



CHAMPEEN OPTIMIST LAYS DOWN LAW

The presidential term of Switzerland is one year—I myself think they should be given only 90 days; they ain't bad at heart.

Nero did not play the fiddle while Rome burned—the violin was not invented until the Middle Ages—he fiddled his thumbs.

This morning I got closer to nature than usual and while crouching in the bushes I watched ants, colored ants, going about their occupations: Last night while wrestling with an article in a public park, my tablet spread over a newspaper, two ants dropt on my paper from the tree. Raining ants, I thought, but after giving the matter consideration I concluded the ants were up in the tree and upon noticing the Rockland County Journal upon my knee they dropt down to see how that Stalter murder panned out.

Never before did I know that ants climbed trees, but this morning I had the opportunity to study their habits in the said bushes—they're good at it. They'd run up the bush and investigate every leaf, even straddling the saw tooth edge much to their apparent discomfort and I could almost hear them swear. And what I mean they investigated thoroly—dry-enforcement snoops ain't in it with those ants. Like any other fool, I concluded they are getting a living out of those bushes and are lumber jacking for that reason—if so they work darn hard for what they get (I did not see them get anything). One thing I did see, they travel equally fast up or down—gravity means nothing to them. Bring on your scientists. Usually, always or most always one ant inspects a leaf but when the bush has berries, tiny apples, it takes two to inspect the berry. They look it over thoroly, I could not see any sense in it; and they keep on, looking it over and over—I suspect their breakfast is in that berry and dares not come out. Anyhow, they weren't taking any chances and had two on guard.

I see them go over to one side and put their heads together. Were they kissing or whispering into each others' ear, I could not tell; you see I'm getting near sighted because of eye-strain from watching the railroad bulls—in fact my crouching at this time was for the purpose of keeping a fatherly eye on two bulls. And what I mean to say when I drop into the weeds the bull can pound himself on the chest convinced there is nobody in this world but himself.

But when that train starts to move, umh, the world becomes more thickly populated and the bull overcome by the realization leaves his blank-pistol into the cinders and begins scratching his ear; which same grew itchy all of a sudden.

Those ants in the meantime were busy engineering their prospective breakfasts (or are they gathering a stake for a rainy day—ants, you know, hibernate in rotten cottonwood, for the winter). And there was this peculiarity about those operations as forest workers, they didn't have "to fall" their trees like beavers do. Also, be this to their credit or discredit, they did no damage to the bushes, which same goes a long way to prove it is waste of hospitality to toss a robin a cookie when he is on worm diet—he'll only laugh at you. But they were busy as busy can be; doing nothing but running around like a steelworker with a red-hot rivet in his hip pocket or a gossip-monger with a fresh piece of moral delinquency in his, her, claws.

This did not appeal to me because I happen to know there are among dumber animals men and women who do not have to rush here and there, everywhere, tiring themselves out, doing nothing. Further, I know people are not compelled to and do not run their heads off to do something—it is a voluntary operation when they do so and bespeaks of bats in their belfry. Even in this age of universal lunacy I know communities where the people have time to live, have the time of their lives without stealing from insanities the time for such doubtful pleasures as momentary indulgence in forbidden fruits—a damned poor substitute for the lost intelligence—people who have the time to associate, visit one another, cheerful, jolly, on whom the sun does not bake but shine, who eat well and sensibly, take care of themselves and who would disdain to use their nose to slow down a grindstone. And those men and women are workers and they do not have to, and do not, wave and weave and haul and heave and rave their lives away—they achieve. They work, true, but they do not do it with a wildness of desperation. Sixty minutes to them is just one hour—not a period of continuous punishment. Ten hours is but the time they sacrifice each day to intermittent toil and sensible production—not a day of aches, pains and weariness—torture. Theirs is not to make every minute count lest it be to conserve their health and energy. Their time is not a life-long candidateship for canes and crutches . . . or worse. These birds did not slow down the grindstone. But somebody did—it is standing still.

I am satisfied, in my own rights, in view of the meagre results in the ant's mad race, those black ants are crazier than I am—they go and go and then they go some more. But it may be the ants are untiring—tireless—and do not use muscle or energy in transportation. In that case, my speed is all out of proportion to the brains I carry.

As I said before, the speed of the ant

is equally fast up or down. Here is where he has an advantage over the rest of us mortals—he is able to overcome resistance—in some mysterious manner. He can grab a bug proportionally the size of an elephant and march off backward with it—this may not mean that he has lots of muscle so much as that he has good kidneys.

Us couple-legged mortals, when so much as forced to carry a chicken or a dead rabbit, holler murder and refuse to quiet down until we get a package of Dean's Kidney Pills.

(Note: This ad is not paid for—nor is it going to be paid for.)

But weak of the kidney as we are, we have held our nose against the grindstone till the bloody thing stooped—throwing out our chest for our medals, we were handed a bowl of soup and told to go pick wild strawberries.

Those two ants that dropt from the tree to read that murder mystery dropt ten feet. The height of an ant is $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch. They therefor dropt 690 times their own height. Try that some time! Just close your eyes and drop 5,760 feet, without a parachute—when you land, that murder mystery will seem a bit blurred. This ought to settle the question, do ants know anything about gravity?

Here again we have it: a foot long bird flies mile a minute and when a plane 32 feet long makes 2 miles per minute the populace scream themselves hoarse and call those sedentary drifters, birdmen. Ye Gods! an ordinary mosquito, afflicted with rheumatism, would scorn to flap its wings if it couldn't do better than that—2 miles with 32 ft. length. Ye Gods, again, brethren, those planes should fly from Gothamsport, N. Y. to Cherbourg, Fr. in 1 hr. 40 min, flat or not at all—32 miles per min. 1,920 miles per hr.—one mile per lineal fuselage ft.

What's the idea of all this constructive criticism? I will tell you—we tinker around with a machine till we break its spirit and when it rolls over once we are right there to hurrah our heads off; we then get into it, fold our arms, and proceed to make a "holy show" of ourselves in a machine that barely moves—it never enters our cranium to find ways to improve the machine—a bicycle, weight for weight, is about 60 times as fast as a racing car.

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