

The Oregonian.

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TODAY'S WEATHER—Occasional rain, with brisk to high southerly winds.

YESTERDAY'S WEATHER—Maximum temperature, 45; minimum temperature, 36; precipitation, 0.11 inch.

PORTLAND, SUNDAY, MARCH 23.

THE PRICE OF DEMOCRACY.

The real complaint of General Miles and his partisans, assuming it to be wholly sincere and disinterested, is not against his superior, but against our system; and his natural and logical discontent must be borne, for it is an inevitable part of the price of democracy.

Government in the United States suffers, throughout all its forms, from school district to nation, from the enthronement of the amateur office, with all its responsibilities, authority and power, is continually passing from the trained to the untrained, from experience to ignorance, from the skilled and competent to the unskilled and incompetent. Novices are in control of everything, from White House to Road Supervisor.

Nothing is clearer than that the Senate itself can never or not for a long time be trusted to approve the House bill for the Constitutional Amendment necessary to bring the change about. So many Senators believe in the legislative machinery as the source of their own power and the means of its perpetuation that they regard the move for popular election as inimical to their own political existence.

has become a standing joke. Charlie McDowell had no experience, but he made a good Assessor. Funston never saw West Point, but he captured Aguinaldo. Experience is a good thing, but there are things more important.

Honest industry is fit for almost any office to which it may aspire, and mistakes are easily corrected. No political machine can save the discredited Senator. There is no tribunal of expert examiners above the popular vote. When the people want they must have; and in the long run they will do well. Every device for reaching more directly and accurately the popular will advances the cause of good government.

THE ONLY WAY.

The throes of a Senatorial campaign again remind us how urgent is the necessity for the change in the method of electing Senators. There is no more reason why a United States Senator should not be compelled to go before the people for approval than there is why a State Senator should not, or a Governor, or the President of the United States.

The objection to which all opposition to the change seems to have been reduced is that thus we should run counter to the Constitution's theory that choice of Senators must be removed from the stress and peril of popular crazes. The theory found expression, not only in the indirect election of Senators, but in the indirect election of Presidents. But, as we all know, the selection of Presidents has long been removed from the indirect method prescribed by the Constitution.

Why, then, is it not possible to substitute at once the system of convention and popular election using in connection with the Presidential office, or the Legislative method of choosing Senators? The answer is that what holds the members of the electoral college to their trust is the fact that the whole perpetuity of their National party organization depends upon it.

There is no one in the country who is not well acquainted with the history of the party. It is not a novel to read in three years old before you admit it to a public library may test its popularity, but it does not settle its merit upon any soubstant basis than it occupied three months after publication.

The "Crisis" is a popular novel; it is entirely decent in its tone, but it is no more fit to be compared with "Audrey" in its beauty or its art than "Thaddeus of Warsaw" with "The Mill on the Floss." "The Crisis" makes the great historical figure of Abraham Lincoln the tail to the kite of a very cheap love story, but there is no such "blacksmith" work in "Audrey," and this conclusion would be reached at once by any intelligent reader.

The local campaign now on in Oregon reminds us how closely this principle applies to the lower walks of politics. We shall soon have men without experience running for offices in which lack of experience is a heavy handicap. We shall have men in the Legislature who never sat in the Legislature, never made a speech or drew up a bill. We shall have a State Printer who never was State Printer in his life, and a Sheriff who was never Sheriff, and a Constable who never saw an ordinance.

greater; for it is families that make population, not herd of men without families—such herd as fills the streets of Seattle, begging, dead broke, going to or returning from Alaska, living nowhere, but picked up by political bosses and registered for elections. Resident population is made up of families and school children, not "vagrom men."

AN ABSURD LIMITATION.

Mr. Carnegie recently said that he would bar from libraries fiction less than three years old. This seems to be an absurd limitation. There is a standard of decent merit in fiction which does not need a mere popularity or esteem of three years for a novel to reach. The real worth of a book devoted to historical or scientific investigation should be so quickly tested.

To illustrate, take "Audrey," Mary Johnston's latest work. It is easy to criticize it for quite frequent lapses from strict grammatical accuracy, just as it is easy to find fault with Byron's poetry, which is full of grammatical transgressions. But while Byron was guilty of bad grammar, he was so eloquent and powerful a writer that no man of intellect and imagination thinks long about Byron's grammatical looseness of style.

All the fine novels of modern life made a speedy impression at once as to their intellectual and moral quality, even if they did not at once prove to be popular, quick-selling books. We do not remember a standard work of fiction that did not at once obtain and retain an excellent reputation, which time only served to confirm.

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TUB-THUMPERS ON THE PLATFORM.

Fifty years ago the lecture platform was among the popular forms of public entertainment, and sometimes, when the boards were trod by a really able, solid man of public instruction, every country town at the East or Middle West of 5000 inhabitants had a lecture association.

From about 1850 to 1875 the public lecture was in good demand. Theodore Parker, who was not an eloquent man at all, was in great demand East and West because of his extraordinary capacity for weighting his thoughts with a vast variety of facts from political history and the world's literature, both sacred and profane; his anti-slavery argument was not sentimental, but industrial and economic.

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AS TO POPULATION.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer says: "The total registered vote of Portland, at the time the election was held at the recent primaries, was 15,634, almost precisely identical with the registration for the recent city election in Seattle." The books at Portland were not "closed" for the recent primaries. They will not be closed till May 15; and meantime many thousands of additional voters will be registered.

carried from the transmitter to the receiver with surprising distinctness. The spirit of incredulity rises in connection with these reports dealing with matters so far beyond ordinary comprehension, but in view of the wonders of the past few years it is the part of discretion to reserve one's doubts. Nothing that is suggested by the experiments either of Marconi or of Dugretee is less believable than the familiar marvels of the long-distance telephone.

Of course, for hard-working people of limited opportunity and time for reading it is a fine thing to have a lecturer give them in a clear and entertaining form things that are new to them, but this is not the kind of audience that goes forth at 11 A. M. to hear Griggs lecture. If he were a man worth seeing, like John Bright or Gladstone, or our own Phillips Brooks, his drawing power would need no explanation.

It is not likely that the President will undertake seriously to retire General Miles from the Army in punishment for his unrestrained speech before a Congressional committee. General Corbin may urge it, but surely the President would not do so lightly.

"INSIDE CIRCLE" ADMINISTRATION.

Current events in connection with the desirability of such general overhauling of both the Army and Navy Departments as will stop the talk about rings and cliques, that there is an "inside circle" in both these departments is to state gently the popular belief.

The acquittal of Stewart Fife, who was arrested in North Yakima some weeks ago and returned to Savannah, Mo., for complicity in the Richardson murder that took place there Christmas eve, ends a most sensational prosecution, supplemental to a mysterious crime.

The appointment of a committee of Congress to inquire into the disfranchisement of negroes in the South is useless and silly. It can produce no other result than partisan strife. The South will not be ruled by the negro, and where the negroes are very numerous their votes will be nullified.

ELECTRICAL PROGRESS.

The old observation that scientific discovery proceeds along parallel lines and that its results come in groups finds interesting illustration in connection with the development of wireless telephony. Marconi, it appears, is by no means the only experimenter along wireless lines.

Four men have declined the post of Assistant Postmaster-General. The Presidential ax will have to take a rest soon for want of substituting material.

Mr. Dillon's manners are almost Senatorial. He boarded awhile at a high-priced hotel. But found it, he said, not sufficiently well. His neckwear was joyous, his raiment was glad.

He boarded awhile at a high-priced hotel. But found it, he said, not sufficiently well. His neckwear was joyous, his raiment was glad. He kicks and his tie were the best he had, but he'd gaze at them sadly, and mournfully because they seemed shockingly lacking in tone.

He married a wife who was charming and fair. But complained at her eyes, and her voice, and her hair. Four years with her clothes and grieved at her ways.

He worried considerably through his career. Reflections on paradise filled him with fear. He said: "I will hand me a halo that's old. And I don't think the streets will be 14-3, gold."

A Campaign Speech.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I stand before you tonight to speak for our glorious party. Never in the history of our proud country has there been a time when the eternal principles which we so well represent have been so widely diffused, so fervently scattered, so enthusiastically received throughout this grand country.

Some of our little folks having apparently been overlooked in the prize essay competition of the Oregon Humane Society, we submit the following list of subjects, prizes to be awarded by the society.

Some of the Signs.

Now and then a sunbeam Drops from out the sky, Lightens up the road you go by; Swifts of Spring are blowing Up the canyon trail; Flutters cotton Flutters cotton All of which 'll tell you 'Tis the good old rhyme, 'Tis the good old rhyme, 'Tis the good old rhyme, Close to home, 'Tis the good old rhyme.

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A VANITY OF VANITIES.

"A long while ago the world began," sings somebody in Shakespeare. Likewise, could I simply find nothing to eat or to drink. To wear or to ride in, to talk or to think. To buy or to have, or to hold or to do. To know or admire, possess or pursue. Which seemed, to his mind to be quite up to snuff. The whole world for him was not half good enough.

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SLINGS AND ARROWS.

He boarded awhile at a high-priced hotel. But found it, he said, not sufficiently well. His neckwear was joyous, his raiment was glad. He kicks and his tie were the best he had, but he'd gaze at them sadly, and mournfully because they seemed shockingly lacking in tone.

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