all weaker people who were weaker physically than themselves.

It is difficult to conceive upon what basis she could plead for the larger power and complete liberty of men who—presumptively at least—upon her own showing were unfit to exercise the measure of power that they possessed. Unlettered in the very alphabet of civilization; living in huts of the lowest and filthiest description; possessed of a

religious fanaticism that made them regard themselves as the Lord's chosen people; making slaves of the natives whom first they had despoiled, and unhesitatingly accepting Paul Kruger as their dictator—it is a marvel that the rude burghers of the Transvaal have secured in Oliver Schreiner a champion by lineage, was a cook in a restaurant when Margaret married him, and a very cheap, shiftless creature, if we may judge from Hawthorne's contemptuous allusions to him. Lowell and Hawthorne describe Margaret Fuller under the ironical titles of Minerva and Zenobia.

## GLADSTONE KILLED THE LIBERAL PARTY.

Lord Rosebery's manifesto on the divisions of the Liberal party takes a gloomy view of its future. No wonder he despairs of his party when it is divided upon a question concerning which the nation is by a very large majority against the pro-Boer faction of the Liberals. No wonder it is exciting adverse comment. The decline of the Liberal party began fifteen years ago, when Gladstone's radical policy of home rule for Ireland drove out of the party the Duke of Devonshire (then Lord Hartington), John Bright and a number of eminent men who were in harmony with the party on everything save that of home rule for Ireland. Had Gladstone been fifteen years younger, his powerful personality might possibly have recovered from defeat, but it is doubtful whether he could have prevented the breaking out of the Boer War, which resulted from Gladstone's fatal error in losing his opportunity to conquer and annex the Transvaal in 1884, after the English defeat at Majuba Hill. Gladstone was warned at the time by some of his political friends that he was only sowing the seed of a future conflict in the Liberal party, the division in the Liberal party is on this very question, which divides it even as the war for the Union divided the Democratic party into War Democrats and "Copperheads."

Lord Rosebery, Herbert Asquith and a majority of the Liberal party have supported the government vigorously in the matter of the Boer war, and continue to support it, but a minority of that party under the leadership of John Morley and Sir William Harcourt have opposed from the beginning the war against the Boers, and there are others, like Campbell-Bannerman, who, while granting the subjugation of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State to be inevitable, favor the immediate grant to the conquered Boers of a full measure of local self-government on Canadian or Australian lines. To such a measure at present there is not the slightest prospect that the British people would consent. The government is bound to persist in its subjugation of the Boers, and it could not safely grant the Boers the rights and privileges which would enable them to recover their losses and renew the struggle. The British Empire cannot afford to lose the Cape of Good Hope, and for this reason the government will not soon grant the Boers of the late South African Republic home rule.

Some of the Liberals who left Gladstone in 1886 to join the Unionist party have gone so far as to say that Gladstone "killed the Liberal party." It is certainly true that Gladstone's mistaken magnanimity in 1884 England owed the Boer War. It is certainly true that Gladstone completely outran English support in his policy of home rule for Ireland, and it is certain that it is the Gladstonian reconcilables, both English and Irish, that form the pro-Boer minority of the Liberal party today. The present attitude of this pro-Boer faction is sure to be fatal to any near restoration of the Liberal party to power. History will repeat itself. The English support in his policy of home rule for Ireland, and it is certain that it is the Gladstonian reconcilables, both English and Irish, that form the pro-Boer minority of the Liberal party today. The present attitude of this pro-Boer faction is sure to be fatal to any near restoration of the Liberal party to power. History will repeat itself. 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