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THE MAINE ELECTION.

In the Fourth congressional district of Maine, a republican, ex-Governor Powers, was elected to succeed Charles A. Bontelle, the unfortunate member of congress who has become unfitted to perform his duties by reason of falling mental powers. Powers' majority was 2000. The same district last September gave Bontelle more than 10,000 majority. This falling off of the republican majority 80 per cent is somewhat significant. A reasonable reduction might have been accounted for by difference in the personal popularity of the two candidates. Powers in April, 1901, and Bontelle in September, 1900. But, the loss of 80 per cent is logically taken to mean a remarkable weakening of the republican forces in the East.

Many republican journals are nowadays warning that party that the people may take it into their heads to turn out the incumbent and put in the opposition party at the next election. The Maine incident and the municipal elections in many Eastern cities, together with countless other political straws indicate a storm in prospect for the party that is now doing all it possibly can to entrench the trusts in power, and make it difficult to order events so as to arrest the trend towards tyrannical regimes of which the trusts shall be the dictators. If the democratic party will demean itself so as to command the confidence of the conservative business man, as well as the laboring man and the man of small income, it may elect the successor of Major McKinley and a congress of the same political persuasion.

NOW CHILDISH, ONCE GREAT.

The recent fight between General Cassius M. Clay, of Kentucky, and a force of deputy sheriffs, following an attempt to serve a civil writ upon the old warrior, will tend to create a wrong impression of the real character of the man who once stood on a level with the great men of the United States. Gen. Clay, although during recent years very foolish and perpetrating deeds apparently indicative of a weak mind, was at one time a man of commanding influence and acknowledged intellect. Among the strong characters that gathered at the national capital during the '60s, General Clay held his place as one of the brainiest and as a man of statesmanlike qualities. He was powerful in influencing the course of national affairs. His word bore weight upon the most important events coming before the country.

He is now about eighty years old. Nearing the end of his life, he loses somewhat of his strength of mind, it is true, and performs acts calculated to belittle him in the eyes of the rising generations. Yet, say those who knew him when in his prime, he is of honored past, and one of the men who has had to do with high councils on affairs of surpassing importance.

HUMILIATING GENERAL MILLS.

Citizens of this country are prone to wonder for what is Major-General Miles retained in office, and some are pondering over the question as to why a commander-in-chief of the United States army is needed at all. General Miles is a commander of finished military education, of proven courage, who has himself successfully taken the field at the head of large forces and who has a record entitling him to highest consideration at the hands of the federal government.

Notwithstanding all these facts, General Miles is compelled to remain a mere figurehead, an army commander-in-chief with no power to command. He has no more to say about

the conduct of affairs than the ordinary citizen, and not one tithe of the authority possessed by the machine politicians who seem to control events in the realm of the war department.

Movements are ordered, promotions are made, plans are decided, and all the multitude of detail is carried on without the commander-in-chief having one word to say. It is the apparent intention of the administration to snub and humiliate General Miles just so often as an opportunity presents itself.

Fair-minded men will record against President McKinley a story of insult permitted and frequent happenings calculated to lose to the army the respect due it from the people throughout the country.

When Secretary Root took charge of the war portfolio, it was hoped that a better status was to be established. These hopes were unfounded. Adjutant-General Corbin, a man with no particular accomplishments to his credit as a soldier, succeeds always in his petty schemes for the embarrassment of the brave fighter and distinguished commander who holds what has become the merely nominal title of commander-in-chief.

PROBLEM OF SIGNALING MARS.

Although Mars is now some time past opposition and more than eighty million miles distant, he is still the most interesting object in our evening skies; and this not so much for what we know about him, as what we imagine.

The belief in his habitability, rather strengthened than diminished by the discoveries of recent years, but as yet incapable of proof or disproof, finds its most appealing presentation to the public mind in the idea of possible signaling between men and the inhabitants of the planet.

Let us for the present assume that such intelligent inhabitants exist, and that the Martian canals are their work. We may then go on to consider what signaling to them involves, and whether it would be mechanically possible.

At the outset we are limited to two ways of signaling—by means of light, and by the electric waves of the same nature but enormously longer period used in wireless telegraphy, since these alone of all earthly means of communication, can pass through interplanetary space. Of these two, light is by far the most promising, as the unaided eye can detect a far smaller amount of energy in that form than the most delicate instruments can in the form of electric waves.

When Mars is nearest us, the earth is almost directly between him and the sun. In consequence we can only see Mars at night, and his sunlit side is turned toward us. From Mars, on the contrary, only the dark side of the earth can be seen, and that in the Martian daytime. Therefore signals from the earth to Mars would have to be made by artificial light, while those in the reverse direction might be made with reflected sunshine. Moreover, our signals would be obscured by the glare of the Martian sky close to the sun; while theirs would have only the light of the planet and stars to interfere with them. For both these reasons it is much easier for the Martians to signal to us than for us to reply, and therefore we will first calculate on the supposition that they are flashing to us with reflected sunlight.

It is surprising how small a mirror will suffice to produce signals visible at a considerable distance in broad daylight. One three inches in diameter gives flashes which are conspicuous to the naked eye ten miles away. Indeed, this is the system of telegraphing messages of which we have heard so much from South Africa. The writer has no available data as to the minimum size of mirror which can be used. It is, however, probably safe to allow an inch of diameter of the mirror for each ten miles of distance if the signals are to be clearly read by the naked eye, and we will use this ratio in our work.

In the case of Mars the signals would be observed with large telescopes transmitting perhaps 10,000 times as much light as enters the naked eye from the same object. In consequence

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the Martians' mirror need have only 1-10,000 of the area or 1-100 of the diameter that our heliograph role would require. We need make no extra allowance for the fact that the Martian signals are to be observed at night, since they would be seen against the bright background of the planet's disk, just as the terrestrial flashes are seen against sunlit sky or hills.

Our final ratio is then one inch of mirror diameter for each thousand miles of distance. Now the least possible distance of Mars is 35,000,000 miles. The mirror with which its inhabitants signaled to us would therefore have to be at least 35,000 feet in diameter. To produce such a piece of glass is clearly far beyond the present resources of human engineering. It seems possible, however, that beings who could construct the Martian canals could also make such a mirror, but once made its mounting would present still greater trouble. It would have to be set up so that its plane was equally inclined to the directions of the earth and sun, and moved by some sort of gigantic clockwork, to counteract the planet's rotation just as telescopes have to be moved on earth.

To make flashes by covering up the whole enormous structure, or by tilting it, seems hardly possible; but its end could be attained by a mirror composed of parallel strips, like the slats of a window blind, which could all be turned out of their plane at once, and later brought back to place by relatively simple mechanism, the whole to be mounted in a great frame moved by the clockwork spoken of above. No firm on earth would take the contract for such an apparatus; but it does not seem impossible that the human engineering of a few centuries hence might be equal to the task. So we reach the interesting conclusion that it is not inconceivable that men residing on Mars might be able to heliograph messages to us, and we cannot deny the same ability to the Martians, however unlike as they may be.

How hopeless the task of signaling to them would be we can now see. What gigantic conflagration, what combustion of all the searchlights of the world, could produce a ray equal in intensity to a solid beam of sunlight a thousand yards across? How could we point them all correctly? And how interrupt their light at will? Remembering that these are the conditions for sending a message from Mars and that it is much more difficult to signal in the reverse direction, we may give up the idea of the use of any regular communication between the two planets.—Henry Norris Russell, in Scientific American.

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