

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON: SATURDAY, NOV. 19, 1881. J. F. HALLORAN, Editor.

"No Redemption."

The California Prison Reform Convention, lately in session in San Francisco, did some good work despite the Procrustean tendency of some would be "reformers" to adjust every thing to their peculiar beliefs. The "Rev." Dr. Platt, in the afternoon of the 10th, gave utterance to sentiments that were hardly in consonance with the teachings of the Master that he professes to follow. In the course of his remarks, which we are glad to note were received with the strongest sentiments of disapprobation, the reverend gentleman said: "The convict of a nature so strong as to stand up in the struggle where the fittest only can survive, need never have been a convict. The moral weakness that made him a criminal at first will ever keep him one. By a miracle of character and support God might so regenerate a soul as to make it strong to bear scorn, isolation and poverty; but nothing else than a miracle would suffice. In Sydney we see how a convict community helps a convict. The guilty will seek the convict, the convict will not scorn the convict, the solitary seek companionship with the solitary, and once a convict, always a convict. What then? Is there no reform for criminals? There may be for criminals, but none for convicts known to be convicts so long as they remain among men. Society has but one or two courses to pursue with the convicted criminal!—either banishment where his crime and conviction cannot possibly be known, or where, if known, it would work no social exclusion, or a merciful detention for the remainder of his natural life. Where it has been shown by a second conviction that the criminal is unequal to the awful environment in the world with his new and heavier burden of conviction, there seems to be no alternative but a prison home for life. Such a doom might be made merciful, religious and contenting. One that a prison life only converts, a prison life can sanctify. Society must take care of the one whom society has disgraced. The question is not whether the disgrace was deserved or not; a disgraced man is the hermit of life and the enemy of government. For the convict is nothing more in this life, whatever may mercifully be given him in the next. The convict is civilly, socially and commercially dead. Let him be buried in imprisonment for life. In this life there is no redemption for the disgraced man or a disgraced woman." Such utterances as that, at this day, simply illustrate how far the speaker has dropped behind the procession.

Among the many associations recently started, the "Strangers' Guardian and Assurance company" deserves honorable mention. This concern guarantees the granger who may be convivially inclined, immunity from all loss incurred in the pursuit of pleasure in the seductive city of New York. It throws its protecting wing over the wayfarer from the rural district, and watches with a mother's care over the visitors who perambulate streets, jealously guarding them from confidence men and tricksters who go about seeking whom they may take in. The next thing in order is the "Protective Association of Enterprising Pickpockets."

A DEARTH of topics in San Francisco force the newspapers to a discussion of the probabilities, etc., of the loss of the Jeannette. She sailed in the summer of '79 equipped for a three years' voyage and bound for a coast from which tidings rarely come.

The Pension Fund.

THE Commissioner of Pensions recommends that Congress be asked to appropriate one hundred million dollars for disbursement by his office for the next fiscal year, ending June 30, 1883, for the payment of the annual and accrued pensions, and also that the immediate deficiency be appropriated. Twenty million dollars will be required for the purpose of paying all arrears of pensions to claimants whose claims have been or may be favorably adjudicated in the current fiscal year. The Commissioner estimates that forty thousand pension claims will be allowed this year, and that with the farther increase of the clerical force in the Bureau, as many as sixty thousand may be disposed of next year. Fully two-thirds of the pending claims carry arrears of pensions amounting to nearly \$1,500 for each claimant, and the Commissioner believes that the interests of the country will be promoted by paying off the arrears as rapidly as possible, even at the risk of bringing up the total pension disbursements to \$70,000,000 this year and \$100,000,000 in the next, in order to reduce the annual charge upon the Treasury more speedily thereafter. It is estimated that the annual aggregate value of the United States pensions at the close of the current year will be \$33,000,000, and the total pension roll, exclusive of the first payments on arrears, will never exceed \$40,000,000.

In the course of a discussion a few Sundays ago in Plymouth church, as to whether it were better to have two sermons a day, or one, Mr. Beecher said that the vast majority of preachers could not preach two good sermons in one day, and it resolved itself into a question whether church members would have their sermon all milk, or have it half milk and water. "Double-barrelled preachers," he said, are not so numerous as they used to be. There are very few ministers who can preach, and fewer laymen who can remember, two good sermons. People can't remember the two, particularly when they are diverse. They go to church for the same reason they go to the opera. It is for the reasoning, the rhetoric and the excitement that they go. Not one in ten of those who go in the morning care to go at night to hear a plain sermon."

So conclusive was the evidence in a recent St. Louis criminal trial against the defendant, that his lawyer declined to make any plea, by reason of its apparent uselessness. Fortunately for the cause of justice, one of the ideal jurymen was there, and he refused to convict on the ground that the prisoner must be innocent or the lawyer would have defended him. Our jury system is a grand thing.

THE American Register is the name of a weekly paper lately started at Washington by Jeremiah S. Black, Senator Lamar, and Alex. H. Stephens. It is devoted to the "principles and doctrines of the Democratic party," whatever they may be, is issued in the form of the N. Y. Nation, and will undoubtedly obtain great political influence and distinction.

A CURIOUS instance of the prevalence of superstition even in this land of schools and newspapers, is furnished by Pennsylvania railroad statistics, which show a great falling off of travel on Friday. In the middle districts of England, out of four thousand and fifty-seven marriages, not two per cent. were celebrated on Friday.

GUIZEAU'S "trial," now in progress before Judge Cox, at Washington, will be the most important in the history of American crime. The judge and council are obscure men, whose actions for the next few weeks will be viewed with interest by the entire world.

—Warrantee deeds at THE ASTORIAN office.

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Assessment Notice. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT AN assessment of fifty per cent. on the capital stock of the Odd Fellows Lodge and Building Association of Astoria, Oregon, has this day been levied, payable within thirty days from date of the issue of the Secretary's certificate of assessment. By order of the Board of Directors. A. J. SMILLER, Secretary. Astoria, Oct. 22, 1881.

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