THE OBSERVER

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THE SEASON'S CROP INDICATIONS GOOD.

Mountaineers tell us that the snow is melting slowly—the failure of the river to assume torrential proportions verifies it—fruitmen tell us the orchards are in better condition than ever before, that the owners are pruning and doing all the necessaries to insure good crops but above all that nature seems to have touched the orchard district with fond fingers failing to crimp the tender March buds with disastrous frosts; wheat growers tell us that the winter has had a peculiarly productive element in it and there is apparently nothing to forestall a banner crop again; hay raisers are unified in the statement that the alfalfa and timothy fields have fared well during the winter—really a promising ascept for the coming, we think.

Weighed and balanced, it is found the past winter treated Grande Ronde valley royally and who is the man who can complain. Certainly not those who live in cities, and who enjoy spring winds and sunshine in the severest month of all, March; certainly not the various tillers of the soil mentioned. So entering on April and its related activities in the field and orchard, let us with one accord give thanks.

THE NEW SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Some record-smashing games of golf are promised in Washington this summer as a consequence of President Taft's appointment of Walter L. Fisher, of Chicago, to succeed Mr. Ballinger as secretary of the interior. For, says the New York Tribune, "like the president himself, Mr. Fisher is an enthusiastic devotee of golf," and quite as hard a driver on the field as at his desk. Moreover, when Mr. and Mrs. Roosevelt to journey to the national capital after Mrs. Fisher is installed there as a hostess, the country need not be surprised to hear an "unprecedented talkfest" on the subject of race suicide, as, we are informed, "the private life the new member of the presidents cabinet is notable for two hobbies—golf and children."

WILL BEAUTIFY CHICAGO.

The "city beautiful" plan which has been slowly gaining headway in Chicago was epitomized by Chairman C. H. Wacker of the Chicago Plan commission in an address this way: "It is proposed first of all to widen and develop existing rectangular streets, and, secondly, to cut diagonal streets to facilitate still more the movement of traffic. The circuit of first importance for immediate relief of the congestion in the heart of the city, and one that will be typical of all others to be executed as the city's growth demands, is Michigan avenue, 12th street Halsted street and Chicago avenue. Michigan avenue may be called the base line of traffic of the city. A great development of this avenue is proposed. It is proposed to develop 12th street simultaneously with the Michigan avenue extension (or north and south connecting boulevard) in order to bring the west side people down to the shore of Lake Michigan and to Grant park. Halsted street, a great business thoroughfare, is so situated that its usefulness might be much increased. It must inevitably carry an enormous traffic, and is selected as the north and south axial line of circulation. Chicago avenue, already 100 feet wide, will, if well maintained, serve for a long time the traffic which it will be made to carry. Connecting, as it does, with the proposed north and south boulevard at Pine street, it will form the fourth side of the rectangle, constituting the first circuit of improvement."

HOW OLD IS YOUR HORSE.

There are four ways to tell the age of a horse, according to Prof. E. L. Potter of the Oregon agricultural college: by his teeth, by his ribs, by the flesh on his tail, and by the skin on his cheeks.

In a young horse the cheek skin is soft and elastic, and flies back quickly when raised; in an old one, it is lifeless and goes back but slowly.

Old horses apparently have a wider and more distinct space between their ribs than young ones. And with age the flesh on the tail of a horse shrinks making the joints more distinct than they are on a young horse.

Judging by the changes in the teeth is a more accurate method. The coming of the temporary teeth first, and then the permanent ones; the development to maturity; the change in shape on account of wear; the coming of the cups in the teeth, and they wearing away afterward; and the change in the angle of meeting of the teeth, from straight together at five years to a sharp angle at 20; all these are signs by which the experienced horseman can read accurately the age of a horse.

"It must be remembered that the permanent teeth, above and below, come in at the same time," says Prof. Potter, "but that the cups above do not wear away until all the cups below are gone. It must also be remembered that the changes begin at the center and continue at the rate of one pair a year; that a horse at maturity, which is at five years, has everything—that is, all his permanent teeth and all the cups. If one remembers this much, he has the whole thing in a nut shell."

AMERICAN HUSTLE A TONIC.

The tonic of American hustle and shortcuts to applied to European business methods has done wonders—and no other, say Chicago business men in relating certain cases of that sort without dwelling on shortcoming of Americans in foreign markets. "In one instance," one story runs, "a man came from Europe and entered in business in Chicago, whose business has increased 500 per cent in one year as a result of knowledge gained by joining the association. He followed the European custom, for one thing, of failing to discount his bills, but carrying a large savings account. We taught him how to adopt the American system and the result has been to make him wealthy."

GIBRALTAR.

The "Key of the Mediterranean" Has Had a Stormy History.

England has been in possession of the rocky promontory of Gibraltar since 1704. From that time to this it has been a crown colony under the administration of a governor. By reason of its important strategical position it is called the "key of the Mediterranean."

Gibraltar has had a stormy history. In 711 the rock was taken by the Arab chief Tarik, who called it Jebel-al-Tarik (Hill of Tarik) and built a fortress on the promontory. Part of these ruins are still extant. In 1309 it was taken by the Castilians, only to be recaptured by the Moors in 1333. It was held by them until 1462. Following the taking and sacking of Gibraltar in 1540 by Barbarosso, extensive military works were built there by order of Charles V.

In 1704 the promontory was captured by a combined force under Sir George Rooke and the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, fighting for the Archduke Charles of Austria. The moment it fell into their hands the British admiral threw off the alliance with the Austrians and took complete possession of the works.

British possession since that time has been unbroken, although it was under a Spanish siege for nearly three years and eight months, beginning in 1779. Twice the garrison was on the point of falling because of the starvation of its defenders.

Right on the Job.

At the time Dewey captured the Philippine Islands there was only one lighthouse in operation in the Philippine waters—that on Cape Melville, Balabac island, south of the island of Palawan and marking the entrance between the China sea and the Sulu sea. As is the custom in time of war, the Spanish authorities had ordered all lighthouses to have their lights extinguished when it was discovered that an attack on Manila was threatened by the American navy. It appears that this order was carried out at all other places except at the lighthouse mentioned above, where the order was never received. The keeper of this light kept his light burning up to June 30, 1899, without assistance, and was paid for his services from May 1, 1899, to that date by the Philippine government.—Philippines Monthly.