

It puzzles the minds of the class of chronic politicians to understand the mission of an independent newspaper which declines to tie itself to the aims of any political dynasty, and has opinions that are not dependent on party platforms and caucus nominations. To such, the doctrines laid down by party conventions are for the time being law, and the actions of the caucus follow after with the power of a gospel. The convention having spoken and the caucus having chosen there is no way left but for the unheeding sheep to follow the guidance of their shepherd.

There may be, as there have been in the party, crises of imminence, when peril threatens the life of a nation and the only hope of the people lies in united action, and of such times voters acquiesce in nominations they do not sanction, and for the sake of the great ends to be secured do not haggle about the instrumentalities by which they are to be accomplished.

Will any sane man pretend to say that such a crisis exists at the present time? Will he even pretend that at this time that there are any old questions existing which should be fought over in a spirit of bitter partisanship? There certainly are no such questions before the people, and to-day the existence of old political parties is threatened because fire cannot burn without fuel and partisanship cannot maintain its bitterness without positive differences to form a cause of quarrel.

It is amusing to a man who really stands and looks over the field of politics from an independent position, to witness the indifference of the people on the one hand and the eager strife of the politicians on the other. The latter, of course, count on the support of the masses and plan their campaigns as vigorously as ever. Cease never divided captured provinces with more certainty than these aspirants divide among themselves the anticipated spoils of office. They are so certain that they want office that they can't believe the people don't want them to have it.

The mission of the partisan politician and the mere party journal is a narrow and very generally a selfish one. The career of the independent journal is both easy and natural, and therefore much happier than that of the mere time server or office seeker. There are multitudes of matters to discuss without disparagement of either the claims or virtues of rivals. Instead of educating the world to be bitter and narrow minded, after the style of mere party journals, one that speaks the voice of the people can honor truth and virtue wherever they are found, and do something towards the proper education of mankind in all liberal thoughts and feelings, and its success does not depend upon the success of any party.

The independent journals of our day include some that have been Republican and others that have been Democratic, and chief among the latter may be counted the Chicago Times which has thrown off party fetters and become one of the ablest and most influential newspapers in America. We should like to see its example followed by a paper of that class here in Oregon.

We unhesitatingly assert that neither of the old political parties is capable of serving the people well to-day, because each is controlled by selfish men and officered by designing demagogues. To-day the need is for honesty and economy in administration of the government, a work we cannot afford to entrust to old political tricksters. There are honest men in the world but no political party has the monopoly of them. The people need them all for the coming battle against reckless extravagance and official dishonesty. The only safety is for all honest men to ignore party and fight side by side for principle, and the coming battle is not to be between armies of the people ranged against each other, but it must be the people against their common enemies—monopoly which seeks to blind the nation in its claims and reduce the people to be little more than serfs, and politicians who stand in the way, ready to sell all else to secure their own advancement.

The people want to know whom they can trust and they must be prudent and careful as to what steps they take or they may find that they cannot even trust themselves.

WANTS NO BUNCH GRASS IN HIS.

A very prominent gentleman whose name has during the last month been mixed up with every prominent office in the gift of Marion county, and whose capacity is equal to holding them all if the people and the State Constitution could be made to see it, has struck the richest idea out of "retrenchment and reform." He is supposed to have originated the remonstrance against the viewing out of the new Cascade mountain road, because it possibly may cost something. He wants to keep Lake La Bish at high water to drown his sorrows in and not to have any mountain road made by which his constituents can escape him. Tying Lake La Bish to the mountain road is shrewdness epitomized, but we suggest that the road to bunch grass ought to be made soon, & only to give him a chance to imitate the example of Nebuchadnezzar in hopes to improve his condition and enable him to live without an office. He can contrive the manufacture of "slates" as a harmless amusement.

The good people of Douglas county give a very hearty endorsement of the Farmer's call for independent action in connection with their county politics, and we have received a further list of about two hundred names to be added to the same, which indicates, what the sender of them declares, that the movement will sweep Douglas county with enthusiasm. Two hundred and fifty names gathered in so short a time, from so wide spread community as Douglas county contains, indicates that there is singular unanimity of feeling among the people there in desiring to ignore old partisan prejudices and labor together for the interests of all. We have the best possible proof that the same feeling extends through all the counties of the Willamette valley and will be certain to assert itself in much the same way. We have been assured by many of the most respected citizens of Marion county, including well known members of both the old parties, that they stand ready to sign such a call and to labor zealously for the success of such a movement here and through the State.

While such is the sentiment of the country, it is amusing to us to note the entire innocence of some Salem politicians, who should have recognized that they were comfortably shelved at least two years ago, but who grope around in the blindness of an old infatuation and think they are shrewdly planning the game which is to control the June elections in Marion county. The days of rings and slates is past. Even if there is no other result of our efforts they will necessitate that each party shall put in the field the best men at its command, and not a single one of those shrewd gentlemen who are so confidently planning for their own advancement will stand a ghost of a chance, because no party will dare nominate a made up slate. So made up slates will be positively smashed to atoms.

It further amuses us to hear that slate makers and ring workers are determined to have their own newspapers in the field. Our paper is welcomed to the freestone of a thousand homes in Marion county alone; it is received as the people's own paper, which has no friends to name as candidates and has no axe to grind, but depends on the fair support of the people for its existence and recognizes that it can only win that support by fully and disinterestedly discussing it. Not a mail comes to this city which does not bring us new subscribers and words of good cheer. The Salem postmaster can inform all interested that no such letter mails were ever before received by any Salem newspaper, and that never before did such a heavy newspaper mail ever go from this city throughout the length and breadth of the State of Oregon.

Devotion to interests of the people, and advocacy of what we believe to be right does not involve a tame subservency to any living man or set of men. We recognize that the Patrons of Husbandry are our friends and liberal patrons, but we took our course before we knew of such an order and before a single grange was organized in Oregon, and to-day we are ignorant of its workings as any other well-read outsider. It is manifest to us that the people relish outspoken, honest independence, and are true to those who are true to them, when we cease to represent the people fairly they will be sure to withdraw their support, and not before. Our towns may be slow to awake to a realization of the identity of interests between town and country, but that will come in time and we can wait and work for the regeneration of the denizens of our towns and cities with a confidence that there is a good time coming—even for them.

COMMON SCHOOLS.

One of the most urgent needs of our young and growing State is a common school system that shall advance the cause of education by securing educational facilities to every neighborhood in Oregon. Our school laws need overhauling and thorough revising, and that is a work we believe the educators of our State have cognizance of with a view to suggesting needed amendments, they having, at the session of the State Teachers' Institute here in December, concluded that as short sessions preclude the possibility of thoroughly considering a new bill the most effectual remedy lies in repairing the existing law to make the most of its good points and to amend its defective ones. It is to be hoped that at the next session our State Legislators will find time to consider this matter of public education well and not allow any excuse for its neglect. The people want schools, and the great movement which is in progress at the present time looks to social and intellectual advancement, which can only be satisfied by liberal educational advantages.

When the question of providing free schools is mooted in this community we always hear business men and persons of reputed wealth make the objection that while they do not like to be specially taxed to support a free school system in this special district they would be cheerfully willing to pay their quota of a regular State tax to support free schools all over Oregon. We very much desire to test the sincerity of these professions, and we are satisfied that the people will more willingly pay taxes to support schools and provide fair educational facilities for their children than for any other purpose. A

thousand teachers would be required for that purpose, and their support would require an expenditure of half a million dollars. We do not say that this could all be raised by direct taxation, or that it should be so raised, but we do say this: that one of the most important matters for our people to consider in the coming election, and for our coming legislators to act upon, is the formation of a suitable system of general education.

As a community advances towards a prosperous and enlightened civilization the school house comes into plain view and bears a more important part. The pedagogue is an effectual enemy of the demagogue, and it is a teacher is fit for the occupation the community will grow too enlightened for prejudice to exist. We stand or fall by our schools. If we have them we progress, and if we neglect them we remain in the dark bondage of ignorance.

The children who grow up together in schools are better friends and neighbors in after life for having explored the paths of learning in each other's company. They who learn the rudiments of education have within their grasp all the realm of knowledge, and it lies within themselves to say how far they will explore it. We know more than one man in Oregon who has toiled slowly on after attaining the age of manhood, learning to read and write and acquiring knowledge with great difficulty, who are now well-read men, and invariably these men are determined at every hazard to offer their children advantages which they never possessed.

Those who come among us from abroad sometimes feel a want of the advantages they enjoyed in the older States, while they recognize that we are doing all that seems possible to advance education among us. The popular cry of "retrenchment and reform;" "economy and honesty;" is not meant to close our schools, but to put an end to all the extravagance and corruption that burdens the tax payers of the State and the nation, and limits our ability to forward the cause of education. We can obtain much of our public service at much less than the usual cost, and it is safe to say that economical administration of all public affairs, from municipal affairs up to the national capital, would economize a sufficient sum to educate the children of the nation.

We possess some means, an educational fund that is derived from lands donated for the purpose, and taxation is not needed to the full amount, but we might to advantage levy more school tax and economize elsewhere to make it up. We can only close with a brief exhortation to the people of Oregon to insist on better facilities for the education of the youth of the State.

CITY AND COUNTRY.

We occupy rather an anomalous position, living in a city, and publishing a daily paper there, and at the same time being the special advocate of the interests of the country. We do not mean to intimate by this that we ignore or at all neglect the interests of Salem, or of any other of the towns of our State, because we recognize that we do all that is in our power to advance and promote the interests of Salem in particular, and the very liberal support we receive here shows that the citizens view it so.

In reality, the interests of the towns are dependent on the success of the country. Let us have poor harvests and low prices for all farm products, and the workshops as well as the stores of the towns are idle and profitless. The last harvest in the country was followed by the more than average harvest by merchants and mechanics in all our towns. It is not the regular dealers that the farmers are leaguely against, it is the speculator and monopolist who are combined to keep the farmers poor against whom they have in turn combined.

In advocating the cause of the country we are surely laying the foundations for the prosperity of the towns. Schools and factories will come of this farmers movement. There will be greater advantages and privileges as a result of the success of the producers and the growth and prosperity of towns will follow the success of the Granges.

If there are any mere parasites grafted on the society of towns they may dread the era of progress and enlightenment, as may also the same class who lust the country, but all honest men, with honest business, must welcome as a great harbinger of good this popular movement which looks to social excellence and growth in intelligence as well as for the protection of the producers from the rapacity of placemen, speculators and politicians. It is true that rings, cliques and monopolies find their richest soil in our towns, but the men who nourish such baleful enterprises are not the best citizens of our towns, by any means. Such creatures are excrecences and putrid sores, in any community, which require severe cauterizing before the body politic can be healthy.

There may possibly be an over supply in the towns of the class of men who fancy themselves born to ornament high positions, and who think they cannot live without it, and the fact that political combinations have been easiest effected where such aspirants congregate and have an immediate influence, goes to prove that the towns have more than their fair share of demagogues, but even our fellow citizens

here in Salem must confess that their city would live and prosper if these ambitious creatures were suddenly to disappear.

The fact is that the mass of townspeople are indifferent to such men, and are in hearty sympathy with the whole country and anxious for the general good. Our mechanics know that the country builds the towns, and we all ought to know that a common tie of country and of home, reaches from one fireside to another through all the land, and makes us one people. We even feel some interest in the ambition of our town politicians, mingled with amusement at their absurd gyrations.

FARM JOURNALS AND POLITICS.

The Western Rural, published at Chicago, is one of the great agricultural papers of the United States, and our readers can see by the following extracts from its columns that the Willamette Farmer is not alone of its class in advocating independent political action by the people. A correspondent of the Rural writes:

For the first time in the history of our country, the farmers are associating for the purpose of becoming better informed as to their private and public interests. They are aware of the fact that they have not been treated as well as they should have been and are combining to remedy it.

It was to prevent the middle-men, or those that live by trading, and by transporting the products of labor, from making exorbitant profits that the great movement now known as "The Farmers Movement" was commenced. But no sooner had the farmers begun to investigate the causes of the hard times that have been slowly but steadily increasing all over the country than they began to discover that the politicians were even worse enemies to them than were the middle-men. As a consequence, the farmers, in several of the States of the Great West, have entered the political field and smashed the slates of the hitherto all-powerful political ring-masters.

The interference of the farmers in politics has caused a great commotion among the politicians. They know full well that, should the farmers unite and act together as a class, they have the power to rule the nation. They are, therefore, anxiously studying the Farmers' Movement to see what the farmers intend to do. In those States or localities where the Democrats are in the majority, the Democratic politicians fear the movement lest it should injure their prospects for office. In those States and localities in which the Republicans are in the majority, the Republican politicians are naturally opposed to the farmers interfering in politics, lest their chances for obtaining public position, should be diminished. But, on the whole, in the nation at large, the Democratic politicians are more favorable to the Farmers' Movement than are the Republicans, mainly because their party is in the minority. The Democratic press and politicians generally are disposed to look upon the Movement in a patronizing manner. In fact, they are quite willing that it should become a grand political movement, always provided that it acts as an ally of the Democratic party, and aids it in obtaining power.

The Republican press and leaders, seeing that their party has control of the nation, are on the whole anxious to have the farmers avoid the political field. They know full well that the movement can do their party no good and may do it incalculable injury. The great organs of the Republican party are, therefore, continually warning the farmers not to allow their Movement to become political, and they denounce all the leaders of the farmers that propose to make it political as broken down politicians and political demagogues.

Politicians may as well understand that, whether they like it or not, the great Farmers' Movement will become political. It is necessary that it should, in order to put down the corruption that now everywhere exists in political circles. If the American people are indeed capable of self-government, the time has now arrived for us to prove it, for as yet it is an open question, as a glance at the situation of our country will clearly show.

And we clip from the editorial columns the following paragraph:

With respect to the Granges and their political action, there is no restriction placed upon individual Patrons acting politically in just whatever manner they think proper. It is true that the discussion of politics is forbidden in the Granges. So is the discussion of religious matters; yet we have not heard of any neophyte Patron being required to renounce his form of worship as a preliminary to joining the Order. On becoming a Patron, the farmer does not surrender his political birthright and is not hampered in the exercise of it. It is now too late in the day to discuss whether the Granges are likely to operate for the advantage of the farmer or not. All this was discussed two years ago and would be in course of discussion now if the Granges had not taken the bit in their teeth and run beyond discussion. For good or evil, the die is cast, and they are already the controlling power in several of the States.

Also this:

What we were among the first to maintain, and do still maintain, is that the promptest, and only effectual, remedy for the corruption in office which is the prime source of the farmers' wrongs is for the farmers themselves to take the matter in hand, and put honest men in office in the place of the present incumbents.

AN OPINION FROM WASCO COUNTY.

Mr. A. H. Breyman writes to his brothers in this city, from Mitchell, Wasco county, as follows:

"I see a movement is on foot by some of your enterprising men, which, if carried out, will be a great benefit to Salem and the valley. That is the building of the road over the Cascade mountains, proposed by Minto and others. It is such an easy pass, as they claim, it will be the road for this country. It will open direct communication for us here, in winter as well as summer and afford us an easy market, saving from \$2 to \$3 per head, and on the other hand will open you a large market for goods and supplies. So by all means advocate it and help it along; you will reap large benefits from it after awhile."

Reform doesn't contemplate that offices shall be so remunerative that men shall be willing to abandon every other walk of life to obtain them or that speculators shall be willing to league their chances to form cliques and rings and band themselves together to corrupt elections and pollute every stream that leads to them. Such is the case however, and these aspirants frequently expend their fortunes to obtain paying positions or to hold them when got. Having failed to get them they often become broken down and discouraged men, soured towards themselves and the world. There is no more pernicious aim than this wretched greed for office, which is especially evil because men are not so often indicted therefor by honorable ambition or desire for selfish aggrandizement, and a fish greed leads to all the corruption that exists in the nation.

Gentlemen who come from the country to attend to business in town inform us that there are already a great many candidates for office there, and we gather that our aspirants in town lay siege to their country friends whenever an opportunity offers, which is rather hard on their country friends considering that they doubtless have their full share of aspirants in the country to attend to. The man who is qualified to discharge positions of public trust ought to be capable of making his way well in private life, and if he cannot earn a good living for himself it is safe to suppose that he cannot attend to important public affairs. If he can earn a good living he should not be anxious to leave a good business for the uncertainties of office and the gift of office should be a popular entitlement conferred on capable men rather than a position gained by wire-working, combinations and political chicanery.

The people are not intending to let themselves be wheedled and tricked out of offices just at the present time and the urging of personal claims will most of it be thrown away.

Rev. J. F. DeVore publishes his answer to the charges made against him, and his answer is a confession that he originally charged the Government for three times the time actually employed in making appraisement of property at Neah Bay. He reduced the claim when objection was made, to be sure, but he made it, and the church very properly considers that it was untruthful to do so, and practically dishonest. It is to be hoped that a single act, done in accordance with worldly usages, will not counterbalance a score of years of usefulness and faithful service, but this case illustrates the pernicious effect, and demoralizing result of office-holding on the best of men.

It seems to be considered the right thing to make all that can be made out of town, county, State or nation, when engaged in public service, and the remedy for this reckless speculation is to reduce salaries to a common rate for similar service and exact a full performance. The duty of reform is to strip office of its glitter; to reduce the public service to the same rate of pay as other service and to punish official greed, as the church proposes to do in the instance quoted, by applying the rules of common honesty to all public affairs.

We cannot close this without giving some advice to the thousands of men in Oregon who are longing for office. Go home and attend to your own business and don't lose time soliciting rates and influence, but leave the people to select their men from the abundant material which seems to be on hand.

DRAINING LAKE LA BISH.

County Commissioner Case informs us that there never has been any intention on the part of the County Court to expend another dollar in draining Lake La Bish; and farther, he explains that the ditching already done was not for the benefit of any individual, but solely to make the most permanent and cheapest road across the lake and dispense with the old bridge system which was costly and always getting out of repair. The bridge built some years ago has rotted and required constant repairs, until finally condemned, and cost about \$1,800 originally, by contract, and repairs have cost about \$1,200 more. Total cost \$3,000, since 1862. The road now made, well ditched and poled, and which will be graveled by the work of the road district, with good culvert, and roadway 20 feet wide instead of 12 feet, has cost, with all the ditching above and below, \$1,654 88.

We consider that this answers the complaint against the enterprise, and as to the benefits to those living near by, their increased values will cost them \$75, more taxes each year. The Commissioners held off, trying to get them to contribute, but they would not. It is supposed that this matter is worked up by somebody who wants to be County Judge and is trying hard to make capital against Judge Terry. Mr. Case further says the Commissioners have no intention to do more than survey the road over the mountains, to present its advantages in a reliable shape for encouragement of private enterprise.

IS ANOTHER INDEPENDENT.

The Jacksonville Sentinel congratulates itself that so many old party men are breaking off from their partisan allegiance, and renouncing such thralldom manifest a disposition to be free men. That sounds well for Jackson county and shows that the Sentinel has joined the innumerable caravan of free thinking American citizens who prefer to be independent of partisan trammels. It looks well for the Republican party that three of its leading organs have spoken out for independence, and very naturally the people will soon begin to wonder when any of the Democratic journals will meet their example by similar enunciation. The day is soon coming when it will be very fashionable for newspapers to pretend to advocate the cause of the people, but the people will not be apt to trust those who have to be dragged in to a movement against their will. The idea is worth remembering.