**Essays on Mount Crosby - Egg Day**

In everyone's school days there are probably a few that stand out from all the others. Those golden days on which something amazing happened, and the sun shone really brightly for some reason or other. I have a few, and the mind being basically a happy thing has placed their memory close to the surface so they can be readily recalled no matter how long ago. No doubt there were worse days, but they are buried deeper and I can't think of them now (so I happily declare that proves my theory).

How many of these days each of us has, I can only guess - but I would say half a dozen really great schooldays would be a good score. Belloc (you should read him) liked the story of the Sultan who proclaimed he had possessed all the power on the earth, and had numbered on a tablet with his own hand each of his happy days, and had found them, when he came to die, to be seventeen.

I recall the day I won two novelty races at the break-up (I shan't say what they were but they paid money in those days); the day they bitumened the parade ground and after-hours we pushed and steered the roller all around the top oval; and then there was the egg day.

Actually, the egg day started years before it fulfilled its promise. Some older boy had brought back an emu egg from out west (Tambo I think) and it had gone, as they say, straight to the museum cabinet for its curiosity value. In that cabinet were a lot of things - some other day I'll try to think of what has been lost - including a bottled snake, an Edison Reel, some flints claimed to be aboriginal in origin, some interesting stones, nameless others, and the egg. The cabinet was placed in the hallway between the school rooms, and onto the egg each morning shone a little bit of sunlight with the power to stir its contents into action. Years passed and the egg looked deceptively benign, but within it there were chemicals stirring and something wanted out.

Eventually it was egg day, and we were passing the time between 8 o'clock and the start of school with the usual pastimes, unaware that the day could get any better. But the golden sun was about to shine, because in a few moments the egg gave up its insides in a most impressive explosion of evil smelling ink black sludge, and teachers, more than a little shocked, emerged from the staff room in a line (two teachers will always be in a line). The museum cabinet was spoiled and reeked of rotten egg so bad that the white flag went up and we were spared school until midday while the "priceless" curiosities were cleaned up and it was thought safe for children to approach.

Yes, that day I count among my number for its sheer happenstance. The egg could have happened on a weekend, or years after I left school; it could have happened during or after school; but no, the golden sun made it happen just when I thought the day couldn't get any better.

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