

PROCESSIONARY CATERPILLARS

Processionary Caterpillars feed upon pine needles. They move through the trees in a long procession, one leading and the others following - each with his eyes half closed and his head snugly fitted against the rear extremity of his predecessor.

Jean-Henri Fabre, the great French naturalist, after patiently experimenting with a group of the caterpillars, finally enticed them to the rim of a large flower pot. He succeeded in getting the first one connected up with the last one, thus forming a complete circle, which started moving around in a procession, with neither beginning nor end.

The naturalist expected that after a while they would catch on to the joke, get tired of their useless march and start off in some new direction. But not so.--

Through sheer force of habit, the living, creeping circle, kept moving around the rim of the pot - around and around, keeping the same relentless pace for seven days and seven nights - and would doubtless have continued longer had it not been for sheer exhaustion and ultimate starvation.

Incidentally, an ample supply of food was close at hand and plainly visible, but it was outside the range of the circle so they continued along the beaten path.

They were following instinct - habit - custom - tradition - precedent - past experience - "standard practice" - or whatever you may choose to call it, but they were following it blindly.

They mistook activity for accomplishment. They meant well - but they got no place.

Improvements are not made by those who follow the beaten path. Improvements come from those who believe that every job can be improved and then take action to prove it.

