
Country Philosopher

Foreign service

BY AMOS ARTHUR HOLMES

My daughter, Ethel, is one of the few absolutely precious things I have in my life. Sometimes, when I am depressed or discouraged, just the thought of her brings sunlight to my heart. And I have always felt that her love for me had the same intensity as my love for her.

This weekend I found out differently.

On Friday I was sitting at my dining room table, drinking a cup of coffee, when Ethel walked in with her children. We kissed and hugged and then Ethel said, "Daddy, would you mind keeping the kids while I do a little shopping?"

First, I want you to understand that I love my grandchildren. Their little faces are so beautiful it just fills my heart when I look at them. But outward appearances can be mighty deceiving. Those kids are monsters. We have had them exorcised many times and it hasn't done one particle of good. Their tiny bodies are still possessed by demons, ghouls, witches and devils.

"Gosh, Ethel, I sure would like to...but I have to plow my garden."

"But Daddy...it's snowing outside."

I noticed that Robert, my seven-year-old grandson, was pitting on the floor.

"Ethel...could you please have Robert stop spitting on the floor?"

"Daddy, you're so damn primitive. Every medical book in the world tells us that we must not stop those human impulses that allow children to grow. Why would you become irritated by a little spit?"

I nodded my head. I realized that raising children has progressed into something unfathomable to me, and I certainly didn't want to stop any human impulses. It's just that I had been taught, somewhat old-fashionedly, that spitting on the floor was wrong.

"Well," said my daughter, "Will you keep the kids or will I never speak to you again?"

I said, "Honey, I am 50 years old and my patience isn't what it used to be. I have arthritis that glues me to my chair and I have these violent headaches that pain me constantly."

"Thank you, Daddy" cried my daughter, "You're the perfect father."

She was out of the house before I could protest. As soon as the door closed Robert threw his shoe through my picture window.

"WHAT IN THE HELL DID YOU DO THAT FOR?" I cried.

He stuck his tongue out at me, thumbed his nose, and ran into the bathroom.

Amy Jo, who is four, said, "I'm sick." And I'll be damned if she wasn't. She

threw up over every square inch of my house. While I frantically grabbed up rags and buckets and suction hoses I noticed that Jill, age three, had climbed up on my bar and was drinking my best brandy. I had just grabbed the bottle from her hand when I heard a blood-curdling scream from the bathroom. I ran to the bathroom door, which was locked, and called, "WHAT'S THE MATTER IN THERE?" When I heard another scream I broke the door down. And there was Robert caught in the commode. I wanted so desperately to flush the commode and get rid of that little monster, but instead, I rescued him and washed him thoroughly.

I was sitting in the corner, crying, when Robert walked through the room. He was dragging Jill along the floor with the aid of my wife's best brassiere and Jill was turning blue because one end of the brassiere was around her neck. At the same time I noticed that Amy Jo was frantically digging holes in the dining room table with a butcher knife. I stood up, and screamed, "EVERYBODY SIT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR!"

When they were all seated (looking like angels) I noticed that Jill was slowly removing her Pamper. I got sick when I saw why she was removing her Pamper. Robert was eating a mouse



that he had caught running across the room and Amy Jo was sticking toothpicks up her nose and in her ears.

My few remaining red hairs had turned to silver and my entire body was shaking so badly it reminded me of St. Vitus Dance. My face was white and pasty and I was becoming nauseated.

And then, due to divine intervention, my daughter walked in. She gathered up the monsters, put their coats on, and herded them out the door. Just as she was leaving she called back, "Thanks a million Daddy...you're a real jewel."

I sat there looking at the broken china, the charred living room, the bits of peanutbutter sandwich clinging to the walls, and I decided right then and there that this would never happen to me again.

I immediately went down and joined the French Foreign Legion. They're sending me to Timbuktu.

And...please...write me if you get the chance.
