

bonds, the selection of county seats, and other important matters are usually decided by popular vote. The fact that platforms are adopted by party conventions is conclusive proof that the voters have a right to know the candidate's views before they vote for him.

Accepting this theory to be the correct one, it follows that a representative has no moral right to misrepresent his constituents. Upon all questions covered by the platform, a representative is bound by the platform. A public official who secures an office without intending to keep the platform pledges obtains office under false pretenses, and certainly to obtain an office by such means is as reprehensible as to obtain money or merchandise in that way. As a rule a representative is elected to office as the candidate of a party, and his platform applies the principles of the party to the questions then before the public. If new questions arise after the election the representative is in duty bound to apply to them the same principles applied by the platform to other questions. If the constituents change their views they cannot with propriety demand that the representative change his convictions during his term, but if the representative undergoes a change of opinion which separates him from his constituents upon an important question, he ought to resign. A representative ought to speak and vote his convictions, but when his convictions are so altered that he cannot conscientiously carry out the wishes of his constituents, he ought to give way to someone who is in harmony with the constituency. Sometimes when a great question arises, causing new party alignments, the representative returns to his people, presents the new issue, and endeavors to convert his constituency to his way of thinking: such a course is entirely honorable and often successful.

The second theory, namely, that the representative should act independently of the wishes of his constituents, is the aristocratic one, and rests upon the assumption that the voters are not competent to think out and decide the questions which concern their own welfare. It is only a step from this theory to the doctrine that the people should not be allowed to vote.

It is important that the representative himself should have a proper conception of his relation to his constituents. Most of the corruption that finds its way into the government comes from the tendency of the representative to regard his office as private property rather than as a public trust. When a representative decides that he is not bound to respect the wishes of his constituents he is on the down grade, and usually the next step is to make all the money he can out of the office.

## How the Blind "See."

That the blind "see" very accurately with their hands has been well understood by educators and has recently been demonstrated in Washington City in a very interesting way.

When Ellen Terry, the English actress, visited Washington she invited a number of blind people to attend one of her matinees. At the close of the performance Miss Terry took

her blind guests to her dressing room where they held her hands and ran the tips of their fingers over her face in order that, as they explained, they might "see" her. Miss Terry caused to be made a portrait of herself in relief and sent the same to the room devoted to the blind in the congressional library. As a result of Miss Terry's suggestion, a number of busts and relief portraits of eminent people—busts and portraits which were going to waste in the copyright division of the library—were sent to the room used by the blind in order that they might "see" these interesting exhibits.

When former President Harrison died, the blind visitors to the library were very much interested in a study of his career. A bust of General Harrison that had been made by a Japanese artist and sent to the copyright division during the World's Fair was carried to the reading room. The blind people inspected this bust, and a number of them exclaimed: "How like a Japanese our President was." It was difficult to understand what these unfortunates meant until it was observed that the Japanese artist had elevated the eyebrows and given to the former President a decidedly Japanese cast of countenance.

## A Contrast.

The imperialist frequently points to the history of Florida as justification for the administration's Philippine policy. The readers of the Commoner have already been apprised of the letter of Andrew Jackson in which he asserted that, as Governor of Florida, he was vested with altogether too much power.

It will be interesting now to take a look at the attitude of James Monroe who was president during the period when the Florida question was most important.

It will be seen that throughout his references to this subject, President Monroe showed a deep anxiety not to get nearer and nearer a policy of imperialism as Mr. McKinley does, but to get nearer and nearer the ideal American attitude.

In his message of December 3, 1821, Mr. Monroe urged the necessity "of establishing, as soon as may be practicable, a well organized government over the territory of Florida on the principles of our system."

In his message of April 5, 1822, Mr. Monroe said: "The principle upon which the act of Congress providing for the temporary government of the newly ceded Provinces was carried into execution has been communicated to congress in my message at the opening of the session. It was to leave the authorities of the country as they were found existing at the time of the cession to be exercised until the meeting of congress when it was known that the introduction of a system more congenial to our own institutions would be one of the earliest and most important subjects of their deliberations."

In his message of December 3, 1822, Mr. Monroe said, "In compliance with an act of the last session, a territorial government has been established in Florida on the principles of our system. By this act the inhabitants are secured in the full enjoyment of their rights and

liberties, and to admission into the union with equal participation in the government with the original states on the conditions heretofore prescribed to other territories."

When we compare President Monroe's anxiety to bring his Florida policy more and more into harmony with American notions, to President McKinley's willingness to carry his Philippine policy farther and farther away from American principles, we realize the difference between a president who is faithful to the traditions of his country, and a president who seems to have lost all concern for the principles that have guided his predecessors.

## The Solar Motor.

On another page will be found an extended description of a new invention called the Solar Motor. It is so important in its nature and so far reaching in its effects that THE COMMONER has taken the pains to secure cuts illustrating its construction. While paper that can be used on the ordinary perfecting press does not reproduce a half tone very satisfactorily, the reader will be able to understand something of the appearance of the motor. It has been patented and Mr. C. L. Haskell, the treasurer of the Solar Motor Company (Boston) says that a motor with engine capable of furnishing ten horse power can be furnished for twenty-five hundred dollars. It is claimed by the company that it costs nothing to operate it, as it requires no attention and consumes no fuel.

If continued experiment demonstrates the practicability of the invention, it is destined to work a revolution in the matter of motive power. It is already utilized to pump water for irrigation.

If the rays of the sun can by means of this motor be converted into electricity and stored up during the day for use at night, it will be possible for small towns and villages to do their own lighting at small expense. With the improvement in the storage battery there is scarcely a limit to be placed upon the possibilities of this invention. It is already used for pumping water, but its capabilities are so nearly infinite that it is already attracting widespread attention.

## Plagiarism.

The charge of plagiarism made against a college orator in a Missouri contest is a sad reminder of the fact that many young men have brought upon themselves an odium difficult to remove by borrowing the language of others without giving proper credit. Doubtless this is sometimes explained by what is called "unconscious cerebration," but often the evidence is so plain that it is difficult to distinguish the borrowing from a plain case of stealing. As the wrongfulness of ordinary larceny does not depend upon the discovery of the theft, so the offense of plagiarism is the same whether it is found out or not.

The object of an oratorical contest is to test the ability of those who participate in it and not to ascertain their acquaintance with