

I presume that the only way she could enjoy her dinner would be to have a hungry child, or better, children, flatten their noses against a restaurant window and steam it with their panting desire as they watch her daintily drop each spoonful into its allotted place. Shaw has mentioned this characteristic of women and says we have no word in English for it (will psychologists please note), but the Germans call it "Schadenfreude." He says: "She may even derive a certain gratification from seeing other women worse dressed than herself \* \* that secret satisfaction in the misfortune of others." Now men have never been troubled with that kind of invidiousness. B. KIDD.

San Francisco, July 24, 1928.

#### **EVEN SO SOMEONE WOULD CRASH THE GATE**

Editor The Chronicle—Sir: The thing for the Railroad Commission to do is to sift the facts out of all this recent agitation about the train whistles and then take such action as the railroads will stand for. In spite of the Pollyanna smiles of those few who rather enjoy the shrieks, here are the facts:

The trains do disturb many persons living within a mile of the tracks.

Every one of these wants to have the crossings safe. Under present conditions they are either disturbed and safe—or they are undisturbed and unsafe. But it is one of their inalienable rights to be undisturbed and safe.

The only best solution is to take away the crossings entirely, establishing under and over-passes for the trains. This the railroads will find impracticable on the ground of expense.

The best substitute is to install gates at every crossing. Only a physical barrier will offer physical resistance. A man with a red flag standing in the middle of a thirty-foot crossing does not constitute a physical barrier.

CYRUS T. BRADY

Carmel, July 26, 1928.

#### **NATURE'S LAWS ARE TOO RIGID TO CHANGE**

Editor The Chronicle—Sir: Anent ever increasing rules, laws and regulations in civilized life, of which so many contributors to the Safety Valve complain, it reminds me of the only anarchist speech I have had the disgust to listen to. Twenty-two years ago, while at the University of Minnesota, a friend took me to such a meeting and the speaker's words ran in this vein:

"The average savage is much happier and better off than the average civilized man. The savage has all the world that he can grab to himself. If he is strong and skillful and keeps himself physically clean, he is successful and happy, takes the fish and game where he finds it, and if his weaker neighbor displeases him, he scalps him. If the savage is not strong, the stronger savage kills him and that ends his worries.

"In civilized life the physically weak but crafty man is usually on top, while the strong and honest, those whose conscience will not allow them to use underhand methods, have to beg for a chance to work for a living, and hope for reward in a fabulous heaven. He cannot go out and help himself to the bounties of Nature. He is trespassing or breaking some law or regulation. And if he starts in business or some occupation of his own,

chances are ten to one that no matter how industrious he is, the crafty man gets his all in the long run and leaves the despoiled one to eke out a miserable existence. Civilized man has reversed Nature's supreme law—"survival of the fittest."

After years of experience in civilized life, I am almost beginning to see the light, and I hope I shall never be forced to admit that the anarchist was right. There is a tide in the affairs of men, and the earth's surface is littered with ruins of great civilizations that reverted to savagery in ages past, through revolutions and weaknesses engendered by the systems that the civilization itself had set up. Then the strong survived and the weak perished, generally speaking. While the present civilization is doing all it can to help the survival of the unfit, sooner or later Nature will find a way to destroy the incubus that is upsetting her laws. We must adjust our civilization to Nature or perish. Ruthless Nature will not adjust herself to us.

OLE J. SNEIDE.

San Francisco, July 24, 1928.

#### **WHO SAYS AMERICA NEVER HAS RUINS?**

Editor The Chronicle—Sir: In the east bay section of last Monday's Chronicle appeared what purported to be an account of a historic dwelling in East Oakland. Like many another legend this one seems to grow in the telling.

La Capriciosa (not Capri Ciosa, as your reporter had it spaced), was unoccupied and in a state of disrepair when I visited it in 1902. I found, however, no spacious hall or extensive suites of rooms. Instead a rather ornate two-story structure of Italian villa architecture with a roof garden overlooking Lake Merritt. Indeed, it seemed to dwindle in size when compared to the big Dargie mansion which loomed up just across Twelfth street. In the basement, which was the workroom of the former owner, we found a number of broken and unfinished plaster casts. Among the debris we picked up a small plaque with a head in bas-relief like a cameo, that for several years adorned our mantel.

La Capriciosa was afterward restored and was for some time the home of the well-known east bay photographer, Belle Oudry. Later it was remodeled into a prosaic two-flat dwelling and finally gave way to the march of progress as stated.

F. A. BONHAM.

Healdsburg, Cal., July 25, 1928.

#### **VOICE OF THE MAJORITY GENERALLY RULES**

Editor The Chronicle—Sir: What a true statement made by Supervisor Havener at the terminal meeting: "It is a day of government of popular will." Certainly the voice of all the organizations present echoed the will of the whole city for the preservation of a water front, safe for bathing and boating, in this seaport. We have plenty of water to look at from the Cliff House, but now we won't have to go south to play in it. What a splendid thing is unity for the good of San Francisco.

We will now have some action toward the completion of Aquatic Park because the Park Commission won't have to change its plans to accommodate the Northwestern Pacific Railroad; and the extension of Marina Park will permit us the added space to revel in what God hath created of scenic grandeur.

SHERWOOD CHAPAIN.

San Francisco, July 25, 1928.