

THE OBSERVER

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THE CITY ELECTION.

At the coming city election La Grande has considerable at stake. The mere form of electing officers means little, but the duties of officers for the next two years is plainly prescribed, and every citizen who is interested cannot but understand that La Grande's growth and prosperity depends to a great extent on the municipal administration.

We, as a municipality, have entered upon an era of improvement; have pulled up anchor as a village and launched our craft on the higher seas. To make the voyage successful means work for every citizen, but more especially for the men who are the city's standard bearers.

And besides the improvements that are to be continued there is another thing that confronts La Grande. This county has been under local option. Why? Because the people were dissatisfied with the old way of handling the liquor question. The local option did not prove satisfactory either, and at the last election the people agreed by a large majority to try restricted saloons and stringent regulation. This is an experiment which will come up for trial at once and the incoming administration will have the regulating power. At least the next administration will have supervision and be responsible for the results obtained from the ordinances adopted pertaining to the liquor traffic.

There is no child's play about these matters and it is no time in La Grande's history to practice anything but straightforward business sense.

This improvement epoch was ably started by Dr. M. K. Hall when he was mayor. He made it possible for La Grande to join the procession of progress by installing a water system here at the time when the peace, health and safety of the people demanded it. Following his administration F. L. Meyers as mayor with the able assistance of a council which was in accord with the advancement idea, has placed this city in the paved street class; has started a well defined system of sewers; has 1 1/2 miles of cement sidewalks and numerous other improvements have been made.

But with all of these things we have barely started. What we need now is a man capable of taking up the load and rendering still further achievement in the way of keeping La Grande to the front.

THE MURDER TRIAL.

Union county's circuit court is now wrestling with a murder trial. One of those unfortunate tragedies which grew out of a family quarrel and resulted in the spilling of human blood. Society has evidently not reached a high state of civilization when such crimes as this mark the calendar of so apparently a peaceful community as the Grande Ronde valley.

Without wishing to even discuss the merits or demerits of the case before the court, we wish to call attention once more to the danger of carrying firearms. If Jess Parker had no gun and could not have procured one within ten minutes he would not have killed Mr. Porter, his father-in-law. This is a fact, no matter what disposition Jess Parker may possess. Men only shoot on the spur of the moment. If, as the defense may claim, that Porter has a gun and Parker shot in self-defense, then had Mr. Porter not been able to have a gun there would have been no killing. We are loaded with laws preventing carrying of weapons, yet they do little good. Why? Because people are not educated from infancy to frown upon the man who has a weapon. We need stronger public sentiment against the practice.

A heat of passion, a family difficulty wherein different ones were implicated has caused the death of the father, and a long train of miserable and gruesome circumstances to be threshed out before the public. And when it shall all have been finished and Jess Parker is either convicted or acquitted as the case may be, who will be the one to suffer?

The wife and mother for one, but more lasting will be the suffering that the little boy will undergo. His life is before him. He will live under the stigma of this family quarrel which has resulted in murder. Try as he may he cannot get away from it, and he starts in life four-fifths beaten at anything he undertakes because he not only has the ordinary life's struggle to combat with but he has that terrible odium of a tragedy for which he was not to blame also to carry.

Regardless of the decision of the jury, regardless of the feeling of friends or enemies of Parker, keep in mind this—the boy is the one to pity most and the boy is the one to lend a helping hand to if the time ever comes when it is possible to do so.

WHEN THE MOTOR SLOWS DOWN

A few days ago the writer met Senator W. L. Pierce, who is probably the best known man in the valley. The senator has a game leg, a flat wheel as it were, and it refuses to heal and become as strong as it once was. After listening to him talk for a while and reviewing his past active life the thought occurred to us what it really means for the motor of the human machine to begin slowing down.

Here is a man who had never known physical ailment. When the cattle needed rounding up in the fall he was the first man in the saddle; when the harvest was in full blast he was everywhere looking after the work. No man could ride more miles and do more work than Senator

Pierce. It is different now. His physician tells him in case the limb does heal and become apparently strong his active days are over and he must let the physical activity be done by others while he confines himself to his office. The punishment is a severe one for a man who has been used to breathing mountain air from the highest peak, for one who has been used to saying, "come on, boys, we'll do this piece of work today." But it is something that is sure to come to every man. The physical house in which we live may withstand for years and years, but like all machinery, some time an eccentric will slip or a rabbit bearing will wear out causing a little lost motion which in turn will day by day cause the whole machine to feel the jar, and we are confronted with old age.

This is not intended for a pessimistic view of the physical condition of Senator Pierce, but is such a splendid illustration for all who will read that the temptation became too great and we have used his personality to demonstrate a point that is worth remembering.

THE WEST ADMINISTRATION

When Oswald West takes his seat as governor we hope he will begin at once and decapitate every republican official that he can. There is positively no reason why a republican should hold office under Governor West.

Many voted for him but they were men who are not asking patronage as a rule. It would be a good lesson to the men who claim strong party allegiance, yet play the game double to have their heads taken off with one blow of the West ax.

Personality should cut no figure whatever, and ability is seldom of such quality in state institutions that it cannot be replaced, so while the orchestra plays let the sheep be led to the block and let the newly elected governor act as executioner.

SNAP SHOTS.

The Memphis Appeal has made an instructive verb out of "ballinger" and defines it as "to stick, to sit tight, to be of a holdfast disposition."—St. Paul Dispatch.

One of the contracts ahead of President Taft will be to see if there are enough consular jobs for the political lame ducks.—Los Angeles Times.

Madero sounds more like a cigar than the president of a republic.—Atlanta Journal.

Those persons who are demanding the abolition of football and those who would do away with Santa Claus provide equally brilliant examples of wasted efforts.—Pittsburg Gazette-Times.

Mr. Battling Nelson's impersonation of the Melancholy Dane is said to be most realistic.—Butte Miner.

Of course the United States will not annex Panama. And we will also see to it that no other power does.—Los Angeles Times.

We fear that in structing Kermit will soon produce beneficial results in the most stooped forms.

An operation for appendicitis was performed on an ocean steamship passenger the other day while the vessel was going at full speed. Even the most expensive luxuries can now be obtained at sea.—Pittsburg Gazette-Times.

If Jack Johnson keeps on making a nuisance of himself there will be several places where he can't come back.—Butte Miner.

However, we do not understand that T. R. contemplates moving to Texas.—Los Angeles Times.

There is a movement afoot to have the government buy the Mammoth Cave. Is this a scheme to provide a habitat for Joe Foraker? Detroit News

The muck-raking magazines that contributed so much to the Democratic success in the East, now have on their hands the job of making the Commercial Tribune.

You can't play hooky from the school of experience.—Cincinnati Democratic legislature behave themselves.—Los Angeles Times.

Many people who think Julia Ward



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N. K. WEST, THE QUALITY STORE

Howe wrote the Battle Hymn of the Republic are mistaken. It was Mendelssohn, and they play it at every wedding.—Topeka Capital.

Senate Adjourns.

Washington, Dec. 8.—After a brief session the senate adjourned this afternoon until Monday.

WEST POINT UNIFORMS.

Cadets Must Sacrifice Comfort For the Sake of Looks.

"It is true," said a retired army officer in a discussion of West Pointers with the Washington Herald, "that many West Pointers acquire a figure of perfection of symmetry and a carriage the acme of manly grace, but these are due not to any ingenious appliances, but to the systematic drills and exercises that make the cadet, to a certain extent, an athlete. At the outset these young fellows are put through what are called the 'setting up' exercises, their object being to straighten the body and develop the chest. One might suppose that it would require a great amount of such exercise to make any marked showing, but three long hours of such exercise daily will soon produce beneficial results in the most stooped forms.

The cadet uniform is also a great help in this direction. The dress coat is tight, very tight. The shoulders are heavily padded in order to give them a square effect. The chest is made thick, so that there will be no danger of wrinkling. And in size a new dress coat seems always to be designed for a boy several times smaller than the one who is to wear it. A new dress coat, in fact, is always a source of suffering to its owner. When he first puts it on it buttons readily about the neck, but seems to lack about six inches at the waist. The owner may squirm and wriggle and attempt to reduce his waist to a minimum circumference, but his maiden efforts are never sufficient to button the new dress coat. Experience is a great teacher, though, and the young fellow laughingly requests one or two of his friends to lend their assistance, and he finally succeeds in buttoning the coat. All this for the sake of looks. Comfort has no place in the makeup of a West Pointer; it's discipline and looks."

WATCHED OVER BY SATAN.

Superstitions That Twine About the Mandrake Plant.

The little plant the mandrake has wealth of tradition centering round such as is seldom found in floral life. Quite an insignificant little plant with a spindle shaped root often divided into two or three forks and rudely resembling the human form, it is doubtless from this latter fact that it has

derived its name. Langhorne in the latter part of the eighteenth century tells us to

Mark how the rooted mandrake wears His human feet, his human hands, while it was once believed that a person pulling up a mandrake would instantly fall dead. This was said to be because the mandrake had a human heart at its root and when pulled it would scream in such a fearsome manner as to terrify the hearer to death or else induce madness. Shakespeare alludes to this where he says: And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth, That living mortals, hearing them, run mad.

And again in "King Henry VII," where Suffolk, asked by Queen Margaret whether he has not spirit to curse his enemies, replies: Would curses kill, as doth the mandrake's groan, I would invent as bitter, searching terms As curst, as harsh, as horrible to hear.

From time immemorial the mandrake has been associated with enchantments and has ever been believed to be one of the most powerful charms of witches. Mr. Conway in a paper on "Mystic Trees and Flowers" states that "by popular superstitions in some places it is said to be perpetually watched over by Satan, and if it be pulled up at certain holy times and with certain invocations the evil spirit will appear to do the bidding of the practitioner."—Westminster Review.

The Holland Primrose.

There is a plant in Holland known as the evening primrose, which grows to a height of five or six feet and bears a profusion of large yellow flowers so brilliant that they attract immediate attention, even at a great distance, but the chief peculiarity about the plant is the fact that the flowers, which open just before sunset, burst into bloom so suddenly that they give one the impression of some magical agency. A man who has seen this sudden blooming says it is just as if some one had touched the land with a wand and thus covered it all at once with a golden sheet.

A Reflection on the Horse.

"My husband," bragged Mrs. Jones, "was a famous long distance runner in his day. He once outran a horse in a twenty mile race." "Isn't that funny?" answered Mrs. Smith. "We once had a horse like that."

Now Jones and Smith wonder why their wives don't speak.—Buffalo Express.

Father Did the Work.

"Why should you beg? You are young and strong." "That is right, but my father is old and weak and can no longer support me."—Meggendorfer Blatter.

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