

## BOOK REVIEWS

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FIFTY YEARS IN OREGON. By T. T. Geer. (New York, The Neal Publishing Company, 1912. Pp. 536, \$3.)

The title of this book indicates its character. The period named might have been extended, as the author was born in Oregon in 1851, has always lived there, and has made his work cover all the seventy or eighty years prior to 1912. He was the son of parents who came from the Mississippi Valley in 1847. They were among those who lived under the Provisional Government, who secured a mile-square donation claim, who were contemporary with the fur traders, the missionaries and the first American settlers. They saw Oregon change into a territory in 1849, and ten years later into a state, and from that time on witnessed the development and progress of a great commonwealth. With such antecedents the son—Theodore Thurston—could not be other than interested in the first things and first people of his native, home state. He is as proud of it as a man can be, and that there is the kindest possible feeling entertained for him in return is evident from the many public endorsements and honors he has received—repeated elections to the Legislature, election as Governor, and a primary election majority of thirteen thousand votes for United States Senator. With him no climate elsewhere, no scenery, no natural resources, no anything that is good and great, no matter where, surpasses Oregon, and when summed up altogether no other locality equals it. The writer hereof is constrained to believe that Governor Geer includes Washington in this generous appraisal, as a part of Old Oregon. If he doesn't, it is because he isn't so well acquainted with Washington as with Oregon, or so well acquainted with Washington as I am.

From start to finish Governor Geer's book relates to the men and women who have made Oregon—to Dr. John McLoughlin, Jason Lee, F. X. Matthieu, Ewing Young, Jo Meek, Jo Lane, James W. Nesmith, Lafayette Grover, Harvey W. Scott, John H. Mitchell, Asahel Bush, and the host of others—merchants, farmers, politicians, preachers, lawyers and the like—down to the present day. Having known these people in most cases long and intimately, and having himself been a prominent actor in Oregon events, he was well qualified for the task he attempted. He is a man of large physical frame, with a full grown heart, well-balanced mind, and a disposition to do all men justice. These traits, coupled with

good nature and a great fund of entertaining information of personal character, with fair literary ability, have enabled him to get out a book that is not only valuable, but delightful.

His attachment to the Oregon Institute—now the Willamette University—which he attended as a student in 1863, '64, '65, is pleasant to witness. He has good words for all connected with it, including the trustees, those good Methodist brethren, Leslie, Roberts, Abernethy, Willson, Pearne, Waller, Driver, Wilbur and Flinn, as well as the laymen and the members of the faculty and the students. L. J. Powell and Thomas M. Gatch, who later were in turn President of the Washington State University, are most kindly referred to. Gatch, who yet lives in Seattle, is declared by Geer "by common consent to stand at the head of the list of men who have devoted their lives to the upbuilding of the cause of education in Oregon." Fifty years Gatch toiled and served the cause of education in California, Oregon and Washington, during which time he was at the head of several now great institutions of learning of the Pacific Coast.

Author Geer is not only a good Republican, a good neighbor, a good friend and a good American, but he is plainly a good kinsman. He has much to say of his parents and grandparents, his cousins, uncles and aunts, as well as of those who are or have been nearer to him. None of them can take exceptions to what he has said of them; none of them could ask for more. He is possessed not only of a fine sense of humor, but also of a vast fund of anecdotes. He has drawn liberally upon this fund for the book under review, but has carefully refrained from saying anything in any but the happiest manner that cannot be other than pleasing either to the persons referred to or their relatives and friends.

Governor Geer's *Fifty Years in Oregon* is reminiscent, personal and pleasant. It is of things, events and people that he has seen and known. As an adjunct to Oregon history it is of much worth. It is well that he wrote it.

On the technical side the book, unfortunately, is injured by the presence of a considerable number of errors, the results of carelessness either on the part of the author or publisher, which, however, are generally of palpable character. It is also injured by the absence of table of contents and index, which, while not affecting the reading, certainly diminishes its value for purposes of reference.

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