

“The Leaners”

With apologies to Opie Read.



IN the northeastern part of Illinois there is a large city situated on the shore of Lake Michigan. In the west end of this city there is a class of men known as “students,” but “leaners” would be a more appropriate name. They live mostly in what are known as “flats” and “boarding-houses,” where there are no chairs, but only posts and pillars to lean against.

Every day a number of these men go to a large building, which is called “Lewis Institute,” and stand leaning against the “lockers” in the halls and corridors. Some of these men have been known to spend nearly a whole day in “leaning.” They “lean” in such numbers that at times it is almost impossible to pass through the halls.

Suppose some day an earthquake were to shake this building and all of these “leaners” were to fall. Many of them would be seriously hurt. Therefore, as a preventive it will be necessary for all earthquakes to post notices in all prominent places at least ten days before they intend to shake the building, so as to give all “leaners” a fair chance to find new “leaning” places, so that they will not fall and be hurt.

Sudden movements of buildings are dangerous; therefore, “leaners,” beware; the building may move suddenly and you may get hurt some day.

These remind us of the animals of which Cæsar speaks, which “had no joints in their knees, and so could not lie down to sleep. The trees served as their beds, and they took their rest in a reclining position. From the footprints of these animals the hunters saw where they rested. The hunters undermined the roots of the trees or nearly chopped them down. Then when the animals reclined, as was their custom, the weak trees fell over and the animals with them.”

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