

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS,
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OH, DEATH WHERE IS THY VICTORY?

Homeward bound to enjoy the holiday season with his wife and two little girls, Ed. Blackburn, one of the well known traveling men in Eastern Oregon and one of the best men, reached La Grande this morning only to hear the sad word that his older daughter had died last night. The writer of this article formerly lived a neighbor to Ed. and we were requested by telephone to break the news to the father.

If ever a man suffered an intense shock it was this father. He could scarcely believe us; he was dazed; struck as though he had been pierced by an arrow, his heart remained in a stunned condition for a moment and then the whole fearful sad reality enwrapped him.

It is such events as this in life that causes strong men to weep; that causes the world to apparently stop revolving.

In this time of bitter anguish and grief Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn, the loving parents whose lives were wholly given to their children, have the deep sympathy of friends. May a kind providence give them strength at such a time.

The removal of one so young, so innocent and so pure is a part of life's program that never yet has been understood. She was a sweet little flower—dear to all who knew her, in attempting to wonder why she should be taken, one cannot but recall those familiar words, "O, death, where is thy victory?"

THE GOOD ROADS MOVEMENT

Good roads will probably benefit the Grande Ronde valley more than any other one public improvement. At present the rural highways are as well kept as possible with the amount of money to expend upon them, but more money will bring better roads.

The good roads meeting at Walla Walla and at Portland lately have had good effect upon all who attended and undoubtedly Judge Webster is creating sentiment regardless of his own ambitions later on.

We would like to see this valley possessed of two trunk lines of macadam highway—one to Union and Cove and the other to Elgin. It would mean a vast saving to the farmers and it would increase real estate valuation here materially. Already there has been a start made by the county court to build macadam highways and that now completed is first class, demonstrating that the county court understands the road building business and will be only too glad to go into it in an extensive way if the people see fit to direct them.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH WALKER?

There is doubtless no statute under which Walker, the man who dismissed the case against his wife in court yesterday, can be punished. He will continue to be a wart on society, remaining as a living example of weakened manhood. His case is a little different from any ever brought to public notice, and there is a general belief that the man is not strong mentally.

If the prosecuting attorney could, no doubt he would inflict some punishment upon this man who has turned down a case after all witnesses were ready to testify and after the jury had taken its place in the jury box.

Union county does not cherish such "horse play." The community at large resents such bogus attempts at justice, and the question arises, What should be done with Walker?

Elder John Brown, the evangelist, continues to draw good crowds at the Christian church, indicating that in La Grande's onward rush commercially many do not forget their spiritual obligations.

And the Walla Walla county branch road assures everyone that this will be one winter when snow storms will not tie up trains in the canyons. And the answer from a score of traveling salesmen is, "good."

La Grande's stores never looked so beautiful during a holiday period as they do this year. Artistic windows and carefully decorated interiors are a part of the great holiday festivity.

If wheat continues to look strong some of the ranchers in the valley may sell a few hundred thousand bushels just to have plenty of spending money during the holidays.

Representative Rusk says everything is good for him to land the speakership of the next legislature.

And here is hoping he will get that possum.

Yes, the Commercial club is essentially a community enterprise. What is your voice in the premises. Shall it continue or quit?

If the women of La Grande could be induced to take hold of the Commercial club everyone could safely wager on results.

Senator Young was talking some in the senate yesterday. Yet what he said was in a large measure very true.

Somehow the name of "Johnson" seems to indicate victory. Take the Walker-Johnson trial for instance.

The little fellows have already begun to figure on the size of the Christmas tree at home.

BIG FARM'S RETARDING INFLUENCE.

Columbia County, Washington, has been producing too much wheat and barley, remarks the Oregonian. The gangplow and the combined harvester have made possible the cultivation of land on such an extensive scale that the big farms have swallowed the smaller ones. The system of absorption has proceeded so far that during the ten most prosperous years the county has ever known its population has actually decreased 131. As the population of Dayton, the principal city of the county, has increased more than 800 in the same ten years, it is not difficult to trace the drift from the country to the city. Columbia county, pointing with pride to its reputation as the greatest barley-producing county in the state, and also to its heavy production of wheat, apparently does not regard the record in this particular as disadvantage to her general prosperity.

But within the confines of Columbia County there are already located fruit and vegetable farms which produce greater net incomes from ten and twenty acres than are taken from grain farms of ten times the size. The economic advantage in the small farm does not cease with creation of as much real, tangible wealth from ten acres as may be derived from a grain crop on 100 acres. The fact that ten families can make a living in fruit and diversified farming on the same amount of land needed to enable one graingrower to keep even shows the tremendous advantage of the small farm in the community and the state.

Graingrowing for many years has paid large profits on comparatively small investments. Not only in Columbia County, but in other portions of Oregon and Washington, has the small settler with his little family been replaced by the hired man of the bonanza graingrowers. Every locality where this change has taken place has been loser because the soil was not making, and never will make the maximum returns when used exclusively for wheat. The grain traffic was formerly very attractive to the railroads, but experience has shown railroad men that for both passenger and freight traffic a thousand acres of well-tended small farms are worth ten thousand acres of wheat land.

The Freewater-Milton fruit district is only a few miles from Columbia county, which has made such a strong showing in grain and such a poor showing in population and from



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