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American "Rush" Only Result of Evolation

Many Americans think that other Americans are hurrying pell-mell and getting nowhere. They wish their countrymen would stop stepping on the gas and enjoy the scenery. And even though they drive slowly themselves they complain that the view is spoiled by a billboard.

But they overlook a number of things. America isn't composed of one kind of civilization. You can take your pick. If a billboard spoils your view, you can read a book until your train goes out where they are few and far between. Or, if you are motoring, you can think serene thoughts until the road turns. If you hate to mingle with the cutting-up trade at the rush hour, you can buy an abandoned farm and spend your life before an open fire. The rural free delivery will pass your door to carry your manuscripts to market and bring back the checks.

The conditions of modern American life have simply evolved. They have their roots far back in the motives that brought the early settlers to this country, in the European environment from which they were escaping, and in the obstacles that confronted them. —Roy S. Durstine in the Forum.

Formation of Clouds Defy Fiercest Gales

An odd formation of the mountain of Cross Fell in Westmoreland, England, sets up a peculiar "draft," which in a high wind produces the curious local effect known as the "Helm."

This is a cloud which in the fiercest gale remains, so to speak, anchored immediately over the summit of the the mountain, while over another point some miles away another cloud, known as the "Bar," also remains stationary. Between the two points the wind rushes down with extraordinary violence, being sucked up again under the "Bar" in a sort of whirlwind, which before now has been known to lift a man and even a haystack.

At the same time its current produces a shrieking sound extremely uncanny, and it was owing to this that in the old days the mountain was known as Fiends' fell.

Took Many Years to Produce Modern Bed

Included in the world's long list of human benefactors is the unknown man who first invented beds. The earliest beds — wicker bedsteads, formed of the midribs of palm leaves —are found figured in ancient Egyptian paintings. Ages ago the Egyptians either slept on their day couches, which were long and straight, sometimes possessing a back made of bronze, alabaster, gold, or ivory, and richly cushioned, or they reposed on low pallets made of palm boughs, with wooden pillows hollowed out for the head.

A recent writer reminds us that the evolution of beds in England stretches over a period of 700 years. Throughout the Thirteenth century even kings' beds consisted very largely of straw.

In later medieval times people all but sat up in their beds, so high at the upper end were the long mattresses lifted on piles of cushions. After the Twelfth century beds were occasionally made of bronze and other metals, but more often of wood, carved and encrusted with ornament.

Narrow, at first, they gradually increased in size until they reached a width of four yards. In such huge beds, we are told, "parents, children and sometimes dogs, were wont to take their night's rest."

History Set Down as Work of Imagination

All histories that are not mere compilations of dates, records and statistics are works of the imagination; for the testimony of eyewitnesses is extremely fallible, especially when an event is calamitous or dramatic; and the report that we have upon the nature of any person or thing is governed entirely by the temperament of the person who gives it. People with the irresponsible imaginations of children will tell you of events in which they participated and will seem to believe their fictions even when you know they are fibbing. Also it is the habit of man to englamor his past and to exalt himself among his fellows whenever an occasion arises in which he can dramatize himself before an audience as the hero of an event, concerning the truth of which the audience can have no knowledge.—Burton Rascoe in the Bookman.

Cat Mourns Bird

Cats and birds, like dogs and cats, are rarely friends, but when such friendships are made they are very real.

Not long ago a black cat lost a jackdaw which had been its close companion for five years, and the bird's death seemed to make life not worth living for the cat. It refused to feed, and at last became so ill and weak that it was taken to the people's dispensary for sick animals at Bethnal Green.

No wonder the cat was fretting over its loss, for the jackdaw had been its daily playmate. The two had fed together and their friendly relations were so good that the jackdaw would often settle on the sleeping cat's back and both would doze in comfort.—Children's Newspaper, London.

No Worry for Animals

As far as we are aware, animals have no notion of time in the sense we have. The future means nothing to them, and for this they are much happier than we are. They live for the present moment only. They have no fears of what may happen to them in days to come—no fear, then, of death and no yearning after immortality. Neither do we suppose that they have any clear conception of the past, although undoubtedly they have unconscious memory. The formation of habits depends on this. But they don't consciously think over the happy days of youth gone by, nor brood over the sorrows of old age.—H. Munro Fox in the Forum.

Vanity of Pakenham Brought His Defeat

The American forces under Andrew Jackson at New Orleans in January, 1815, inflicted severe losses on the British troops because General Pakenham, the British commander, insisted upon carrying out a set method of attack which did not prove successful against the Americans, points out Clifford Raymond in an article in Liberty.

"It was British tradition," continues the author, "that troops could take a position in frontal attack, carrying material for filling ditches and ladders for scaling walls. It was also in the history of British regiments in America that they had not done it on many occasions; but Pakenham, with his reputation to maintain, was convinced that he had do it, even with Andrew Jackson animating the troops behind the breastworks.

"Pakenham died rallying the men," explains Raymond, "when they withered under the rifle and artillery fire. Before that fire, in 25 minutes the storm troops of Great Britain disappeared. There were 700 killed, 1,400 wounded, and 500 taken prisoners. The American loss was 8 killed and 13 wounded."

Peking Child Beggars Bane of Foreigners

Even Cairo and Naples cannot compare with Peking in the number and persistence of the professional beggars who swarm upon the streets and annoy strangers with their supplications. In Peking the casual tourist will do well to buy a "small dime" coppers before he goes out—that means twenty-eight coppers—and to distribute a copper here and a copper there. It purchases immunity from annoyance.

The permanent resident obtains immunity only by being as "hard-hearted" as the Chinese themselves—and never giving. If one lives in Peking for a time and maintains a 'rickshaw boy and several servants, one's doorway will not be bothered, for the magical words "ta boo gay"—"He nothing gives"—spread rapidly. Recently the doorways of the foreign hotels were beseiged by swarms of ragged little girls of eight or ten years, each carrying a tiny, wailing, naked infant, supposedly their starving little sisters. As a matter of fact, these little begging girls are all hired, as are also the infants, by fat, sleek men who control this beggar ring and prey upon ignorant foreigners.

Roman God Gave Name

Ancient Rome, from which we obtained the names of our months—as we got the names of our days from our Saxon forefathers—first thought of calling our first month January, we are told in 672 B. C. It marked a turn of the year, when the winter solstice ended, the earth turned from its short day period toward the longer days just about to begin. Janus, an old Roman god, was the god of beginnings. Because war was man's chief business then, he especially represented the beginning of war. His temple in Rome was always open, while the country was at war, and closed when it was at peace, which last was not very often, though it did happen in the reign of Augustus Caesar at the time when our Savior was born. —Montreal Family Herald.

In Conference

There was a tired business man, a member of that busy clan, that shields itself from prying eyes behind that old old alibi—"In conference."

He rested in his office chair and ducked a lot of toil and care and smoked cigars in sweet content, and thus his busy hours were spent—"In conference."

Came anxious strangers by the score to camp outside his office door, and angrily they went their way, for he was busy all the day—"In conference."

And so he died and at the gate an angel bade him stand and wait and said to him with frowning brow, "St. Peter's mighty busy now—'In conference.'"—Vancouver Province.

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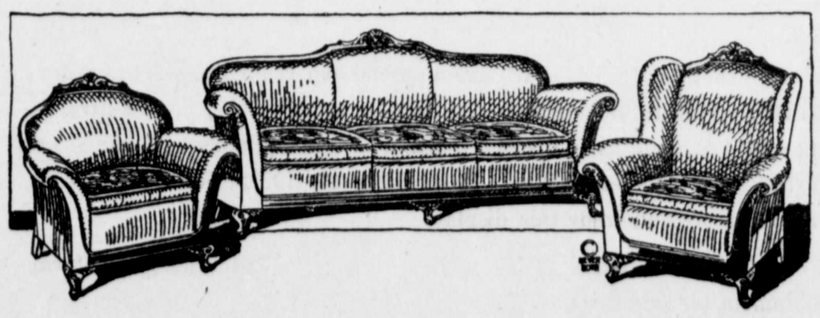
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