

Country Philosopher

It's all very effective

by Amos Arthur Holmes



I married a girl from Minnesota who seems to possess an endless supply of relatives. Each summer this hoard of kith and kin descend upon Southern Maryland, and like the crow flies, they come directly to my house.

And this causes problems.

My wife insists that we give up our bedroom. After all, she says, they would do the same for us. I must leave that lovely bed, with that beautiful, restful mattress, and take my weary body and place it on the old army cot my wife has somehow resurrected from the dead and placed on the porch. The porch is screened but the mesh is so large it allows anything smaller than a buzzard to enter. Invariably it will rain and each tiny drop of water seeks my head as a final resting place. I have to fight spiders to see who gets the one thin blanket, and the spiders (being fantastically huge) often win the battle. And as I lay there freezing, with millions of crawling creatures drinking my blood, my wife

will sigh, "Isn't it lovely out here?"

My wife's relatives make themselves right at home. They use my shaving cream, my tooth brush, and one time I caught Aunt Bessie using my athletic supporter. My television set is constantly tuned to Porky Pig meets Spiderman and I am forced out of my own house if I wish to watch football. And the bathroom... lordy, lordy, lordy... the bathroom. One tiny room in my house that is ALWAYS filled with relatives. I pound on the door, I plead, I cry out in great agony, and am completely ignored. What could they be doing in there? Reading? Playing Bingo? Monopoly? I finally dash over to the woods and expose myself to various varmints.

My wife's relatives have appetites that allow me to think they haven't eaten for the past several months. I sit, stunned, and watch them

demolish a breakfast. They attack with the vigor of mad dogs, snarling and biting, and eating every thing in sight including the salt shaker. I have watched them go through a dozen eggs like a termites goes through a plank of wood. Zip! No more eggs. I have reached for a slice of toast and had my arm torn off at the shoulder. I have watched them devour (without chewing) ten pounds of bacon at one sitting. I might recover from what this does to my mind, but I will never recover from what it does to my bank account.

After just one day of this infestation

I am terribly sad and totally dejected. But I finally found a solution to my problem. A way I could send these scavengers running back to their Minnesota farms.

I take them out to eat steamed crabs.

We, in Southern Maryland, love steamed crabs. But to the midwesterner, who has never seen a steamed crab, the occurrence is a disaster. When the waitress brings the tray of steamed crabs my wife's relatives sit in stunned terror. I reach over and break off the crab's back shell. My wife's relatives are becoming weaker and weaker. They

are horrified at the looks of the crab. They are petrified at the smell of the crab. And then I play my trump. I hand one of the relatives the hard shell that I have torn off, and brightly say, "Try it, you'll love it."

The relative, who I am sure would eat most anything that was free, crunches down on that hard shell. He screams as two of his molars fly across the room. And invariably the relatives will get up from the table, say something to the effect that they must get home to look after the wheat, and drive swiftly from Southern Maryland.

And I end up with one dozen hot steamed crabs.

And one very hot steaming wife.