

NEWS and GOSSIP of WASHINGTON



Says Goddess of Liberty Will Fall Some Day



WASHINGTON.—"Some day that goddess of Liberty on top of the capitol is going to fall down and hurt someone. I know, because I was up in it."

Thus spoke Rodman Law, who calls himself the "human fly," while he was reclining on a bed in a downtown hotel waiting for a telegraphed remittance from New York, which was necessary after the way some friends of his had disappeared with his cash while he was climbing up the goddess' insides.

"All that bracing material on the interior of the statue is made of cast iron," continued the "fly." "It was put up there before anyone used steel construction, I suppose, and I scraped up handfuls of dust. I went all over the inside and I'll bet that if something isn't done about it there will be an accident some day."

The "human fly" took the impending danger to the goddess about as

seriously as he took the fact that his friends who accompanied him to the top of the capitol had disappeared with his cash.

Any old time he wants to go back and sit on Liberty's head he is going to do it, but he is going to make sure that his friends can be trusted with a "human fly" pocketbook before he gets up in the air between earth and sky, with no one but a press agent to keep the secret.

The "fly" went to the capitol in the afternoon with his false friends. He climbed up a column on top of the dome, using a piece of steeple jack's rope to aid him in his efforts. Previously he had handed his pocketbook and valuables to his false friends who accompanied him. When he descended they had gone.

"I went all around the inside and saw the rust. It was very dark, and I used up a box of matches in there. Then I crawled up on the base of the statue. A 'cop' yelled to me to come down.

"When I slid down the cop pinched me"

A rap on the door interrupted this story. A bellboy handed in a telegram. It was money from New York, replacing that which the false friends had taken with them so hurriedly.

"Well, I guess I can have breakfast now. So long."

He Found Out What the Yellow Flag Was For



IT IS notorious that street railway companies in Washington, as in other cities, have a good deal of trouble with rail joints and with the street paving along the rails. The pounding wheels and the vibration of the track seem able to break down or break up almost any kind of pavement which the railroads lay. The result is that repairs are made frequently necessary.

For several weeks repairs have been making to the tracks of the Mount pleasant cars along Connecticut avenue. Yellow clay has been piled high up on both sides of the track. Strong men have been working there with crowbars, sledges, picks and other tools. At the ends and along the sides of the repair work has been quite a procession of flags, mainly red to warn of danger, but some of them green to indicate safety, and marking where teams or machines might pass.

At each end of the construction work by day flutters in more or less harmony with the red and green flags a yellow flag, and at night lanterns with yellow globes let their light shine there. The question was put

to many fellow-travelers: "What does the yellow flag mean?" Day after day the answer was: "Give it up." "You got me now," or "It stands for small-pox."

Those yellow flags were getting on the scribe's nerves, and on one of the few pleasant days in early April he got on a car determined to pay an extra fare to find out the significance of those strange flags. He walked over to a stalwart colored laborer, who was cranking concrete in the excavation, and asked him: "What does that yellow flag mean?"

The man looked amused. There was pity in his eyes and his voice as he replied:

"Boss, dat am de sign fo' de kyars to go slow."

Simply crushed!

Duck on the Window Sill Known to Many People



TWO weeks ago attention was called to a duck on the second story window sill of a fine old house on H street. "Attention was called" is not a happy phrase, because nearly everybody who passes along that part of H street knows the duck.

In the previous story it was said that: "Perhaps the family living in the house will be able to explain it, and perhaps not, but the writer did not care to pursue the inquiry further than to make the necessary observation and notation."

The story of the duck is well told in the following letter, which was received a few days ago:

"This is the history of the duck in the window:

"My father, Dr. Clymer, surgeon, U. S. N., on his return from the Asiatic coast brought with him some very beautifully colored ducks, which he purchased in Ceylon.

"On the trip over, whether from change in climate or difference in food or exposure aboard ship, all died but one drake, and he arrived in H street in good health. He lived with us happily and contentedly for two years, occupying the backyard, where he had a large pond filled by a natural spring.

"When Alexander R. Shepherd put in the deep street sewers our pond ran dry, and our drake then became sad and pitifully melancholy, and one day we found him dead.

"We called in a taxidermist, had him treated, and placed him in the front window, always looking toward his native home. And when he faded out of existence we placed another there—in memoriam. He or his representative has been in the front of 1617 H street for 41 years."

What Middle Statue of Buddha Said to Teacher



THREE Chinese students entered the Y. M. C. A. Educational Institute not long ago to study, among other things, English, American history and geography. They are young men in whom the Chinese government is taking an interest, it having sent them here to acquire the English language in the shortest possible time. They haven't been here very long, but they're strong on English already, as will appear from this exclusive story, told by Myron Jermat Jones, director of education of the Y. M. C. A.

Dr. Jones took the education of the three boys as a personal matter. He gave them all the time possible, and mingled his plain language teaching with several highly polished courses in ethics, philosophy, philology, apologetics, etc. He dipped into the Gospel of St. Mark for some of the great social teachings there, and gave the three Chinese students a lecture that they would scarcely be able to get anywhere else in a month's journey. Dr. Jones concluded his remarks

behind him. In fact, almost every outfielder has his own regular patrons, who attend games and seek seats as near to him as possible, and who defend him against all comers. To them he is the best in the world, a "Greater than Cobb," nor do they forget him; the player who finally displaces an idol has a hard time. I have known them to follow a player around the field when he was shifted from one to another position and to battle for him with the retainers of the other fielder who dared criticize him.

Biased, prejudiced and distorted in their views as most of them are, they are very human and very lovable in their blind devotion to the game, and in their unreasoning hatred. And a word of warning: Never try to argue with a real, dyed-in-the-wool, thirty-second-degree fan. In the first place the chances are he is right, but even if he is wrong there isn't a chance to win the argument.

FANS

Motto: May the best team win; But ours is the best

By Hugh S. Fullerton

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"Wow! Wow!! Great eye, Eddie! Make him put it across! Bust a fence! You can do it! Wow! Wow!! Wow!!! ROBBER! All right. Tough luck, Eddie. Two and two. Make her be over. Home run, Eddie, old scout. Break the gate. Wow! Wow!! Wo—"

The red-faced, apoplectic young man in the front row made a trumpet of his hands and yelled until the veins in his neck turned purple. In the middle of the final "Wow" he collapsed, looked disgusted and turning to me said:

"What do they keep that hunk of cheese for? He can't hit. Never could. Striking out in a pinch like that!"

The fan, howling encouragement or bawling abuse at the ball players is the spirit of the town. Just how great an influence this spirit exerts upon the playing strength of the team representing the town or city is impossible of calculation, but it is certain that it is part of the national game. He and his fellows exert almost as much influence upon the team as does luck, and this spirit is so inextricably mixed with the element of luck that it is impossible to determine cause and effect. There are cities in which the loyalty of the fans has waned and turned to gibes, and in these, cities no player does well. There are crowds that remain loyal in victory and in defeat. These inspire the players to give their best efforts to win. Ball players will tell you that teams invariably play better with friendly crowds applauding. The fan invariably will respond that he would be loyal provided the club would win games enough to justify loyalty. The players accuse the fans, the fans accuse the players, and both are in a measure right. The majority of patrons will "root" when the home team is winning. An/ team will play better ball and win oftener if the patrons are loyal. The fan, voicing the spirit of the town, is a power for victory or defeat.

Conditions in different cities comprising the circuits of the major leagues assert a powerful influence over their teams. Players will tell you they would rather play for the Chicago White Sox or for the New York Giants than for any other teams. They will assert that twenty Cobbs could not win a pennant for Cincinnati under conditions which the management is now striving to change. The fanatical loyalty of the White Sox rooster and the Giant patron, the angry abuse of players by the annually disappointed Cincinnati public, the sarcasm and raillery of Washington crowds, trained for years to expect nothing but defeat, have an immense effect upon the players and teams. They make or mar players, and weak men win for one type while brilliant ones fall and lose for the other.

The baseball fan is a unique American species and the most rabid of all enthusiasts. Compared with him the golf fan, the bridge fan, even the bowling fan are mild. Baseball is the most serious pleasure ever invented.

Probably the most blindly loyal crowd in the world is that which follows the fortunes of the Chicago American league team, and to one who is disinterested the Chicago situation is acutely funny. The White Sox park is located on the south side

of the city; the Cubs' on the west, and the city is divided into two great armed camps. In 1896 when these two teams, winners of the championships in their own leagues, met to contest for the world's championship, it was the loyalty of the south side crowd beyond doubt that won for the team. That fall the Chicago Tribune's composing room was about equally divided between the followers of the two teams and so bitter was the feeling that the foreman was compelled to separate them and send them to different sides of the building to maintain peace. It was civil war all over Chicago.

It is a magnificent crowd, wonderful in its spirit and in its intense loyalty. There are few things that shake an opponent like the incessant: "Get a hit," "Get a hit," which the war

of the National league players last year when they saw the wonderful Brush stadium was that the crowd could not make itself heard on the field as it did in the old stands. The Polo grounds crowd is odd. Somehow fans who occupy box seats either are not as rabid as those in the cheaper seats or they are on their good behavior, and a fringe of box seats is an effective shield for players. Strangely enough the crowds on the New York American league park, although quite as noisy, are much fairer than the crowds at the Polo grounds.

One would think that visiting players would like to play on grounds where the home team is unpopular through defeat or other causes, but they do not. They rather resent the home crowd abusing the home men.

Not all players are frank enough to admit that the rooting has any effect. Indeed it is a common pose to pretend that they do not even hear. But they do. Even among themselves they pretend they do not care; but once in a while they tell their inner feelings. They know that half the men who quit the major leagues are driven out by the voice of the fan. I have seen men break and go all to pieces, rave and swear and abuse everyone after suffering a cruel grilling by a crowd.

Walter Willmot, one of Anson's famous old Chicago players, came to a game on the old grounds fifteen years after retiring. He looked across toward the left field and said: "There's some of them out there now I'd like to choke."

Yet the roar of the crowd does not break them as quickly as does some sharp thrust of sarcasm or biting wit from an individual. Perhaps that shaft is only the last straw, but when a player is in a nervous collapse he usually rages at some individual who said something to him. Josh Reilly, one of the merriest, happiest players I ever knew, "blew up" one day and had to be restrained from assaulting three or four thousand men in the bleachers.

"Did you hear what he said?" demanded Reilly as the other players tried to restrain him.

"What did he say?" inquired someone.

"He said: 'Reilly, you're a disgrace to the Irish,'" and then he raged again.

One of the quickest things I ever heard was a remark from a Washington fan which upset Frank Isbell, the veteran, completely. Isbell's head is as bald as a concrete pavement, and usually he kept his cap plastered tightly on his head to shield himself from the gibes of crowds. This time he tried to steal second and made a desperate, diving slide around and under the baseman only to be called out. He was so enraged that he ran at the umpire, grasped his arm, argued and raved and finally in sheer anger, jerked off his cap, hurled it onto the ground and jumped upon it. His bald head glistened in the sunlight and the crowd roared. Then, above the roar came a voice:

"Put on that cap. They pinched Mary Garden here for less than that."

Possibly more trying than any concerted rooting is the incessant nagging to which players on the Polo grounds, New York, are subjected. The one great bit of rejoicing among

In Cincinnati, Brooklyn and Washington, during most of the season, the crowds are bitterly sarcastic toward the home teams, although the Brooklyn crowds are decent except on Saturdays. St. Louis affords a queer study of the crowds. When the Browns are at home the crowds are ugly and vent their temper upon the players, yet half a dozen blocks away, on the rival park, there assembles a crowd wilder and more frantically in favor of the home team and more unreasoning in partisanship than almost any in the country. Just where this feeling arises is hard to discover. The crowd is violent in temper when the team is winning, worse when it is losing. Perhaps long years of bitter defeat have caused it.

In Boston and Philadelphia, on both major league parks, the home players and visitors are almost upon equal terms, and the spectators applaud good plays irrespective of the players. They see baseball under the best conditions, with both teams encouraged and giving their best efforts to the work. Pittsburgh is bad because of the gambling that has become almost part of the game in the Smoky City. The temper of the crowd is ugly and the losing element is in evidence no matter whether the home club wins or loses. Detroit is a loyal, rather violent crowd, tamed now because the fans have learned to endure victory as well as defeat. The crowds were mad with enthusiasm the first year Detroit won and have since tamed down



"They Pinched Mary Garden for Less Than That."

One of the queer things in that city is the baiting of George Mullin, the veteran pitcher. Mullin is a jolly, quick-witted joker and years ago he began talking back to the bleachers. He was warned that the bleacherites would put him out of the business, but persisted. Every afternoon he would walk down in front of the bleachers and engage in a verbal skirmish with the crowd, trying to hold his own at rough repartee with hundreds. He abused the crowd, laughed at them, accused them of "quitting," and enjoyed it. If he had taken it seriously the result might have been different, but after a time it became part of the game and now the spectators in the bleachers would not be satisfied if Mullin forgot to start a skirmish. Last summer, going out on a car in Detroit, three young fellows were talking.

"Oh, I've got a peach of a get-back at him today," said one, and, at the urgent request of the others he drew out a card and read what he was going to say to Mullin if he came near their seats.

It is not the great crowds that attend the crucial games that exert the strongest influence over players. True there is a natural nervousness among all the players when a tremendous throng gathers to see them, as in world's series games; but the ones that help the home team, or damage it, are the crowd of from six to ten thousand, stirred up by the "regulars" who, day after day and season after season, incite those around them. There are thousands of these regulars, self-appointed claque or cheer masters, and some of them feel as if they are doing as much to help the team to victory as if they were out there on the mound pitching. The large crowds usually are the fairest and most sportsmanlike, for in these great gatherings the rabid and partisan fan is lost and his utterances are smothered. These crowds police themselves and the players feel safe and assured of fair play, and, after the first nervousness passes, they play their best.

A baseball crowd is much like a mob. Without a leader it is just noise and turmoil, but with one recognized leader it can do much. A few years ago a number of Chicago men attempted to carry out a theory that the crowd needed leaders and the result was one of the most dangerous experiments ever attempted. The White Sox rosters organized, a band of men far above average intelligence, who laid daily plans for inciting crowds and stirring up enthusiasm. The Board of Trade Rooters operated at both Chicago parks, being organized primarily to attack McGraw and the Giants. They wrote and circulated songs, invented ingenious methods of harassing a worthy foe, and to force undeserved victory upon the home teams. The idea spread rapidly. "Rooters' clubs" were organized in many cities and towns to help the home teams. For a few weeks it looked as if the new movement would seriously endanger the national game. The crowds grew more and more violent. Then, suddenly and without warning almost, the wildest efforts of

the cheer masters fell flat—in Chicago at least. The harder the leaders of the rosters worked the more apathetic the crowds became. It was an interesting phenomenon and I set out to discover the reason. The first bleacherite I met solved the problem.

"Dem guys ain't on de square," he said. "Usuns out in de bleachers don't want to rob nobody."

There was the solution. No matter how partisan a baseball fan may become, or how wild in his desire to see the home team win, deep down he wants fair play, and, after a time, he will insist upon it. The rosters' clubs died.

There are few of the noted fans now, chiefly because the papers seldom mention them. Perhaps they exist. In the old days almost every club had one or two such followers. Probably the best known was "Hi Hi." This was General Dixwell, of Boston, who for many years followed the fortunes of the famous old Boston club. He is wealthy, intellectual and a cultured gentleman who became completely absorbed in baseball. He followed the team wherever it went and became a familiar figure all over the country. He occupied a front seat in the stands, kept a careful score and studied the game with a seriousness that was appalling. He maintained a deep silence during almost all the game, but when a really great play was made he emitted two sharp staccato barks: "Hi! Hi!" and then dropped to silence again. His



"Fans."

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