

That figgering old chap, by name Xeno,
Was wrong in his premise; 'cause we know
That Achilles' bold stride
Would never subside
To a fractional pace
In so vital a race.
The length of his feet contravene so.

—A. B. RIPLEY

Augusta, Maine



NIZE BABY CATCHES THE TORTOISE

Solution II of the Ramsey Prize Contest

WINTHROP PARKHURST

WANCE upon witt a lung time ago in Griss it wass desited to ran a leetle ressess betwinn a femmous men end a animul wot he wass called by de name of a tortoise. Diss men wass not a proud men so you should spik of it because a tortoise iss not a fest animul. He likes to tek things issy so he should not hexert himself too much in de lags ivin whan he iss ressessing. But besides diss rizzon he wass ulso hinstructed dat no men in de woild could catch opp witt heem ennyways on account of he hed chest wan leetle had start by de men who should be ressessing efter heem.

Itt wass a gret day by which diss femmous ressess was called for — as nize a Grik hefternoon as you could imagine itt, clear end warm witt chust a nize suft brizz to kipp down de humitty.

De judges wass all femmous Grik horators to a men end werry grend. Dey soitinly looked all tugged hout in wot wass called tunics but wot wass rilly high cless pattycuts — only in Grik diss mins tunics.

"Wall," sad de animul wot he was called a tortoise, "wot do you say, lat's go!" So Achillis sad — dot wass de nem by de men who should be going to ressess witt de tortoise, "Enny time you say, my dear fallow, enny time you say."

So wan of de judges sad, "Boom!" in de Grik langwitch not hevving yet a peestol by heem on account of the semm bing a werry muddern invention — end away de ressess ressed for dear life!

Achillis looked werry nervous indid. He wass quit pell so you could nottis it iffen from a grat beeg distance away. End de rizzon wy he should be pell was alraddy dot werry hefternoon a methmetician fallow hed spoke to heem so:

"I fear hall iss lust, Achillis. I heff figgured itt hall out by methmetics — de werry best warieties in hall Griss. Itt iss absolutle impossible dot you should be winning diss ress. Sappose diss tortoise *iss* only a leetle in de had start by you — no metter! It meks no deefrence at hall. Itt is houtreggous for a femmous hero like you should be bitten by chust a cummun tortoise. I advise you not to ress. I besich you should not ress or else you will bring yourself down witt sorrow on de had and disgress on de hull Griss country."

Dees woids med Achillis werry unheppy indid. But he had alraddy giffen his woid of honour he should ress witt de tortoise end so pruff wan leetle spot on de hill wass no hendicap by a rill hero — so uff he went so soon as de judge sad, "Boom!"

End then as his lags went opp end down so fest like he wass in a Marathon ress itself alraddy he noticed how he could not be seeing de tortoise at hall. End de woids of de femmous methmetician reng hout in his ears: "Hall iss lust!" Indid, hall wass soitinly lust. He couldn't ivven be seeing dat tortoise no metter how hard by a strenning of de heyes he looked forward to find itt.

So he desited he should stop. Itt wass no use he should be only running witt a ress dat wass alraddy bitten. So no sooner Achillis came by dees thought then he sad: "Whoa, lags. Itt iss no use you should be moving by your papa Achillis. His sore hill wot is not invulnerable on account of he deed not get deeped dip enough wance upon witt a lung time ago has brought down disgress end sorrow on de hull Griss country, chust like the methmetician sad."

But so soon Achillis wass tinkin diss sed thoughts than he stopped absolutle steel. End so soon he stopped steel he began to notice a gret noise coming toward heem from the femmous judges wot wass hall horators to a men end hed by them werry strong woices indid. End he wondered wot itt wass hall about dot so much scrimming by choy witt gledness reng hout on de Grik air. Only he noticed by de semm time ulso dot by some of de scrim-

ming wass a werry penful sound. End he supposed a thought dot de methmetics wass scrimming by choy witt gledness on account by diss rizzon dot de best warieties of Grik methmetics hed soitinly been proved strickly kosher. End he ulso supposed a thought dot de Grik horators wass mekking a werry penful sound on account by diss rizzon dot he hed brought Griss down by shame on de had to be ignominously bitten end defitted in a feet ress witt de slowest animul in hall Griss.

End then he falt by a peculiar filling in de lag Achillis. So he looked down. End wot he saw in de heyes wass so strenge he could not belivve it wass true. Behind heem wass de tortoise, end he wass scretching him on de lag.

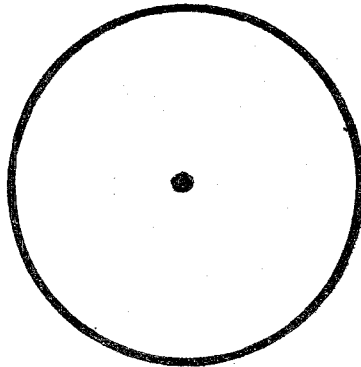
So Achillis sad to de tortoise, he sad so: "Ho, boy, wot you tink! Achillis bit you in de ress efter hall."

"Indid," sad de tortoise werry proud. "But itt iss absolutle impossible on account of I hed a had start by you."

"Then," sad Achillis, "wot is absolutle impossible must be absolutle true, wan by de semm time."

So de tortoise sad: "You rizzon like you wass only a common athlit, which itt may be good rizzoning by you. But hall de same time hy wan de ress, end when you hev de brens wot a eddicated tortoise has got by heem you will hev diss semm opinions too."

A Circular Argument Catching Itself Snapshot by the Author



Weather: hazy

Exposure: 2½ millennia

WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

Forum Definitions

DEMOCRACY, like religion, is an elaborate superstructure of rational thought built upon a foundation of pure assumptions. These were accepted in the first instance as truths so obvious that no one but a fool would have wasted his time trying to prove them. Such assumptions are the starting point of all intelligent behavior, and they are so common that for the most part we do not take the trouble to rationalize about them. The child assumes that his father knows everything and plies him with questions.

But as we grow older — individually and racially — our basic assumptions undergo an inevitable change. This is perhaps the most curious and fundamental fact of our evolution. We start as credulous animals, finding it both easy and pleasant to believe. Doubt being both disagreeable and dangerous, we leave the doubting business to a few adventurous souls whom, as a rule, we crucify as speedily as we discover them. Then, having got rid of the doubters, we find we cannot escape our own credulousness, so we proceed quite consistently to embrace with ardent faith the doubts of those we crucified for doubting. Thus swings the pendulum from the fanaticism of belief to the fanaticism of negation.

At the present moment, Democracy is assailed by doubts in many quarters. We are no longer as sure as we once were that the basic assumptions of Democratic theory are true. As a practical test, some of them are listed below. Try them on your own credulity. If you can swallow them hook, line, and sinker, you are an orthodox Democrat — and probably the only surviving member of the Simon-pure species. The theory of Democracy assumes:

- That king and slave were born free;
- That philosopher and fool were born equal;
- That a natural reservoir of wisdom and virtue resides in the common man;
- That this wisdom and virtue will express itself through the ballot;
- That every man in his right mind wants to vote;
- That there exists an intangible but very real something called “the will of the people”;