

THE OBSERVER

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1916.

THE FIRST CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC.

(Written for the Observer by A. R. Marker.)

Opulent October days in Oregon! Our granaries are full of yellow grain and our banks are full of yellow gold. One hundred and forty million dollars in Oregon banks this fall! Four months of Oregon sunshine garnered from the harvest fields and transmuted into gold. Back of the Oregon financier stands the Oregon farmer. The gold of commerce is a symbol of the glory of the plow.

And just now while we are dividing our attention between contending political factions, let us not forget that the farmer is a more important factor in the prosperity of the country than all the politicians put together.

Previous to the invention of the plow, man was a homeless nomad, a wandering barbarian. The earth was a savage solitude without wreath or ornament or order. Then the farmer appeared, struck his plow into the ground and the arts sprang up in its furrow. Fields, gardens, orchards, homes, cities, emerged from the virgin wilderness where prehistoric monsters once disported. The cultivator originated prosperity. The plow is the progenitor of progress. The sublime structure of civilization, studded with the stars of science and the splendors of art, is the achievement of agriculture. The farmer is the artificer of capital, the craftsman of civilization.

It is a thousand pities that we do not know the name of the man who invented the plow. He did more for the happiness of mankind than all the kings and conquerors who have drenched the earth with tears and fertilized its soil with blood. If we knew the humble spot where the first farmer was born we would erect upon it a monument more august and magnificent than those which commemorate the glory of Caesar or Napoleon.

It is an old common law doctrine that he who owns the soil owns up to the sky. The farmer who tills the soil should own everything up to the sky, including a quarter section of heaven itself. Every structure that rests upon the earth is a product of his toil. Let the farmer evermore be honored in his calling. If we estimate dignity truly, by its immediate and constructive usefulness, farming is the first and noblest of sciences, and they who till the soil belong by divine right to the royal priesthood, the chosen people of God.

There are a lot of pink-eyed young Americans who look with contempt upon the occupation of the farmer. Their fathers have given them a classical education and they have never gotten over it. They think that a college education has fitted them for something more dignified than farming. They would rather be a forked radish with a white collar and patent leather shoes than to be a real, red-blooded man and be known as a farmer. God pity the young man with that sort of an idea of education!

Cast your eyes, my son, over those mellow autumn fields where reapers are singing amid the yellow sheaves, yonder "Old Homestead," the cradle of a thousand precious memories—this was once the lair of wild animals, the haunt of heathen savages, who beguiled nothing beneficent from the

bounteous bosom of earth, and who came only to destroy what grew upon it. It was the farmer who subdued the forbidding wilderness, who harnessed the untamed forces of nature and set them to plowing in the fruitful furrows of civilization. He tickled the desert with a plow and the primeval solitudes laughed with happy harvests.

Let no man cherish aught but veneration for the farmer. The patriarchs were cultivators of the soil. Gideon was accosted of God while he was threshing wheat. Cincinnatus was called from the plow to become the noblest consul of Rome. In the frosty mornings of their boyhood, most of the really great men in America warmed their feet on warm spots where their father's cows had lain. Judged by the standard of real service to humanity, no living man is better entitled to a patent of nobility than the farmer. I would rather be a farmer and sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than to be a king and be crowned on a velvet cushion.

Mother earth cares for her children. The bounteous earth throbs with the benevolent heart of God. But the fact is, man's food will not come to him without labor. It is a peculiarity of the cereals that they are never found growing wild. They are never self-sown or self-grown. They cannot prolong their existence without the care and cultivation of man. It is the covenant faithfulness of the farmer, coupled with the Fatherhood of God, that gives to each of us this day our daily bread.

Harvest home has come again to Oregon. The year's growth is completed. The fields are at rest. Their green and gold are turning to russet and brown. The waves of yellow grain, sweeping in from the tawny ocean of the world's wealth, have rolled upon our shores, and breaking into golden bits, have left one hundred and forty million dollars to be gathered up and stored into our banks.

The orchard trees are laden with fruit that is reminiscent of the Garden of Eden. Paradise is not wholly gone. Its benign content remains. Rich returns of ripened fruitage still reward the sweat of the farmer's face. The flaming sword is gone and in its place is the emblem of peace and prosperity, the plow. The fragrance of gathered hay and golden sheaves still lingers on the autumnal breeze as it dances lightly over the bounteous fields which the farmer's toil has blessed.

And while we are dividing our allegiance between Hughes and Wilson, let us all unite in electing the farmer to a higher honor than we can possibly bestow upon the politician; let us confer upon him the illustrious title of First Citizen of the Republic.

CITY'S DUTY TO FARMER

By David F. Houston, Secretary of Agriculture, who urges Businessmen to Cooperate in Promoting Rural Prosperity.

Article V.—What Every Business Man Can Do.

"I have indicated these problems, this legislation, and this machinery for the very simple reason that if you undertake to co-operate in agriculture, you must know what you are co-operating in and for, the conditions under which work must be done, the machinery through which it must be accomplished, and to suggest to you, and through you to business men, that these things must be assiduously studied if efforts are to be effective. Obviously, you must know the problems and the forces if you are to work intelligently. One of the great problems confronting us is how to educate the business man and secure his effective participation. The department and the land-grant colleges are frequently embarrassed by ill-considered and unwise propositions; and not infrequently friction and ill feeling is engendered. The businessman is occupied with his immediate concern and no effective plan has been devised for teaching him. The metropolitan press has not yet fully comprehended the part it might play in this great field. Agricultural activities are important, but furnish little of the stuff commonly regarded as news, and it is seldom that you find on staffs of city papers men either interested in these matters or possessed of the requisite

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training to discuss them. Is there not suggested here a high opportunity for the useful direction of your opportunity for the useful direction of your efforts and influence? It is especially essential that the business world should have at least a sympathetic appreciation of the difficulties under which the farmers of the Nation labor and a basis for forming an intelligent judgment on constructive and remedial economic and legislative proposals. One of the discouraging things is the resistance by many business interests, based clearly on ignorance, to greatly needed and sound legislation. I need not suggest that if we are to have government by public opinion, facts must be presented, be fairly interpreted, and correct conclusions courageously faced, no matter where they may lead or what prejudices they may run across.

What Communities Can Do. "Looking at the matter more narrowly, there are many things that commercial organizations and business men may well consider. Each urban community might well, in cooperation with leaders in the surrounding districts, undertake a careful survey for the purposes of better production and better organization. It may assist in the securing of a good county agent where there is none and effectively co-operate with him. Business men and business organizations may help work out better wholesale and retail markets for farm products, farmers' community buildings may be planned and established, and good roads radiating into the back country may be promoted to mutual advantage. Bankers in many parts of the country may be brought to see that by their wise use of credit will be determined the question whether or not the rural districts shall have a well-balanced, prosperous agriculture. Not a few of them are learning the lesson, and in some states the banking associations have intelligently and effectively organized state committees, composed of a member from each county, for the betterment of rural life. A peculiar opportunity is afforded for the sympathetic and constructive assistance of the banker and the business man in connection with the inauguration of the farm-loan act and the formation of local associations, and in the furtherance of cooperation among farmers for the betterment of production and marketing. (To Be Continued.)

Picked Up By The Stroller

"Every time I start to say Adams Avenue," said Ray W. Logan to the Stroller, "I say Adams Apple."

Thirty-four years ago Peter O'Sullivan was the crack billiard player in this part of the country. The last game he played was thirty-four years ago in Union. But he can beat most of the young fellows today. He can play left-handed as well as right-handed.

Ed. Ford has been hunting all season with a gun for pheasant. Next year he says he is going to leave the

gun at home and go out with a sack of salt.

The Stroller had a pleasant chat with Colonel Ivanhoe the other morning and the Colonel averred that the war with Mexico was some war.

Ed. O'Brien says he will have a great story to tell Sanford Hirsch next time he sees him of how he tried to sell a pulpit. When he couldn't sell it he gave it away.

Bill Seigrist is wearing a smile that won't come off. He says that that eight-pound girl that the stork left at his house is the finest he ever saw. He says he is going to make a moving picture actress out of her and put Mary Pickford in the shade.

The Stroller went down to the train to see Captain Lee M. Clark off for Portland and noticed that a group of fine-looking La Grande girls were there to say goodbye to the khaki-

clad young men in Captain Clark's party. That's the trouble with soldier sweethearts. They come and go just like traveling men.

Before the Storm. The day was dark and windy, and the storm was sweeping free across the lonely country, and the skyline seemed to be a mass of molten thunder in the hollow of a sea.

We rode across the country, and the horses seemed to fly. For they felt the lurking danger in the clouds that hung on high. And they trembled as the lightning ripped the curtain of the sky.

Came a peal of belching cannon from that cloud without a form. The air grew breathless, lifeless, for the wind was sullen, warm; and, praying in the heavy dark, we fled before the storm.

—Margaret E. Sangster, Jr., in The Christian Herald.

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