

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS
Editor and Owner.

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CIRCUMLOCUTION OF HOME RULE LAW.

The Portland Oregonian says editorially:

Shortly after the November election the Oregonian expressed, in effect, the opinion that the framers of the home rule amendment had merely led the people of the state in a walk around a circle. The first court instruction of the amendment has now been given by Judge J. W. Knowles in the Tenth judicial district, and this decision seems to coincide fully with what the Oregonian has said.

This decision, coming from the circuit court, is of course not final, but it is interesting as showing the trend of judicial opinion. "I believe," says Judge Knowles in his opinion, "that the only reasonable construction that can be placed upon the above consti-

tutional amendment (home rule measure) is that where the local option law is in force in a county by a vote of the people of such county, that towns, cities and municipalities do not have the right to license the sale of intoxicating liquors within the corporate limits of said town, municipality or city."

The main issue in the case decided was not the question of the right of voters of a city located in dry territory to authorize by election the sale of liquor in the city. It involved the right of the city council in a city in dry territory to issue saloon licenses. But the same course of reasoning that led to Judge Knowles' decision would seemingly apply to measures initiated by the voters in dry cities. There is nothing in the amendment bearing the construction that the voters may enact laws pertaining to the sale of liquor regardless of the local option law, but that the city council may adopt such measures subject only to the local option law.

If Judge Knowles' construction finally prevails the time and effort expended in the adoption of the amendment will have been fruitless. The country precincts will still be able to force prohibition on unwilling towns if they have the necessary preponderance of votes. Local option will not have been changed in definite particular. Meaningless phrases will merely have been added to the constitution.

The situation leads one directly to one of the guide-boards placed along the road to a proper initiative by Theodore Roosevelt. He has wisely declared that the initiative should be safeguarded by some method that will guarantee competent drafting of measures. The home rule amendment is a striking example of the need of such a safeguard in Oregon. It is a measure to which a final clause was added apparently for the sole purpose of gaining votes. In effect this last clause is the string attached to the April Fool purse, when we attempt to pick the purse from the sidewalk it is jerked away with the cord.

The Oregonian, however, is not complaining so much concerning the ineffectiveness of this particular measure as it is of the looseness which permits the use of ambiguities and catch phrases in initiative measures to an extent that deprives the people of knowledge as to the true effect of legislation submitted to them.

AFTER COMIC SUPPLEMENTS

Rag-time journalism, so called by would-be reformers, is just at present an issue in New York which from their point of view seems to be a more important question than the improvement of the present building and fire regulations which recently contributed to the loss of nearly 150 lives. The Sunday comic supplement—alleged or real—is now calling forth all sorts of criticism from persons who are interested in the culture of ethics. All this hubbub over a matter comparatively trivial has arisen as a result of the fancied discovery that the comic supplements stimulate disobedience, practical jokes on elders and many other juvenile crimes. All sorts of charges have been made against the comic supplement, such as the one which characterized it as a "social crime which might carelessly destroy the exquisite quality of the young mind as it expands," and the like. New York is nothing if not inconsistent and

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..... Gaumont
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the fact that the readers of Sunday newspapers can easily destroy unread the colored supplements does not seem to have been realized. As a matter of fact no New York newsdealer could sell a copy of a Sunday paper which lacked its colored supplement, ethical culture notwithstanding.

Capt. John Weller, a seaman and boat builder of Carlstadt, New Jersey, is to attempt to cross the Atlantic in a 50-foot raised-cabin motorboat cruiser, which he has been constructing for the past several months. The little vessel is 50 feet long, with a beam of 12 feet and a draft of three feet. She is driven by a 37-horse power gasoline engine, which is expected to give a steady speed of a little over 10 miles an hour. The trip across the Atlantic starts at St. Johns, the course being between the two transatlantic lines from Quebec and New York, the contemplated landing being at Galway bay, Ireland. The May number of Popular Mechanics magazine contains pictures of the boat.

Kenyon Cox, the eminent artist, contributed to the May Scribner a paper entitled "The Classic Spirit in Painting," in which he makes a plea for the preservation of all the best traditions. While believing that American art is far below what the art of France was in the early part of the 19th century, he says, "But just as certainly, I believe, is it the best art now being produced in the world, and the art of all now being produced in the world that has the most in common with the great art of the past and the largest promise of the art of the future."

Echoes of the Knights meeting in La Grande Sunday are still to be heard and among the many nice events of the day apparently W. C. E. Pruitt of Pendleton made a decided hit in his speech which sparked with local mention and caused vigorous applause and laughter during the banquet. G. B. Moulton of Baker is said to have

also delivered a classical oration.

La Grande is honored today by a visit from Rear Admiral Rees who served under Dewey. With apology to Eugene Ware let us say, "and we do feel honored, we really think we do."

Making a city is not a small task. La Grande begins to understand what improvement means, and also to fully be aware of the marked benefits of such improvement.

With forty dead and many wounded it looks like there might have been a skirmish near the border.

PHARISAISM DENOUNCED.

So the worthy lawyer, W. M. Ramsey, still has time to devote to writing articles in defense of the preachers!

Ye servants of toil, ye multitudes of workers, ye burdened producers of the world's good, ye builders of communities, ye transformers of the deserts; above all ye Judases of this valley, listen: Did you read the thrusts made against those who must win their bread by the sweat of the face? You are likened unto Judas who sold the Laborer into the hands of the idle Pharisees. There are two classes of people, the producer and the hanger-on. When a man leaves the ranks of the sycophants and enters the ranks of the toilers and denounces the man who will not work, calls black black and white white there arises a wall of indignation from the idlers. But you would think by reading the worthy lawyer's articles that he was employed by the ministers of La Grande to defend their position. This is by no means the reason for his articles, neither is he so religious or holds the Christian religion in such high regard. There is still another reason. The ministry as it is conducted today compels the minister to be a tool of the social system under which we all are compelled to live. The ministry is subsidized by the theories and mon-

ey of such Pharisees as the worthy lawyer who love the chief seats in the modern churches and to parade their goodness and piety before the world. The worthy lawyer holds his position by virtue of the fact that the ministry preaches that it is perfectly in accord with the laws of God and the Bible for one to live off the earnings of another. By the way, lawyer, do not quote Latin for the laborers to read. They do not have time to study the foreign tongue. It takes their entire time to produce enough of the necessities of life to keep themselves and the drones. If every able bodied man would become a natural producer of the necessities of life those who now are compelled to work from early morning until late at night would have sufficient time to study Latin and enjoy some of the many comforts that are now denied them. Now, my good kind benefactor, I will devote a portion of my time in writing for your good pleasure if you so desire. Come again.
FORD A. ELLIS.

With the above communication the Observer closes, so far as it is concerned, the controversy regarding Mr. Ellis and the ministry. It has been a long argument and we feel that all sides have been heard.—Ed.

With only words of loudest praise for the fine treatment accorded them by their brothers in La Grande, the Baker Knights Templar returned to this city last night from the annual meeting of the Eastern Oregon Knights. It was one of the finest meetings that the Knights have ever had.—Baker Herald.

J. R. Filgate and wife will leave in a few days for Greeley, California, where Mr. Filgate has land possessions that he desires to look after. He has been with the Wright Drug company for almost a year and both himself and wife have made many friends in La Grande who regret to see them leave.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.
Department of the Interior,
U. S. Land Office at La Grande, Oregon
March 13, 1911.

Notice is hereby given that Sylvester V. Keltz, of La Grande, Oregon, Guardian of the minor heirs of Pearl Senter, deceased, who, on July 11th, 1902, made Homestead Entry No. 11728, Serial No. 03695, for E. 1-2 N. E. 1-4 Sec. 29, and W. 1-2 N. W. 1-4 Sec. 21, Township 4 South, Range 35 East, Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final five-year Proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before the Register and Receiver, United States Land Office, at La Grande, Oregon, on the 10th day of May, 1911.

Claimant names as witnesses:
John F. Alden, Andrew J. Sullivan, James B. Hagey, and Fred Hoalthee, all of Starkey, Oregon.

F. C. BRAMWELL,
Register.
WKLY—Mch. 17, 24, 31; Apr. 7, 14, 21, 28.

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