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Literature for Lions

(By Jean Hill)

One Saturday night Papa Lion yawned a mighty yawn and mumbled: "Nothing in the house to read."

"I am going to the library," said Mama Lion. "What would you like, dear? Another mystery story?"

Or perhaps it did not happen like that at all. Perhaps they both called to the Lion Cub as he dashed forth to see if by any lucky chance that new aeroplane book was in: "Ask the librarian to choose something for us."

It is possible, of course, or ought we to say probable, that no such scenes were ever enacted in the homes of our literary Lions. Doubtless Papa Lion said: "I think, my dear, I shall go to the library to see if anything new on Philosophy, Sociology, or Economics has been purchased; and not-so-high-brow Mama Lion replied: "If Rebecca or Kitty Foyle is in bring it to me."

This, or something very like it, is the way the library of 1940 is used by the Lions, their friends and relatives; but it was not so in the good old days. If you would like a glimpse into the past, ask the Village Clerk to loan you the records of the first years of our library. There, in faded copper-plate script, we read:

"A General Meeting of the Shareholders of the Richmond Hill Library was held in the Brick School-house on Thursday, the 23rd Dec. 1852 at 7 o'clock p.m."

Further:
"On motion seconded it was Resolved: That the Librarian be paid 3 Cy. per annum, for his services.

Three pounds does not sound a princely remuneration but it seems very little was expected of the Librarian in those days. On Sept. 19, 1854, it is recorded:

"No. of volumes in hands of Librarian this date 357; No. of volumes in hands of Shareholders 10; Total No. of volumes accounted for 367."

It was definitely the head of the house who was the high-brow in 1852. He paid one pound for the privilege of being a shareholder, and an additional sum of one shilling and three pence toward defraying the incidental expenses of the library. This entitled him to draw

books, recommend "Subscribers" who were charged seven and a half pence per month, and indicate any book he would care to have purchased.

"A blank book shall be placed in the Library in which any Shareholder may recommend to the Committee the purchase of any book, subscribing his own name thereto; which shall be placed in the Library should the funds of the association allow it; and the committee approve the same."

Imagine a list of Shareholders to a library to-day. It would run: (In addition to all the Lions), Dorothy Little, Violet Paris, Barbara Langstaff, etc. etc. But it was not so in 1852. Then the list ran: Robert McNair, Parker Crosby, Robert Hewison, William Trench, James Newton, Amos Wright, Dr. James Langstaff, Abraham Law, Matthew Teefy, William Harrison, David Bridgeford.

Not a Mary or Jane or Martha in the lot (with one exception). One wonders: What did Mama do for her reading material in those days? Probably she swiped Papa's book. But what about little Willie? In the recorded titles there is nothing to suggest suitable reading for him, unless he liked Macaulay's History of England; Chamber's Cyclopedia of English Literature; or Lives of the Signers of American Independence.

How different the picture is to-day! Now little Willie, Mary, Jane, and Sam have taken the library by storm. So much so in fact that even those of us who love them most sometimes wish they hadn't. When one considers that of one thousand readers four hundred are children, and that one half the circulation of books is juvenile; one realizes with a sense of satisfaction that the Lions of the future will be well-read men.

Yes, our Public Library is very different from the old "Association". Six thousand volumes instead of three hundred. Approximately three hundred dollars yearly spent on books and periodicals. A bright attractive room in which to house it. And an accommodating librarian to keep it in order—one who is paid in this good new age much more than "£3 Cy. per annum."

The Weather is Against the Nazis

(By Lion Jack Heard)

Even the weather is on our side! Because modern weather forecasting demands a knowledge of weather conditions to the westward, the Allies are able, in large measure, to prevent the Nazis from making the accurate forecasts so essential to present day aerial warfare.

In temperate latitudes the day-to-day changes in weather are controlled almost entirely by the passage of what the meteorologist calls extratropical cyclones. These great whirling formations, hundreds of miles across, travel with velocities in the neighbourhood of 500 to 1000 miles per day, always in an easterly direction, and carry the weather with them. Passing a given point, they produce, as a rule, first easterly winds with snow, sleet or rain, depending on the season, then often a change to southerly winds with a thaw or a sultry spell, and finally, often very abruptly, north-west winds with a bitter cold wave in winter or a welcome relief from the heat in summer.

The weather bureaus of the various countries normally receive, twice daily, reports on weather conditions from hundreds of stations scattered all over the continent and from ships at sea. From these data they draw up their weather maps, charting the positions and structures of the cyclones which are chasing one another across the continent or over the sea. On these maps the forecaster watches to the west, decides with a skill born of knowledge and experience whether a seemingly approaching cyclone is growing in strength or petering out, slowing down or speeding up, coming straight ahead or due to veer to the north or south. Then for the various localities he makes his forecasts—easterly winds and rain here, northerly winds and colder there.

For general purposes "partly cloudy", "rain in some sections", "colder with snow" are sufficient, but for aeronautical purposes the forecaster must be much more specific. He must predict not only general surface conditions, but also specific conditions and particularly wind directions and velocities for various heights above the surface. An aeroplane's "speedometer" works, of course, not against the road but against the air; it will measure the

distance travelled only if the pilot knows how fast the air itself is moving.

For reconnaissance and bombing flights weather forecasts are doubly important. Not only must the pilots know what heights will best suit their journey, how long it will take them to get there, but the observers or bombers must be assured of favourable visibility when they arrive.

Normally German meteorologists depend largely on France and the British Isles for the all-important westward weather data. Naturally in wartime the Allied censorship guards the weather as a strict military secret. Just how jealously it is guarded is illustrated by the fact that not until spring did we know that Britain had had the severest winter in decades. Even our forecasting service in Canada is censored to some extent for fear the Germans could use the information. The reader will recall that we no longer get detailed forecasts for Eastern Canada from the C.B.C. as we did before the war.

The hush-hush on the weather is putting the enemy to no end of trouble and annoyance. For weather data to the west of him he has to depend upon bootlegged information wirelessly out by his spies and upon whatever odds and ends he can pick up by listening in on ships at sea—uncertain and unreliable at the best.

The Allies, on the other hand, have all their normal facilities. That they are using them to the full is indicated by the fact that the meteorological service of Britain has more than doubled its personnel since the beginning of the war. Not only are the Allies, by virtue of westerly position, able to withhold data from the enemy, but they are, for the same reason, able to pick their weather as it goes by and to time their flights and raids so that their aircraft will arrive at the right place at the right time in the right weather.

None are too wise to be mistaken, but few are so wisely just as to acknowledge and correct their mistakes, and especially the mistakes of prejudice.—Borrow.

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