

THE POLK COUNTY ITEMIZER.

INDEPENDENCE, OREGON, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1882.

VER.

to pardon criminals... by the executives of nearly all the States and by the President of the United States is a remnant of a kingly prerogative. It is a power without limitation or legal check, and has kept its place in our system for many years, simply because responsibility to the people has measurably prevented its abuse. But, of late years it has been extended and applied for purposes not originally contemplated. This power was lodged in the hands of the Executive to remedy injustice. It was found that occasionally an accused person was found guilty in the courts, whom after acquired testimony proved to be innocent, or, extenuating circumstances came to light which the jury did not consider. To prevent the innocent from suffering, and to relieve cases of exceptional hardship, the American system has retained one of the prerogatives of royalty. But the power has outgrown its usefulness. It has been made in this State, at least, to shield the guilty, and to turn loose upon society, criminals who ought to have remained in the penitentiary. The frequent commission of crimes by those fresh from the arms of Executive clemency teaches that the power ought to be abridged. The law through strong guards around the liberty of the accused. The State has always to fight its way to a conviction against odds. The criminal is now allowed to appear before the Grand Jury with his witnesses. The State, after indictment, must make out its case before the petit jury beyond a reasonable doubt, which often means no doubt at all. The accused here has the benefit of a single negative to prevent his conviction. Every error in the many technicalities which the law has raised for him, inures to his benefit. And then, after everything in his favor, if he is convicted, his friends almost immediately set about to obtain his release from the punishment provided by law. With what success this is done, let equal chance. The convict who is fortunate in having influential friends, is soon pardoned. The less fortunate and friendless fellow, having no one to present his claims, languishes in prison.

And so, there is grown up a practice never contemplated by law. The Governor is allowed to reverse the carefully considered judgments of the courts made up from evidence before them fresh and full; and this reversal is allowed to be made on a whim, a petition, a passing spasm of spurious sentiment. The Legislature should take away from one man the power to nullify the laws. It should bring it to pass that, when the law, and the courts in accordance therewith, say the punishment for a crime shall be ten years in prison, it shall be ten years. It should write over the door of the State Prison: "Who enters here leaves hope behind."

The State Temperance Alliance assembled in Salem last week, held an enthusiastic and successful session. The question of intemperance is exciting unwonted interest, all over the State. If practical wisdom shall be evinced in dealing with the matter, the present agitation will result in benefit. Drunkenness may not be abolished but it may be made to take its place alongside its kindred crimes, larceny, licentiousness and murder, and receive the condemnation of all good people.

The usual biennial political hub-bub has begun. These periodical excitements cannot but be detrimental to the business interests of the country. It would be well if they were less frequent. Elections should not occur oftener than is necessary for the safety, economy and efficiency of the government. If they should occur once in four years, we believe that no public interest would be sacrificed.

Col. Long, in his lecture, struck the note that is just now sounding all over the United States—legal prohibition. Petitions are being circulated asking the next Legislature of Oregon to pass a prohibitory law. Such a law like other whiskey laws on our Statute book, will be a dead letter, unless the temperance people have the courage of their convictions and elect a legislature to do their bidding. The petition begs that the ballot can command. Say, the temperance element is not strong enough to elect. Then it is not strong enough to enforce the law.

RUTH.

I know I was a selfish old idiot, now, when I look around me and see the mercies given me in my helpless old age, feel the warm love around me on all sides, and realize the desolation my own hand reached forth to grasp; but I was blind to the future in those days when I so nearly wrecked all its happiness.

This was how it happened: After Martha died—my wife, I mean, with whom forty happy years of my life were spent—and all my children were dead or married, except Ruth, there fell upon me the heavy misfortune that has chained me to this chair, or my bed, for fifteen weary years. I had been a hard-working man all my life—a family by trade—with a large family to rear, to clothe, to feed, to educate, and, ah me! one by one to bury in the old churchyard, till only Mary, James and Ruth, our baby, were left to me. Mary married, and went with her husband to the far West. James took his small fortune of a few hard-earned dollars and left us for the golden land of promise, California—and only little Ruth was left us. Then the angel of death came for Martha, and only six months later I was stricken helpless with paralysis.

But even in that time of rebellious murmuring, of bitterest repining, there was some consolation. First, there was the house and five acres of land, my very own, free of debt or mortgage, and a small sum in the bank, the interest on which fitted us above actual want. Then I had Ruth.

She was just twenty when her mother died, and others beside her father thought her face the fairest one for miles around. She had the bluest eyes, like the patches of summer sky, and hair that was the color of corn silk, and nestled in little baby curls all over her head—rebellious hair, that would never lie straight under any coaxing, but kinked in tangles that were full of sunlight. Her skin was white as milk; her cheeks like the heart of a blush rose, and her smile showed the prettiest rows of pearly teeth I ever saw.

She coaxed me from my wicker reclinings by coming to me for directions, making me feel that my head was still needed to direct the work, though my feet would never move carry me over the door sill. Then she fitted up for me a large bed room that overlooked most of the house, and she had a deep-cushioned chair by the window, where I could see the barn, the poultry-yard, the well, and the fields of waving corn and wheat. She made me feel myself of importance by giving me thus the mastery over my own little domain; and she brought up her own meals to eat with me in my room where my infirmity held me prisoner.

She devised little dainty dishes to tempt me to eat, she put saucers of flowers on my table, that I might chat myself into fancying what was out-doors, as their perfume crept on the air; she assured me, petted me, loved me, till even my misfortunes seemed blessings driving us nearer together. And when she was all the world to me, all that saved me from misery, John Hayes asked me to give him Ruth for his wife. I could have struck him dead when he stood before me, a young giant in strength, with his handsome sun-brown face, glowing with health, and wanted to take away my one blessing, my only child.

"I will be a true son to you, Mr. Martin," he said earnestly. "I will never take Ruth away from here; but let me come and share her life, and lift some of the burdens from her shoulders."

I laughed bitterly. I knew well what such a thing would be to Ruth had a husband, and perhaps children, to take her time and love away from me. But I was not harsh. I did not turn this suitor from my house, and bid never speak to Ruth again, much as I longed to do it. I worked more cautiously. I let him go from me to Ruth; and when he left her and she came to me, all my rosy blishes, to tell me, with drooping lids and moist eyes, of her new happiness, I worked upon her love and her sense of duty till she believed herself a monster of ungrateful wickedness to think of leaving me or taking any divided duty upon her hands.

I wept, asked her if she could face her dead mother after deserting her helpless father. I pointed out to her the unceasing round of wifely duty that would keep her from my side, and proved to her that the ties of wife and child must clash, if undertaken under such circumstances as were proposed.

The loving, tender heart yielded to me, and John was tearfully dismissed. Through the warm autumn months, when the corn ripened and was garnered—when our crops were blessed and the little bank fund was increased by the price of farm produce Ruth grew very quiet and subdued. She was not sad, having always a cheery word and a pleasant smile for me; but the pretty rose tint left her round cheeks, and

A Double-Barreled Joke.

The other evening, round at McGovern's saloon, the boys were putting up an elaborate practical joke on somebody, and they asked old Capt. Skiddy, who had just happened in, to take a hand.

"No, gentlemen," said that estimable old citizen decisively, "you don't catch me taking part in any practical jokes. I went out of that business for good over ten years ago."

"How was that?" asked the group of beer-exterminators.

"Well, it was in the winter of '70, may be '71. I was living in Davenport, Iowa, and a man came round there giving balloon ascensions. One day it was advertised that the Mayor of the town was going up with him. Now, the Mayor was a big fat man, who always wore a light suit of clothes and a white hat. This put me in the notion of working off a joke on the people. I got acquainted with the aeronaut, and he agreed to assist me in the scheme. We then got an old suit of light clothes and fixed up a dummy, which we filled with sand, so that it weighed about 200, and would, therefore, drop straight and heavy like a man. The day of the ascension there were 30,000 people on the ground, and the excitement was very great, as there was a light wind blowing at the time. After the balloon got up about a mile, and maybe that far South of the town, they dropped the dummy over."

"Big sensation then, eh?"

"Well, I should say so. But that's just where I lost my grip. While the crowd was shouting and going wild with horror, I just laid down on the ground, rolled over and laughed until I was sick."

"Should think the crowd would have taken a tumble, too," suggested the audience.

"But just wait. Of course, the crowd made a break out of town to scrape up the remains, and I rushed home to get my fishing tackle, for it struck me that the most healthy thing I could do would be to go a fishing for a day or two. Before I left the house, however, I was arrested for murder."

"For murder?"

"Exactly. A lot of the boys accompanied by the Sheriff, rushed in and collared me. They claimed that the dummy had fallen on a farmer and driven his skull clear into the heels of his boots. They said that the balloon had turned over and landed on the poor fellow's head."

"That was rough."

"Well, so I thought. I was just scared plumb to death, and I begged the boys to stand by and protect me. I ponied up \$50 for legal expenses, and they hid me in the garret of a neighbor's house. They kept me there ten blessed days, and there wasn't a day but they struck me for a twenty or two for contingencies. One night the whole gang came around full of beer—on my money, mind you—and said they had concluded, as an additional precaution, to hide me in the hollow of an oak tree about three miles out in the woods. I saw through the whole business then, and drove 'em out with a club. It was a good square case of the biter bit, I know, but they never let up calling me 'Dummy Skiddy' after that, until they actually run me out of town, and I had to emigrate to this jumping off place of creation, and the Captain shook his head with a disgusted air as he paid for his hot Scotch and walked out.—S. F. Post.

How to Make a Telephone.

Some of our young readers may like to make their own telephones. It will be great fun for them to try and really succeed, and be able to communicate, from house to house, such important matters as boys and girls have to talk about.

To make a cheap and serviceable telephone, good for three or four blocks or so, only requires enough wire and two cigar boxes. First, select your boxes and make a hole about half an inch in diameter in the centre of the bottom of each and then place one in each of the houses you wish to connect; then get five pounds of common stove-pipe wire, make a loop in one end and put it through the hole in your cigar box, and fasten it with a nail; then draw it tight to the other box, supporting it when necessary, with stout cord. You can easily run your line into the house by boring a hole through the glass. Support your boxes at their ends with slats nailed across the window, and your telephone is complete.

See the Horse-Car. How Full it is. Now it is Not so Full. See How the People run Out of it.—There is a Woman with the Small-Pox in the Corner. See the Woman Laugh! Is not that a Pretty Trick the Woman has played? How would you like to have Such a Trick Played on You?

"Why," the boy asked "do you blow down the muzzle of your gun?"

"To see," replied the man, "if it is." And just then he discovered it was.

WIT AND HUMOR.

Silks and satins, scarlets and velvets, put out the kitchen fire.

Time and the mule should always be taken by the forelock, never by the fetlock.

A wag said of an egotistical writer: Somebody should take pity on his readers and put out his r's.

The most sacred obligation is the marriage contract. The most sacred duty is to maintain one's health.

At a printers' festival the following toast was offered: "Woman! Second only to the press in the dissemination of news."

"Well," said an Irish attorney, "if it plze the court, if I am wrong in this, I have another point equally as conclusive."

"Reasons for dressing plainly on Sunday" is the title of a little essay on social ethics. Most of us have the very best reasons for dressing plainly on Sunday.

"I say, Patrick, that is the worst-looking horse that I have ever seen in harness. Why don't you fatten him up?"

"Fat him up, is it? Fat the poor baste can scarcely carry the little mate that's on him now!" replied Pat.

"Fruit eaten at night is baneful." This is one of those wise axioms proved to be true by Adam. His trouble was caused by eating an apple after Eve.

"Long John" Wentworth, ex-Mayor of Chicago, is entirely bald, except a little tuft of hair behind the ears, and on one occasion, when riding in the cars, he frequently took off his hat and scratched the back of his ears, when a waggish backwoodsman shouted: "Stranger, drive 'em up into the clearin' and you can catch 'em all in five minutes."

"Speakin' 'bout the Arkansas ager," said the man with the sandy goatee and squint eyes, as he laid back in his chair, "that's where you saw my heart strings, in case I've got any left to save on."

"Did you ever live there?"

"Did I? Well, I reckon I sort o' existed in them parts 'goin' on thirteen years."

"And you had the ague?"

"Had it! Why I wallered in it. Gentlemen, gaze on me!"

The crowd gazed.

Whiskey as an Educator.

Our liquor dealers' circular talks of interest of liquor to prevent prohibitory laws.

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The dryer can be seen at Mr. Paul Hiltbrand's on Luckiamute, or at Robert McLaughlin's, 1 1/2 miles north of Buena Vista. We guarantee satisfaction to any one who will purchase a dryer. Orders can be sent to the undersigned at Independence, Polk County, Oregon. I indulge in no boasting, but am willing for all to see and examine for themselves.

INCORPORATED IN 1864.

HOME MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY.
CAPITAL, Paid up in U. S. Gold Coin, : \$300,000.00
COIN ASSETS, December 31, 1880, : 642,841.00
Income for 1880, : : 340,641.00
Losses, paid since organization, : 1,635,202.84
Reinsurance Reserve, : : 174,989.60
Losses Paid in Oregon, : : 200,000.00

This leading and popular company offers superior advantages to those desiring reliable indemnity against loss and damage by fire, being solid in assets, conservative in management, moderate in rates and prompt and liberal in the adjustment and payment of losses.

\$50,000.00 deposited in Oregon for the further security of Policy Holders in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.
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