

Small Worlds Around Us
By Lynn W. Watkins
Register & Tribune Syndicate, 1963

Nature is 'Cruel.' But So Is Man's 'Civilized' Society
The bird on the back lawn, probably very hungry, was a little late in the take-off and was caught and eaten by the prowling house cat.

The lady of the house watched, horrified, as the cat pounced.
"Why," she wanted to know, "should such cruelty be so commonplace?"

The lady is not an exception. Many people stand aghast and bemoan the fact that "nature is often cruel." We extend our sympathy to the baby rabbit swallowed whole by a snake, or are shocked at the bloodthirstiness of a hawk that swoops down from the sky and strikes dead a songbird. We shudder at the thought of how heartless nature seems to be with many of her subjects.

We gaze with horror at the shark which rips huge pieces of flesh from a lesser creature. We draw a sharp line of distinction between beauty and the beast, and become horrified when a flesh-eating animal kills and eats a beautiful bird, or a wolf or a mountain lion attacks a graceful, spotted deer.

Civilization Follows Suit
The law of tooth, talon and fang appears bloodthirsty and needlessly cruel, yet strangely enough, the same formula operates in the most highly civilized communities. Cooking our meat, cutting it with a knife and eating it with a fork (instead of tearing it with our teeth) doesn't contradict or cancel the law of self-preservation. The survival of the fittest applies just as much to a human as it does to the wolf or the hungry mountain lion.

Man, of course, eats mostly vegetable-eating animals such as the cow, deer, rabbit, sheep and wild game. He eats fish, most of which are flesh eaters themselves. Chickens and hogs, two favorite and popular entrees on our tables, can be classed as meat eaters. The hog can do very well on grain and other vegetable matter, of course, but it will eat flesh when given half a chance.

The big fish which eats the little fish in the lakes and oceans grows fat and plump and is relished by most of us. At the same time, we ignore or deny the "eat or be eaten" formula that fattened the fish in the first place.

Credit the Rattlesnake
It seems ironic that some of us, who claim to be so squeamish, enjoy pork chops that probably grew lean, tender and very tasty because the hog was pastured where rattlesnakes were abundant. Such are the true facts, and makes rather poignant the saying, "It's the truth that hurts."

We should not condemn or criticize the hog. It, too, is operating by the same set of rules that govern all of us.

The digestive processes of a chicken can change a steady diet of worms into delicious white meat and succulent drumsticks. The expensive frogs' legs you enjoy on festive occasions were fattened on worms, bugs and a host of other crawling things.

You may refuse to admit it, but when you visit your local supermarket or fish store, shopping for chicken, beef, pork or fish, you are actually practicing the same basic procedure as the wolf or mountain lion when it hunts for fresh meat, or as the big fish when it eats the little fish.

The fact that the meat you buy comes wrapped and with a price tag on it - and that it will be cooked - doesn't alter the fundamental law of "survival of the fittest." The only difference is in the way you look at it. Even the most civilized man, woman and child operates under the same cloudy distinction.

Kelly Leaves for Phoenix Convention

Bernard P. Kelly, Medford attorney, Oregon representative in the National Association of Claimants Compensation attorneys, planned to leave today for the western regional convention of the organization in Phoenix, Ariz. Kelly also is Oregon editor of the NACCA Law Journal. He will attend the five-day convention, then continue to Tucson and Yuma on business before returning to Medford. Mrs. Kelly is accompanying him on the trip.

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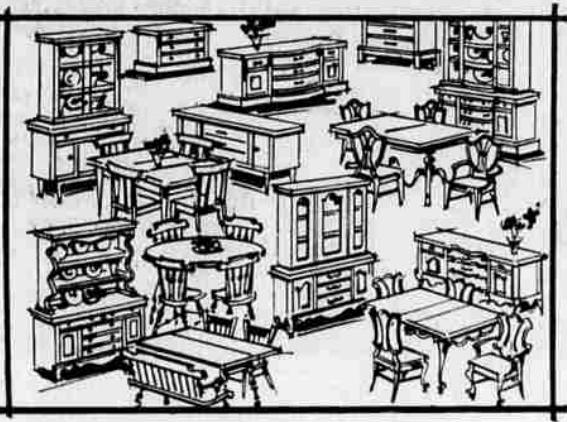


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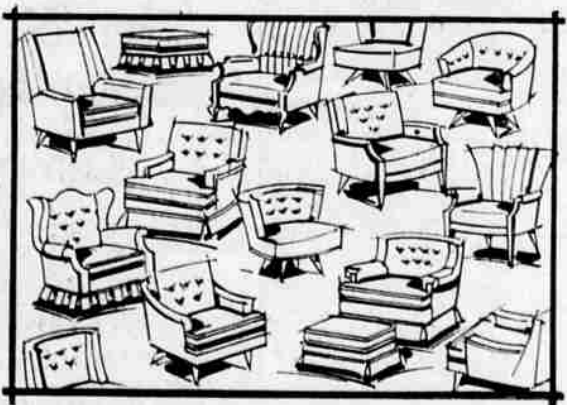
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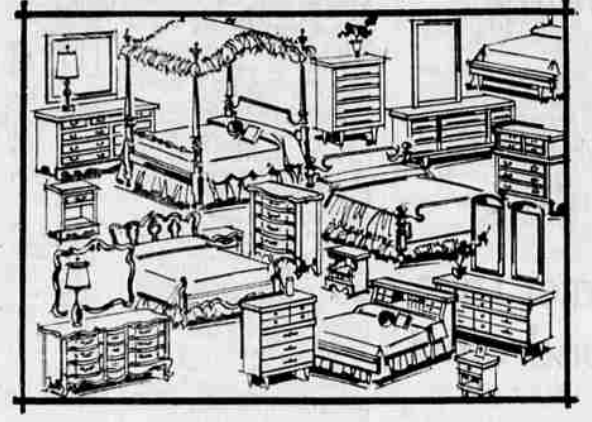


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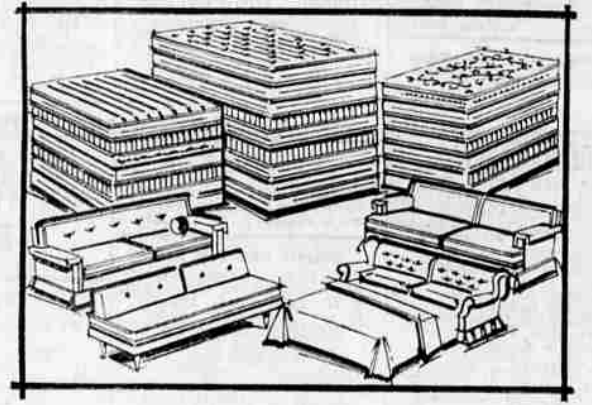
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