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## Miscellaneous Mention.

Longfellow was sometimes styled Poet Laureate of America. The expression might lead one to believe that there is a laureateship in America the same as in England. There is not however, and the title when bestowed upon an American only indicates the high esteem in which he is held, or that his writings are similar to those of the English Poet-Laureate. The term means the crowning of a poet with laureals. It is an old custom of the Greeks and Romans. It was indulged in also by the German emperors, and was not unknown to the Spaniards. Chaucer is said to have been the first Poet-Laureate of England. It was not until 1630 that it was made a patent office in the gift of the Lord Chamberlain. Ben Johnson was the first to hold it after this was done. Since then, of the famous men who have held it, we might name Dryden, Southey, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, who is the present incumbent.

Again our country within the space of a month is called to mourn the loss of one of her best citizens. Massachusetts has given many noble sons to our country. Not least among them stands the gifted writer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose death we mourn to-day. A man of remarkable genius, moving in an atmosphere above his countrymen. His own individuality is strongly stamped upon our literature and the speculation of our age. There is much difference of opinion as to his merit as a poet. He murders rhythm, metre and common sense in his verses. Some of his poems are mere jargon, coarse and had much better been left unpublished, though here and there through them gems of some beauty will be found. It is unfortunate that a man of such depth of learning, such ideality and imagination, such refinement, such subtlety of thought, should so ape the great Scotch writer, Carlyle, both in style and construction. He seems in a measure content to mimic rather than create. As a lecturer Emerson has been eminently successful. He has lived long enough to realize the happiness of having his countrymen appreciate what is noblest and best in his writings.

The Governor has finally issued his proclamation convening the Legislature on the 10th of May. He names seven things for its consideration, the most important of which are, to apportion the state into three congressional districts, to confer additional powers upon cities of the first class, and to provide for the payment of expenses incurred in suppressing the riots at Omaha. It is not thought the session will be a long one. There may be some strife over the bill providing for the payment of the militia while on duty in Omaha. As it is claimed by some that their services were not needed, they should have no pay. Rather poor argument, but sufficiently convincing to a few. The students are all glad that another opportunity is given them to witness the proceedings of our legislators. They will find it convenient to spend their spare time in the galleries of the House and Senate. The politicians, too, rejoice that they have a chance to come again before the public. They will have another opportunity to enter into combinations to their favor. As the need of an extra session was well nigh universally recognized, the legislature will not have public sentiment to contend against. Acts alone can render the member obnoxious.

The May number of the *North American Review* has a very fair and impartial article on "Party Schemes and Future Problems" by Carl Schurtz. A concise and condensed history of the two parties is given, not after the manner of a politician but more like a statesman. He holds that there is very little difference in the actual position of the two parties, however great a one party leaders try to make in theory; that these are days of disintegration, and factions within one party will ally with factions within the other, rather than unite to defeat the common enemy. Slavery, states rights, hard money and free trade have lost their party signification. In short, that each party has outgrown its former beliefs and that the question of the day is more how that each department may have a clearly defined outline of its work, and how the intelligent and educated citizen may take a more active part in the administration of the government. If either one of the

now existing parties will take hold of these questions and be the embodiment of the progression and thought of the day, that party will have the support of the people. If it neglects to do this, then a new party will necessarily be formed. This is a time of formation, but the exact *tera* affairs will take he does not pretend to say. A great change may come before the next presidential election; it may not come for years. The article is well worth reading. It is a calm, sober view of the political parties and what is demanded at the present time.

People of to-day would hardly expect an author to state the following objections against casting lots in order to combat them, viz.: "Lots may not be used but with great reverence, because the disposition of them cometh immediately from God. . . . The nature of a lot, which is affirmed to be a work of God's special and immediate providence, a sacred oracle, a divine judgment or sentence; the light use of it, therefore, to be an abuse of God's name, and so a sin against the third commandment." We cannot easily believe that such views were prevalent, yet during the middle ages they were, and even down to modern times. Then there was no such thing as chance—chance to them was the will of God or their gods. They saw no reason why a stick or whatever they used should fall one way any more than another. They argued that it fell as it did because it was the Divine will. The principal part, if not all, of the religion of the Romans was chance as we would call it,—Divine revelation as they called it. Everything that did not obey regular laws, that they knew was a means by which the will of gods could be determined. The only difficulty was to interpret these signs. Many of these signs are now known to be the result of fixed laws, others obey no law, each being a law of itself. The tendency of modern science and investigation has been to reduce the unknown, or <sup>the</sup> divine manifestations, and increase the known, or those phenomena that obey fixed and immutable laws.

Philadelphia has an artist named Sword. When only eight years old he was only a little bowie.