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NOT AN UNMIXED BLESSING

Washington Man Rejoiced Over "Autoless Sunday" Until Awful Thought Came to His Mind.

"Something is always happening to take the joy out of life," he said, mournfully.

"Something always happens, or somebody always says something, and if they don't I have to think of something myself," he continued.

"When I saw that news about the supply of gasoline being short, with probably not a month's supply left, I rejoiced. You see, I don't own an automobile, and, what is more, my nerves must be sensitive, because they worry me.

"They awake me at midnight with a terrific banging and snorting, and disturb my slumbers at six o'clock in the morning with mingled roars and explosions like unto antediluvian monsters.

"If I had my way I'd restrict the use of automobiles from nine o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night. But—well, when I thought the gasoline was giving out, I must confess I rejoiced. Selfish? Maybe. But I had no sooner rejoiced than I thought —"

The mournful man smiled sorrowfully.

"I thought," he said, "that with all the automobiles out of business, there would be just that many more people to ride on the street cars."—Washington Star.

ALL HAVE THEIR FAVORITES

Most Novelists Admit Decided Preference for Certain Children of Their Brain.

It is no secret that Mowgli, the wolf boy of the "Jungle Books," is Mr. Kipling's prime favorite, or that Rodney Stone, that fine fighter and gallant Englishman, takes precedence even of Sherlock Holmes in the affections of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Thomas Hardy much prefers to consider himself a poet rather than a story writer, but among the many characters he has created he loves Tess best of all; and it is rumored that H. G. Wells has a sneaking affection for his Tono Bungay.

It is often difficult to account for prejudices, for likes and dislikes. The mother often loves her least worthy kid best. Mark Twain doted on Huckleberry Finn. Dickens had a soft place in his heart for the Artful Dodger, and it is said that W. W. Jacobs loves best his sly, diplomatic, cool poacher and general scapegrace, Bob Pretty.

Jerome K. Jerome has never lost his first love for "Three Men in a Boat." It made his name known in two hemispheres, and he feels he owes it a debt of gratitude.

Allan Quartermain is an easy first in the heart of Sir H. Rider Haggard; Marie Corelli's favorite among her own works is "Thelma," and Sir Hall Caine's "The Manxman;" while nobody else can ever take the place of Babbie, the gipsy lass of "The Little Minister," in the love of Sir James Barrie.

Fast Reclaiming Desert.

Men have begun to reclaim the Californian desert by irrigation. The Imperial valley is the first word in the bringing back of the waters to the thirsty land, but it is by no means the last. Towns like Brawley and Imperial now stand where the mesquite once grew and the coyote howled. The limit of man's progress in the valley is sharply defined. The "field" of alfalfa or grain faces the desert, the one wearing a fierce scowl, the other a gentle smile. Close by live the desert's conquerors, big upstanding folk, amid the softness of an eternal summer. The irrigation canals flow musically everywhere. The houses are ringed round with cloth-screened verandas, which do duty also as living and sleeping places. The people always seem to be on the defensive against the desert. But they have made it blossom like the rose, and are making it pay. Soon the desert of lost hopes, of burning heats, of intolerable mirages, and arid solitudes will be a land of teeming thousands and of plenty.

Famous Soldier Poet of Italy.

Gabriele d'Annunzio, Italy's famous poet, whose flying feats are the admiration of his countrymen, has not the slightest fear of death, and he has a presentiment that he will die in action. To a friend who interviewed him he remarked: "My worldly life is ended. What can I do after the war? I shall write no more. Every time I go off on an expedition I hope it will be my last. That is the reason for my fearlessness. The finest end I wish for is to die for my country."

Pudgy's Bravery.

"Pudgy" is a Y. M. C. A. man, well known to many American soldiers in France. He recently spent a night in a front-line dugout. While he was there a deafening barrage rained around the dugout for a full half an hour.

Everyone wanted to know afterward how Pudgy liked it.

"I fear," he confessed, and the everlasting smile broadened as he spoke, "that I'm no braver now than before."

Proper Pirate.

"You seem to be rather proud of being a pirate," remarked the trusty lieutenant.

"I am," replied Captain Kidd. "I'm a regular pirate, I am. When I want to sink a ship I superintend the job in person. I don't sit at home and send a lot of scared sailors out to take chances all by themselves in U-boats."

LITTLE DIFFERENCE IN BOYS

Silly Idea That Those Born in May Are Naturally More Cruel Than Other Youngsters.

What is the origin of the belief that boys born in the month of May are cruel by nature? In Notes and Queries John T. Page says that he was born in May, "and as I look back into the days of my boyhood I am often horrified to recall many acts of cruelty perpetrated by me, and at my instigation, on birds and animals. I seem to have delighted in these acts of cruelty until I was about twelve years old, when they ceased." Mr. Page adds that as a man he is supersensitive. "I cannot now kill a bird or an animal without experiencing most poignant feelings of abhorrence of the act."

Are not nearly all healthy boys destructive and cruel? They were in our little village, writes Philip Hale in the Boston Herald. One of our favorite amusements was the reckless employment of sling and buckshot. We would lie on the roof of the minister's house on Elm street and plug horses, dogs, farmers in carts or on wood sledges, just to see them jump. Nor were we then aware that surprise was the chief element of wit. "That's what makes a man laugh so when he sits down on a bent pin." Riddling the windows of a schoolhouse was almost as good sport as tearing off the pickets of Deacon Bodman's fence. Hitting little boys' heads with iceballs, not snowballs, was a favorite winter amusement. It was considered a good joke to kidnap a youngster at night, take him far into the Bridge street graveyard and then run away from him. Tormenting cats and dogs was common when a small boy was not easily caught. The slingers, the throwers of other missiles and the tormentors of animals were surely not all born in May. Nor were all boys born in May skilled in rude or ingenious torturing.

MORE VALUABLE THAN GOLD

Real Treasure of Peru Was the Potato, Though Spaniards Did Not Realize It.

The gold of the Indies was the attraction that led Columbus to sail westward, that carried Cortez to Mexico and Pizarro to Peru. The Incas had large stores of the precious metal, representing, no doubt, the accumulations of many centuries. The capture of such a booty resounded through Europe. Spain became for a time the wealthiest, as well as the most powerful, nation of Europe, and this was ascribed to the gold of Peru.

But Peru held another treasure much more valuable for the nations of Europe than the golden booty of Pizarro. Carrying the potato to Europe was an event of much more profound significance in relation to the subsequent history of the world than sending the Inca gold to the coffers of Spain. But nobody understood the value of the potato, and its Peruvian origin was generally forgotten before the plant became well known. Instead of Peruvian potatoes we call them Irish potatoes.

The potato was the basis of the ancient Peruvian nation and has attained almost the same importance in other parts of the world within the last 100 years.—National Geographic Magazine.

"Puget Sound Lobster."

Seattle is consuming only about half a ton of octopus, "devilfish," a week, according to fish dealers of that city. But this consumption is bound to jump as soon as the Americans become familiar with the taste of this inhabitant of the deep. The Greek fishermen, who consider the octopus a great delicacy, call it "devilfish;" while the Japanese fish dealer gets calls from his people for "tako," and when Sing, down in Chinatown, places it on his menu card he gives it a name that only a Cantonese can read or understand. When cafe managers uptown decide to give their patrons a treat the lowly devilfish probably will become "Puget Sound lobster."

Improved Fuel for Airplanes.

That the Germans are using a new and improved fuel for airplane engines was the statement of Leon Camen before the Aeronautical society. To gasoline is added one per cent of toluol and one and one-half per cent of alcohol. The mixture gives a sharper ignition than simple gasoline, and while it exerts some deteriorating effect upon the metal, the short life of the airplane motor at the war front means that the motor is discarded before the deterioration becomes serious.

Toluol is a coal tar product and is the base of that powerful explosive, trinitrotoluol.

"Bear" Proved Harmless.

A white bear had been seen in the Alps near Ofenburg, Switzerland, peasants reported. The alarm created some excitement in the mountains. The authorities were forced to arrange a great hunt to run down the "animal." The hunt was successful and the "animal" was cornered. He turned out to be a poor Russian deserter clad in a sheepskin coat who had been running around aimlessly.

Church Novelty.

Flatbush—Been to church lately?

Bensonhurst—Sure, I was there last Sunday.

"Anything new doing?"

"Indeed, yes. Grimes' boy, who is home on furlough, was there, and the dominie announced: 'The young man in khaki will now take up the collection in his helmet.'"

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FIVE POPULAR STORES

HAD MODIFIED HIS DESIRE

After Experience in Airplane Man Decided He Would Prefer to Travel to Heaven on Foot.

"Does it ever fall?" finally quivered the novice as the airplane climbed higher and still higher.

"Only when I let it do so," answered the airman. "Now and then I drop her backward. Here we go!"

On the backward descent, a mile or more, the passenger clung to the pilot with both arms and never breathed. At last the machine resumed its horizontal traveling.

"Great heavens!" gasped the novice with relief.

"Say, look here; didn't you say you wished to flit on high like a gliding sunbeam?" complained the aviator.

"Yes," admitted the passenger.

"Then shut up. You're going to get your wish."

Suddenly the airplane dived and looped the loop, then traveled upside down.

"Hold fast."

"Wh-what?"

"We are going to land."

Gently the airplane glided to earth. Released from his seat, the passenger knelt and lifted both hands solemnly.

"Once I prayed to be an angel," he said. "But it doesn't go any more unless on foot."—New York Times.

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While standing in the woods Warden Otis C. Small of Hammonton, N. J., says a young fawn approached and after eyeing him for a short time came up and rubbed his body with its nose. The warden says he had no trouble in making friends with the deer. Warden Small expressed the opinion that deer knew when the closed season was on, but that this was the first instance when one actually held him up in the woods.

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