

England whenever parliament is dissolved the election of candidates is based upon the issue that caused the dissolution. This is an indirect form of advisory referendum. In the United States the vote on the national platform by voting for candidates is an advisory referendum. An improved form of advisory voting has been discovered for national issues, the direct system of advisory referendum, as we have pointed out. The establishment of this system is logically the next step, and it is an open sesame to a Constitutional amendment, but, without waiting for the amendment, the legislative issues can at once be settled.

This programme is an admirable party issue. It meets all the requirements, which are:

1. An issue that is capable of immediate settlement by a majority vote in Congress.

2. An issue on which the progressive elements in the several parties can agree. Such is especially the case as to the referendum, for if installed in the Congress to be elected next year, it will open at once the way for a direct vote by the people on every kind of national reform that is likely to poll a majority vote, at the same time shutting out the political power of special-privilege funds and terminating corruption.

3. No candidate will dare to openly oppose the issue where it is prominent. The proposition is merely to establish an institution through which the people can instruct representatives—the mere reestablishment of an old-time Constitutional right.

4. The issue is so popular that next year a majority of the legislatures can be pledged to instruct the Senators, while a majority in the House can readily be secured, because many of the Republicans are already pledged, and others will quickly pledge when the issue is raised in their districts. The only difficulty will be in getting the Republicans where their pledges to vote for the people's sovereignty will avail them naught. In order to thus out-general them, it is necessary that the Democratic candidates for Congress and the legislatures shall earnestly champion the issue before they are actually forced to do so. In last year's Congressional campaign some of the Democratic candidates for Congress were defeated because they ignored the referendum questions, while the opposing Republicans answered in the affirmative; in other places some of the Republicans were defeated because they ignored the questions.

Leading up to the Congressional campaign, the Democrats will have plenty of opportunity to show that they favor majority rule. A Democratic Referendum Club can be formed in every city and county, even though only a half dozen or more Democrats should take hold, and the combined work of the clubs will leaven the whole party. Immediate work along many lines can be engaged in, as is pointed out in the Constitution and By-Laws. In this work the cities can immediately be emancipated from machine rule, while in the State campaign the citizens can become freed from machine rule by establishing through the legislature a direct vote system for instructing representatives. In both State and city there exists the best possible kind of a party issue.

Until last year in Massachusetts the referendum did not become a live party issue anywhere, because the demand was for a Constitutional amendment, which requires one or more years to establish; and for the further reason that in many States the machine politicians held back the issue. To-day the questioning of candidates at Democratic primaries and conventions by means of Democratic Referendum Clubs will prevent the sidetracking of the issue, while the demand for the immediate establishment of a direct-vote system will furnish an effective party issue.

The results in Illinois, where an advisory referendum system has existed for four years, is no criterion of what can be accomplished when a leading party makes this direct-vote system a live issue. In Illinois it has been the non-partisan organizations that have used the system. They have brought six State questions to a direct vote, but the instructions have not been as binding as would have been the case had the advisory system been used by one of the leading parties. Furthermore, the Illinois system is deficient in that it does not force a vote in the legislature at the time the measure is initiated by the people.

Summarizing the advantages of the several portions of the programme of the Democratic Referendum Clubs, it can be truthfully said that it is a plan for immediate work along irresistible lines. Already the anti-monopoly business interests, organized farmers and organized wage-earners are pushing for the immediate establishment of a direct-vote system. It is not a question of whether the Democrats will take hold and lead in the emancipation of the people, but whether they will keep from being run over by

the existing movement among the non-partisan organizations. It is believed that partisan clubs and leagues will take a leading place, for it is the means whereby the self-interest of individuals can be promoted—they can win the offices. Furthermore, the newspapers that take up the Democratic programme for the people's emancipation can increase their circulation. In short, the two great incentives to party action are present, an opportunity for successful office-seeking and an increase of newspaper circulation.

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## BOOKS

### A NEW BOOK ON AMERICAN LITERATURE.

"I have endeavored," says the author, "to furnish a condensed account of the development of American literature, rather than a series of connected essays on leading American authors." The happy carrying out of this intent, so far as is possible in a brief treatise of 250 pages, is a main ground for commending this volume (A Brief History of American Literature, by W. P. Trent, Appleton, N. Y.)

The reader who wishes to get a good running view of what America has produced in literature cannot do better than to take Prof. Trent's book as his guide. The style is clear and interesting, with perhaps a little too much consciousness of making a text-book. The judgments are free and candid, and at the same time, as the critics say, sane. The transitions and periods are, as the author proposes, well linked into a connected chain, making in truth a history of the literature.

There is no better part of the book than the treatment of the transcendentalists, a part which the author unnecessarily fears may be unsuited to the "wants of pupils." He has treated the subject, however, in so clear a way that even young readers may follow him. Ripley, Alcott, Margaret Fuller, Emerson and Thoreau are all happily touched off. To Channing he seems not to do full justice. To call his style "formal, old-fashioned, and lacking in profound appeal" is not quite fair. Let one read the essay on Napoleon or the essay on Milton, which Prof. Trent names, and he will find himself engaged in as clear, strong and beautiful prose as America has produced.

His treatment of the poets is excellent, and many will be glad to see his testimony to the growing fame of the one really great literary genius of the South, Sidney Lanier. There can now be no doubt that Lanier is to be ranked with the best of American poets. Some have already ventured to say that he is the most original of all. This can hardly be said in comparison with

Whitman; but taking him all in all, his music, his extreme modernness, his insight both into the mysteries of nature and into the problems of mankind, we may not fear to predict that his poetry will probably increase in the favor of readers more than that of any other American poet who has yet written.

It would be wrong to close this brief review of Prof. Trent's book without mentioning the excellent and useful chronological appendix. The method of inserting parallel references is especially worthy of commendation. It is interesting, for example, to be able to note so conveniently that in the year Tom Paine published his *Common Sense*, Gibbon published his first volume and Adam Smith the *Wealth of Nations*; that in the year Marshall's *Life of Washington* appeared, George Sand was born and Schiller published his *Wilhelm Tell*; that in the year Irving published his *Knickerbocker*, Gladstone, Darwin and Tennyson were born and Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviews* appeared, and so on. Such bringing together of names is more than a matter of curiosity; it is a substantial aid to the comprehensive knowledge of the history of literature.

J. H. DILLARD.

#### LAST HOURS OF SHERIDAN'S CAVALRY.

Sheridan's cavalry played a prominent and effective part in winding up the sanguinary Civil War between the Northern and the Southern States of the American Union, and Gen. Henry Edwin Tremain tells the story vividly in *Last Hours of Sheridan's Cavalry, a Reprint of War Memoranda* (New York: Bonnell, Silver & Bowen).

Gen. Tremain's story opens somewhat languidly, because it assumes a knowledge of the circumstances which few readers of the present generation possess. This fault is due, doubtless, in part to the fact that the memoranda were written many years ago (which also accounts for occasional expressions that a Southern reader might call ungenerous), and are now published without much revision, as impressions of an officer on the ground. It is probably due also to the fact that the author, having been an officer on the ground, does not clearly realize that circumstances which are commonplaces of knowledge to him may be all unknown to his non-military readers.

But if there is a somewhat languid opening, the story becomes intensely interesting as it discloses the movements of the contending armies in the region of Petersburg, Richmond and Appomattox during the closing days of Grant's final campaign against Lee. It has none of the non-human qualities of histories of military movements, in which the humanity of the units seems lost in the mechanism of military tactics. Neither is it a gossipy volume of personal experiences and observations "at

the front." It is an account of the military game as a game; of military maneuvering as maneuvering. Bodies of men are placed here or sent there, and the reason for each move is made evident; but they are men, all the time men, whether advancing or retreating, fighting or dying, and never mere collections of muster-roll statistics or regiments and brigades of automatons.

Gen. Tremain's volume, though without the slightest literary pretension, or any attempt to do more than describe and explain a military episode of historic consequence, makes the circumstances of the fall of Richmond and the surrender at Appomattox to live again with the impressive reality of 40 years ago.

#### PERIODICALS

Watson's Magazine for April is even more interesting than the first number. The distinguished editor's remarks are, of course, the features of each number. This month he writes, with his usual pungency, on "Russia," on "Free Passes," on "Roosevelt's Railroad Problem," on "High Salaries for Public Officials," and other timely topics. In the present number a serial begins by the well-known Georgia novelist, Will N. Harben, and ex-Gov. Garvin writes a forcible article on "Corrupt Practices in Elections."—J. H. D.

Prof. John E. B. Mayor, of Cambridge, England, is one of the great scholars of the world. His edition of Juvenal is known in every American college, but probably very few of his admirers in this country know of his being a "crank about eating." For many years Prof. Mayor has been a vegetarian, and now at the age of 80 he finds himself in good health and able to do steady work. It is no wonder that vegetarians point with pride to his wonderful career. The *Vegetarian Messenger* (Manchester and London) for March gives some account of the recent celebration in honor of the great scholar's birthday, with a portrait sketch and an appropriate sonnet.—J. H. D.

Julian Hawthorne has an article in *Munsey's* for March, discussing a subject which needs far more of public attention than it has received. His title is "The Crime of Hazing," and he states the case none too strongly. He is right, too, in his conclusion. "The college faculties could stop hazing, if they were not afraid to do so. They could expel an entire sophomore class, if the culprits refused to declare themselves. But the hazers are generally rich and influential." This is the rub. The colleges are too much dominated by a set of rich young men who are in college without earnest purpose, and mean to have a good time, according to their own ideas.—J. H. D.

Mr. Montague, in his article on "The Ethics of Trust Competition" in the

March *Atlantic*, misses the point of real complaint against trusts. If he could be induced to read the single-taxers' criticism of trusts he would find that it is not the fact of their competition with the independent dealers, or the fact of their underselling their opponents, which gives the true ground of complaint, but the fact that their methods and the privileges which we give them permit them to eliminate any genuine competition. His defensive article is, by the way, an illustration of the weakness of all the anti-trust attacks which do not base themselves on the feature of monopoly.

J. H. D.

The greatness of Abraham Lincoln and reverence for his opinions have become so firmly established that it is of the greatest importance that the world should have a correct account of his expressions. For this reason all should feel indebted to Mr. W. J. Ghent for his article in *Collier's Weekly* of April 1. Mr. Ghent shows that certain quotations are incorrect. "It is not needed," he well says, "that the utterances of Lincoln should be juggled in order to make them the expressions of a sense of close kinship with the tolling masses. Throughout his life he gave the most unmistakable evidence of this feeling. He gave frequent expression to the historical fact of the priority of labor to capital."—J. H. D.

Every human being who has managed to retain a fair amount of his humanity must, at some time of his life, have considered the problem of clothes from the point of view of utility and style. It is a hard problem and goes back to every age of recorded pictures. The fashion plates of every century have their manifest absurdities in men's as well as in women's garbs. There seems to be, today as well as in the past, some mysterious tyranny at work; for some of our modern requirements can find no justification in reason or beauty. The problem is cleverly discussed by Mrs. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in a recent number of the *Independent*, under the title, "Why These Clothes?" Here is one of the best of her questions: "Why should we slay a young goat, skin it, make of its hide a little leather bag, many fingered, and carefully conceal our hands in it?" Who can answer?

J. H. D.

## The Public

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT  
James G. Parsons, Manager

#### ADVERTISING.

The value of *The Public* as a medium for advertising is coming to be recognized. A few pages have been added, to be devoted to advertisements