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GENERAL APPRECIATION IS EXPRESSED.

The many nice things said about The Observer's Christmas number makes the management and everyone connected with issuing the paper feel well repaid for the hard work used in bringing out the 24-page edition, containing a resume of the affairs of La Grande and Union county for the past year.

We are glad to be able to record the remarkable advancement, to be able to have issued such a newspaper, and the entire force is greatly pleased with the splendid appreciation expressed by all.

THE SPIRIT WAS HERE.

The Christmas spirit prevailed yesterday in its very best and pure quality. Everyone quit work and enjoyed the day. It was Christmas day in La Grande. Apparently the whole city was of one idea—to have a good time and make others happy.

This sentiment was very pronounced in every quarter and in the afternoon the Elks gave it a beautiful climax with a magnificent Christmas tree for all children who desired to attend—and there were a multitude of them there—and each child carried home a present with the compliment of the Elks' order. This was only one of the things done by the B. P. O. E. during the holidays—another and probably more important one, was the charity extended in the way of an excellent Christmas dinner and other material things given where needed by this order.

All secret orders and churches did their part to make this the greatest Christmas time La Grande has ever experienced.

CHRISTMAS ON ENGINES.

Some original genius among the railroad men, in whose heart there is much of the Christmas poetry, would not deprive himself of the thoughts and feelings that spring from the sight of the evergreen spruce tree. He was booked to run his switch engine up and down in the local yards, pushing and pulling at the unsightly box cars and lending his assistance to the parade of commercial products. His Christmas tree was with him. On the rear of the engine it waved in the breezes and felt proud of the fact that it claimed a distinction in being the only tree on wheels. It was unusual and impressed a number of men at the railroad station, who could not help commenting on the spirit of the man who placed it there. It was in fact a striking contrast to the dull black of the engines and the unsentimental surroundings. "The world is better for the presence of such men," remarked a witness to the odd scene.

HUMANE OFFICER NEEDED.

Every community needs a humane officer.

This is demonstrated almost every day, not by intentional cruel people, but by thoughtlessness. It is like everything else, without a head tax methods prevail.

As the state law stands now the humane situation is nothing more nor less than a bluff. Frequently someone will insist that certain practices be stopped, and they do stop for the time being, but if it came to a show down no one has authority to act.

This can be remedied very easily without increasing the number of officers in the state. Every county has a stock inspector, or some other official who can and would be glad to look after the humane work needed.

A good thing for the legislature to consider. It will cost nothing and will add greatly to the organization of every community in Oregon.

WHY NEED THE LEGISLATURE MEET?

The time is rapidly drawing near for the convening of the state body and a word will not be amiss at this time.

Plainly stating the facts, it would seem that Oregon with her earnest desire to accomplish everything that pertains to the general welfare in a wide open way, is facing a condition that, to all appearances, would

make Taunmany do a little blushing.

Several weeks before the legislature meets we find Senator Dan Malarkey laying his wires for election as president of the senate. Likewise C. N. McArthur is pulling for speaker of the house. In the latter case there is good reason to believe he was forced in at the early stage because of the activity of Malarkey. Both these men are from Multnomah county—a county that already has one-fifth the voting strength of the legislature. If successful this gives Multnomah not only its one-fifth voting strength, but arms it with the power that accompanies the leadership of each branch of the state legislature. In other words, Portland and Multnomah county will have nothing to do but ask and receive what they want.

And on top of this almost unheard of transaction comes the announcement that Malarkey, McArthur and Governor West have had a caucus deciding just how they will proceed with the business of this coming session. Then why is it necessary for the legislature to convene at all? Why not turn the whole matter over to Malarkey, McArthur and the governor. If they are going to dictate the procedure, going through the formalities of electing senators and representatives from Eastern Oregon is entirely superfluous and unnecessary.

We believe the people of Oregon are against such cut-and-dried slate methods, and we prefer to agree with Senator Lair Thompson of Lakeview who vehemently denounces such political transactions.

Legislatures have in the past made themselves obnoxious to the rank and file of the people by their log-rolling method; but to our knowledge they never stacked the cards so early in the game, practically serving notice on every senator and representative who was not in the deal that the slate was made and the program outlined.

THE ROUNDUP.

At the Roundup ain't it true, Wild and woolly Buckaroo Mounts a bronco just for luck Then he hollers "Let'er Buck" Benny Corbett, there he stands And spins a rope to beat the band Briscoe Vernon and Freddy Spain Bulldozers steers, by night and main, Shaps and spurs and lariats Something doing now, you bet, Next Lou Miner takes the reins And yanks the belt from Johnny Spain.

Hank McGrath and Jory Jack Makes the fellers clear the track Riding high with spurs and quirt, Then a cowboy hits the dirt. Now the Roundup it is done You bet we had a pile of fun, But I bid you one and all To bring your bronc and come next fall.

Ropers, Riders, short and tall It will be the best of all. —By Eugene A. Roach, La Grande.

A BATTLE IN THE SEA.

Wanton Slaughter When Bluefish and Menhaden Meet.

Did you ever see oneself charge a school of menhaden at sea? That is something worth seeing. The bluefish throw their lines forward until they almost surround the menhaden, and they attack them flank and rear. The menhaden fairly make the water boil in their efforts to escape, while all around the enemy is at them tearing relentlessly.

Into all this commotion comes a great shark. It's a picnic for the shark, a school of menhaden all herded up for his benefit. It swims leisurely into the midst of them, opens its mouth and takes in half a dozen menhaden at a gulp. It swims around and bites but half a dozen more from the school. It gorges itself without effort.

But the menhaden are not nearly as much disturbed by the presence of the monster swimming about among them as they are by the charging bluefish. The shark takes half a dozen fish, or more at a bite, while the bluefish only bites a piece out of a single fish, but there is only one shark, while there may be thousands of bluefish plunging and tearing incessantly and killing and maiming at every stroke.

The shark's brute, but under such circumstances the menhaden have less of fear than they have of contempt for him.

Tombstone Inscriptions.

Three of the commonest tombstone inscriptions are "In the midst of life we are in death," "His end was peace," "He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." The sentiment of each is comforting and reassuring, but none comes from the Bible.

Natural Spectacles.

Many birds are provided with natural spectacles, a transparent membrane called the third eyelid. This third eyelid when not in use lies folded in the inner corner of the eye. Two muscles work it, spreading it over the corner or folding it up again much more cleverly than a man can put on or take off his spectacles. But for its third eyelid the eagle could not look at the sun. The spectacle here is longer of Chile. Its Latin name is Urostris. It is black and around its eyes pale rings are drawn which have exactly the appearance of a pair of goggles.

KEPT AN EYE ON THE HOUSE.

A Neighboring Act That Resulted in a Comedy of Errors.

A gentleman and his wife occupying a villa in a London suburb asked a neighbor to "keep an eye on the place" while they were away on their annual holiday. The neighbor consented and on the first night of his caretaking noticed a light in the bedroom of the presumably unoccupied house and saw the light extinguished.

Accompanied by a policeman, the neighbor made a forcible entrance through the scullery window, and quietly the two men made their way to the bedroom. The light of the constable's bullseye disclosed the head of a man in bed, and the policeman promptly drew his truncheon.

As promptly the occupant of the bed sprang out, and a desperate struggle began. Simultaneously a lady dashed across the room shrieking, threw open the window and at considerable peril clambered out. A second constable, passing at the moment, concluded that the lady was bent on suicide and, entering the front garden, held himself in readiness to catch the woman, who appeared to be about to fling herself to the ground.

The neighbor, however, dragged the lady back into the room, and then the truth began to assert itself. The captured invader of the empty house and the escaping lady were the occupant and his wife, who had suddenly changed their holiday arrangements without informing their too vigilant neighbor.—London Globe.

FRENCH ZOUAVES.

These Fighters Won Their Greatest Fame in the Crimea.

One of the most interesting class of soldiers of modern times has been the French corps called the zouaves. This body of daring and picturesquely attired fighters reached the heights of its reputation during the Crimean war. The zouave corps at that time was supposed to consist of Frenchmen. It was, however, quite international, since many daring young foreigners had joined it, and it was known to include in its ranks men from Oxford, Göttingen and other universities. It is probable that a majority of its members were in it more for love of fighting than for any love of country.

It is not strange, therefore, that its fame as a fighting body should have spread throughout the world. When our war between the states broke out several corps of zouaves, wearing the glittering oriental uniforms of the French corps or a modification of them were formed on both sides. On the Union side the best known was that corps commanded by Elmer Ellsworth, a young officer from New York and the first killed on the Union side. In the Confederacy the most famous corps of zouaves was that called the "Louisiana Tigers."

While in American military life the zouave uniform has practically disappeared, in France the zouave name and uniform still survive.—Harper's Weekly.

The Queen Chameleon.

There is nothing in the world which induces a chameleon to take even the slightest apparent interest in its surroundings unless it be the sight of what it considers a toothsome insect. The chameleon's method of taking its prey is very curious, being effected by shooting out an enormously long, wormlike tongue, the end of which is clubbed and covered with a viscid secretion, to which the insects stick and are thus drawn into its mouth. The actual projection of the tongue is made with marvelous rapidity. The eyes of the chameleon are very curious. They are very large, but, with the exception of a small opening in the center, are covered with skin. They are also entirely independent of each other, with the result that occasionally the creature is looking forward over its nose with one eye, while with the other it is intently watching something directly behind it.

Too Strong.

"A young woman from the west who lately has been admitted to the intimacy of 'the artistic set' of Washington recently made this query of an artist with reference to the work of a fellow painter:

"Why does Blank stand off and half shut his eyes when he looks at the pictures he is painting? When I visited his studio the other day he made me do it too."

"The explanation is simple enough," said the other. "Did you ever try to look at them with your eyes wide open? Well, don't; you can't stand it." —New York Press.

He Must Be Shy.

"Pretty bashful sort of chap, isn't he?"

"Bashful? I should say so. He's the kind of fellow who'd stammer and stutter and break and run if opportunity came up smiling and tried to shake hands with him."—St. Louis Republican.

Some Wag.

Proud Father—in the sweet garden of our home, sir, my daughter is a blushing rosebud. Waggish Visitor—And you, of course, are the poppy.—Baltimore American.

Lots of 'Em.

She—it says here that a man in Kansas has a chicken that can dance and tries to sing. He—Why, the stage is crowded with them already.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

THE UMBRELLA.

Its Antiquity and Its Introduction into English Writings.

Umbrellas were first used in a country where the intensity of the light and heat rendered a shade almost indispensable, and discoveries at Nineveh show that they were carried before the king in time of peace and sometimes in war.

In 1688 Thomas Coryat traveled in Italy and wrote: "The people do carry umbrellas—that is things that minister shadow unto them for shelter against the scorching of the sun."

In Beaumont and Fletcher's play, 1640, "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," are these words, which prove that they were then known in England: "Are you at ease? Now is your heart at ease. Now you have got a shadow, an umbrella, to keep the world's scorching opinion from your fair credit."

In 1786 Jonas Hanway died in a house in Red Lion square. He was the first man who ventured to walk the streets of London with an umbrella over his head.

Dr. Shebwar was committed to the court of king's bench for a libel and was sentenced to stand in the pillory. A servant in livery was hired to hold an umbrella over his head to keep off the rain.

Cowper in the "Task," 1784, thus describes the country girl who dresses above her condition:

Expect her soon with foot boy at her heels,
 No longer pushing for her awkward load,
 Her train and her umbrella all her care.
 —New York Telegram.

A SCIENTIFIC HOAX.

The Steel Eating Worm and the Origin of the Mythical Insect.

A letter published in the New York Engineering News from Mr. E. Gibson Spillbury gives the origin of the myth regarding the "steel eating worm." About 1896, he says, employees of various iron, steel and chemical works of the district surrounding Haspe, in Germany, used to meet at a hotel in order to discuss subjects of general interest, with the result that a society known as the "Ulk," which in English signifies "fun," was formed.

The steel eating worm was created at one of the meetings and an editor from one of the neighboring towns was made the subject of the joke. The "insect" was manufactured from a piece of gutta percha tube and was exhibited in a bottle half full of scale. The worm was filled with dilute hydrochloric acid and when properly disturbed with a glass rod it would emit a drop of the acid, which, on attacking the scale, served to prove that the corrosion was due to a secretion of the worm and that the oxides formed its food.

The editor accepted the exhibit in good faith and published an account of the alleged discovery, with the consequence that it reappeared in many other journals and has since been reproduced elsewhere at varying intervals.

An Incident of Old Japan.

On March 24, 1860, an English passenger ship, the *Forster*, was detained at Yokohama by the Japanese government. The ceremony by the mikado, and the story of that reception illustrates remarkably the transformation of Japan under Meiji. It had been fixed for the previous day, but on his way to the palace Sir Harry Parkes was fiercely attacked by two Japanese swordsmen. So sudden and furious was the assault that nine of the eleven men of the escort were wounded. The nose of Mr. Saw's pony and Sir Harry's belt were cut, but Sir Harry himself was uninjured and pursued one of the assailants. Mr. Freeman-Mitford found him at the angle of the street with the headless body of one of his enemies at his feet. The other, a samurai, was decapitated and executed; the reception came off next day, and the mikado issued a decree forbidding all assaults upon foreigners.

Creeping Salt.

Here is something in the course of natural phenomena that will interest and instruct the little folk if they look into it curiously: Into a tumbler half full of water dissolve just as much common table salt as can be held in solution. Let it stand for a few days and see how the salt creeps out of the water, up the inside of the glass and down the outside—just like a thing of life trying to escape from its environment. And when all the salt is apparently out of prison the water remains as salty as before! It is a pretty demonstration.

The Honeymoon Over.

"No one comes to see me," said she wearily, "as they did before I was married."

"Speaking of that fact," said he, "I used to call on you seven evenings in the week at that time. But I am as bad off as you—I now have nowhere to go."

Moving.

He read the letter twice and then said, "This is one of the most moving pieces of literature I ever saw."

"Is it an appeal for aid?" asked his wife.

"No. It's a note from the landlord saying he has raised the rent."

Some Difference.

Hewitt—This is a queer world. Jewett—What is the matter with it? Hewitt—Hence we're making a legitimate business, but housebreaking is a crime.—New York Press.

MARRIAGE BY PROXY.

This Curious Ceremony is a Purely Dutch Institution.

Some time ago a Boer in Pretoria was married to a girl in Amsterdam, in Holland, the ceremony constituting what the Dutch call *handboom*, or glove marriage.

In spite of the fact that a distance of 6,000 miles lay between the bride in the Netherlands and the bridegroom in the Transvaal they were just as effectually married under the Dutch law as if both had been present in the same church.

The bridegroom sent to his friend, or best man, in Amsterdam a power of attorney to represent him as his proxy at the ceremony and at the same time forwarded his glove, which at the proper moment, when the two were made one, was held by both the bride and the proxy.

The wedding was duly registered at Amsterdam and at Pretoria, where the bridegroom filed an affidavit with the landroost, or magistrate.

This curious form of marriage is a purely Dutch institution, the custom having originated, it is said, in the old times of Dutch-Batavian rule. It is, however, a dead letter in the Transvaal since the English took over that colony.—New York Press.

After the Deluge.

She had just returned from her first trip to Europe and everybody was given an opportunity to know about it. One by one they gently extorted themselves but at last she found a silent youth in a corner who proved to be an attentive listener. To him she rhapsodized on the beauty of life "abroad," and especially in England. It is difficult, however, for the most enthusiastic tourist to exist long without eliciting from an auditor some expression of wonder or applause, so she sought to break her listener's respectful silence even at the expense of losing a little time herself. "Were you ever in England?" she asked.

"Yes," he said modestly. "I was born there, and I am thirty-six years old. I lived there until I came to America three months ago. If you can tell me anything about America I should be awfully glad, as I wish to learn all I can."—New York Press.

Negroes in Shooting Affray.

Seattle, Wash., Dec. 26.—Morton Freeman and his wife created a sensation today when they began firing at one another from behind telegraph poles. The streets were crowded with spectators but no one was hurt. The shooting was the result of a quarrel.



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C. M. LOCKWOOD, Mgr.
Office in Foley Bldg.

After checking up all flour dealers for 30 days we find that from all brands of flour sold in La Grande 75 per cent is

LA GRANDE MILLING CO.'S BLUE STEM

Now do you suppose if this flour was not the right kind the per cent would show up this way? And one more item: Do you suppose we dare print anything we can not prove? We are home fixtures and must make good. So, now to the few who are not using this particular kind, ask your grocer to send you a sack. It won't hurt because they will hand back your money if it don't do the work. There's nothing cheap about it, only the price.

We Now Have On Deposit
\$800,000.00

of money accumulated by residents of La Grande and the Grande Ronde valley.

We Now Have Loaned
\$700,000.00

to business men, farmers and others in this community. The money deposited here is not "laid away" as some of it might be if its owners had not deposited it, but it is industriously at work all about us, doing good.

By depositing your income here on open account and paying it out by check, you will safeguard your interests, build your credit and cultivate an acquaintance at a strong financial institution, which can and will help you when you need help. Don't delay, you can begin with a small deposit at the

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