

preferences to affect his choice and preparation of the bait. If stink-bait is called for, stink-bait it is. When running a hook through your frog, says Walton, "use him as though you loved him." Humility, unobtrusiveness, and an almost pathological desire to please are characteristic of the successful baiter.

The ethics of baiting has been argued since the beginning of time. Some consider the practice low and degrading, some argue that it is immoral. It does not serve our purpose, in this brief history, to explore such issues. However, we may observe that anything which brings so much pleasure to so many inevitably will be viewed with suspicion.

THOUGHTS ON FLEAS (ADAM HAD 'EM)

Should anyone be so foolish as to doubt the existence of God, he must first examine the tiny world of the flea in all its marvelous complexity. Here, the Creator's Divine Hand has woven the mysterious tapestry so tightly that the Atheist is dumbfounded.

What mortal could have foreseen, in the Universal Plan, the need for a wingless, bloodsucking insect with extraordinary leaping ability? A need that would be shared by every plant and animal on the Earth? The need to be fed upon. So subtle, so pervasive that sometimes we see it as no need at all, but as a hindrance and irritation.

And the variety of our fleas is staggering. In addition to regular fleas, there are flea beetles, flea weevils, and even a fleahopper (kangaroo of the flea world). Some suck blood and some eat plants. And some are plants.

We talk of fleas. When we have a message, we say we want "to put a flea" in someone's ear. We mean to say something to stick in a person's mind. We mean that our words will be like fleas that leap through the air, burrow in the ears, and lay their thought-larvae in the moist brain.

And yet, for all its nuisance, this flea, this bloodsucking parasite, is a vital part of the Universal Plan. With the Almighty's blessing, it eats and sleeps and leaves its children across the face of the Earth. It knows hard times after the cat has been to the vet to be dipped. Or the family has moved away and taken the dog. It has waited patiently alone in the empty house, deep in the carpet with growing desperation until, at last, the warm leg of a realtor passes overhead.

Sometimes, though, there are too many fleas. And then we

must quickly take control. We must spray our houses and halls, and set off bombs in the places where they gather. We must dust their offspring to death and buy special soap to, sooner or later, wash them out of our hair.

DICK AND JANE TAKE A HOTEL HOLIDAY

"I must go to the City tomorrow," said Father, "and see a man about some business."

"Oh, please take us along too!" cried Dick and Jane.

"All right," said Father. "We shall ride the Train to the City and then we will stay at a Hotel."

"What is a Hotel?" asked Jane.

Father told her it was a big building with many, many rooms where all sorts of different people slept while they were visiting the City.

"Mother, have you ever been to a Hotel?" asked Dick.

"Yes," said Mother. "Father and I stayed in a Hotel for a few days after we were married. It was our honeymoon, and I don't believe I've had a more enlightening experience since then."

"Who will take care of Spot and Puff?" asked Jane.

"Let them fend for themselves," said Father, suddenly angry. "We are going to the City to stay in a Hotel. In my day, we didn't have pets. We didn't have food to waste. Animals had to fend for themselves."

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Dick is worried. We can see worry lines on his smooth little brow. He does not understand why, ever since they left for the City, Father has been secretly passing money to strange men. First was the Negro with the red cap at the Train Station. Then, when they arrived in the City, Father passed money to another red-capped Negro. The taxi driver got money too. When they stopped at the Hotel and Father thought no one was looking, he gave the taxi driver a handful of coins just as he had the other men.

Who were these men that Father should give them money when Dick himself never had a crying dime? None of the men even said, "Thank you." They only stared at the money as if they too did not understand why Father had given it to them.