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THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 1931

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those either than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publishers.

Many Hands—One Heart

The annual roll call of the Community House is one activity in our village which should bring to gether every man, woman, and child in Birmingham.

Not only does the work of the Community House touch, at some time during the year, upon the interests and the welfare of us all, but the ideals behind the Community House are perhaps the one common ground upon which all of us can come together in harmony and agreement. For the Community House is founded upon the primal human urge to band together for mutual help, mutual advancement and mutual enjoyment. During its eight brief years of existence it has been a definite factor in bringing the families of our community together, in supplying the needed facilities of a common gathering place, and in administering to the wants of many of the unfortunate.

In those years the Community House has grown from an idea to a living organization, with excellent facilities for its present activities, and with facilities to accommodate others as they may develop. In this growth it has suffered the usual pains of rapid maturity. Mistakes have been made in the over-enthusiasm of individual efforts. There have been errors of judgment and sins of omission and commission.

But there has been no fundamental change in the idea of the Community House. There has been no change, either, in the need of this institution in the community and in the potential value of its activities to better, broaden, and make happier the daily lives of all our families.

The Community House is necessary to Birmingham. It is a bigger thing that those who founded it and labored to bring it to its present place. It is bigger, too, than any one individual, or the ideas of any individual. For it is the property of many, many individuals, and its ideals are those of every honest, sincere, and intelligent man or woman.

The present campaign for funds for its support should have the fullest cooperation of us all, in time, and in money. Whatever may be its present faults; however any of us, individually, may differ with its present policies or with its vast programs, we all owe it to Birmingham and to the future, to continue our support. By so doing we enfranchise ourselves as members of the Community House Association and can then exercise our privilege as voters to modify or correct its program as we may decide.

The annual roll call is a call to us all—a call to many hands and one heart—the heart that is full of our mutual desire to make Birmingham a better place to live for ourselves, our children, our neighbors, and our friends.

This Girl Believes In God

Here's a bit of wholesome observation upon a solemn subject by the natural red-cheeked, sincere-minded daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Murl H. DeFoe, the latter editor of the Charlotte Republican-Tribune. The daughter, Rose, is attending Yale; recently she went to the Yale Hope Mission to hear an address to "down and outers" by Dr. William Lyon Phelps, one of Yale's "biggest minds." This is what she wrote to her dad about, with the following conclusion:

"I go rambling on, but I do wish you could have been here tonight when some of the 'fellows' stood up and gave their testimonial and praised God. For some reason this type of procedure has always appeared melodramatic, but tonight the simple sincerity of it all, changed my whole attitude. It does seem as if mankind in general, keeps drifting further away from religion and it is a pity that many more couldn't have listened in at that meeting tonight, with one of the outstanding men of the country proclaiming the Christian life, along with the poor, unfortunate, down and outer. After all, without a belief in a God there isn't much left upon which to base or explain life and it seems that a religious depression has paralleled this material depression and I wonder if perhaps the first is responsible for the second?"

REV. R. N. HOLSAPLE, superintendent of the Michigan Anti-Saloon League, was given a ticket for speeding 40 miles an hour in Detroit, March 13. Later he was excused, exonerated, pardoned, let go. Looks as though here's a means of converting new recruits to the League.

A DETROIT MAN, RUNNING for election on the school board, declares the Fourth City's educational institutions are ruled by politics. My! what a strange, unheard of statement for a person to utter in these days.

A BILL HAS BEEN introduced in Lansing to tax trucks. What a lot of difficulties were projected upon mankind when the first internal (he should we say infernal) combustion vehicle was placed upon the pavements.

SOME MEN SPREAD themselves out so thin that they become but the shadow of their real selves.

Editorial Inconsistencies

Back of every respectable newspaper, whether it be a daily or a weekly, there is some manner of editorial policy. That editorial policy determines very largely the manner in which the newspaper interprets human affairs, or the side it may choose to take when crusading for a specific reform. Editorial policies are made and carried out by human beings—which also means that a newspaper may err on certain occasions, just as with any other human institution. No one will find fault with any newspaper that honestly and conscientiously takes a view opposite to his own. Out of the honest heat of any controversy one side must win; out of sufficient controversies both sides win victories, and society in general becomes the better for the arguments, the debates, the eventual decisions at the polls.

There's nothing finer, either, than a humble winner or a cheerful loser.

Which leads us to a question and a reflection, caused by the post-election attitude of the Detroit News and the Pontiac Press, two nearby newspapers that are feeling badly over the defeat of their heart's desire, namely, capital punishment.

Here's what the News said Wednesday of last week: "... However, the vicious element always goes to the polls whenever an election promises to interfere with its activities and always decides an election if the respectable majority is indifferent and largely stays away." That statement was made not only very foolishly, but quite untruthfully by an irresponsible editorial writer. That is plain to see.

Then observe the plaint of the Pontiac moral engine: "Major crime very largely could be abolished in six months time, but not by letting the gangsters dictate what the laws shall be and what the punishment shall be. . . ." Now what kindergartner do you suppose wrote that criticism of every voter who opposed the Foster death bill last week?

As we said in the beginning of this comment, back of every newspaper there is an editorial policy of some description. It takes an issue like capital punishment to reveal how some of them operate with a degree of inconsistency that, at times, is really startling!

P. S. There has been so much blood smeared all over the Detroit Free Press since the election that we can't even read its type; when coagulation has taken place, we'll try to comprehend its hidden meaning.

Some Plain English

George E. English is what might be termed "the mailed fist" up in the Thumb district of Michigan—for he publishes the Huron County Tribune, at Bad Axe, and not only does he not wear kid gloves in his journalistic labors, but he can on occasion wield a good axe in the general direction of corrupt politics. Last year Mr. English waged a fight against corruption in Huron County's government, resulting in a grand jury investigation, and all that goes with it. Often Mr. English has glanced toward Oakland County from his column in the Tribune, "The Velvet Hammer." Read what he uttered about certain phases of county politics in Huron County:

"Judge Gillespie, of Pontiac, conducted Huron county's one man grand jury investigation last summer. He didn't stay long in the county but it seems that while here he learned a lot about the troubles and failures of our county government, and that of other counties also.

"Whether or not Judge Gillespie had anything to do with the bill, introduced from his county, to prevent supervisors from being candidates for county office until a year after their township term expires, we do not know. It is likely however, from the Judge's letter, published this issue, that his experience here had something to do with representative Miller's bill.

"This bill ought to become a law and probably will. The log rolling, vote swapping and campaigning of county candidates and by the supervisors has had much to do with the expense and failure of our county government. It is nearly always in evidence at a session of the board of supervisors and particularly so in state campaign years. Last fall three of our supervisors were elected to county offices, one to the state legislature, one other was a candidate for the legislature and still another supervisor was an unsuccessful candidate for county office. This for last year made six supervisors candidates for county and state offices. Very naturally, the votes and activities of the candidates and their friends would be influenced by selfish and personal interests under such circumstances. At last October's session there were more political meetings than committee meetings and it costs $200.00 a day to run the Board of Supervisors."

AT A CERTAIN CIGAR STORE in New York city, the telephone book is used so much it is worn out in three days. Well, they ought to know better than to put a telephone book in a cigar store.

Things We've Said Before . .

Genius Flourishes In Poverty

You will be interested to learn that the great city of New York is about to establish a Music and Art Center, the purpose of which is to aid persons with a capacity for cultural development. The central idea, according to the mayor's announcement, is conservation of talent which exists but which, under present conditions, flickers and dies because of poverty.

Aside from a few really talented geniuses who may emerge from New York's Music and Art Center in the years to come, we venture to prophecy that it will turn out nothing but mediocre, clever people. For (though New York should be commended for the building of this enterprise) real genius does not *grow* under conditions of luxury; and a man or a woman who will give birth to latent powers of real creative leadership in art, science, or industry, will not be greatly aided by having things made easy.

The world's greatest men and women have come from the ranks of poverty. "Necessity is the mother of invention" reads an old axiom; and the real expression of art is tendered and nurtured among the simple, poor boys and girls of any era. Genius will, of course, bring a certain accompaniment of worldly possessions, but *real genius will live despite accumulated wealth*—not because of it!

For Providence has decreed that spiritual growth (which is the companion of the true expression of genius) shall be found along the stoney, thorny paths of life. For the world's greatest example of this you are referred to the Man of Nazareth—meek, lowly, poor in material possessions, yet the most powerful GENIUS of all ages.

..EX-NTRIX

What Started It All?

Archives:—Contrary to popular belief and Noah Webster's 3,202-page pamphlet (with illustrations) on the study of etc., the word, "archives" does NOT mean "a place where government records are kept."

In the first place: the only time we hear of government records is when they are lost.

Secondly, "archives" is not a place, it's an infection. (Not to be confused with the heroine's laugh.)

Thirdly, "are" is a segment of a circle. On this point we agree with Noah Webster.

Also ran: When you put them all together they spell, M-O-T-H-E-R. (Note to linotype operator: We would appreciate it very much, sir, or madam, if you would kindly delete from the words, "Also ran:" to "M-O-T-H-E-R" inclusive. Thank you.)

Therefore be it resolved: that the word "archives" be restored to its original meaning and be given the definition, "an infection common to aviators who perform stunts such as looping the loop, barrel rolling, and arching (making segments of circles in mid-air, of course)."

Be it further resolved: that all persons are hereby prohibited from associating with said type of insane aviator, or aviatrix, until such time as this organization may denote.

"Not to be confused with Daniel Webster, the author of the dictionary.

SONNET NO. 777

Farmer Jones was 42
Before he learned
To smoke or chew.
But he was only 22
When he first learned
Just how to flew.*
He used a gun,
The goofy 1-4,
To prod the south end
Of a mule.
The mule, of course, retaliated,
And mischerly
Jones aviated.
(The foregoing sonnet is the work of our Wagontracks correspondent. Personally, we are opposed to such writings but we consent to publish it because of certain unexplainable, (or is it inexplicable?) and extenuating circumstances which surrounded our near-arrest in Wagontracks last week. The following graphic illustration, drawn by our staff artist, depicts Jones "About To Take Off," as aeronautical engineers would say.)

*Poetic license No. 2: "In case it is difficult for poets to find an appropriate word to rhyme with "Two, too, to or toot," the past tense of "fly" "throw" "blow" or "cry" may be used.

* * *

Efforts to abolish the antiquated verbiage still in vogue in the returning of indictments, have resulted in a proposal to change this:

"... One Michael Sheehan late of the County of Cork, on the thirtieth day of July in the year of our Lord, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three in said County of Cook, in the State of Illinois aforesaid, in and upon the body of one William Frederich in the peace of the People of the said State of Illinois then and there being, unlawfully, feloniously, wilfully and of his malice aforethought, did make an assault, and that the said Michael Sheehan a certain pistol, commonly called revolver, then and there charged with gunpowder and divers leaden bullets, which said pistol he the said Michael Sheehan in his hand then and there had and held and there unlawfully, feloniously, wilfully, and of his malice aforethought, did discharge and shoot off, to, against, towards and upon the said William Frederich . . ."

to this:

Mike Sheehan bumped off Bill Frederich.

* * *

A poetry-speaking festival was held recently at Northwestern University in which 45 women and 23 men took part, the winners receiving medals inscribed: "The Sidney Lanier Medal for Excellence in Poetry Speaking."

It appears to us such a festival might be developed into a major course if the contestants would only strive to imitate De Wolf Hopper's inimitable recitation of "Casey at the Bat."

* * *

A Ferndale filosopher observes:

Most of these veterans of foreign wars are married now, so don't turn to the conclusion that all the scars you see on their faces were received in France.

* * *

News item—"The head of a family who pays any income tax can step up and congratulate himself. Even in a good year he belongs to a small group of eight out of 100 who earn enough to do it."

There, there, poor, abused income tax payer! That ought to console you.

* * *

How's Old Hintz?

Refrigerator ice
Is really very nice
As substitute for dice.

That is, when the sugar cubes become too soiled for accurate playing of, let us say, backgammon.

It is advised, however, that the game chosen be played on a waterproof surface. The length of time one may play with refrigerator ice depends, of course, upon the temperature of the room and one's ability to endure cold hands. Some handicap also should be placed upon football players who serve their apprenticeship as icemen.

From The Eccentric Columns of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO

What became of our gun club?

Clawson folks begin to brag that they have a larger mail than Big Beaver.

Mrs. C. Utter has made many needed improvements in and about her residence and has newly built a large and commodious wood and coal shed.

The person who borrowed Ira Slade's rule for measuring lumber has one week to return it before Ira gets mad enough to invoke the strong arm of the law for its recovery.

A large sized Big Beaver chap took his girl home from meeting lately, and as they parted at the gate, he pleadingly said, "No kiss —what! no kiss from my darling tonight?" "Naw," she replied, "I hear there's mumps in your family."

Mr. A. Bayley informs us that Frank Fearsoll of Troy is building a large and commodious barn with a room attached for our steam engine and thresher, and he will have a machine shop upstairs. That's the kind of a man Mr. P. is to take care of his property.

Abe and Will attended a dance party at Z. Caswell's last week Friday eve., and while Abe and Will were tripping the light fantastic and enjoying themselves to their hearts' content, somebody hid their buggy in the swamp, and it took five hours hard work to find the vehicle under a brush pile. We advise the boys to take their rig in by the stove next time.

Correction: Miss Mary Barr (Clawson) is badly afflicted with a bad cough on her lungs instead of a sore throat as was published, and is apparently about the same.

At the close of the winter term of the school in the Lamphier District, the gold penholder and pen offered as a prize to the best scholar by Miss Green, teacher, was awarded Miss Ella Cromey; the second prize was taken by Miss Anna Todd. Some of the larger scholars presented Miss Green with a beautiful album containing their photos.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Next week we hope to give a list of the different societies in town and what each has promised to do for town improvement.

Senator Alger has announced officially his withdrawal to succeed himself in the U. S. Senate. The field is open and more than 400 would-be senators want the job.

If you are contemplating putting in a telephone now is the time to speak about it while the men are at work in this vicinity. After they are away it will be a right smart time before they return and work again in this vicinity.

Miss Gertie Mudge is learning the mysteries of the telephone exchange board under the tuition of Miss Florence King. Manager Mitchell is making ready for the addition of 40 new subscribers, who are expected soon to be attached.

Many a stranger waiting for the trolley has been obliged to notice E. A. O'Neal's modern harness shop, its dressy window and the life size make believe horse in the window. We have heard men qualified to judge say this shop would fit in Flint, Battle Creek or Grand Rapids for size and completeness.

Screams that froze one's blood came from Dr. N. T. Shaw's home Tuesday evening, and Miss Helen Shaw, hanging by one foot, head downwards, was the screamer. She had been walking the porch railing, fell, her foot catching, there the little lady hung. Miss Hope Ferguson, a playmate, holding her up to the best of her ability and yelling too. Help quickly arrived, she was disconnected, a hurry up call brought the doctor on a run and the next morning she was almost as good as ever. Neighbors scared? Yep.

FIVE YEARS AGO

Meeting of the Community House budget and planning committees were held last Saturday evening. The budget committee met at the home of Mrs. J. H. Charlotte on Pierce street, and made out a budget of $3900 for the coming year.

Before a crowd of excitement seekers, some half clad, the Birmingham fire department spent ten minutes in thawing out a frozen fire plug to combat a fire which destroyed three machines and a barn behind Baughier's garage early Friday morning of last week. The property was owned by Judson Bradway.

Increased traffic over Birmingham's streets, coupled with the fact that this spring has been unusually wet, is responsible for the proposed purchase of a power driven street grader. Manager Starr was authorized Monday to buy the new grader at once. Another piece of equipment which the village may purchase this spring is an automatic street sweeper. At present street sweeping is done by hand. The new sweeper would be used after midnight each night, thereby not interfering with parking conditions during the day.

Birmingham's new elevated tank is about ready for testing which reminds us that with the annexation of Eco City last week, the village may get another elevated tank—providing they can use it.

Resolution

It seemed to me that all the days I've known
Before me passed in word review last night.
It was a very strange and eery sight.
Some days there were I quickly blushed to own
And wish that for their hours I might atone,
And some were so unsullied and so bright
That I would fair have stayed them in their flight
To spend a little while with them alone.

It might have been a dream. I can not tell,
But if it was, it served its purpose well,
For I am now resolved forevermore:
To be more heedful than I was before,
And keep my days so spotless and so fine
That I shall be rejoiced to call them mine.

—BEATRICE MCDONALD.

Just A Minute

—ABOUT STORY BOOK CRIMES AND MASTER CRIMINALS

From the Detroit Bureau of Government Research

Under the reading lamp the householder settles down for a long evening with the latest volume from the Crime Club. With Van Dine or Oppenheim or Mary Roberts Rinehart the jewels are stolen, the body discovered, and through breathless chapters the brilliant detective, amateur or professional, struggles with the master criminal that justice may be done and law and order vindicated.

Outside, law and order in the person of the policeman, crunches along through the snow on foot patrol or in the patrol car listens for instructions and the gist of police news over the humming radio.

To this law and order whose day's work deals with thugs, bandits, burglars, and racketeers, the master criminal does not exist and a story book crime comes once in a life time.

In Detroit, more than 8000 such persons are charged with the commission of felonies each year, and more than 4000 stand trial,—persons for whom the taxpayers maintain police, prosecutors, courts and prisons.

Recently, Judge Thomas M. Cotter asked Dr. Theophile Raphael and his associates in the Psychopathic Clinic to examine the mentality of 100 "run of the mine" individuals convicted of felonies.

The offenses charged ran the usual gamut:

Robbery armed	22
Prostitution, 2nd and 3rd offences	14
Prohibition violations	9
Breaking and entering	9
Uttering and publishing	6
Larceny of property	5
Concealed weapons	5
Robbery, not armed	4
Violation of gaming law	3
Murder, manslaughter, felonious assault, attempted breaking and entering, auto theft and miscellaneous	23

The group included 85 men and 15 women, 55 being white and 45 colored. Previous arrests ranged from one to 15, with a median of 1.64.

If there were "master minds" within this group they were few and far between. The Clinic diagnosed their mentality as:

Insane	2
Feeble minded	33
Inferior intelligence	25
Handicapping personality	37

From this diagnosis, and from other factors, it was concluded that 15 were good risks for community supervision; 12 were doubtful; and 73 were poor risks that should be more or less permanently in institutions, penal or hospital.

The mentality of this group did not deviate very much from that of 100 cases selected because their mentality was questioned.

The "selected" 100 showed:

Insane	7
Feeble minded	23
Inferior intelligence	31
Handicapping personality	31

Of these, 68 were poor community risks that should be in institutions,—60 penal and 8 hospital; 15 seemed reasonably good present risks, and 17 were doubtful.

This high proportion of cases requiring institutional care compares with the Massachusetts study of "500 Criminal Careers" made by Sheldon and Eleanor T. Glueck. Out of 510 men who left the Massachusetts Reformatory in 1911-12, 80% were not reformed five to fifteen years later, but went on committing crimes after their discharge.

An argument for the mental examination of all felons is found in the similarity of the "unselected" and the "selected" groups. "Run of the mine" cases included few insane, but rather more feeble-minded, more handicapped personalities, and more of the penal type.

It is not primarily a question of normality or abnormality, which are purely relative terms. All individuals, relatively, have both strong and weak points. Some have enough of the former to get along in spite of the later.

However, the convicted adult offender class appears to come from the mentally inferior portion of the population.

That does not mean that mentality is the sole factor to be considered in combating the criminal.

Other factors are important—economic and industrial conditions; education and training; home family, and neighborhood influences; rural or urban residence; environment and culture; habits; fortuitous circumstances; exigencies of the law, etc., etc.

It does not mean that in human relationships, which includes the criminal versus society, the personal factor is extremely important and its consideration cannot be left out of a really effective solution.

In preventing crime the personality of the criminal deserves as much emphasis as the other factors that brought the crime about.

Detroit has been a pioneer in such personality study. The Psychopathic Clinic of the Recorder's court was one of the first of its type and has served as a model for others.

Its Director hopes eventually that all convicted felons will be examined—not alone those suspected of mental inferiority.

Such examinations would be of fundamental value in controlling the crime problem—to the courts in selecting cases for probation and determining sentences; also to the prison and parole authorities, particularly when Michigan can be prevailed upon to segregate the prisoners in different types of institutions.

At present the clinic can handle properly 1,100—1,200 cases a year. To examine all offenders would call for a minimum additional budget of $26,000 a year.

More money for studying men might mean considerably less for prisons and policemen.

As one warden of 25 years standing said: "There are enough prisons now in America to last for 75 years if confirmed criminals were kept in close custody, and the others were given the type of treatment each case required.

The "Big Shots" Say:—

Edgar Lee Masters, poet:
"This is the age of brass and gas."

Sinclair Lewis, author:
"It is a shame two gentlemen cannot have a private squabble without letting the world in on it."

Bainbridge Colby, former Secretary of state:
"Almost everybody has his congressman except Uncle Sam."

Samuel Crowther, newspaper writer:
"Racketeering in the necessities of life has as its chief beneficiaries, not gangsters, police or politicians, but people who hold respected business positions."

Paul Valery:
"The true value of intelligence consists in allowing oneself to be taught by the facts."

Mahatma Gandhi, Indian leader:
"Every nation's religion is as good as any other."

William Green, president A. F. L.:
"If reductions of wages are persisted in as return to normal conditions will be delayed for two years or more."

William Lyon Phelps, professor:
"There ought to be more difference between church members and others."

Harry Emerson Fosdick, preacher:
"Far too much religion in the past has been beautiful but dumb."

ParaLaffs

No Chance

Deep-sea divers have found $5,000,000 sunk off the coast of Spain eight years ago. Now if they could only recover some of the millions sunk in Wall Street last year.—Judge.

Real Rare

O. O. McIntyre is given to naming country boys who make good in the city. The rare bird, however, is the city boy who makes good in the country.—Weston Ore. Leader.

Not Yet

There's one thing about Dr. Einstein: nobody has ever accused him of plagiarism.—Louisville Times.

The Difficulty

A New York minister says that Christianity is the only cure for war, but the trouble is in making the other fellow see that he is the guy who should turn the other cheek.—Miami News.

The Other Chap Says Something—

WAR DOESN'T WORK

As the world is becoming more and more industrialized, peace is becoming more inevitable. War doesn't pay. Either war must stop or industrial civilzation must disintegrate. The world cannot survive as it is organized today with war a worm in its vitals. The preparation for war costs too much. War is entirely destructive and the aftermath of war is worse than war.

These reflections arise upon reading about an embassy of business men from Canada to the Orient. They want to sell a hundred million bushels of wheat to China. It is now proposed to call together half a dozen of the powerful war lords of China and make them understand that the country would be far more well off if the Chinese armies were turned into industrial units carrying on public works. They will be told that this is done and a semblance of peace is attained Great Britain and the United States will be ready to endorse a substantial loan to China which would enable that country to open up its far provinces with good roads and railroads, and so prevent future famines. Famines occur in the Orient, not because there is not enough food, but because it cannot be distributed; that is, because there are no roads.

But before this loan is agreed to China must turn her armies into industrial units returning to the ideals of peace.

So speaks civilization "to the heathen in his blindness."

Which is only a translation of the song the angels sang two thousand years ago. "Peace on earth among men of good will." Where Christianity touches life, slowly, inexorably through the succeeding centuries comes peace. And to maintain peace justice is necessary and to establish justice reason must prevail. Reason requires "the understanding heart." So it all comes down to this: The progress of the world depends upon the kindness of men.—William Allen White in Emporia (Kans.) Gazette.

Until Michigan with other states cut out some of their elections, refuse to elect court judges and sheriffs on their popularity rather than on their ability and dependability, dirty old man Crime with his minions will continue to make havoc of law and order, and too of course, the shyster technical lawyers will also have to be eliminated.—J. E. McMullen in Linden Leader.

All of Us

By Marshall Maslin

Got Prejudices? They Make Friends Strange That This Should Be!

DON'T you like thick apple pie, either? . . . Or picnics in the sand, or limp handshakes, or dialect stories? . . . Or people who say they never talk gossip, and insist on it proudly?

Don't you like them? Don't you like celery root or spinach or egg plant? . . . Or salesman who try so hard to "sell themselves" to you that you forget the other thing they are trying to sell? . . . Or jokesters who poke you in the ribs while they're telling their stories?

Don't you like people, like myself, who borrow books and don't bring them back? . . . Or who hear somebody saying something pleasant about you, just the other day, but can't remember who said it or what he said? . . . Or traffic officers who shout at you or sneer, particularly the ones who sneer? . . . Or people who refuse another helping and say "no" when they really mean "yes"? . . . Or clergymen who seem ashamed of their profession?. . . Or salesmen who tell you this is what everybody's wearing? . . . Or intellectuals who sneer at what other people like? . . . Or acquaintances who tell you something you "ought to know"? . . . Or people who drive up in front and honk their horns? . . . Or doctors who won't tell you the truth? . . . Or anybody who ridicules a child? . . . Or even fine people who take you through their gardens and expect you to be as crazy about flowers as they are?

Don't you like them? Do they make you wiggle? Then we have a lot in common. We have the same prejudices and we could be friends. You don't like something and neither do I. I object to something else and you agree. How wise we are, and what men of sound judgment! We have taken our stand and we will stick to it, we will allow nothing to influence our judgment, we will die heroically in defense of our prejudices. I will swear by you, you will swear by me.

It's funny, isn't it? We ought to be friends because we share some great and noble aspiration, because we love the same thing, because we are soldiers in a common cause . . . But nine times in ten we are friends because we both hate the top-sergeant and neither of us likes the chow we've been getting.

I'm full of prejudice and so are you—so we're friends. How strange that this should be! . . . But that's the way it is.