



Whether Common or Not

By Will M. Maupin.

Realization

The knowledge that one is really growing old usually comes with a rush. On the last day of August the Architect celebrated his forty-ninth anniversary—celebrated it by working like a galley slave all day. Now forty-nine years old isn't a marker to what forty-nine was a generation ago. When my father was forty-nine I was a husky lad of almost eighteen, and he appeared then to be a very old man. I often wonder if I seem as old to my children now as father did to me when he was the age I now confess.

But I started off to tell something else. We lost the key to the front door last summer, and while the wife and kiddies were away I had to enter the house by way of a window. Now, a few years ago it would have been mighty easy for me to shove up that window and placing my hands on the windowsill leap in. But goodness me, what a job it was getting in last summer. I'd raise the window, put my hands on the sill, then stand there and grunt and pant and think, for several minutes, before I could muster up the courage to make the effort. And by the time I landed in the house I'd be breathing loud enough to be heard by the neighbors. That's the sign of advancing years.

During the summer camping out the kiddies had great sport climbing trees and swimming. Near the tent was a tree that spread beautifully, and one limb made a fine horizontal bar. The kiddies would "sit in the cat" by the hour. Now I used to be something of an artist on the horizontal bar, so one day, after watching the kiddies a bit I undertook to show them a thing or two. I proceeded to "skin the cat" forward and backward, but only got the forward part. On the return trip I stuck fast and couldn't go either way. There I hung, doubled up into a wheezy ball, unable to go either way and not daring to let go. Finally friends in camp rescued me. Then it came to me that it required but a few years to put a crimp in one's muscles and stiffness into one's joints.

But what of it? Nothing matters just so long as one does not allow age to wither the heart or embitter the soul. In a few short months, if life is spared, I'll celebrate my semi-centennial. If I do, I'm going to do it like a kiddie. I'll admit the years, but never a sign from me that they weigh heavily upon my heart. God willing, I'm always going to be a boy—a chum to my kiddies. Nobody will ever truthfully say of me that I accumulated money, or that I made much of a success in life. But I'm going to give them a chance to declare that I grew old gracefully.

A Puzzled Friend

A friend who signs himself "Josh-away Texas," which name I have my doubts about, writes from Post Falls, Idaho, and asks me to help him in his trouble. The letter itself is the best explanation, so here it is:

Syland Ranch, Post Falls, Idaho.—Dear Architect: Being much perplexed—I guess that's the word—and seeing that you lately have been "getting back to nature," and that I am one of your friends, I am coming after some of your advice about my year-and-a-half-old rooster, a full-blooded Plymouth Rock Anti-Moosevelt bird. It is like this. When he crows he says as loud as he can, "Why-y-y didn't he-e-e do-it-before?" And then, soft-like he winds up,

"B'gosh!" Now he might have learned the first part by having heard me read The Commoner, but I'm blessed if he ever heard me say the last of it. What's the matter with him, and what does he mean? If you get a little spare time I wish you would advise me what to do about it.—Joshaway Texas.

Far be it from me to butt in on this nature story. I'm not going to run the risk of being denounced as a "nature fakir" by the strenuous gentleman whose knowledge of animal and bird life is confined to the butt end of a repeating rifle or shotgun. My friehd's precocious rooster is but repeating a question that every thoughtful voter is now asking himself. If the bird, after asking the question a few times, will only give us the answer I'll be greatly obliged.

The Difference

"Miss Lightly is a most versatile young lady. She is expert at golf, plays a splendid game of tennis, can bowl better than the average, is an expert horsewoman, drives like a veteran, knows baseball in all its angles, can wield a rod and reel, shoots like a trained marksman and is a splendid conversationalist."

"Yes, she is all of that—so different from Miss Goodly. Now Miss Goodly can do nothing that Miss Lightly shines at. She can only bake bread that would tempt a dyspeptic to overindulgence, her pastry is a dream of gustatory delight, her home is kept as neat as wax but is never stiff and formal. She plays a bit and sings some, and she is an expert with the needle, making most of her own dresses and always looking like a dressmaker's model. Her biscuits have to be held down to keep them from floating away, and even if she does not know a foul ball from a clean hit to center field she knows the difference between frying a steak and broiling it. She isn't a bit versatile, of course, consequently she doesn't shine in society like Miss Lightly. But I take notice that there is a heap of difference between the character of the young men who delight to do her honor and that of the young men who dance attendance upon Miss Lightly."

Gastronomic

"Here's a piece in the paper telling about how the surgeons opened a man's stomach and found in it five jackknives and two silver dollars, a half-dozen nails and thirty cents in nickels and pennies."

"That's nothing. I had a neighbor who swallowed a 320-acre farm, 200 head of steers, a dozen good horses, some shares of bank stock, more hogs than I could count, and an eight-room house, all modern."

Nature Studies

The Bull Moose is a wheesome bird That flits from crag to crag, And bleetsomely its voice is heard In many a blissome brag. It hops about on gloosome wings With much gilsome glee, And in a vincus voice it sings "I-me! I-me!! I-me!!!"

Ever Notice It?

Did you ever notice the melancholy humor in the "funny anecdotes" published in the religious press?

They are about on a par with the kind of literary pabulum they used to feed youngsters like me from the "Sunday School Library." I never read one of those Sunday school

books wherein the good little boy didn't die in the last chapter, leaving everybody—except me—to mourn his untimely taking off. Those good little boys in the books died with such unanimity that we who read about them never took any chances. We preferred to live on, even if we didn't win any medals for goodness.

I try to read pretty regularly a couple of church publications that come to me. They are doubtless the best among their kind. But somehow or other I can not help wishing every time I pick one up and peruse it for a spell, that a religious publication could be established and edited by men who know real flesh-and-blood boys and young men. Doubtless a lot of "g d stuff" is submitted for publication in our religious papers. It would help some if more of it were printed.

Natural

You remember, of course, that the Arabian fishermen dragged a bottle from the depths of the sea, and when he opened it a huge genii emerged.

It happens every day right now. genii and sea serpents and a lot of other huge and wonderful things emerge from bottles. Open enough bottles and you'll be able to see more kinds of animals and bugs and snakes and birds than old Noah crowded into his ark.

The Tariff Wall

The gates of Eden changed behind Adam and Eve.

"That ends our supply of free raw material," complained Adam.

Whereupon was marked the beginning of the middleman's existence, he being the progenitor of the tariff baron.

Brain Leaks

Past performance is a better index than present promise.

A lot of last summer's elegant plans now lie untarnished in winter storage.

Talk about worry—ever see the look on that woman's face who takes out her winter clothing only to find that during the summer the moths have been at work?

Getting a living without work is about the hardest job any man can tackle.

The man who insists on getting his first usually gets the least last.

Those who shine most in society are merely reflections.

The average man loves to take credit for his success, but he usually blames his failures on providence.

PEDIGREES OF SOME ANIMALS IN THE POLITICAL MENAGERIE

Edgar Ellsworth Owen in the Chicago Record-Herald: When the bull moose jumped into the political arena only a few weeks ago some persons who never before had questioned how or when the elephant and donkey had arrived began to show curiosity. Possibly ninety-nine out of every 100 voters and as large a percentage of the population not voting have accepted the present symbols of the two old parties as part of the particular economic system with which certain persons become saturated and have looked upon them with due regard to a statutory monopoly.

Nearly two generations of voters have passed by in the great annual spectacle of saving the nation at the ballot box since the elephant and the donkey became conspicuous at the polls. They had been preceded by the tiger and all three had been driven into the ring by a little Bavarian, who soon became known the world over—Thomas Nast, master of satire and grotesquerie.

You must go back to the days of "Boss" Tweed in New York to find

Nast's first use of the tiger in cartoons that did more than any other agency to expose the nefarious methods of the men who for years had been misruling and robbing the municipality. You may not remember that William M. Tweed, son of a chairmaker, chose politics for an occupation and became an autocrat under one of the most complete plans of public spoliation ever devised and executed in any land. Tweed was a member of a fire company—the Big Six—before he held high offices in the state and city, and the Big Six had as an emblem a tiger's head. It also was adopted by the Americus club, which later adopted the name of Tammany hall. When Nast began his war against Tammany hall he cast about for an appropriate symbol and naturally hit upon the tiger's head. He attached a body to the head and the Tammany tiger lives today as every schoolboy knows.

Although the tiger was first used by Nast to symbolize a political party, he had previously made use of the donkey to symbolize the element that was attacking Secretary of War Stanton as he lay in his coffin. In Harper's Weekly, Jan. 10, 1870, he had a small cartoon entitled "A Live Jackass Kicking a Dead Lion." The jackass was labeled "The Copperhead Press." Two years later Nast utilized the donkey for the emblem of the democratic party when the national campaign came around. A few years later it had become the party symbol.

When the politicians were looking forward with the uneasiness of uncertainty to the campaign following Grant's last term the New York Herald started and kept up an outcry, under the general head of "Caesarism," of the possibility of a third term under Grant. This cry found an echo in various places and led Nast in 1874 to frame a cartoon to ridicule the idea. He pictured the Herald as an ass in lion's skin frightening other animals with his braying. Here for the first time the elephant was employed to represent the republican party. The big, unwieldy, but timid creature was on the brink of a pitfall. Democracy in this cartoon was represented by a fox—the donkey not yet having proprietary rights—and the fox was made to resemble Samuel J. Tilden. The elephant was shown disappearing into the pitfall and again climbing out to safety and happiness.

Following this Nast made a practice of using the elephant to symbolize the republican party, for a time labeling it, so that none could mistake it. Then he marked it "Grand Old Party," which later was shortened to "G. O. P." Other cartoonists were quick to adopt these symbols and for more than thirty-seven years the tiger, the donkey and the elephant have been as securely established in the American political zoo as are the lion and the unicorn on the escutcheon of John Bull. Whether they will admit the bull moose to all the rights and privileges of the zoo remains to be seen. New arrivals seldom find old residents who have established an aristocracy all their own deposed to extend enthusiastic welcome.

Then, too, the bull moose arrived without an invitation. "Teddy Bears" had been courting friendship of the children and might have found a warmer welcome, but the bull moose simply jumped over the fence that surrounds the zoo, brusquely announced "I brought Colonel Roosevelt up to the circus" and without a by your leave showed an inclination to be familiar with the time-worn privileges of the old residents. To be more specific, Colonel Roosevelt in a moment of enthusiasm had declared he "felt like a bull moose" and immediately the bull moose was established as the symbol of the party of which he is the head.