

# WOMAN'S EDITION

# Dalles Times-Mountaineer.

THE DALLES, OREGON, MAY 17, 1898.

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## OUR LIBRARY--THE OBJECT

We have been told, that today in the village towns, women are doing the most reading. Howsoever as this may be, it is a fact where library movements have originated in these towns, women have been the promulgators. In the mad rush and search for material wealth, which characterizes the century, the majority of men are not finding the time to devote to literary pursuits. While they give their encouragement and support, the burden of the work is falling upon the women. This is a division of labor which does not seem unfair, since woman's greater refinement and innate love of the good, the true and the beautiful must forever claim her interest in that which tends to the development of the highest culture. In response to the growing need women's educational clubs are spread broadcast throughout the land and women's work along this line is well recognized, but now and then we hear them cry for "new worlds to conquer." All reform movements must begin at the root of the evil, and instead of clamoring for the power to vote, we wonder why we cannot train our boys to cast their votes for the right and let every vote so cast be a mother's proxy. The channel of the stream of politics is muddy. Let us not plunge therein, but make a new source, turn the stream and keep its waters pure.

But we are digressing, we started out to talk about our Dalles library, an infant of a year, strong, healthy and vigorous, insisting upon its right to grow, develop, exercise its influence and crying lustily for more space in which to have its being. A few women, prone to help the weak, heard this cry and endeavored to satisfy these demands. We met, organized and armed ourselves, and from the moment battle was declared "the enemy was ours," falling easy victims to the smiles of the soliciting committee. The movement was started with modified ambition which grew and grew as the work progressed successfully, until it assumed gigantic proportions, but now at the end, we know our loftiest flights have not equaled the result. For the financial success of this undertaking all honor is due our solicitors. There was not a flowery path to tread, they were met with stern faces and here and there a frown deep inlaid, but withal purses were opened and the committee were only moved to actual tears once, when told by an individual whose breakfast had not been well digested, "that he didn't care whether there was a library in the town or not." At the end of one long and tedious afternoon's work the report came back to those waiting on

the anxious seat "one hundred and twenty five dollars and a smile." The first part of this report was listened to with calmness, at the latter the business manager fainted.

We regret exceedingly to learn of the several criticisms made on the books now contained in the library and indirectly on the buying committee. No one but the members of this committee can realize the effort that is made to buy with limited means the best and most suitable books. In the first place it is taken for granted that the public desires to read the books of the day, the books that are now being read from one end of the world to the other. Such books are selected, and if they are disliked, condemn not the committee but the literary taste and the authors of the present age. Hitherto it has not been thought best to add the older and more familiar works, as we have long had in mind an effort similar to the present one for the accumulation of a special sum for this purpose, and if out of our two-hundred and thirty volumes, fiction is predominantly represented it is because fiction is more demanded, but it has been our earnest effort to supply only fiction of the highest order. But unfortunately tastes differ. One glance over the titles and with the condemnatory word "trash" passes out, yet certainly there are many books on our shelves worthy any person's reading, however particular, but whose pages are spotless, bearing no thumb marks indicative of careful perusal. Another looks carefully, eagerly and then disappointedly and in wailing accents demands "Mary J. Holmes," and "Bertha M. Clay," while the librarian listens breathlessly, surely the next mentioned will be "Nick Carter," but happily so far has been saved from nervous prostration. What is a buying committee to do? They can only be governed by their best judgement, and despite the often repeated plea that "we want books only for amusement reading," yet it is the judgement of the present committee that they have no right to buy books which possess no literary merit, which tend to lower literary taste and which cultivate in our young readers a liking for light and utterly valueless reading. Such a taste once developed is hard to overcome and it is useless afterwards to place within reach books which elevate and refine. We realize that the benefits which must necessarily result from a library such as we hope to make ours, will not accrue to us in any very great measure, but to the rising generation, so it behooves us to be careful what we place within their reach.

The work of every successful author is written for a purpose, contains one central thought, one theme, endeavors to teach a lesson that is good and wholesome. The careful reader will grasp this theme, the cursory reader will miss it and if as is often the case in present day books it is clothed in light language, is apt to condemn the book. Books should not only be read but studied.

The object of our library is to supply a long felt want, to give the opportunity to those who wish higher educational advantages, a chance to gratify their tastes, to those who wish to keep step with the literary progress of the age, an easy way of so doing, to pass time rendering amusement combined with culture, and to juvenile readers a training school for the mind, a valuable aid and support in the pursuance of their studies. We wish our library to be used for general reference by our scholars and citizens. Yesterday this object seemed a futile hope, a dream soon to fade, today it is a proud realization. For what we have accomplished this year we have determined to do next year and the year afterward and soon until the contribution of a few dollars

for the support of the city library becomes as regular a thing as the payment of taxes. We shall persist in our efforts upheld by the proud consciousness of building up a public institution for the public good, which admits of nothing as a substitute. It has been a source of great encouragement to us that from time to time we have received donations of valuable books. By such donations we are greatly aided in our work and the goal of our ambition is placed more nearly within our grasp.

In addition to pointing out our great commercial advantages, our facilities for trade, to the stranger seeking a business location and a home, we desire to turn and point with pride to the best public schools, the best high school and one of the best public libraries in the state of Oregon.

The idea of traveling libraries seemed quaint enough, but now we are confronted with traveling art galleries. Yet we wonder why these things were not thought of sooner, and as we bow down and worship the happy originators we feel aggrieved that the thought did not occur to us. In Wisconsin and New York women's organizations have so extended the traveling library plan as to include pictures as well as books. In fact the idea of circulating pictures seems to have originated with women. Four years ago the College settlement of New York found that it contributed as much to the intellectual life of its neighborhood by circulating pictures, and also games, as by circulating the more traditional source of popular education. Since the traveling library system was established, women's organizations have supplemented their work of establishing "traveling art galleries." In Missouri the first steps in this direction were taken by Miss Mary Tanner, a teacher in an art normal school. She observed how art hungry were the students from country homes, and interested a few friends in getting together a collection of inexpensive pictures. These pictures were exhibited in country schoolhouses, and then lent out among those who came to see them, each borrower agreeing to return the picture within a certain time in exchange for another. The innovation was warmly welcomed and quickly found new supporters pre-eminently among the women's clubs. With regard to the best class of pictures for such collections Miss Tanner's observations are of decided value. "It depends," she says, upon the class among whom you work. If they are not well educated, I doubt the desirability of giving them pictures of beautiful buildings or historic places. What they want is a picture with a story "I cannot read your book, but I can read your picture," was the way an old woman put the matter to me once, and since then I have tried to get pictures with a story they can make out themselves, such as Millet's Angelus and The Gleaners. Pictures of landscapes and flowers always prove popular." In one respect pictures are not so well suited for circulation as books, since families become more attached to pictures and often prefer to keep the one's they have rather than exchange it for another. But the value of these traveling circulating picture galleries in awakening a taste for art in communities now without art privileges is almost incalculable. Some of the collections sent out are for the especial use of school rooms, and the education which these pictures are sure to afford, when lent for even a short time is sure to create a demand for art, which will make bare walls in the future intolerable.

There are in circulation in China at the present time coins bearing the names of emperors who lived two thousand years ago.

Many ladies of The Dalles and vicinity have been greatly interested in the "Oregon Congress of Women" recently held in Portland. The educational and social advantages of such conventions cannot be overestimated, and we hope to send a delegation from this place next session. It has been a source of great gratification and pleasure to us that many of the leaders of this popular assembly have taken an interest in our work and greatly encouraged us by words of commendation and by letters and articles. We are indebted to Mrs. Dunniway, Mrs. McComas and Mrs. Ward for interesting accounts of their convention work. We deeply regret that lack of space prevents us from publishing clippings. The following interesting communication has been received from the recording secretary:

PORTLAND, Ore., Apr. 23, 1898.  
 To the Women Editors of the Times-Mountaineer, of The Dalles, Or.

DEAR LADIES:—Learning that you have undertaken the magnificent enterprise of editing the Times-Mountaineer, "for a specific purpose, I desire to show my personal "good wishes" by a contribution to your columns.

As women, we are interested in the higher and better possibilities for women; and as women we must be a unit, as how best to secure them. To heed those of experience and actual service in the conflict, is the safest road to success.

Many of your intelligent readers will doubtless be interested to know that, at an executive board meeting of the State Equal Suffrage Association at headquarters, 294 Clay St., Portland, Or., April 16th, our honored president Mrs. Abigail Scott-Dunniway invited the public to meet and honor Mrs. Alice Moor-McComas, of Los Angeles, Cal., who had been with us during the congress of women the first part of the week.

Mrs. McComas was the distinguished leader of the Equal Suffragists of Southern California, and to her common sense views, and conservative plans for campaign work, was due the majority vote for the constitutional amendment of 1886 in that part of the state.

Mrs. McComas is a broad-minded, lovable woman, combining the gentleness of true refinement, with the firm independence of character that constitutes a valiant leader. She for many years has been a forcible writer. The wife of a prominent Republican office holder for Los Angeles Co., Cal., the mother of three beautiful daughters, a most lovable neighbor and delightful companion. Such women add strength and influence to the cause of suffrage, wherever they touch the key note.

Mrs. McComas was called upon to give a history of the work in California. She responded with a lucid statement of the efficient plans of work adopted by the northern, central and southern districts of the state, for the Equal Suffrage Amendment. She emphasized the fact that women were not striving for any "issue" but a principle that will secure the ballot on the same grounds that secured it to men, that "Taxation without Representation is Tyranny."

Hoping you will make a great financial success of your venture, I am sincerely your co-worker for Liberty.

MARY SCHAEFFER WARD,  
 Portland, Or.

The buying committee will undoubtedly feel a great responsibility in spending the large sum placed at their disposal. It is thought that some of the subjects of general interest, including literature, biography, fiction, travel, art, education, history, science, language, adventure, together with a large number of choice juvenile books, can be purchased. These books will be bought in the east, as much better terms can be procured, and there being sufficient quantity for freight, charges will be greatly lessened.

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