They Go Years Without Water

Ninety-nine people out of a hundred will tell you with sureness of mind—"Of course, all animals need to drink water at least once a day."

That is an erroneous belief, for there are many animals in the world that go for a period of from a month to two or three years without being able to secure drinking water, Willis P. Knight writes in Our Dumb Animals. The only moisture they obtain is from morning dew or from the fleshy leaves of plants. Right in our own country are little animals that do not even care for water if it is set before them.

Camel's Stomach

One might suppose that such animals have means of storing water supplies as does the camel, with his stomach of several divisions. The camel drinks very generously and his stomach acts as a reservoir so that he can travel across the desert and not be obliged to drink for several days. A few animals do absorb moisture in their bodies during the rainy season of the country where each lives but others do not even meet with a rainy season.

In the Pacific Ocean lies an uninhabited land known as Henderson's Island. It is about six miles long, has no annual rainfall, no swamps or water holes and no springs. It is the driest place imaginable and yet on that island live rats, lizards and about half a dozen birds of various species. The birds may be able to fly 120 miles to Pitcairn Island and get water but the rats and lizards stay there at home and get absolutely no drinking water as long as they live. What moisture they get comes from dew and from a few desert plants that grow on the island.

Sahara Desert

If you were to go to the Sahara Desert you would find wild pigs living along its border foothills. This region has rainfall perhaps once in two or three years and it is not of a sufficient amount to fill up deep water holes or cause springs of water to form. These wild pigs get what moisture they can from the thick, fleshy leaves of the cactus.

One of the most interesting animals that does not seem to need an abundant supply of water is a small rodent known as the pocket mouse which lives in our deserts. It receives its name because each cheek has a fur-lined pocket on the outside and in this it stores food such as nuts, etc. This tiny creature thrives where water seldom falls and where springs are rarely encountered. If one of them is kept in captivity and water is offered, it may taste it out of curiosity but seldom takes a real drink. It will live for months on nothing but seeds well dried and thus does not gain any moisture.

Kangaroo Mouse

In the western part of this country is another rodent, the wood rat, that lives in a place where rain falls not more frequently than once a year and in the Sonora Desert is the kangaroo mouse that does not drink from water holes or springs and gets its moisture from desert plants. In nearly all deserts rain does fall in great quantities when it finally comes and the plants soak up enormous quantities of the water and thus are enabled to live until the next rainfall appears in from one to three years.

Among the large animals that seldom drink may be mentioned the prong-horned antelope, and the mountain sheep of nearly every land where rainfall is scarce. In fact, a mountain sheep seems to be the hardiest of all mammals and can go from three to five months with no water to drink.

Thomas Edison was a pioneer in the use of electricity for traction.

Motorists Must Show Their Colors—of Gas!—In Jerusalem an Israeli policeman siphons gas from a car in a check of unauthorized use of army supplies. Army gas is colored to prevent illegal use.

Lincoln's Dream

One afternoon in 1865, President Lincoln's Cabinet entered a council room for a meeting, and found the President seated at the head of the table, his face buried in his hands. Presently he raised his head. His face grave and worn.

"Gentlemen," he said, "before long you will have important news."

Someone inquired, "Have you bad news, Mr. President? Is it something serious?"

"I have heard nothing; I've had no news," he replied. "But last night I had a dream. I dreamed I was in a boat, alone. I had no oars, no rudder. I was helpless in a boundless ocean."

There was silence for a moment. Then the President added: "I have had that dream many times during the war. And each time, some great battle came within a day or two. Yes, gentlemen. Perhaps tomorrow, perhaps in just a few hours, you will have important news."

Five hours later, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated.

A look in the mirror at regular intervals would be a great help in finding the one responsible for many of our troubles.

Old Gray Mare Shows Them More

The horse is a good swimmer and he moves through the water very smoothly. I saw a hundred horses swim half way across the lake and back at Fort Qu'Appelle once and it gave me quite a thrill to watch them.

An old grey mare was their leader. They were in a strange pasture bordering on the lake and she was homesick! She led the band down to the water and, after a few swallows, with her ears pricked she walked deliberately out beyond the shallow water and headed in a beeline for the opposite shore which was a good mile away.

She had a seven weeks old foal at her side and a yearling colt following her. They never hesitated but followed her closely, as did every horse in that band. Ears pricked, eyes gleaming as much as to say, "I don't know where the old girl thinks she is going, but I guess it's all right. Anyway they all went, just like a brood of great ducks in V formation with the ripples streaming out behind them.

Another fellow and myself went on horseback and we had just about made up our minds to ride around to the other side of the lake so as to head them off when they came ashore, when for some inexplicable reason the old grey leader swam around in a wide circle and headed back to the very spot where she took to the water.

Perhaps her foal was tiring—they had been in the water for 15 to 20 minutes, or she made up her mind the distance across was too great. Anyway they all emerged safely and if you ever saw a slick looking lot of horses you did then! The sun shining on their soaking coats made them look like bronze and ebony, gold and silver. It didn't take them long to change their appearance, however. A couple of shakes and a roll in the sand and the transformation was complete!

Try This Test

Dr. Donald A. Laird once asked a class of boys at Colgate University to write down as fast as they could the initials of people they disliked. In a half minute some boys could think of only one person, others listed as many as 14. And those who disliked the largest number were the boys who, Dr. Laird had discovered from previous research, were themselves the most widely disliked.

A young bride, disturbed by her husband's presence in the kitchen while she was preparing dinner, accidently knocked her cookbook to the floor. "You've made me lost the place," she cried, "and I haven't the least idea what I'm cooking!"

THE FARM FRONT

Maybe you've heard of the old-fashioned farmer who—when asked if he ever made use of the various bulletins sent out by the Dominion and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, sniffed scornfully. "In the summer time, when they might be some good to me, I'm too blamed busy to read the things; and who wants to read about farming in winter, when there's nothing a body can do about the land?"

* * *

Well, that's one way of looking at it, all right. But during the long winter months it mighn't be a bad a tion to sort of catch up on one's reading, and get a slant at some of the ideas—both new and old—that are going the rounds.

* * *

For instance, Bulletin No. 459—"Life of the Soil"—issued by the Ontario Department of Agriculture, has some mighty interesting things to say, from which I quote as follows:

* * *

"A soil without organic matter, or fibre or humus, is a DEAD SOIL. All soils contain at least some of such organic matter, but many farm soils contain so little that they are perilously close to exhaustion and ultimate death. This has resulted from over-cultivation and cropping, with failure to put back enough organic matter to keep up sufficient resources in the soil."

* * *

"The capacity of any soil to produce crops is lowered as its organic matter is reduced. As the soil's productive capacity decreases less organic matter—in the form of crop residues, manure and so on is available to be returned to the land. Thus a vicious circle sets in—poor crops to leave less organic matter—less organic matter to leave poorer soil. Is it any wonder then, that finally the tired, run-down soil gives up and refuses to produce any crop at all?"

* * *

"This is not just theory. It has happened on many farms right in the midst of what we consider the best agricultural areas of Ontario. It is happening even now in farms all over the Province, because of misuse of the land. Prosperity of farming depends on the farms continuing capacity to produce good crops. Soil depletion undermines and destroys the very foundation of agriculture."

* * *

The first step toward returning soil to its original productive condition—the Bulletin goes on to explain—is to sit down and take stock of your past cropping programs. Introduction of organic material to the ground—by the use of proper fertilizers, barnyard manure and other means—is all clearly outlined.

* * *

In this connection I might break in and say that the question is often asked as to how much more plant food is contained in poultry manure than in manure from horses cattle etc.—also, does it lessen the value of manure for it to heat when in piles.

* * *

The answer is that the exact amount of plant food contained in manures of different animals varies with the bedding or litter it contains. If each has about the same amount of bedding or litter, poultry manure contains about three times as much plant food as that of other animals mentioned. But much of the plant food is autimatically destroyed if any manure is allowed to go through a heat.

* * *

And now, back to that Bulletin I started off to talk about. It's titled—as I said—"Life of the Soil." It's number 459—and it's one of many profusely illustrated and containing valuable charts, issued by the Department, and available-free of charge—to anyone writing from this province. You simply write the Ontario Department of Agriculture, Publications Branch, Parliament Buildings, Toronto. If sent outside Ontario a small charge is made.

* * *

So why not write — right away before you forget—for your copy of "Life of the Soil." I feel sure you'll find it so valuable that you'll be wanting a lot more of the other bulletins, also issued "for free."

Chance Takers

Of the some 20 persons who attempted a death-defying stunt at Niagara Falls between 1859 and 1928, ten succeeded and lived. Two men passed through the rapids, one in a barrel and the other by swimming with a life preserver. Two men and one woman, Annie E. Taylor, went over the falls, one in a rubber ball and two in barrels. And four men and one woman, Maria Spelterini walked and performed tricks on a 1,100-ft. tightrope stretched from the American to the Canadian side 185 feet above the waters of the gorge.

Why must we have enough memory to recall to the tiniest detail what has happened to us, and not have enough to remember how many times we have tild it to the same person? —La Rochefoucauld

PEACETIME USE FOR WARTIME DEVICE—That's a wartime mine detector—but in the picture it's being used to find stray pieces of metal which may be in these bales of rubber, just arrived from Malaya. Metal is sometimes found imbedded in the raw rubber and must be removed lest it injure the processing machines.

Will The Machine Man Made Finally Destroy Mankind?

Enshrinement in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington of the Wright brothers' "Kitty Hawk," the first airplane to fly, and the simultaneous prediction that man soon may be able to travel through the air at a speed of 3,000 miles an hour dramatically illustrate how rapid has been the development of the machine. At the same time these things must raise the question of what man is doing to control this supersonic force his skill and ingenuity have developed. Has he, like Frankenstein, invented a monster that will eventually destroy him? Can he learn in time how to control himself as well as the machine so that its great potentialities can be used to achieve good ends and a better life for everyone, or will he allow it to be used by evil or stupid men for evil ends?

This enormous development in the speed of flight is something that has come about during the lifetime of most of the adult population of the world. The Wright brothers are dead, but there was a 63-year-old man at the Smithsonian Institution, Friday, who saw the first flight from Kill Devil Hill on Dec. 17, 1903. The Kitty Hawk's first flight of 120 feet and the second of 852 were made at speeds of about six and nine miles an hour, respectively. A man can run faster than that. A year later airplane speed was up to fifty miles an hour. Now, only forty-five years later, a young Army officer has flown at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, and the developer of the rocket plane he flew says this speed can be tripled. This passage through the wild blue yonder at four times the speed of sound strains the imagination. At that speed London would be only a little over an hour distant from New York, and Moscow an hour and a half.

The evil uses to which this machine that has telescoped distances almost beyond comprehension in less than half a century can be put was amply illustrated in the Second World War. Armies moved at little faster pace than did the Roman legions, but in the air the Second World War was fought at speeds of 400 and 500 miles an hour. It is so vast an arena, that of the air, that there can be no absolute defense against attack. There was not in the last war at the now relatively slow speeds of 500 miles an hour. At 3,000 miles an hour the balance swings even more heavily to the attackers' side.

In a peaceful world this devourer of distance can bring many benefits to mankind. Food and medicine and succor to overcome the effects of natural disasters can be sent to where they are needed almost as soon as the need is known. But a 3,000-mile-a-minute plane could carry an atomic bomb the same distance in the same period of time. It would seem to behoove man to look to his development of peace machinery, and to accept the restraints on national pride and anger that are the only sure guarantee against war. Otherwise this machine he has invented will overwhelm and destroy him. The choice is his to make.

150 Missions Equals 14 Pairs of Socks—Capt. Harry C. Newsome, an Allied flyer engaged in the great airlift operation, has 150 missions to Berlin chaked up to his credit. While he waits for his cargo of coal to be unloaded at Gatow Airport he works on his 14th pair of Argyle plaid socks.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD — By William Ferguson

Honey and Hank — By Seeg