East Oregonian

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1902.

PRISON REFORM.

Some of the older Eastern States, notably New York and Rhode Island, are agitating the question of establishing juvenile courts, with jurisdiction over criminals under 16 years of age. The prominent clergymen, jurists and educators, together with the women's clubs and sociologists, are taking an active interest in the matter.

The association of young boys with older criminals has a bad effect upon society. The old man, steeped in his fixed criminal habits, bends the boy to suit his tastes. The penalties inflicted upon young men, only serve to deepen their inclination to do wrong. They hear crime discussed in the prison, and its romantic side appeals to them. They come out worse criminals than when they went in. To remedy this, it is being urged that juvenile courts, with distinct powers, covering a certain age of offenders, be established, with separate jails, judges, jurists and special penalties. It will class the innocent and the inexperienced together. Their circumstances and the conditions surrounding their lives will be taken into account. A sort of reformatory movement, in the shape of specified sentences, covering certain crimes, with pay for good behavior, and education along with punishment, is to be agitated. In the large cities are hundreds of young offenders, who cannot be reached under present statutes. Older and more experienced boys are in the background, and urge misdemeanors. The object is to correct the child, and remove him from the evil influence. In every state the same condition prevails. Our boys in the reform school are thrown together. The older ones who have had more or less contact with the world of crime, paint its glowing colors for the young. The ones who can be saved by education and good influences, should be segregated from the ones whom nothing but punishment will reform, and that, not permanently.

Might not this question be brought before Oregon legislators, with good results.

By reforming a few inefficient laws, we will have less boys to reform.

ELECTION FRAUDS.

Today will be no exception to the election day rule. "Criminal conspiracies" and "election frauds" are already on the wing. In Spokane county, a wholesale exposure of fraud is promised, including some high federal officials in the ring. In Idaho, the secret is whispered cautiously from ear to ear that great disclosures will be made in the fraudulent manipulation of the ballots. East, South, West and North, the other fellow has gone wrong. The other fellow is doing crooked work; the other fellow will be exposed and brought to grief. It is nothing new. It has been and perhaps always will be, one of the most interesting phases of all our elections. Politics is an art. All art has its unpleasant features. The painter often finds it necessary to roll up his pants and wade through the mud in pursuit of his ideal. Politics is no exception. Men will be men and smelling so strongly of earthly things, leave the impression that they are, after all, a very poor grade of clay.

The report of Hon. Binger Hermann, of the United States land office, has been made public and contains some interesting features. After giving statistical details, the commissioner makes some pertinent recommendations in regard to land and forest legislation. He advises the repeal of the laws now in force covering the timber on the government reserves, and suggests a general law which will allow settlers, miners and others to secure timber for necessary purposes. He recommends an increased number of wardens for timber lands and wants all forest reserves converted into national parks subject to the regulations now in force in regard to such.

The enforced idleness of the miners and the consequent neglect of the mines has caused thousands of dollars worth of damage to the coal districts. At many of the most important mines, the tunnels and underground works are so flooded with water that the arbitration board cannot go into them to make an investigation. It is estimated that it will require two months of steady work to place many of the mines in working condition. A strike strikes both ways with lasting effect. It will require more than two months for the miners to recover.

One of the most commendable moves that has been made among Pendleton young people for some time, is the organization of the Young Men's Club. While the Commercial Association, now in a thriving condition, is an ideal organization, the merging of this with the Young Men's Club will make on of the strongest and most efficient commercial clubs in the Northwest.

GIRL BABIES IN RUSSIA.

One of the oddest of the minor developments of the time is the outbreak in Russia of what appears to be a spasm of indignation against girl babies. The spasm is manifest in more places than one and in more ways than one. Again and again from widely separated parts of the empire reports have come of outbursts of this indignation, and it is therefore fair to conclude that a considerable portion of the Russian people are undergoing a revival of something like the primeval barbarism which of old prompted men to kill girl babies by way of improving society.

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Two recent reports will serve to show the extent to which the barbaric feeling has been aroused. One states that since the Czarina has given birth to none but girl babies she has become so much disliked by the people that she is in danger of being hooted when she appears in public. Even the courtiers of the palace look upon her with indignant eyes, and the story is that her life is rendered so unhappy she may leave the empire and permit the czar to obtain from the Greek church authority to get another wife.

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It might be supposed that in the case of the czarina the anger of the court and the populace is due to the desire of themighn,
desire for a male heir to the throne and that it would not be felt toward a mother of girl babies in private station. That view is rendered untenable by the second story, which narrates that in one of the provinces of the empire several men have been publicly flogged because they were fathers of girl babies. The report says the census of the province showed an excess of women over men, whereupon the military authorities have taken to flogging the head of every family in which the number of girl babies exceeds that of boys.

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Reports from Russia are always exaggerated, and we are not able to assume that the flogging of the fathers of girls has been carried on to any great extent, but still there must have been something done to stir up this tale of military punishment for the birth of a girl, while the frequency of the reports of the popular rage against the czarina goes far to confirm that story. Thus we have another evidence of the innate barbarism that underlies the outer culture of the Muscovite civilization.

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Napoleon's saying, "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar" still holds true. It is not easy to understand the processes of reasoning or even the lack of reasoning by which such sentiments find a place in the minds of a people making even a pretense to be civilized, but Russia is clearly a good place just now for missionary work on behalf of girls. It may be too much to ask that they shall have a right to vote, but surely they have a right to be born. Even Russians might concede that much, seeing that the two greatest sovereigns that ever sat upon the Russian throne were women, and one of them, the first Catherine, was so good to her people as well as so great in war and statecraft that she is known to history and tradition as "the mother of Russia."—San Francisco Call.