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"Run-Off" After Rainfall Affects Water Power

In the study of the matter of rainfall, it has been gradually realized that the "run-off" calls for just as much investigation as the precipitation. In fact, it has been found that the "run-off" is even more variable than the rainfall. The "run-off" is that part of rainfall which finds its way to the streams and is available for generating hydroelectrical power. This "run-off" is not a fixed percentage. When the ground is very dry it absorbs all the rainfall and there is no "run-off." When the earth is saturated practically every drop of rainfall runs off. Thus, when a severe drought strikes an area usually well watered, the drop in "run-off" is much more pronounced than the shrinkage in precipitation. All of this has been known in a general way, but it has taken a prolonged dry spell to make it really appreciated, and water power plants that were planned from rainfall records without proper allowance for the still greater fluctuations in "run-off" have suffered.

The recognition of this relationship will undoubtedly save the industry many millions of dollars in unprofitable investments and will safeguard the consumer because of greater reserves that will be provided hereafter.

Wright Brothers Showed Genius in Early Years

According to the first biography of the inventors, "The Wright Brothers: Fathers of Flight," by John R. McMahon, they showed their inventive minds at an early age. When Orville was ten and Wilbur fourteen they constructed a wood-turning lathe out of lumber from the wood pile, parts from an old buggy and marbles for ball bearings. Its power plant was a foot treadle long enough to accommodate the feet of six boys. When Orville was seventeen and Wilbur twenty-one they built a printing press with a second-hand tombstone as the flat bed. Their first revolutionary discovery was made from a cardboard box from which Wilbur had just sold a bicycle inner tube. Orville had previously concluded that lateral balance would be necessary to successful flight. As his brother twisted the sides of the box he evolved the very principle they had been seeking. This became the warp which, in its present form of aileron, is essential to the sidewise balance of airplanes.

Insect Resembles Leaf

The walking leaf, an insect species the female in which has disguised herself to resemble vegetative life probably more cleverly than any other, comes originally from the island of Ceylon, but has been raised in Europe, whence eggs have been imported to America. When the young emerge from the eggs they are very active and a bright red in color, says Nature Magazine. They do much walking about, but do not begin to eat until they are about one week old. A week later they have begun to turn brown and by the time a fortnight has passed the females are green, which color they maintain until they perish. The older and larger they get—and they grow to be four inches long—the more do they resemble a leaf. In their native country they feed on tea leaves and leaves of certain species of lemon trees.

Planned Great Memorial

Nearly 80 years ago a Santo Dominican, Don Antonio Delmonte y Tejada, conceived the idea of a fitting memorial to Columbus. His proposal was: "Let us erect in the most visible and notable place in America, in a central point and where it may be visited by travelers as they approach her shores, the statue that his greatness and remembrance demand. Let this statue be a colossus like that of Rhodes, and let it be designed by the best sculptor available and with funds raised by popular subscription in all the cities of Europe and America, and let this statue have its arms extended and pointing to one and the other of the American continents."

Prickings of Conscience

The first contribution to the national conscience fund was made in 1811. Money received for this fund is not carried on the books of the Treasury department as such, but is listed as miscellaneous receipts. The amounts sent in range from two cents for a person who failed to put a stamp on a letter when mailed, to several thousand dollars from persons who smuggled goods into the United States without paying import duty. Usually the sums sent are small. The total amount sent in now amounts to about $578,000.

A Prompt Suggestion

"What can I do," roared the fiery orator during a demonstration, "when I see my country going to ruin, when I see our oppressors' hands at our throats, strangling us, and the black clouds of hopelessness and despair gathering on the horizon to obliterate the golden sun of prosperity? What, I ask you, What can I do?"

"Sit down!" shouted the audience. —Toronto Globe.

Need Not Have Worried About Waking Family

This newspaper man is a most thoughtful person and it is very seldom that he leaves his home for an evening out. But he did so one evening recently, intending to be out only a half hour or so. The half hour stretched into several hours and it was nearly midnight when he reached home. He thought as he approached the door that his wife and son would be sound asleep at that hour so he tiptoed softly after opening and closing the door more quietly than he had ever done before.

Even breathing more gently than usual lest he disturb the sleepers, he finally reached his own room without hearing any sound to indicate that he had awakened anybody.

Next morning at breakfast his wife casually told him that she went out to play bridge the night before and did not reach home until about two hours after his own arrival. The son reached home even later than his mother.

Husband and father still believes in being thoughtful and hopes he didn't disturb the family cat.—Brockton Enterprise.

Remarkable Salt Lake in Central Australia

Lake Eyre might be called Australia's "Great Salt Lake." It is located only about 250 miles southeast of the geographical center of the continent and because of its desert surroundings has been called "Australia's dead heart."

The lake and its immediate surroundings constitute the only area in Australia that lies below sea level. Its shore line is 39 feet lower than the ocean waters that surround the continent. The bottom of the lake can be considered with little error as at the same level, for Lake Eyre is in reality only a tremendous salt flat that is covered from time to time with a few inches of water.

It becomes a lake after droughts are broken by unusual rains in the faraway Queensland plains, so that floods rush down the usually dry river courses that lead to this closed basin. But quickly the shallow covering of water evaporates and the "lake" becomes first damp and then dry.

Flesh-Eating Ants

The safari ant belongs to the subfamily Dorylinae, of which the genus Dorylus, with several subgenera, frequents nearly all parts of Africa. These ants usually make only temporary nests, but spend most of their time wandering in long files. The size varies from quite minute forms to over one-half inch in length. The mandibles are very strong and the ant also has a powerful sting and a swarm is able to kill animals or birds that it may come upon. These ants sometimes enter houses in search of vermin and on these occasions the people leave till the ants are through. The same general type of ant occurs in almost all the tropical countries, except on islands. The female is without wings, which makes its distribution to islands impossible.

Terrifying Records

One of the most fascinating displays at the New York Academy of Medicine, says an article in the New York Herald Tribune, is a chart, compiled a century ago, in the columns of which are arranged the records of cases, guaranteed authentic by the author, of persons who have died of spontaneous combustion as a result of drink. In one case recorded combustion was "complete" in one "who had abused spirits for three years," and in another even more terrifying event combustion was absolute "save for a part of the skull and the last joints of the fingers" and the cause is given as "too great a proximity to a footstove."

The Grip of Gold

There are metals rarer than gold and more precious. But no other substance remotely approaches gold in its grip upon the imagination of mankind. We do not speak of the Platinum Rule or of the Radium Gate. We discuss, instead, golden days and golden youth and golden weddings and a golden future. Gold is the universal symbol of riches, the inevitable metaphor of wealth. And in addition it is the solid and unsentimental foundation on which the world's structure of currency and credit is built.—Fortune.

Creative Instinct

Once the motive of craftsmanship went far toward keeping the world efficient and happy. This motive, and its self-expression through the homely arts, can be applied with as much satisfaction in the field of consumption as it ever was in production. Especially for men whose part in the productive system is highly mechanized, the creative instinct can find expression in the arts of use, and in the subordinate art of buying well.—From the World Tomorrow.

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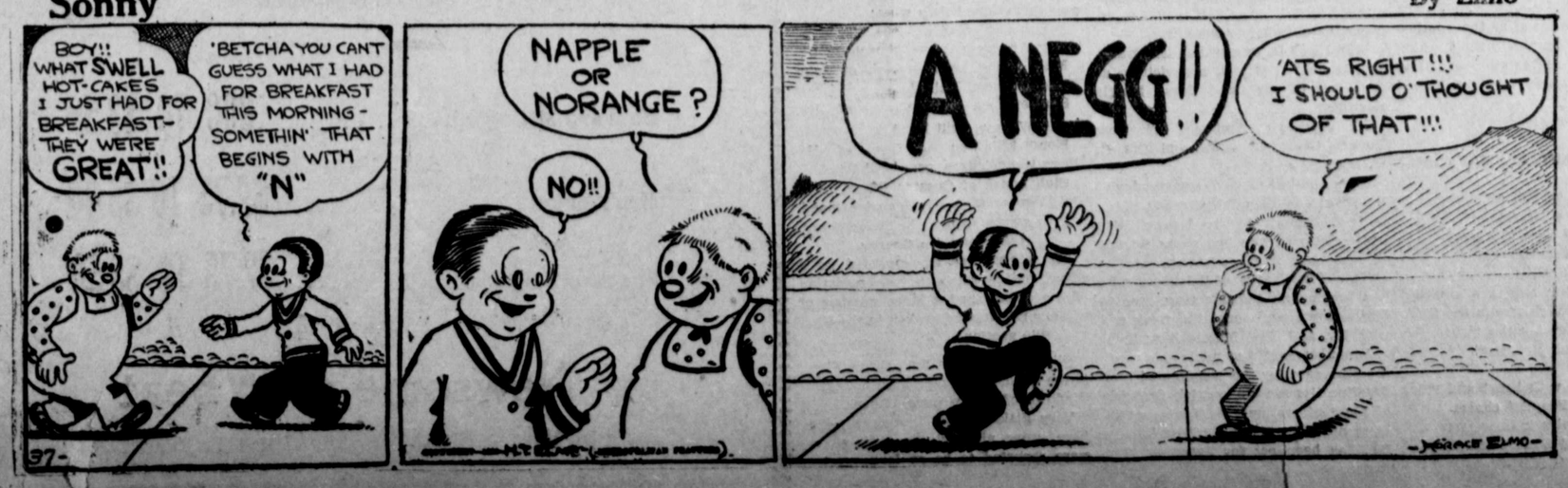
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