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UPTON H. GIBBS
Editor and Manager.

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CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The NEWS is in favor of the restoration of capital punishment, in the case of murder in the first degree. The arguments against such infliction do not outweigh the fact that since its abolishment the number of homicides has increased in the state. In this connection it is well to consider the purpose which law and its penalties serve.

The primary purpose of law is for the protection of society, to insure its security and proper development. Otherwise there would be anarchy and confusion and the weak would go to the wall; all moral distinctions would be eliminated and might would constitute right. Crime is social in effect. When a man commits a robbery or murder, it is a matter which involves the whole community as its peace and safety are thereby endangered. Hence the community deals with it, and it is not left entirely to the immediate victim to determine whether prosecution and punishment shall follow or not. He may be willing to forgive or condone the offense, but when it is a serious one and the public security has been rudely assaulted, then the state will not allow the matter to rest.

It is the imperative duty of the state to conserve the safety of its citizens, by laws which are enforced with suitable penalties, to make them effectual. No crime is more dangerous to the welfare of a community than cold blooded, premeditated murder, which the law terms murder in the first degree. It should receive then the severest penalty. That this is justified, is shown that it acts as a most powerful deterrent. In countries where murder is promptly punished by death, there is much more respect for human life than where capital punishment does not prevail or where it is seldom inflicted. Compare the number of homicides in Great Britain or in Canada, and in this country where a murderer usually gets a lighter sentence. France for years while not re-

voking capital punishment, allowed juries to find mitigating circumstances so to avoid it, with the result, murders so increased that the guillotine was once more put in operation. This shows that capital punishment conserves life instead of destroying it, for in such cases it is the corporate life of the community not the individual which is the chief consideration.

Capital punishment when rightly viewed is not unmerciful. Every precaution of course should be taken to prevent a miscarriage of justice, and where there is a reasonable doubt, the accused should be given the benefit of it. Penologists claim that punishment should be directed to the reform of the criminal, which is true. But the safety of society is primary, the reformation of the criminal is dependent on this being first secured.

In first degree murder, the writer is of the opinion that the safety of society and the reformation of the criminal are best secured by the infliction of capital punishment.

The latter point may seem dubious, but he gives it advisedly, for he is convinced that however faulty human judgments may be, the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that divine justice regards the reformation of the criminal.

A Valued Contemporary

There is none among our exchanges we find more valuable than The Oregon Voter. Its brilliant editor, C. C. Chapman, has a most analytical as well as synthetical mind. The way he analyses a subject and then gives its gist in a small compass is most remarkable. No paper that we have seen, deals more efficiently with current events in the State, whether political, municipal or legislative. In the last two issues it has been running a few columns on Political Personals which are very bright, breezy and pointed. We have heard that the Voter is controlled by the predatory corporations, yet however, we find ourselves constantly in agreement with most of its positions.

The verdict at Montesano in the trial of the I. W. W. members, has met with a storm of disapproval. In rendering a verdict in the second degree, when it should have been either the first or acquittal, the jury evidently tried to straddle. It looks as if they had been intimidated by the threats of the I. W. W. and also in face of the evidence, did not dare bring in an acquittal.

INTRODUCING SAHLUKENE
QUEEN OF WITCH DOCTORS

Sahlukene Cele, once queen of the Zulu witch doctors, has abandoned her practice and is studying Christianity. Cele was known as premier "caster out" of "maidenly spirits" in Africa. The Zulus believe these spirits have power to keep eligible young men from proposing. At least, the Zulu debutante thinks this true and when a proposal does not come quickly she seeks the witch doctor. Tribal wars in recent years have made men scarce in Zululand, so Cele was doing a tremendous business when a field worker for the religious, social and economic world survey of the Interchurch World Movement met her. He saw Cele banish spirits with incantation and the smoke from a fire consisting of herbs, leaves, cuttlefish powder, elephant's flesh and a live python. Cele explained that the python's ability to hold tightly was passed on to the maiden that she might keep her husband in an everlasting grip. It was through the efforts of Dr. James B. McCord, a Congregational medical missionary, that Cele became interested in Christianity.

Dr. McCord is now in the United States in the interest of a medical institute to be started in Durban. Here the Zulu witch doctors will be taught medicine and surgery.



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