

Country Philosopher



Love Those Crabs!

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 St. Mary's County, 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 the beautiful, restful mattress, and take my weary body and place it on the old army cot that my wife has somehow resurrected from the dead and placed on the porch. The porch is screened but the mesh is so large that 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 with spiders to see who gets the one thin blanket, and the spiders, being very large, 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?"

The next morning at breakfast I am stunned to find my wife's relatives have appetites that allow me to think they haven't eaten in over six months. They go through a dozen eggs like a termite goes through a plank of wood. Zip! No more eggs. And I become sadder and totally dejected.

But I finally found a solution to my problem. I take them out to eat steamed crabs.

We, here in St. Mary's County, 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. 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 St. Mary's County.

And I end up with one dozen hot steamed crabs.

And one very hot steaming wife.