

The Lane County News

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IGNORANT VOTING A CRIME.

In the January number the editor of Everybody's Magazine confesses that he has been leading the wild life of a reckless ballot-bluffer.

This Ridgway publication has been highly progressive and has been in favor of submitting matters to the people for decision until now.

The editor confesses that at the last New Jersey election he was asked to pass on matters that stimulated his vanity but he was ignorant.

Among many other bills was one to buy the Warton tract, a large area of land supposed to yield millions of gallons of drinking water.

The teeming millions of the industrial centers were to be supplied for all time to come with unlimited quantities of pure drinking water.

The unharmed instinct of the uniformed voter was to authorize purchasing millions of dollars worth of watershed and develop the same.

The Wharton tract would produce 340,000,000 gallons of water daily the politicians said, and was just what the people were clamoring for.

Disinterested engineers showed it would only yield 200,000,000 gallons a day, and that this supply would not be needed for 25 years. Yellow newspapers called these engineers hirelings of the water companies and said until it was needed the state could hold it.

Edgar Ridgley changed his mind several times, the Water Supply Commission said it was a bargain.

The people of New Jersey had the good sense to vote it down, along with a score of other propositions, as doubtful bargains at any price.

How can the ordinary voter pass on a matter involving expert engineering opinions, and where the matter is clouded with agitation?

MOTION PICTURES

In Berkeley, California, the seat of the State University, a committee appointed by the City Club has reported against establishing moving picture censorship, as being "unwise to entrust a few individuals the right to determine what the taste of the community should be." The committee makes three constructive recommendations:

1. That the press co-operate to crystallize public sentiment in favor of higher standards.
2. That civic organizations co-operate in a friendly manner with picture theatre proprietors to secure the elimination of the worst films, and intersperse better films among the blood-and-thunder and comic films which are so popular with children.

3. That special programs be arranged for children; that parents be encouraged to take their children to these special programs, and that the press and civic bodies do everything in their power to help make the better films more profitable to exhibit.

The committee records its judgment that while only a few children read extensively, either good or bad reading matter, all children attend moving picture shows, which thus have become

possibly the strongest influence upon character and education of any in force today.

"The subject of the moving picture," says the committee, "is one which every citizen, es-approach with the most serious purpose."—Oregon Voter.

GOOD LUMBER OUTLOOK

A bright outlook for the lumbermen of the Pacific Coast is taken by the Pioneer Western Lumberman of San Francisco, which says editorially:

"Standing on the threshold of 1916 and looking into the future, lumber manufacturers and the allied trades have every reason to believe that they are entering into a busy and prosperous year. The Pacific Coast, and parti-

cularly California, has been the last section of the country awakening to the increased demand and improved prices for all classes of commodities. Among these lumber, the largest industry on trend, and while it still has a considerable distance to go in order to reach a point that is perfectly satisfactory, the indications are that such a desirable result will be realized early in the new year."

PAYS SOME TAXES

(Lebanon Criterion)

A fact not generally known is the amount of taxes paid by the big railroad companies. The recent statement of the Southern Pacific Company filed with the State Public Service Com-

mission shows that fully one-third of the net revenues of the company are paid to the counties in which they operate as taxes in many counties in Oregon it is the largest single item of tax receipts on the rolls and in Linn was practically ten per cent of the entire collections for state, county, school and municipal taxes. With such investments the railroads become vitally the prosperity of the country through which they should run and should not, as they have in the past, be made the butt of every demagogue's political campaign.

Wonder where that cord of wood has gone to?

Feed the birds.

The New Adventures of J. Rufus Wallingford

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER, Creator of "Wallingford," and CHARLES W. GODDARD

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Detective Blackie

"TRUNK checks," demanded a muscular faced boy as he deposited the hand luggage of the two travelers in the faded blue bus.

"Be careful of that black wardrobe," warned J. Rufus Wallingford. "I think there's a hinge loose."

"All right," answered the boy, deeply grieved. "I'll write that on my report." He was embellished with a green band on his faded blue cap; a yellow banded man, with a ladder under his arm, crossed the station platform and fixed an electric light bulb.

"Don't you get it?" laughed Blackie Daw. "It's a political job. The other one is the official bell fixer, and here comes the official bus driver. I've seen municipal ownership towns, Jim, but this one must be the limit."

"That means there isn't a live dollar in the burg," regretted Wallingford, and, with some disfavor, he viewed the approach of the official bus driver, who wore a blue band on his cap and carried a grin full of holes. "I'm afraid the girls are against a dead one this time."

"Good evening, gents," hailed the tooth shy officer. "I got two good seats left in the grand stand," and he produced a pair of faded blue pasteboards from which the printing had long since worn away. "I reckon most of the councilmen have sold their regular seats by this time, but these is good; front row, right next to the official box."

"We're in luck, Jim," declared Blackie, inspecting the penciled numbers on the tickets and slipping them into his pocket. "I was afraid we wouldn't get seats at all. By the way, sergeant, what are they for?"

"Hy, don't you know?" inquired the driver in surprise. "It's the regular Saturday night festival. Why, people come from miles around, from all these summer resorts and health cures to see the fireworks. The city council makes a heap of money off of 'em. The whole courthouse steps is covered with a grandstand, that's left there winter and summer."

"And what might your business be?" asked the officer, looking back with cordial interest.

"Hush!" warned Blackie in a hoarse whisper, and, leaning forward, he confessed, "We are detectives!"

"Do anything I can for you," offered the driver so hastily that he forgot to whisper. "I don't reckon there's anybody in town better posted than me."

"Being an official inspector, I suspected as much," returned Blackie, keenly interested. "There is a man in this town who goes away every little while, and no one knows where he goes or why."

"Henry Closby!" affirmed the driver, with a promptness which shocked Blackie, for he had only talked at whimsical random, forgetting that in every town there is at least one man whose unexplained goings and comings are an aggravation and an insult.

"Describe that man," demanded Blackie with professional peremptoriness.

"Well," obeyed the driver carefully and accurately. "Henry Closby is a bachelor about five foot nine, fair to middlin' heavy set, dresses like a dude, has a pink face, wears fancy eyeglasses with a little dingus like a spring tape measure to wind up the string, has blue eyes and shiny black hair and beard and mustache. He keeps the general store."

"Not the party," declared Blackie defectively and with an honest impulse to clear the unknown Closby from unjust suspicion. Then his whimsical nature came uppermost again, and in spite of himself he added, "Unless he disguises."

"By jinks, I never thought of that!" exclaimed the driver, struck by the startling supposition. "Whiskers is the easiest disguise there is, I reckon." As Blackie registered at the official hotel under the first eye of the official

inkeeper he glanced across at the opposite pace, which carried the names of the arrivals of four days past. There they were, three names in a neat, firm hand—Miss Fanny Warden, Miss Violet Warden, Miss Fanny Warden. Rooms 27, 28 and 29.

As soon as the men were straightened in their own apartments they tiptoed along the hall to the door of 27 and knocked.

"Hist!" said Blackie as the door opened, and the blue eyes of Violet and the brown eyes of Fanny widened with astonishment as they saw before them a lean and lank gentleman with white hair, black mustache, yellow sideburns and a red goatee.

"Blackie!" gasped Violet, regaining her breath and shaking hands delightedly with him, while big Jim Wallingford turned to Fanny Warden with the warm friendliness which had been growing between them since the men had volunteered to recover the lost fortune of the beautiful Warden orphans.

"Before we leave this town, little V, we'll collect the \$40,000 which the city of Spangerville stole from your estate." And Violet's blue eyes softened as he looked in at them.

"We were out and looked at the property which Spangerville confiscated for Mr. Falls and his clique right after the death of Mr. Warden," observed Aunt Patty indignantly. "It must be worth a hundred thousand dollars to the railroad."

"If we get the original valuation of \$40,000 and our expenses we'll call it square," returned Wallingford. "Hand us some information." And he looked at the blank and discouraged faces of the three ladies he chuckled.

"Don't seem to be any."

"How could there be?" demanded Violet. "Why, there's only one regular person in the place."

"Hist!" loudly whispered Blackie and jerked the red goatee from the door-



The Blue Eyes of Violet and the Brown Eyes of Fanny Widened With Astonishment.

knob. "I know that man!" He stuck the goatee on his chin. "Henry Closby!"

"Henry Closby!" repeated the three ladies in amazement.

"Detective stuff," grinned Blackie. "Get on your shawls, girls, and we'll have a municipal dinner and a municipal show."

Henry Closby was alone in his store on Sunday morning, taking an invoice of his goods, when they called on him, and he came forward to meet them with the engaging air of a man who is quite sure of himself.

"We don't want a thing in the world," said Blackie, genuinely grateful. "I owe you an apology for starting some gossip about you."

"It can't hurt me," he said, very apologetic to both Blackie's and Wallingford's relief. "The town wasn't so tight, though, till a long haired fellow converted the place to public ownership."

"A little soft music and I'll tell you the story," offered Wallingford, with a chuckle. "First they confiscated the electric light plant, the Warden property, the gooseberry industry and the ax handle factory; then they bought the mortgage on your father's hotel and foreclosed."

"You must be detectives, after all," wondered Closby.

"Of course they've been offering you all sorts of information."

"You go to Chicago every two weeks!" whispered Blackie hoarsely.

Closby threw back his head and laughed heartily, though he looked much concerned nevertheless.

"Naturally they'd tell you that the first thing," but he did not explain it. "What else?"

"You buy a pound of orris root at a time," Blackie accused, "and you take a fresh pound to Chicago with you. Listen! I know your secret. The water is hard in Spangerville!"

"Good sleuthing," approved Closby. "You burn lights in your window till after midnight! Your suit case is yellow, and your handbag is brown! You ship wooden boxes to New York, and you go to Chicago!" rattled Blackie.

"Well, I'll be"—Closby began with a sudden burst of anger, which he as quickly checked.

"I've done the worst possible to the town, I guess," he declared. "I've made money in spite of them and without their knowledge," and his eyes rested on a padlocked tin box standing on his safe. "I've just sold my store, and I'm going away." Presently he overcame a certain diffident hesitation, unlocked the box and drew from it a grotesque terra cotta cast. "Maybe you've seen these things?" he remarked.

"The Lost Dog!" exclaimed both Blackie and Wallingford with delight. It was a weird little caricature, which at first made one want to laugh, but gradually it emanated in some subtle way all the pathetic wistfulness of a mistle, half frightened, altogether hopeless, soft eyed friend of the family, and it made one evidently wish to go right out and adopt a stray cur.

"He had swept the country in its various forms of clay, plaster and bronze, and it was for sale in every shop window from confectionery stores to cigar stands. Women and children demanded one at sight, and men of all degrees, cab drivers, lawyers and shoe clerks kept one close to their smoking materials.

"Are you interested in the marketing of it?" asked the studiously inquisitive Wallingford.

"I made it," stated Closby quite modestly enough and smiling affectionately on his own handiwork. "I seem to have a knack for this kind of thing. I've modeled a lot of things out of the clay from my back yard, but this dog is the only one which has been largely successful."

Before they went out to dinner Wallingford picked up a gorgeously inlaid checkbook and "hefted" it in surprise.

"I thought that was glass mosaic, but it's as light as wood!" he exclaimed.

"Another little side issue of mine," said Closby carelessly. "It's a transparent mixture, something like celluloid, but is water proof, fireproof and almost scratch proof."

"Have you done much with it?" inquired Wallingford quickly, and he examined the checkbook again with keen interest.

"Not a thing," returned Closby.

"How much will you take for your patents on this thing?"

"Make me an offer."

"Will you give the Warden estate?"

(Continued on Page 4)

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