

MORALITY

by LLEWELYN POWYS

WHEN we worry about morality, that fanciful topic so closely associated with man's assumed freedom of will, the first thing to be understood is the fact that this tiresome word in its original Latin use denoted nothing more momentous than manners. It was the serpent's wisdom of the priests which first entangled what is our present conception of the word with religious feeling. Religion and ethics in their ultimate origin have little to do with each other. The former is concerned with man's emotional reaction before the miracle of existence, with the wonder that his lonely spirit feels when in a state of heightened awareness it meditates upon the hidden reality behind experience. The other is a mere matter of conduct, the commonplace adjustment of the individual to the arduous restrictions imposed upon him by the exactions of the social contract.

True religion is identical in all races. In its simplest form it is best expressed by the word awe, awe felt before the pageant of eternal matter, awe felt before the profound mystery of life. Morality is a chameleon-like property that takes a fresh color for its skin in every climate and in every age. It consists of submission to expedient rulings devised by each commonwealth for the advantage of its constitution. Its precepts are for the most part framed to curb the actions of forward persons judged to be detrimental to the public good. It has no divine and no metaphysical sanction. Moral codes occasionally coincide in human colonies far removed from each other. This happens because they represent an accumulation of man's work-a-day experience in social agreement and for this reason they have a certain claim upon our attention and deserve to be closely examined before rejection.

It should be remembered, however, when we are disposed to indulge this mood of submissive tolerance, that throughout the generations the legitimate freedom of the individual has been continually subjected to the most arbitrary curtailments for reasons that are often enough sordid and ignoble; for the preservation of private property, for instance, or for the security of certain favored classes.

Those pure moral qualities that especially grace our kind—tenderness, generosity, altruism—had their modest origins in mother love and sexual love. Their beginnings still may be observed at work in the self-effacement of a mother animal, in the courage of a female leopard defending her young, in the fidelity of light-hearted, free-flying birds for their nestlings. In Africa when a herd of impalla are disturbed, the stag will always take up his position at the rear of the stampede, in the place, that is to say, of the greatest danger.

Man's faculty of ethical arbitration is similar to the sensitive mainspring of a clock; and it is about the bland face of this intricate timepiece of human behavior that the hour-hand of civil altruism and the flickering minute-hand of self-realization revolve, the sound working of the machine being dependent upon certain minute proportionate abatements. In human conduct there is no golden rule to follow, always it has been and always it will be a matter for compromise. An infallible decalogue does not exist. The accredited tenets of custom can each one of them be broken under certain circumstances with justice. From the earliest times these commandments have never been taken seriously 1/2 free men.

Nature is strong, has sound nerves, and is not troubled by conscience. Selfish behavior, unselfish behavior, it is all one to her, not the difference of a cherry stone. She performs her multifarious tasks without hesitation or misgiving, in a state of innocence, apart from all knowledge of good and evil. When a butcher bird transfixes upon the pegs of its larger creatures more sensitive, nature remains indifferent. When a wandering Jew, possessed by a treacherous delusion, sacrifices himself with heroic passion, nature remains utterly unimplicated. For all she knew, the most tragic and significant cry that has ever disturbed a Spring twilight—Eloi, Eloi Lama Sabachthani—might have come from the gutted throat of some hideous hyena crunching the bones of a scrupulous Pharisee in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

To her flat ears the frightful murmur that rose from the battle fields of Flanders when bands of regimented primates, with memory and prevision, bit, scratched, and stabbed at each other, was no different from the murmur that rises from a green orchard where boys and girls are dancing to the music of fiddles. The Persian sovereign who, to satisfy his lust for revenge, had silver trays piled high with the eyes of his enemies carried past him from dawn to noon was no more condemned by nature than was John Huss commended. Whether we like it or not, we must accustom our minds to accept the fact that moral action has no philosophic justification and still less a supernatural one. It represents a capricious humor of mankind, it is an artificial toy of their own invention and nothing more. Morality has no tap-root in earth life, of this we may be certain.

Because we should put our sanctimonious convictions under the sharp teeth of the harrow of skepticism, it by no means follows that we advocate the abandonment of all difficult self-control. For the sake of life we must never tire in our fight against stupidity and cruelty. If we are unable to vindicate this attitude with rational arguments we must learn to live, as the Christians teach, by faith. In a last analysis it is simply a matter of taste.

With regard to our personal conduct here and now we must always bear in our minds the doctrine of Epicurus that we are endowed with a modicum

of freedom. Make no doubt of it, this blest swerve of the atoms defrauds fate of an absolute sway. Like the cows on Portland we are each of us tethered to our destined post, but within the length of our rope we are free to move where we will. We need not harass ourselves overmuch with the "authoritative impostures" of conventional society. Each of us in accordance with his nature must make a settlement in his own personal life between the claims of self-interest and the claims of service to others, using as his guide far-sighted, foxy calculations as to the probable balance of happiness likely to arise from any particular undertaking.

It is most certain that ultimately nothing matters. There is no pity in the clouds. There exist upon earth, however, sensitive values and gross values and it becomes well-bred spirits to advance the cause of the former as far as is compatible with personal happiness.

THE DECLINE OF LIGHT VERSE

By NEIL TRIMBLE

DURING the six year life span of the old *Masses*, from 1911 to 1917, two literary accouchements took place. The first was *Poetry*, founded by Harriet Monroe in 1912; the second was Margaret Anderson's *Little Review*. Both of these magazines championed causes which rapidly became cults, and one of these cults still exists, although the cause has been forgotten. As soon as the other little magazines noticed the trend they immediately perked up with swollen-necked Communism, radical art and *vers libre*, and became too per cent serious in tone. Then something commenced to fade from our literary horizon, and it is still fading. Free verse did not quite drive out serious rhymed verse, but it did, for a time, provide an effective stop-gap for light verse. The ghosts of Lewis Carroll and W. S. Gilbert were laid quietly away. Lazy experimentalists, whose only previous encouragement had come from the ephemeral Bohemian magazines whose repercussions were severely local, suddenly remembered Stephen Crane's "Black Riders" and the magic name of Whitman, and pounced like vultures on the new magazines of expression. The story of the rapid growth of the movement and of its culmination in the successive coronations of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and e. e. cummings is as familiar as the history of the Republican plague of 1928-32.

Most of the little magazines that appeared before the advent of *Poetry* and *The Little Review* were not too serious and often allotted space for satiric and even occasional nonsense verse. Poets now were practically forced to abandon that medium of expression, since the quality magazines had never bought heavily of light verse. Not that it was at all a question of market. The little magazines seldom, if ever, paid for anything, and the bards, for the most part, barded for the fun of it. But the *Liberator*, which succeeded the old cavorting *Masses*, and the later expatriate publications such as *Broom*, *Secession*, *transition*, *This Quarter* and Pound's *Exile*, had no room for anything except tragic groans in *vers libre*.

What a contrast we find in the magazines of thirty-five to forty years ago! There was *Puck*, edited by Bunker, *Mlle. New York*, with Huneker as one of its stars, the *Chap Book*, Burgess' *Lark*, *The Yellow Book*, *Cosmopolis*, and a host of big and little magazines, most of them eagerly receptive to the work of such technical experts as Richard Hovey, Guy Wetmore Carryl, Bliss Carman, Oliver Herford and Gelett Burgess, as well as lesser figures such as Kenyon Cox, John Kendrick Bangs, Charles F. Lummis and Carolyn Wells. How much of their product do we remember and quote today aside from the well-milked "Purple Cow"? Unless one is a literary historian or a collector of first editions, one is probably acquainted only with the caudal examples, such as Riley's threnody to the outhouse and Field's "When Willie Wet The Bed,"—things of the type that are reprinted by the leg-and-chemise magazines.

Today? Well, there are a few (a very few) who amuse and entertain occasionally. For instance, Morris Bishop, Arthur Lippmann, E. B. Crosswhite and that wholesaler of jingles, Berton Braley, who evidently operates on a yearly contract basis with the *Saturday Evening Post*. And we must not forget the shrinking Samuel Hoffenstein and the ubiquitous Dorothy Parker.

But we must still admit, much as we may dislike it, that our best practising technician is Ogden Nash, even when it is apparent that all his tricks were used by Hovey, Carryl and others nearly forty years ago. In Hovey's "Don Juan" (*Smart Set*, Nov. 1900) are found Nash's own rhymes—"please men" with "policemen", "Ellenor" with "hell in her", "satyrasis" with "your bias is", and even the Nashian distortion of spelling in "Lucifer" with "crucifer." Nash must have carelessly read Carryl's "Grimm Tales Made Gay," because he was once guilty of rhyming "wittier" with "Whittier" and overlooking Carryl's redeeming pun. But the imitator has been flattered in turn. One of his early satellites was Margaret Fishback, who now has moved into an orbit of her own and writes capable verse in carload lots. She has reformed, but there are plenty of others who have not. A contributor to one of the leading humorous magazines recently copied, almost word for word, two of Nash's verses.

Of writers of nonsense verse there are today none to compare with Carryl, Herford, Burgess, Cox and Carolyn Wells. Carolyn Wells, Herford and Burgess are, I believe, still with us, but the fact that they no longer write intentional nonsense shows either that they are incapable of doing it any longer or that the public taste has changed.

GRIM FOLLIES OF A MINOR COURT

by ELEANOR ROWLAND WEMBRIDGE

THERE is often a fantastic drama in the workings of a minor court that is missing in the sessions devoted to the major crimes. If a knife, let us say, has entirely severed someone's jugular vein, the criminal court meets the episode with all the gravity appropriate to the abrupt thrust of a soul into eternity. Lawyers, judges, witnesses, police, are summoned. Oaths are administered, precedents consulted, sentences pronounced. The outcome may result in another fatality added to the first, but at least life and death are taken seriously. Murder is accorded its due respect. Let us suppose, however, that the knife, flung with an equally savage passion, but less accurate aim, misses its target's neck and, glancing sidewise against the stove, falls harmlessly into the wood-box. Half an inch has removed the incident from the august consideration of the higher courts to an obscure hearing, where a fine or a scolding takes the place of a cell or the electric chair. In both cases murder was in the air. But the deflected blade has turned the affair from the grim to the grotesque. There is something almost more disturbing to one's moral sense about the under-valuation of the knife that did not meet its mark than in the ominous appraisal of the one that did!

In my modest chambers—I am the referee of the Juvenile Court of Cuyahoga County, Ohio—there is no warning ahead of what wild mischief I am to consider. There cannot be much for-knowledge of minor cases. One moment, let us say, I have never heard of Vennie, her half-sister, her grandfather, and the barber who lodges in the hall. After fifteen minutes, with no grandeur of the law invoked (because Vennie is a poor shot), I know more about them all than anyone should know, except possibly their doctor and their confessor. Old scandals, jealousies and reprisals are chattered to me by Vennie, her sister, and the barber, while grandpa shakes his head and says it isn't so. No one this side of doomsday will discover which is right.

Vennie's story is that the fight started over an uncalculated comment by the barber as to the virtue of the half-sister's grandmother. Words passed and Vennie picked up the knife and threw it, in order to forestall being choked by the barber. The neighbors heard the noise and sent for the police. But, when the patrol wagon arrived, no one was visible but the panting barber, reading his newspaper by the stove. He protested that there had been no trouble, merely a friendly chat, and that the family had gone up-stairs at peace with all the world, including him. He believed them to be on the roof. "Why the roof?" I inquired of the grandfather. "To escape the barber?" "Oh no," explained the old gentleman blandly. "On the roof to shoot pigeons!" Nothing could budge any of them from this statement. If Vennie had tossed her weapon with a more practised hand, she would have made the front page as a major criminal. Because her aim was poor, the affair has dwindled to a family party playfully shooting pigeons on the roof at midnight, and with Vennie and her erstwhile hated barber quite obviously engaged in a flirtation.

It seems shocking that crime missed by so narrow a margin should turn burlesque. The collapse of the combat into this anti-climax is almost more monstrous than the barber in the morgue!

Often real calamity develops before our eyes, yet, though we foresee it, we are helpless to prevent it. There was Aggie Lou, who presented herself to the police with a grave complaint against her brother-in-law, which bore all the earmarks of truth. No child of thirteen could have invented such shocking charges, nor was there any motive for her doing so. All the investigators agreed that her story was true. She was ministered to, her mother summoned, and the two met with sobs. But after the interview a new glint appeared in the eye of Aggie Lou. She insisted that her brother-in-law was a good kind man, and that all the stories she had told were lies. She was vague as to her motives in inventing such monstrosities, but persisted in her statements that she had done so.

As the family filed in for the hearing, I had to stare hard even to recognize them. The father, with oiled hair and a glistening new gold tooth, was resplendent in a tan overcoat, while the mother was draped in green satin with glass beads. Aggie Lou sat beside them, with a ticket to Chicago in her hand; and the brother-in-law, fat, sleek and silent, eyed me with a covert smile. At our first meeting, the family was being fed by charity. Today, Aggie Lou had a long shopping list, and feared to miss the train because of it. "Where did all this money come from?" I demanded in futile wrath, though I knew very well. "That man paid all of you to change your story," I insisted, in shrill contrast to the composed father, who murmured that he had "friends," and the confident brother-in-law, who smiled and gazed out of the window. Aggie Lou grasped her ticket and reiterated faintly, "No one done nothing to me." What higher court has time or patience for the tremulous falsehoods of children? As for Aggie Lou's family, what is a daughter's virtue compared to the tangible benefits of a fawn-colored overcoat and a green satin dress? Such gifts are not to be despised by those who live on charity. So the fat brother-in-law waddles out, with the serene composure of a philanthropist who scatters sunshine—and Aggie Lou, despite our best efforts, travels happily off to her destruction.

Occasionally a frail creature epitomizes in herself every conceivable mischance. One such drifted into our court-room, young, sick and pregnant. Her mother was dead, her father had long since deserted, and her one-time admirer had departed, leaving not

only his victim but a wife and two children. He had no money and was literally not worth the energy necessary to track him down, even if we had known his last name, which the girl could not recall. His first was Frog. I gazed at the bedraggled little wretch in helpless despair, then asked, "What do you want? If I knew what you really wanted, there might be some chance of getting it." She smiled. But, accustomed as I should be by now to whimsies and lunacies, I was startled by her answer. "I want a green and black bathroom," she murmured.

"A green and black bathroom?" I echoed, staring.

"Yes. I saw a picture of one once, and it had a black tub. I want a green and black bathroom with a black tub!"

I fell back, inadequate to her bright vision. I could only mutter, "I am sorry. I have no black tub," as she was ushered to an obscure bed, and thence I know not where. On the lowest rung of the human ladder. Yet, her only smile was at the dream-picture of a glittering bathroom and an inkly tub.

I insist that such encounters in the humble sessions of a minor court make a heavier drain on one's social philosophy than a concourse of the League of Nations.

THE OTHER SIDE OF PARADISE

By VERNON C. SHERWIN

THE peninsula of Florida protrudes from the southeastern corner of the United States into the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean like an index finger dipped into a tepid bath. To varied thousands, ranging from tin-can tourists in house-cars and khaki breeches to harried Crésuses who feel they are no longer able to relax in the spas of southern Europe, the state is just that: a warm bath made attractively warmer by cheap and convenient highballs.

A native, however, gazing pensively at a map of his state is more likely to be reminded of one of the pendulous mammae of a range cow, the islands dripping into the Gulf from the southernmost end of the state representing the last drops of milk grudgingly released by an animal ripe for the abattoir. Alcoholicly the state is wet enough; economically it has been milked dry.

Laying claim to the oldest settlement in the Union, Florida might well be expected to have attained a maturity incompatible with a double life, but such is not the case. The triangle of the old lady's girlish senility has at its apex the freeborn white native, who roams the northern and western reaches of the state, the Cracker, who controls her political destinies and looking after such morals as still survive.

Perhaps no state in the Union displays so great a contrast as exists between north and south Florida. The differences are cultural, moral and ethnological. The southern section of Florida, given over to the entertainment of tourists and the cult of the sun, is ruled in the main by an immigrant Babbitt, attracted by the fantastic paper profits made in real estate speculation in 1925 and 1926. In the vicinity of Miami and other tourist centres there are overtones of a cosmopolitan culture visible through the fog of go-getters and boosters but, as is always true where numerical greatness is confused with progress, the enlightened few are sadly in the minority and lead, at best, a life of vicarious pleasure.

In more prosperous days concert artists of the first water were brought into Miami and Orlando by a venturesome entrepreneur and once, during the height of his fad, the Spanish painter Zuloaga mildly shocked the good ladies of the former city with an exhibition of his nudes. Of late, however, appreciation of the arts appears to be in the doldrums. Kreisler and Heifetz fiddle no more on Miami's shore, and the Spaniard was the last painter heard of in the land. The composer Mana-Zucca, married to the former owner of a Miami department store, is making a conscientious effort to keep interest alive in music in the Magic City and the Civic theatre carries on, but with difficulty.

That the love of beautiful letters is not dead is evidenced by a virulent rash of poets which has broken out in the state during the past few years. Euterpe and Erato are wooed by such unexpected aspirants as policemen and matrons of homes for the poor, and the appalling results are published in an anthology of Florida poets. Published, that is, after the poetasters subscribe for ten copies of the volume at two dollars each.

In the main, however, Babbitt is in the saddle in south Florida, and any surplus energy these enterprising gentlemen may possess is expended in a valiant effort to avoid payment of the overburdening load of bonded indebtedness contracted during the real estate boom, without using the opprobrious term "repudiation." In the city of West Palm Beach their efforts have resulted in the bondholders forcing a tax levy of 450 mills on an already bankrupt populace. No man can predict the outcome of this unheard of tax rate. It remains to be seen whether property owners will abandon the town site or rise in revolt. Only one thing is certain: few, if any, of the property holders can pay any such amount as the levy will entail this year.

II

The northern and western stretches of the state, with their sweatboxes and other penal atrocities, present a far different picture. There the towns remain uncontaminated by Yankee emigrés and the land is given over to agriculture rather than subdivisions. The arts are not only neglected, they

are unheard of. Popular relaxation takes the form of communal barbecues, an occasional lynching by flogging, and the quadrennial elections.

Jacksonville, considered the leading city of the state by everyone except Miami, was the scene of the highly publicized sweatbox murder trial in the Summer of 1932, which resulted in a twenty-year sentence for a prison camp boss but has yet brought no startling reforms in the penal system of the state. The publicity given to the revolting details of this murder of a young convict from New Jersey was probably a contributing factor to the conviction. Had there been any real feeling in the state against the brutal treatment of convicts, the case of Martin Tabor, beaten to death in a prison camp more than six years ago, should have provided sufficient warning that a reform was in order.

More recently five men were acquitted on charges of flogging several men and women in Jacksonville, despite positive identification. Convenient relatives and lodge brothers provided alibis for the defendants. Although more than twenty-five Jacksonville men and women reported to the police that they had been abducted and beaten with heavy straps last year, no arrests, other than the five mentioned above, have been made. Most of the victims stated they were warned against frequenting "disorderly houses and living in the Negro district of the city."

Among the onerous duties willingly shouldered by the politically-minded Cracker is that of custodian of the moral and spiritual welfare of his fellow citizens. In the field of endeavor he is aided and abetted in the resort section of the state by as able and active a crew of non-indigenous whoopers up as is to be found outside of Kansas.

III

The geographical position of the commonwealth makes Florida ideal not only for the hard-drinking, sun-loving Pan worshippers; the place is also a sort of pre-paradise for arthritic clergymen from all points of the compass. While the actinic rays of the Winter sun draw the swelling from their joints, they lick their Christian chops as they contemplate the appalling moral turpitude of less God-fearing visitors. Where else, this side of Paradise, if even there, may a Servant of God lie in the heliotherapeutic atmosphere of a populous beach, simultaneously ridding himself of rheumatic twinges and preparing a sermon on the devilish seductiveness of the one-piece bathing suit?

Do the business men of the resorts demand a liberal interpretation of the statutes as an attraction to free-spending visitors? Then a pack of amateur and professional bluenoses are on their trail, shouting and praying for strict enforcement of the puritanical regulations of antebellum days, including Sunday closing laws for every institution except, of course, the church.

Do the tourists ask for dog and horse racing? Then the Crackers of the state legislature convene with palms conveniently upturned, equally ready for a *fourboire* or a prayer. There was considerable speculation among residents when the Florida legislature, after many refusals, suddenly legalized pari-mutuel betting under a local option law, after winking at illicit oral betting for five years.

Two years earlier the same august body had hitched up its galluses and fled precipitately, spraying the adjacent scenery with a fine jet of Brown's Mule en route, when a Miami racing promoter descended on the capital with the announcement that he was prepared to buy up the whole assemblage, body and soul, in the interests of legalized gambling.

By a God-given act of wisdom on the part of some early Solon, the state legislature is allowed to convene only once in two years. Thus was facilitated another two years of illegal gambling at the tracks before a group of less garrulous promoters could visit the boys at Tallahassee and make them see the light. This time there was no vulgar talk of a headright for representatives. The conversation was confined to betting for public, rather than private, revenue, and a local option gambling bill went through. Governor Carlton vetoed the bill, but, so convinced had the legislators become that racing for revenue would prove to be the state's salvation, that the bill was passed over his veto. So after six years it became legal to back one's judgment on the relative speed of thoroughbreds at the track, but it remains to this day a felonious offense to do the same thing in a bookmaking establishment downtown.

The snoopers waited and beat their breasts and predicted disaster for a state so far gone in sin, but their law-giving colleagues went placidly to their homes, content in the knowledge that their flaccid counties would get an equal share of racing profits.

Since the legalization of pari-mutuel betting, ministers of the Gospel have had to content themselves with harassing slot-machine operators, gaudy women and other such small fry, but the resort cities still present probably the most inspiring field for the reformer to be found in the land.

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THE CONTROL OF SEX

by CALVIN B. BRIDGES

THE problem of how to have the baby a boy was of considerable importance to King X, whom Providence had blessed with five daughters in a row. There was nothing he could do about it, and possibly there isn't yet, although at the recent Third International Congress of Genetics a Doctor Sanders made a report concerning some experiments conducted by a colleague which a nearly uniform production of boys followed the feeding to the mother of an alkali (sodium bicarbonate) during a critical period before conception. And, conversely, a great preponderance of daughters was reported to follow the administration of lactic acid.

Whether or not the sex ratio in man can be controlled, laboratory experiments with the small fly *Drosophila melanogaster* have shown that in this form at any rate the ratio of the sexes can be governed by genetical means to an astonishing extent. So far, however, no chemical treatment of environmental variations has modified the sex-ratio significantly.

The genetical methods of controlling the sex-ratio in the case of the fly mentioned consist in the main of killing in the early larval stages, of individuals of one or the other sex. The killing is accomplished by the transmission to certain individuals in the family of definitely inherited character changes. These characteristics differ from the other characteristics, known as dominant traits, in this fly only in the more devastating and more effect upon the ability to live. For example, the inherited characteristic of white eyes may appear in half of the sons of a certain family, but the white eye does not harm the recipient fly. Hence no more of these white-eyed sons than of the normal red-eyed sons die. So the sex-ratio remains what is normal for this species: one to one. But other inherited characters, instead of being harmless, may be very harmful. Thus, a certain inherited character consists in the transformation of certain organs of the very young larva into rounded masses of black cells, very similar in their manner of growth and in their fatal effects to the malignant melanotic cancers found in man. Since in these families one half of the sons receive this character and one of the daughters receive it, half of the sons are eliminated and the family shows the reduced sex-ratio of only fifty sons to each one-hundred daughters.

We know the explanation for this curious type of inheritance, whereby a given character appears in half of the sons of a family and in none of the daughters. It is because sex itself is determined by the existence in the cells of the body of a growing larva of one, or conversely of two, particular chromosomes called the x-chromosomes. A larva with one x-chromosome is a male and a larva with two becomes a female. When a female produces eggs, each egg contains the one or the other of these two x-chromosomes. In the case of the male, when he produces sperm, half of the sperm receive his x-chromosome,

while the other half of the sperm are left without an x-chromosome. Fertilization of the eggs, each of which has an x-chromosome, by the two kinds of sperm results in two kinds of larva, those with two x-chromosomes becoming females and those with one x-chromosome—the other half—becoming males. The result is that normally as many sons as daughters are produced.

II

In the case of characters such as white-eyes and the fatal cancers, the particular bit of chemical called a gene, which results in the white-eyed instead of the red-eyed condition, is a part of this sex-determining x-chromosome. A female that has this specific gene in one only of her two x-chromosomes is able to live, since she does not develop the cancer. But those males which have this cancer-bearing x-chromosome only, since they are not protected by a second and normal x-chromosome, develop the cancer and die from its effects. By combinations of certain of these death-producing genes with certain other ones, half of the sons can be killed by one of them and the other half by the other. Hence, families consisting only of daughters can be raised. If families consisting of a very few sons and many daughters are desired, they can be obtained by combining particular ones of these male-eliminating genes with particular other ones from our large selection of death-dealing genes.

Reciprocally, genes are known whose peculiarity of action causes death to daughters and not to sons.

Not only can the scale of sex-ratios be run from one extreme to the other in families, but individuals can be produced which, in themselves, are combinations of male and female in various but specific proportions. Thus, one individual can be entirely and sharply female throughout the left side of its body and just as sharply male throughout the right side. Since the male is only about two-thirds as large as the female, the combination is ludicrously curved—he being the string to her bow. In other cases, approximately a quadrant of the joint body is male. In many cases, half of the head is male and half female. In such instances the fly may exhibit a mixed libido. The tail region containing the testes or ovaries may have more effect on the sex behavior than the head region, as evidenced by "their" pursuit of females or "their" being pursued by males.

In other experiments, besides the two fixed points of maleness and femaleness, the interval between can be filled by a whole series of individuals, each being a definite intermediate or inter-sex between maleness and femaleness. In these intersexes, the sex constitution of every cell in the body is intermediate. But in the developmental process, the organs become more female-like in appearance than in the standard male, and the proportion of organs thus becoming female-like determines the grade of inter-sex. Again, the maleness of all the organs may be accentuated to give a series of super-male individuals. Conversely, the scale of sexes can be extended in the opposite direction to a series of super-females. Thus, the entire range between extreme super-females through standard females, inter-sexes of different degrees, standard males and thence on to the extreme of super-males, is producible on demand.

Do you want a moral? If so, here it is: Work relatively as long with the study of heredity in man as has been done in the heredity of flies, and then, if you wish, like results can be produced in man.

IN PRAISE OF COOKERY

by HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON

WHEN I was very young, I, like all other well-behaved little Dutch boys, was regularly dragged to a bare and dreary room, atrociously ventilated and adorned with a few antiquated maps of Palestine, where I was soundly instructed in the history of the ancient Hebrews according to the views of Dr. John Calvin, late prophet-in-extraordinary to the patient people of the town of Geneva, Switzerland. Every lesson was full of "burnt offerings" which, according to our excellent Dominie, had been so acceptable to the nostrils of the Great Jehovah that he had preferred them to all other visible forms of homage.

Now the Dutch expression for "burnt offering" was "smelly offering" but the word "smelly" was used in the old sense of "perfumed"—in other words, it indicated a more or less agreeable smell. Being, even then, rather empirically inclined, I decided one day to play the rôle of Jehovah and to arrange: such an offering according to the best Hebrew precepts and then enjoy those pleasures which had so delighted the olfactory organs of the Great Master of the Divine Tantrums, for whom, in those days, I had a profound if awesome respect.

On the plea that I wanted to give Philax an extra treat (Philax was a fat and wheezy pug-dog, now gone the way of all pug-dogs) I obtained a few odds and ends of meat from our family butcher. In the back of the garden I had erected an altar according to the specifications as found in Exodus XX:24—good wet earth and a few flat stones, carried to our low country a million years before by an obliging Scandinavian glacier and never polluted by the touch of a human hammer.

I had carefully refrained from constructing any steps, "that my nakedness be not discovered thereon," because I failed to know what that meant. All decent little Dutch boys wore pants and their nakedness was never discovered unless they got spanked, and surely one would not get spanked for building an altar according to Exodus XX: 24. I had neither "sheep nor oxen" but I had a large plate-full of their choicest entrails and old newspapers would provide me with fuel. The fuel question rather worried me. Exodus XX was silent on that point. But I had been careful to collect a large number of copies of the *Dutch Church News*—a wondrous gazette consisting exclusively of announcements about forthcoming sermons and "help wanted" ads. for the benefit of ladies who wished to avail themselves of the services of a decent, self-respecting Protestant cook in exchange for forty dollars a year, full washing and tips—and I felt certain that out of respect for the word "church" Jehovah would overlook any possible minor errors connected with the actual process of combustion.

I had a vague notion that holy offerings should be brought while the suppliant was still in a state of pre-prandial sobriety, a possible remnant of the days when my ancestors had worshipped in a somewhat different temple, and so, early one morning, I sneaked out of the house and set fire to the contraption. It stank to high Heaven. Pardon the use of this homely Anglo-Saxon expression but "smell" and "odor," "emanation" and "fume" are entirely too mild to describe the ensuing stench.

It was Summer and the pole-cat fragrance rolled in heavy waves toward the house and caused several members of the family to arise in haste and to inquire whether the cow-barn was on fire. The gardener, with a bucket of water, made an end to all my further experiments in applied holiness. My parents,

sound Voltairians, who had sent me to my weekly catechism not in a spirit of piety but in order to have me out of the house for an extra couple of hours, frowned severely upon this unwelcome and wholly unsuspected manifestation of an interest in outworn "prejudice and superstition."

I escaped further punishment by a most solemn vow that henceforth I would not take the sacred writings either too seriously or too literally, one of the few promises I have kept to this day without any serious infringements, and that was the last of my efforts along the line of empirical ancient-testamentary testimony.

II

A few years later, when entering the glorious portals of immortal Homer, I was slightly shocked to discover that the Greek Gods had also been devotees of the hideous smell of fried meat. By that time, Jehovah had become a slightly ridiculous and wholly antiquated patriarch, vaguely reminiscent of those hoary-bearded rabbis who would pass through our streets whenever the Little Father of the great Russian plains had indulged in another little pogrom, when vast hordes of bewhiskered and bedraggled ghetto-folk would come scurrying through our streets in search of the blessed ships that were to carry them to the Promised Land on the other side of the broad Atlantic Ocean.

The Olympians, on the other hand, men and women of the world, with their serious devotion to all outdoor sports and their amorous adventures that smacked of the French funny papers, were as modern as this evening's Extra, and it seemed absolutely incongruous that they too should have asked their worshippers to refresh and delight them with the vapors of slowly smouldering carcasses. But Homer's words allowed of no mistake. Nectar and ambrosia sounded most impressive. When our zoology teacher showed us the mummified remnants of the ambrosian beetle (a rare American import) which had derived its name from the strange habit of cultivating a juicy fungus inside the bark of trees as a special delicacy for its promising young larvae, the last vestiges of my former respect for the Jovian bill-of-fare disappeared as completely as my erstwhile fear of the late Jehovah. I came to the definite conclusion that the tastes of our ancestors must have been very different from our own, and I let it go at that.

No doubt a hundred years hence, one of my full-fed great grandchildren, in writing in *The American Spectator* of 2033 about his antiquarian experiments with a Roosevelt-steak smothered in onions, will express a similar devastating dislike for the delicacies which now grace our domestic tables. For the perfume of today is the insufferable stench of tomorrow, and the same food which made Charlemagne ask for a fifth helping would be merely kennel-ration to the gourmet of 1933, and would only remind him of that cup of luke-warm tea mixed with rancid goat-butter which his delighted host had urged upon him when he was forced to take shelter in the house of a Tibetan lama.

Whoever doubts my words is politely requested to make a culinary voyage of discovery through the metropolis in which I am writing these words, to wit, the city of New York, the greatest renaissance village of our modern world, the sublime crazy-quilt of all nations, all races, all tribes and all clans, which has a larger variety of truly "regional" restaurants than any other town on this or any other planet. Being myself of an almost incredible conservatism in the matter of "taste" (the kitchen of my childhood was excellent but almost as restricted as that of the rice-fed babies of India), I humbly partake of bread and butter and the wings of some defunct chicken, while my friends delve deep into the hidden delights of some Turkish, Armenian or Hindu mess. But everything man ever ate, should eat or should refrain completely from eating, from the succulent fingers of the octopus (*Cephalopoda vulgaris*) to the hundred-year-old eggs of the Chinese are there for the asking.

Wheat-meat is no longer a rare delicacy since Sears-Roebuck undertook to preserve it and distribute it *en gros*. But the edible birds' nests of the Javanese cliffs, all the snails that ever delighted the Gallic whiskers of our late allies and associates, and the fried lambs' eyes of the Kurdistan highlands are available for the benefit of the true connoisseur.

III

An article like this is not easy to write. The classical tradition of the American philosophy of life is very decidedly opposed to the idea of paying too much attention to what one eats. Like a too great proficiency at billiards, a too profound familiarity with the doctrines of Brillat-Savarin has ever been considered an indication of a misspent youth. The stern Calvinistic deities of the Founding Fathers insisted that one swallow whatever was put "before one" as if it were part of the doctrine of infant damnation or trans-substantiation. The fact (a contributory fact of economic origin) that the greater part of all our domestic cooks during half a century were recruited from among the race that had never learned to prepare a more elaborate dish than stew and boiled potatoes made matters worse. Irish cooking may have done wonders for Sinn Féin, but that is about all I can say in its favor.

For a short space of time, a ray of hope illumined the culinary sky of our fair land. As long as New Orleans was the capital of a separate empire, the influence of Bechamel and Vatel and of the Duc de Richelieu (the human benefactor who discovered mayonnaise) made itself felt among the dusky chieftains who held sway in the kitchens of the cotton and slave magnates. But Grant, who was a heavy and indiscriminate feeder, conquered Lee, who knew the difference between eating and dining, and during the scramble for riches that followed upon our domestic Night of St. Bartholomew, the noble art of cooking fell upon evil days.

A menu of the Seventies and Eighties reads like a sermon of Cotton Mather. There was a lot of it, but only the strongest constitution could hope to survive these cannibal feasts of our sovereigns by the grace of oil and coal and iron.

Gradually, however, when bigger and better vessels made a trip across the ocean a little less of a torment than it had been during the days of Charles Dickens and Anthony Trollope, our hardy pioneers of good living and clear thinking ventured forth once more into that distant but delectable wilderness of Europe which had nourished (in more ways than one) the founders of the Great Republic. Thirty years ago New York and an increasing number of American cities had a large variety of restaurants as good as any that were to be found in Paris or Vienna or Warsaw.

Came the dusk of the Eighteenth Amendment. The embattled lay-sayers, the disinherited folk of the sterile New England farms, now grown rich among the fertile opulence of the mid-western wheat-farms, taking a premature leaf out of the book of the Bolsheviks, started upon their little career of

spiritual and material confiscation. They deprived (without compensation) the brewer of his malt vats and overnight they destroyed the California vintners to make a Chicago holiday for the gangster and the grafter. As a by-product of their fury, they forced all our first rate French chefs to return to the land of their nativity. "For how," asked the worthy gentlemen, and quite justly, "can one cook without wines, without Madeira, and without sherries of diverse and rare vintages?"

The deserted ruins of our glorious gastronomic edifice were at once occupied by the hygiene-hawkers. The old sauce-pans and the copper cauldrons of the departed Gauls were filled with vitamins (A, B, C) and calories (D, E, F) and the din of the "balanced diets" resounded nightly through the cavernous caravansaries, where solemn-faced and sterilized attendants operated upon us for our appetites, without paying the slightest attention to the aesthetic necessities of our long-suffering souls.

The last straw came when cellophane was invented. The food that was then thrown at us was guaranteed "never to have been touched by human hands." "God help us! No human hands should ever have touched it. It was fit only for those contented and happy cows who were producing ten pints of milk on only four cubes of highly compressed alfalfa.

IV

I am in great hopes these days. Another year of the Depression and we shall be a happy nation. Instead of devoting all our wakeful hours to the main problem of how to make a living, we may be also tempted to try and discover how to live. We are still a long way from the times of Louis the Well-Beloved, who bestowed the blue ribbon of the Royal Order of the Holy Spirit upon the first French female cook who had demonstrated that she knew her onions quite as well as most of her male competitors. But soon we may begin to realize that a single sardine in the haros of an artist has more nutritious virtues than a dozen Porterhouse steaks maltreated by an indifferent pot-walloper in a Pullman kitchen, and that the making of a perfect omelet is quite as difficult and just as deserving of high praise as the construction of a new gearless car. Instead of a peppy lunch of ice-cold half-and-half, followed by a pint of cream-smothered coffee and an ounce of bicarbonate, we once more may devote a couple of hours to the noon-time meal, though it may cost us only fifty cents and may offend against all the laws of the dietary specialists.

We have the experience of twenty centuries at our elbows. We can draw upon the entire universe for our raw materials, for the stuff is almost being given away these days. The refrigerator has done away with waste. The bilious, high-powered executive has gone the way of the Russian grandees and the Dodo. At last we have a clear field.

The subject is so vast that one must either write a ponderous tome or a very short essay. The lack of space demands the short essay. Do not consider these remarks, oh reader, as the last word upon a topic that may mean life and death to you. Rather take it as a little appetizer, a humble *hors d'oeuvre*, to your own resolution to be done with mere feeding, to eschew the ways of the gourmand, the stuffing glutton, and to practice the arts of the gourmet, the amiable connoisseur of the good things of this earth, which it has pleased Almighty Heaven to place at our disposal, in such multifarious and multivariant abundance.

During the Crimean War when, because of a hopelessly mismanaged commissary department, the allies outside of Sevastopol were reduced to a meagre daily ration of a few mildewed beans, the *chef de cuisine* of General Canrobert invented a Pudding à la Malakoff, which kept the French armies in high spirits, while the British groused away on their murderous diet of soggy, boiled beans.

Out of the present mess there may arise a Bread Pudding à la Franklin Delano which shall make coming generations regard the Depression as the beginning of our culinary redemption. Let us pray!

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