

THE OBSERVER

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EDITOR AND OWNER.

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THE ROAD BILLS AGAIN.

The Central Labor Council of Portland has issued the following circular to readers of Oregon, touching upon the good road laws:

Knowing of your deep interest in roads for the farmers, and that a state-wide movement for good roads, honest expression of opinion from a thoughtful, unprejudiced source would be of interest to your readers, I give below the text of the resolutions adopted by the Central Labor Council, June 21, 1912:

Whereas, The Oregon state grange has now before the people of Oregon, good roads measures giving the voters of the state and each county full power to locate and secure roads of service and benefit to the farmers; and

Whereas, The organized workers of the farms and the cities of Oregon, fighting shoulder to shoulder, have secured and are retaining the Oregon system of people's rule; therefore be it

Resolved, By the Central Labor Council of Portland and vicinity, in regular session assembled, that we urge our members and the friends of the Oregon system to endorse by their signatures, the grange road bills and to carefully scrutinize the so-called home rule or harmony road measures, initiated or to be initiated,

to defeat the grange bills." Trusting that you will find the space to include these resolutions in your edition of this week, I beg leave to remain, Yours Fraternaly, Arthur W. Lawrence, Secretary Labor Council.

LONG AND SHORT ENLISTMENTS

One of the many recommendations made in the recent annual report of Secretary Stimson of the war department is of special interest as indicating a change of sentiment in official quarters concerning the matter of enlistment. The head of the war department urged that the time of service in the regular army be shortened and that there should be in each enlistment a stipulation that when the soldier returns to private life he shall be amenable to calls for service for some definite period.

It is to be presumed that this recommendation of Mr. Stimson meets the approval of the president and is the general view of the army officialdom at Washington and elsewhere. And yet it was not long ago when long-term enlistments and frequent re-enlistments were deemed desirable. Even now there is pending in congress a bill proposing to increase from three to five years the service of each recruit.

The new view will probably strike the average citizen as wiser. In this country we want no soldier class. Soldiers are necessary appendages of a civilized state, but no one wants them exalted above the common rank. Their profession is honorable but no more so than many other professions.

This theory is, in substance, that the army is a training school for good citizenship as well as a force for national defence. The officers constitute the faculty of teachers; the soldiers are the pupils coming and going, receiving the benefits of army discipline, and then passing on to private life, disseminating among the citizenship at large sentiments of patriotism and love of the flag.

It might be well—for many reasons it would be well—if every young American were required to serve one enlistment period in the regular army. Something approaching this condition exists in Germany and the results are considered beneficial. Not only would such an experience prove of benefit to the young man himself, but it would in the course of a few years build up a body of army trained citizens of invaluable consequence to the nation in case of emergency. They would be the first to rally to support their country were it assailed by a foreign foe. They would not need the preliminary training demanded by raw recruits.

The regular army will always constitute the nucleus of the country's line of defense. It could not, however, bear the burden alone in case of any serious attack. Instant recruiting would be necessary. In any fight against injustice, particularly in any fight to resist invasion, the hardest soldiery to defeat is that made up of law-abiding citizens who have momentarily dropped their civilian pursuits to shoulder a rifle.

This has been the experience repeatedly. Without exactly this citizen soldiery the history of the United States would not have been written. Most people will agree that it is the part of wisdom to make the regular army organization as useful to the country as possible. It seems that the new official view of the army as a training school is calculated to increase its usefulness.

A conference of those opposed to lynching is to be held in Chicago. It will lack the support of those best posted, as none who have been lynched will participate.

The government is after the bridge trust, but, unfortunately for father the crusade has nothing to do with the game of that name.

An eastern paper says that politically T. R. is at sea. Perhaps, but he has not yet begun to sound the "S. O. S."

Dr. Couch Returns.

Dr. O. J. Couch, veterinarian, of La Grande, who went to Portland some time ago, returned the latter part of last week to take charge of his practice here once more. During his stay in Portland he took the state veterinary medical examination and was admitted to the state veterinary medical association. Having fulfilled the state law in regard to the practicing of veterinarians he is now allowed to carry on the tuberculosis test of cattle and the maiting test of horses which are being shipped out of the st

On Little Peak

A Story of a Western Blizzard

By CLARISSA MACKIE

When they rode up to the gate their young faces seemed to reflect the glory of the sunset. Owen Morgan's was aglow with love and pride, and Annie Bell's was pink flushed and shyly happy.

Annie's father, Peter Bell, saw them coming and strode across the yard with thunder in his voice and lightning in his eyes.

"You clear out of this, young fellow!" he growled as he snatched the bridle of Annie's pony and led the animal away. "You've done about all the mooning around these diggings that's allowed by me—see?"

"Father!" cried Annie indignantly, snatching at the bridle rein.

For reply the gruff old man lifted his daughter's slender form from the saddle and pushed her toward the house. "Go inside and stay there till I come," he added, and because Peter Bell's word was law in his house Annie went, with a single heartbreaking glance at her recently declared lover.

Owen Morgan stared after her with eyes that saw not. The whole scene appeared to be some grotesque comedy that was being enacted for his benefit. Perhaps he was expected to laugh at Peter Bell's joke.

"Understand—you?" rasped Peter Bell unpleasantly.

"You mean it?" Owen managed to ask, with stiff lips. "You mean that I'm not to come and see Annie again?"

"That's just what I do mean! Why, you must think I'm a fool to let you run after my girl after the way your father has treated me!"

"You mean about the boundary line?" asked Owen, wheeling his horse about.

"Yes, I mean about the boundary line!" roared Peter. "When then papers was served on me this afternoon I vowed this would be the last ride your father's son ever took with my girl. Now that's all plain, and you're invited to go."

Owen's face was very white and his lips were compressed to a straight line as he rode home at breakneck speed. His own father was smoking in the porch of the ranch house, and the older man's calm demeanor served in a measure to cool Owen's wrath at Peter Bell.

"Careful, lad!" warned Mr. Morgan as his son brought the dripping horse to a standstill. "Don't you know how to treat a beast, Owen? Take Brownie and give him a rubdown and come back to me."

Although Owen was twenty-four, he obeyed his father as meekly as though he were still in his early teens. After he had made the reeking horse as comfortable as possible for the time he walked slowly back to the veranda, where his father sat enveloped in overcoat and hat, for it was January and the thermometer had been near to 20 degrees all day. Now it was a little milder, for the wind had died down. The sunset clouds had lost their delicate colors even as Owen's face had lost its glow of happiness.

"It's going to snow," prophesied Mr. Morgan, with an eye turned toward the weather.

"Then I ought to get that bunch of cattle in from the lower range," remarked Owen rather listlessly.

"Morning will be time enough. Where you been—riding with Annie?" Owen's face reddened to the ears, and he avoided his father's searching eyes.

"Yes," he replied constrainedly.

"Have a good ride."

"Went over to the Little Peak."

"Hum—same place I went with your ma once. It ended in our getting engaged."

"It didn't end that way with me, dad." Owen's eyes still sought the distant horizon.

"Tut!" Mr. Morgan's carefully balanced chair came down on all four legs, and he looked with concern at his son's handsome, downcast face. "Why, I would have staked my eye that Annie— He paused helplessly.

"She does?" was Owen's significant reply.

"And you, dad?"

"So do I!"

"Then—what—why?"

"Peter Bell kicked me out—practically—before I even had a chance to ask him—or anything. Just told me to get out and stay out."

"Why?" demanded Mr. Morgan, although he had guessed.

"He said you've served papers on him in a suit over that boundary line."

"What did you say to him?"

"Nothing. There wasn't anything I could say under the circumstances."

Annie's his daughter, and he's got the right to say who's coming to see her."

"Leave it to me, Owen, lad. I'll chuck

the whole boundary business if it will help any. I don't want you and Annie to be"—

"It's all right, dad. Maybe he'll get over it," said Owen, although he doubted Peter Bell's repentance over such a small matter as that of dismissing one of Annie Bell's suitors. Annie Bell was young, but there had always been suitors for her pretty hand and tender heart. The heart had belonged to Owen Morgan ever since she had

discovered that she possessed such a troublesome organ, but Owen had waited until Annie had returned from the boarding school in Denver before asking this question.

The next morning, just before noon, came the beginning of the snowstorm. Owen ate a hasty dinner and, mounting his sturdiest pony, set out for the lower range to gather in a small bunch of cattle that had been left there to graze on the sparse herbage that might be found in sheltered nooks.

Shortly after he started the plain was obliterated from view by the thickly falling flakes, but his pony knew the trail and seemed to realize that perhaps their lives depended upon his speed, for he raced across the whitening earth with undiminished speed until the frightened herd of cattle was located and started on its homeward way.

It was harder going back to the ranch. The snow was driving in their faces now and clung moistly to every inch of exposed surface. Just as the last frightened beast was driven into the corral and Jose, the Mexican stableman, had closed the gates there came the sound of shouting from the front of the ranch house.

By the time Owen had fountered around there he knew the shouting voice to be that of Peter Bell, and he wondered what sudden accession of anger had driven the old man forth in the midst of what promised to be a blizzard.

But Peter Bell was not angry. He was a terrified and grief stricken old man, who was being thawed out before the big coal stove in the sitting room of the ranch. Mrs. Morgan was holding a cup of something hot and steaming to his bearded lips, while Owen's father was pulling on fur lined boots with great haste.

"What is the matter?" demanded Owen, standing in the doorway.

"It's Annie—she went out for a ride before the storm and she hasn't returned," explained Mrs. Morgan quickly. "All of the Bell ranch men are away, and so Mr. Bell came over to see if you and father wouldn't help"—

"Of course I don't deserve it after what I said to you yesterday," broke in Peter Bell tremulously, "but—"

"Which direction did she take?" interrupted Owen ruthlessly.

"Toward Little Peak. I warned her it was going to snow, but she said she'd be right back. It's a bad trail, you know, Owen," ended Peter Bell pitifully.

"I'll bring her back," promised Owen confidently. "You have everything ready to thaw us out when we come, and, mother, just give me a flask of that brandy in case—in case Annie should be pretty cold."

A little shudder ran through the older people. They knew the chances of finding Annie Bell cold—cold in death—were very strong. But Owen, fired by his great love, would leave no place unexplored. If any one could find the girl it would be the man who loved her.

Owen's mother kissed him and the two men gripped his hand as he closed the door behind him. Jose had brought around one of the farm horses, a great heavy animal, whose enormous strength could better combat the snow than the lighter animals.

Out of sight of the ranch house, all bearings were lost in the white world of snow. A small pocket compass warmed in his hand guided him to the westward, where Little Peak reared its height.

The trail up the mountain side was narrow and precarious in fair weather. Owen, strong as a bull riding down here in the face of the foot flakes. Even if she reached the peak there was the deep snow to ride through, and if her pony stumbled—why, he did not dare to think of the soft mound of snow that might now cover pretty Annie Bell, who only yesterday had whispered that she loved him. It had happened on this very self same peak, and Annie had gone back there today!

Owen struck the horse sharply, and the big body heaved convulsively forward, and the great hoofs dashed through the fast forming drifts. They covered the three miles to the canyon in a half hour, and Owen was another thirty minutes finding the narrow entrance. There was not a foot of ground that he had not scanned with his eyes as he rode, and his voice had been lifted in continuous shouting, but so far only the dumb silence of the muffling snow had answered him.

In the ranch house Mrs. Morgan had completed her preparation for the restoration of the half frozen ones when they returned unless—there should be two lost instead of one. Owen's mother was holding her husband's hand, and his other hand was unconsciously gripped by Peter Bell, who had for-

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gotten his anger over the boundary fence and had become the father of the missing Annie—and that was all.

"Hark!" cried Peter Bell after three hours had passed in agonizing silence. There was no audible sound, but an instant later the outer door burst open and Owen staggered in, holding a snow wreathed burden in his arms.

"She's alive!" he panted. "Take her—I can get along all right" and to prove that he could Owen Morgan gave Annie Bell safely into her father's arms and sank unconscious to the floor.

When Owen awoke between hot blankets, with a restorative burning its way down his throat, his first thought was for Annie Bell. At his first stir in came Peter Bell, leading Annie by the hand. She was pale, but her eyes shone happily.

"Owen, lad," said Peter Bell in a shaking voice, "you saved my girl's life, and it belongs to you. I give her back to you!"

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