



ALLYCE'S ATTIC

by MARY ALLYCE



Springtime. A time of renewal, of hope, around here, hopefully, of rain – as in “April showers bring May flowers.” That old saw is from Chaucer’s prologue to *The Canterbury Tales*, (“Whan that Aprill with his shoures sotte/The droghte of March hath perced to the roote/And bathed every veyne in swich licour/Of which vertu engendred is the flour”). The modern version is pithy, but Chaucer’s Middle English original is poetic, musical, graceful. I wonder if Chaucer was alive today, what would his facebook page look like? After all, he and Shakespeare and other intellects contributed the original thoughts we see as “hackneyed” or trite today.

I’m not endorsing of facebook, just acknowledging how large part it is of most of our days (and nights). Used to promote artists and businesses of all kinds, it also keeps us in touch and posts endless lifestyle statements, mostly written by someone other than the poster. We are uplifted, encouraged, incited and/or insulted by a deluge of “helpful” word images once confined to “bumper sticker mentality.” In more recent “days of yore”, when e-mail was the main conveyor of whatever passed across the senders’ minds, we saw lots of the same stuff, but in longer format. Now, facebook lets anyone reach out and touch, enlighten and annoy literally millions of people with one click.

It’s not necessarily a bad thing. It is a lot easier to hit “Like” than to respond to an e-mail with some sort of intelligent response. I read posts on a daily basis showing me “6 Things Mentally Strong People Do”, “5 Deadly Terms Used By A Woman”, instructing me that surrounding myself with nice, intelligent, positive people will improve my life and outlook, thousands of recipes, some of which actually look good, craft ideas I save and never get around to making, lots of religious posts, lots of political posts, pictures of cute animals, the lunch my friends are eating, their vacation

and family photos.

Occasionally one really strikes a chord.

My favorite this month, is: “Some studies have shown that sipping champagne can have a positive effect on people . . . Some people even think it boosts your mood due to having magnesium, potassium, zinc and even traces of lithium.” And you thought facebook wasn’t educational. I know champagne lifts my mood and it definitely makes facebook a lot more entertaining!

We haven’t talked about all the videos eager to eat up your data plan, One writer might have called them, “Too much of a good thing.” Shakespeare. He would have had lots of fun commenting on facebook with familiar phrases like, “Love is blind”, “Fight fire with fire,” “Dead as a doornail” Send him packing” and “Naked truth.” Ah, the sweet brevity.

No surprise - I love writer quotes. Some of my favorites are from Hemmingway: “All my life I’ve looked at words as though I were seeing them for the first time.” “Easy writing makes for hard reading,” and “It’s none of their business you have to learn how to write. Let them think you were born that way.” Mark Twain advised, “Don’t say, ‘The old lady screamed.’ Bring her on and let her scream.” F. Scott Fitzgerald warned, “What people are ashamed of usually makes a great story.” All the above have appeared on my personal facebook page and my writer page.

I’m not a big fan of smarmy stuff – the “I’ve decided to be happy because it’s good for my health,” stuff even if that was written by Voltaire. I much prefer the one about the baby dragon sitting on my shoulder and that’s all I can print about that one!

Having instant access to millions of people with whatever we decide to share is fun, but let’s finish with a quote from J.K. Rowling (Harry Potter) who said, “Words are, in my not-so-humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury, and remedying it .Good advice for writers and Facebookers.