

TRIBUTE TO WM. HELFRICH—

● Bill Helfrich is gone! Many readers of the Press enjoyed his "Bellevue" column which he contributed to our paper for years, and learned to rely upon his weather predictions. And there are many folks who knew him well who will mourn his death as a personal loss. "Uncle Billy" in his own way, was one of the Valley's most interesting residents. We venture to say that he read more and absorbed more of what he read than anyone else in the Valley! He had a devouring hunger for knowledge—about this interesting world, about nations and their people, and about the stars. He would remain hidden away alone on his little hillside ranch for days at a time, spending his days caring tenderly for his cattle and chickens and his almond orchards, and his nights studying the stars or reading by the light of an oil lamp. He had been a member of the Bellevue School Board for many years, and that school was his pride and joy—the big event of his life each year was his trip to the city to attend School Trustees' meetings.

We knew "Uncle Billy" best as the man who wrote his little Bellevue column—because he loved to write. Because he could that way express his thoughts—and every so often, a bit of the real Bill Helfrich would peep through in what he had to say—showing his humanness, his breadth of vision, his understanding heart. We'd like to quote just a few passages from his columns of the last few months and you'll know what we mean:

"Most of us know the old time poem, 'Cleon sees no beauty in nature.' Well, I think if Cleon could have seen that rainbow as I did he also would have seen beauty in nature, or rather in the heavenly phenomena."

"Tremendous doings at the nation's capital these days."

"This writer took an involuntary ride in the air Sunday morning (last April 23) and although the bull gave me a mighty boost, flight could not be sustained and the landing was most abrupt, a broken collar bone, a few bruises and a very sore nose being the net result."

"A grand spectacle was visible in the sky the other night. A cloud above the moon divided into two streamers, one going down and then turning south, the other to the north, somewhat like the tentacles of an octopus with the moon the eye."

"Another missing link is discovered in South Africa. They should soon have enough links to make a connection."

"One day last week a long strip of cloud looked through the constellation of Cassiopeia as if it wanted to take some of the stars away."

"My old car went haywire last Wednesday while going to town. The insides, tired of their long imprisonment in the darkness, wanted to see daylight and promptly burst out like a chick pipping the egg shell. Now I'm driving a new car."

Bill Helfrich wrote his last column for the Press November 17, 1938.