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Editorials



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Pro Choice Life

by Marien Helz

I have long felt that if one asked someone what their view on the abortion issue was, and they could answer in less than five minutes, they hadn't thought deeply enough about the subject to be taken seriously. This seems more true now than ever.

I suppose that my own views on abortion were solidified when I was a graduate student and learned that a block or so away from where I lived, a student was found dead who had tried to abort herself with a coat hanger. It's impossible to begin to imagine the desperation that she must have felt to make her do something like that. In order to glimpse what this was like, you have to recall the pre '73 climate when abortion was illegal. A legitimate pregnancy was regarded as something of a scandalous illness, and one outside the bounds of matrimony was a social abhorrence that branded mother and child for life. Whenever a child was born less than nine, or even ten, months after the wedding, it prompted finger counting and caustic remarks.

It has been, ironically, the legalization of abortion which has enabled women to choose not to have one. Rather than being regarded as social outcasts [something that severely limited their employment potential and therefore their ability to support their children], it is seen as choosing a difficult option based on the value of love. Prior to the legalization of abortion, illegitimate fathers were able to skip out relatively unscathed and were actually regarded as somewhat foolish if they did the right thing and took responsibility for their offspring. In various methods of looking at the issue, it has been fairly well demonstrated that the legalization of abortion reduces the number of abortions.

The "pro choice" groups have done a much better job of avoiding hysterical language and silly slogans which tend to ruin the position taken by "pro life" groups who adopt bumper stickers such as, "Beethoven's mother chose life." Well, so did Hitler's; so did Charles Manson's.

One "pro life" activist talked about how she was convinced to participate in the demonstrations because she had a cousin who had abortion after abortion with the

regularity that physicians advise having mammograms. Rather than dealing with the immorality in her own family, she decided that she wanted abortions to be illegal for everyone whether they had a drastic reason for one or not.

When one reads about the scientific experiments which have pushed mice embryos together, implanted them, and obtained one mouse with three different genetic structures, one has to conclude that the point at which an embryo is formed is not the same as the point at which life has begun. This is especially apparent in the incident in which it was discovered that a woman in England was not the genetic mother of her children although her parents were the genetic grandparents. Two different embryos were joined in utero with the reproductive organs being genetically different from the rest of the individual. This one woman, therefore, has come from two genetically distinct embryos. A zygote is not a human being.

On the other hand, the first problem with the "pro choice" side begins with its name. *What's in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name....* Everything is in a name as Juliet learned to her sorrow. The idea that a woman has the right to choose sounds like one is talking about whether to buy red or white onions. It really ought to be a decision rather than simply a choice. It probably should be a decision made with great agony. If that were the case, the women who were trying to sue their physicians for abortions they had because they hadn't been given enough information would be aware of their own foolishness. It's unfortunate that there is no feasible method to prevent someone like that from ever conceiving again. All who claim that they were not given enough information in this age ought to be abandoned on an island with only members of their own sex.

Another problem, is the pro choice statement that an abortion is something that should be between a woman and her doctor. "Her doctor" is merely a technician who is paid to perform a clinical service. The fact that "her doctor" makes a living performing clinical services means that he or she has no moral authority whatsoever and should never be mistaken to have any. It is "her doctor's" duty to provide every medical life enhancement possible under the law. A far more preferable statement would be that an abortion is something that should be between a woman and the dark night of her soul. Whether the decision is the right one or the wrong one, whether she decides to have or have not, it is something that she has to live with and die with.

There are more significant problems with the pro choice stance however. One is with repeat clients, those getting abortion after abortion as though it is a form of birth control. The more serious issue is that of abortions being performed up to the sixth month. I remember when abortion was first declared legal, I was astounded that it was made so up to the sixth month. A relative of mine finishing medical school told me about these aborted babies who were born gasping for breath. It was the nurses who had to rush them up to infant intensive care where they died. The physicians never saw them.

Apparently, the usual technique is to hold them within the uterus so that they

suffocate before they are removed, and then they are placed in refrigerators so that their tissues can be used for a growing industry that utilizes fetal parts.

It really isn't a stretch to envision "fetal farms" where financially stressed women are offered money to be impregnated and aborted for the use of fetal tissues. I read the statement by one woman who wanted an abortion after the third month because if she had the baby, the life style for her pre-teen son would go down. Since she gave him \$75 a week allowance, she borrowed money from him for the abortion. That ought to bother all kinds of people for all kinds of reasons.

Now the waters are getting yet murkier with the issue of stem cell research. Both my mother and her brother died as a result of Parkinson's disease, so I have a personal stake in this research as I am at higher than average risk of developing the disease. Yet when one has a personal stake in something, one has to be particularly careful. If the organs of the Nazi victims had been used to save other people's lives, some would consider the event less horrendous; others would consider it more so. Hopefully, most would consider it more abhorrent. Justifying murder and gaining from it are crimes against humanity in themselves, making the actual murder colossally grotesque.

It is mystifying, therefore, when people like Orrin Hatch, who identifies himself on the side of pro life, finds that stem cell research is all right. I'm sure that personally, Senator Hatch is a fine person and that if I knew him, I would like and possibly even admire him. He is, however, backing himself into the swamp of irrationality, and that is the same swamp that burned thousands of human beings as witches and condemned Copernicus and Galileo. Senator Hatch has decided that only embryos which are conceived inside a woman's body are those which should be considered to be at the point at which life begins and therefore protected by law as human. If there can be that distinction made between embryos conceived in and out of the human body, it logically must follow that the same distinction can be made between human beings who were conceived in or out of the human body. Further, it logically follows that the thousands of children whose parents needed a fertility assist and were conceived in a laboratory are as distinct from naturally conceived children as the two sets of embryos and are not protected by all the laws that protect naturally conceived human beings. Such children, then, could be murdered with impunity. There is no way to avoid this logical conclusion if an ontological distinction is drawn between embryos based upon the method of conception. One can never violate the rationality of the cosmos without incurring cosmic penalties.

The emphasis on "inside a woman's body" causes one to fear that the impetus for some men who proclaim the right to life position arises not from the noble desire to protect life as much as from the obsessive need to control women by controlling their bodies. Such was surely the case with the right to life men who tried to obtain legal custody of a comatose woman they had never met in order to prevent a medically advised abortion.

We need to come far closer to an understanding of when life begins before we legalize use of embryonic tissue. Although life does not begin at conception since two embryos can fuse to create one person, life clearly begins before the sixth month.

If a fetus is not a baby until it's born, there is nothing to prevent aborting fetuses just before birth and utilizing any part of them that can be used for medicine, profit, or food.

Arguably, the best article (and most balanced) on the subject is Gregg Easterbrook's *Abortion and Brain Waves: What Neither Side Wants You to Know* published in *The New Republic* January 31, 2000. Easterbrook cites significant facts such as that 1) the Catholic church defined life as beginning at 40 days after conception until 1869, 2) *Roe* was much more sensible about the abortion issue than later legislation which has altered it, 3) about half of all natural conceptions [sperm/ova joinings] fail to implant and die naturally, 4) viability is an absurd criterion for abortion since it can never be reliably established especially by the provider of the abortion, 5) there are more late term abortions in this country than most of us realize, and 6) both camps on either side of the issue consider sensible compromise a threat to their right to dominate legislation.

There are some difficulties with Easterbrook's position in that there is the typical confusion between trimesters and months and weeks. Trimesters are based on months. Months are often considered to be four weeks, but are not: they are four and approximately a half weeks which means that twenty-three and twenty-four weeks, the point at which some premature infants have survived, is firmly within the second, not the third, trimester. A normal pregnancy is approximately *ten* four-week months. This doesn't effectively weaken Easterbrook's position since he urges some control in the second trimester, but abortion in the final trimester only to save the mother's life.

Until the pro choice groups acknowledge that abortion is something that should be taken very, very seriously and is, if not a tragedy, at least a sorrow the need for which should be strenuously avoided, they render the entire movement callow if not calloused.

Until the pro life groups loudly and clearly denounce and distance themselves from such things as the Dr. Barnett Slepian murder, they not only are tainted by it, but the contradictions render the entire movement foolish.

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Columns

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FIELDS OF DREAMS

by Susan Johnson

Flying carpets were just one of the literary wonders that French scholar Antoine Galland discovered when he began his translation of *The One Thousand and One Nights* from Arabic into French in the early 1700's. Working on the translation may have given M. Galland his first notion that carpets were an important part of the Arabic culture, but their exquisite artwork had fascinated ancient rulers in the centuries before Christ, prompting kings and pharaohs to take their treasured weavings with them to the tomb.

Today, antique Oriental carpets continue their seduction of kings, presidents, and commoners alike. They are equally at home in palaces, the White House, urban and suburban living rooms, and museums worldwide, including a fine collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

As in all works of art, part of the allure of the rugs is the spirit of the artist embodied in the work. "Carpet weavers spend months of their lives, if not years, hand-knotting the design for one rug," said Isabell Posner, the co-owner of Knot by Knot in Buffalo, New York. "The planning and spatial thinking involved in weaving a rug is astonishing since the artist can't refer back to the completed portion of the rug which is hidden on a roller behind the loom."

The character of each rug is no less influenced by its materials. Informed by the foundation of its vertical warp and horizontal weft, the rug depends on fine silks or lanolin-rich wool for thickness and the elements of its dyes for subtle hues or vibrant colors. Although the investment of time and materials is considerable, it is also well spent. Once the rug is cut loose from its loom, it will last its new owner a lifetime and the lifetime of the generation to come.

As in any genre of art, there is much to learn and Oriental rugs can seem particularly daunting. "Orientals are among the hardest things to know," said Monte Hoffman, a collector who has studied the rugs for over 30 years. A section cellist with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra for as many years, Mr. Hoffman has

performed nationally and internationally, using some of the time when he's travelling to look for unusual rugs. "I believe in educating myself about the things I collect - there's more pleasure in owning something when you know what you're buying. Even now, I think there's more for me to learn."

For the first-time buyer, it's useful to know that Oriental rugs come from many countries including Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, China, Tibet, Nepal, Afghanistan, India, and the areas north of Iran and Pakistan known as "Turkestan". Rugs are known by names that refer to their place of origin or the marketplace where they're sold.

Place of origin frequently determines the quality of wool used in a rug as well as the availability of dyes. Sheep from cold mountainous regions tend to have longer more lustrous wool that is highly absorbent, facilitating the absorption of dyes. And it's the dye that brings the rugs to life, giving them color and allowing them to reflect light.

There are two types of dyes used by the weavers, synthetic and natural. Natural dyes use various plant and insect materials and are necessarily inexact, relying as they do on the memory and skill of their brewer, the mineral content of the water, and the season of the year. Subtle differences in natural dye lots create a desirable visual effect called abrash.

Many natural dye recipes were lost for a time, forgotten in the face of easily obtained and stable synthetic dyes. In recent years, laboratories have analyzed the old natural dyes, allowing them to be re-created and recorded, thereby restoring their use by village weavers. However, synthetic dyes continue to be used, along with chemical washes, allowing for a wider spectrum of colors and artificially creating the mellowed patina of abrash.

Oriental rugs are described by their various sections. Most rugs have a large central area called the field. The field is surrounded by a large wide border called the main border which, in turn, is flanked on either side by two narrow guard borders.

Buyers will also hear references to the number and type of knots per square inch. While it's interesting to know that information, and it may at times help to identify the origin of a carpet; the number of knots is neither the sole nor an important determinant of the value of a carpet. The price of a rug has everything to do with its condition and quality, the materials used and, for an antique rug, its rarity and desirability.

The heart of the rug is in its design and descriptions of these designs approximate poetry. In a recent Sotheby's catalog, a rug was described as having a "crimson medallion framed by ivory roses on a medium blue floral vinery field within a crimson cartouche and palmette border".

There is an entire vocabulary devoted to the designs including: lambalis which

resemble the hanging lamps in village mosques, and akbas, triangular shapes that resemble a bride's headdress, olus which mean with arrows, lotus blossoms, carnations, birds, elks, and vases among hundreds of others.

"Rugs tell their own stories through design and composition," explained Jeff Markarian, of Charles Markarian and Sons, a third generation rug dealer. "Small, coarsely woven rugs with few knots per square inch tend to be the product of nomadic tribes who wouldn't find packing up and carrying a large room-sized rug particularly convenient. Their designs lean toward the bold and primitive.

"Carpet weavers from the cities were better educated," said Mr. Markarian. "They lived in relatively civilized circumstances, sipping tea and conversing with one another. They produced rugs that were larger, more intricately woven and finely patterned than those of the nomads. Silk rugs of this variety can have more than 1,000 knots per square inch."

Part of the confusion about rugs is that they were rarely signed or dated, making positive identification a challenge. In earlier centuries, when there was less traffic among the rug-weaving regions, it was easier to look at a rug and tell its origin by the pattern. However, since then, cultures have intermingled, borders have shifted, and artists have integrated patterns they've seen elsewhere into their own work, making it more difficult to say for sure where a rug is from.

So, if acknowledged experts and dealers, for whom exotic rug names like Sarouk, Turkoman, Karadja, Kirman and Qum are as familiar as Smith, -- if they can't always tell where a rug is from or even agree on how to spell it, what hope is there for a novice trying to choose a rug?

"Unless you plan to collect rugs as an investment, it doesn't matter where a rug is from," said Mr. Markarian. "It only matters whether or not it's beautiful in your eyes. Go and look at as many rugs as you can. There's no substitute for seeing and touching the rugs. After awhile, the styles and colors that you prefer will become clear." Mr. Hoffman agreed, "First and foremost, the rug must appeal to you." But he added, "the more you know, the more your knowledge will influence what you find beautiful."

Knowing the methods and eras of rug production that are available is also helpful. Viewed from this perspective, there are five basic categories when considering an Oriental - with each succeeding option becoming more complicated.

The first two options are machine-made rugs, which come in two categories - new, and old. Machine-made rugs made their debut in response to the overwhelming demand by affluent European and American customers for Oriental carpets. European capitalists set up weaving centers in rug-producing areas and gradually moved to mechanized forms of production. Today, machine-made rugs are produced on computer-programmed looms and satisfy the portion of the market

that wants a durable uniform carpet that comes in every size imaginable and that can be ordered to match any of countless designs including classic Asian art, Arts and Crafts, and Aubusson.

"Programmed rugs are convenient for certain people because they can be coordinated by patterns and colors. They take away the mystery and fear that some people have regarding where and how a rug was made," said Carolyn Carroll, of Carroll Rugs. "For instance, the tea-washed American-made Karastans wear great and are reasonably priced. They're a perfect choice for someone with children and pets or someone who needs rugs for five or six rooms."

"There are machine-made rugs available from Belgium at a somewhat lower price than the Karastans but they're nowhere near as good," said Dick Tiftickjian, of David Tiftickjian and Sons, another third generation rug dealer. "They aren't as thick and they won't wear well because they use poor quality wool. A Karastan will last fifty years or more and will always have a re-sale value."

Traditionally, all rugs were hand-knotted and this method comprises the last three categories - new, used and antique.

Fewer people are hand-knotting new rugs than in the past. Pressured by the rising costs of living and the proliferation of mechanized carpets after WWII, entire villages stopped making carpets, having lost their young workforce to factories and cities.

In certain regions of Turkey, there is now a resurgence in the craft, in large part due to a cooperative effort among Turkish government, Turkish artisans, and an American facilitator, George Jevremovic, who founded a company named Woven Legends.

"Woven Legends is the largest distributor of new Turkish rugs in the United States and the largest private employer in Turkey," explained Mrs. Posner. "They've restored the use of both natural dyes and fine-quality hand-combed and hand-spun wool to the rug-making industry throughout Turkey. In addition, they've established an environment for the weavers that guarantees a decent wage, prohibits the use of child labor, and encourages creativity and freedom of expression."

"The rugs from Woven Legends, called Azeris, come in a variety of patterns and sizes including classic Oriental designs, abstract geometrics, and individual folk-art designs created by the weavers," said Mrs. Posner. "The folk-art rugs are whimsical in nature, reflecting the personality of the individual weaver and populated by swans, flowers, animals, and anything else that might pass the weaver's field of vision, whether real or imagined."

Hand-knotted rugs that are used but not yet antique rugs offer certain

opportunities for the adventurous. "It's more and more rare to find a great old rug," said Mr. Hoffman. "On the other hand, it's possible to find some 60 year old rugs that are bargains. Twenty years from now, you could have a nice investment. Of course, certain collectors will buy rugs from only one particular period. I can find beauty in any era - just like music. I'd never restrict myself to one composer, why would I want only one type of rug?"

Maria Scrivani agrees that old and new rugs can happily reside in the same home. "We bought our first rug spontaneously at an antique show in Clarence. It's a big beautiful old Oriental that fits perfectly in one of the bedrooms," said Mrs. Scrivani. "The fact that it's a little threadbare in places makes it all the more interesting to me."

Her next rug took more time. "We live in half of one of Buffalo's converted mansions, so the rooms are of substantial size. The living room called for something really fabulous. We began by looking at a lot of rugs and quite a few photographs. Then we had several rugs brought out to the house by a couple of different dealers so that we could see how they looked in the light at different times of the day. The whole process took some time but we finally found a new Azeri with an abstract, nearly Native American, pattern. It's like having a painting on our floor. I can't tell you how many people walk into the living room and say, 'Wow. I love that rug.'

Rugs that are over 100 years old comprise the fifth and most interesting category. "Any antique Oriental rug that is of good condition and good quality is very desirable," said Mr. Hoffman. "Rugs of this era can sell for upwards of \$50,000 in Buffalo and well over \$100,000 in New York City," said Mr. Tiftickjian.

Eighty percent of the rugs carried by Tiftickjian's and Markarian's are new. The other twenty percent are used and approximately half of those are old enough to be classified as antique with some of the rugs valuable enough to warrant their storage in a vault. "We have a priceless three by five Kashan in the vault," said Mr. Markarian. "My grandfather bought it long before the Iranian embargo, when the country was still called Persia."

At the turn of the century, Buffalo's mansions were filled with rugs of this era. Sadly, many of those rugs have left the area, sold years ago by family members unaware of their potential value. The rugs also fall prey to dry rot, moths, and the wear and tear of foot traffic. "For every old rug you find, there are 100 rugs that are gone forever," said Mr. Hoffman.

With serious collectors and museums in every major city of the world now vying for an ever-shrinking number of good quality antique rugs, the prices are out of range for many buyers. In addition, "the antique rugs go in and out of fashion, like anything else. Right now, coarsely woven rugs are more in favor and the finer rugs are less popular," said Mr. Markarian. "You should buy an antique rug for the same

reason you buy any rug," said Mr. Tiftickjian. "Because you like it. Don't worry about its investment potential. It's never going to appreciate the way something like IBM stock will."

Before spending a substantial sum on an antique rug, it's important either to have a strong knowledge of this era or to rely on a reputable dealer for guidance. Sotheby's offers courses on the subject from time to time and most dealers are generous about loaning books from their extensive collections.

Centuries have passed since the oldest of the surviving rugs were constructed, some of them dating to the time of M. Galland's translation. In that space of time, the myth of airborne rugs unraveled, but Oriental carpets never lost their ability to transport their beholders, if only vicariously, to another world. A world where design, defined by silk and wool, approaches a form of religion practiced by people for whom art has always been inseparable from function.

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Arts



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The earlier chapters of Father Heart are available in the April, May, June, and July 2001 issues in the Archives page .

FATHER HEART

by Banwell Goddard

Chapter Five

While our social and intellectual lives fell prey to the occasional ignorance of our neighbors, summer heat was the more constant problem. In winter I cut and hauled blocks of ice from our lake and packed them deep in a sawdust-lined pit under the barn. Annie made iced tea and iced coffee for us during the day and washcloths soaked in ice water cooled our bodies in the evening. Still, there were nights we couldn't sleep.

"Are you awake, sweetheart," I asked one night when we were both lying still on top of the bed, trying to get through the heat.

"I'm wide awake. I can't sleep, it's so hot. I miss the sea breezes," said Annie.

"Would you like to go for a swim?"

"Now? In the dark?"

"In the moonlight," I said.

"I haven't had a swim since we moved here. I'd have to dig out my swimming dress," she answered.

"No, you don't," I said.

"Oh," she said with a smile, "that kind of swimming."

We got up and tiptoed through the house, as though we were committing a guilty deed, collecting candles, pillows and a quilt.

A brilliant white moon threw shadows of us as we walked hand in hand down the path to the lake. Annie got into the canoe and I pushed it away from the shore,

paddling it out to the raft. We tossed our things onto the raft and then I helped Annie climb up. She looked like an apparition standing above me in her long white nightgown. I climbed onto the raft myself and tied the ropes of the canoe while Annie arranged the quilt and pillows and lit the three fat beeswax candles that I'd brought along.

"For an engineer, you're romantic." Annie said looking up at me from the quilt.

"I'm not romantic," I protested. "I'm practical. I want to be able to see my beautiful wife clearly."

"Did you build this raft?" she asked, changing the subject.

"Of course," I answered. "How do you like it?"

"It seems quite seaworthy," she said. "I feel like Cleopatra with my own miniature barge."

"Well, it's not the Nile but at least there aren't any snakes."

"Asps. They were called asps," said Annie.

"How well-read you are, Nurse. I'm going for a swim. Would you care to join me?"

"Since there are no asps, I would be pleased to swim with you. Last one in...." Annie stripped off her nightgown and dove in.

The center of the lake was dark and cool, fed by a spring. My skin was so hot, I thought it would sizzle when I broke the plane of the water. We swam around and around the raft, playing tag like children. When Annie finally tired of our game, she said, "Cleopatra wishes to return to her barge," and pulled herself up the short ladder.

We sat on the raft, letting the air dry us. "What a beautiful night." Annie said.

"There are so many stars over Kansas."

"These are the same stars that are over Boston."

"Why does it seem like I can see them so much better here than at home?"

"In Kansas, the stars don't have to compete with the gas lights of Boston."

"Philip, sometimes it's nice not to be so clinical."

"Well then. I think the reason is because they are a reflection of the stars in your beautiful eyes," I said.

"That's better."

"Here, let me check your eyes, Mrs. Clark. Yes, I see stars."

"What else do you see?"

"Beautiful lips, lovely nose."

"What else?"

"Nice shoulders and lovely um..."

"Those are breasts Philip. Lovely breasts."

"Sometimes it's nice not to be so clinical."

I blew out the candles and we stretched out on our backs on the quilt, counting the stars embedded in the black velvet sky. Annie rolled towards me and kissed me on the lips. I put my arms around her. The stars were close, so close we felt as if we were among them. When the first falling star raced across the sky, I thought I might have imagined it but Annie said, "Did you see that?" Then, a dozen shooting stars streaked across the night.

"It's Phyllis," Annie whispered, her eyes shining. "She's showing off for us."

I kissed my wife, feeling a surge of love for her. How lucky I was to be married to someone who saw the world in such sweet terms.

Our son, Roy, was conceived that night, with the light of a million stars and the spirit of our dear little girl watching over us, blessing us with her presence. The raft rocked us to sleep, while the songs of a hundred crickets sang in the soft night air.

In addition to beauty, nature gave Annie a fine form so that she was fitted to nurse her babies when they came. The maternal instinct was all powerful within her - one of the excellencies that fitted her so well to be my wife.

I was with Annie when Roy was born. We had a Swedish midwife attending her. I would have preferred a doctor but there were none that could come all the way out to our little farm.

In her great unselfishness, Annie showed no signs of discomfort during this labor. She smiled at me in the intervals between expulsive pangs and there was scarcely a groan or cry of despair. It was over so quickly, I barely felt ready for our lives to change in such an irreversible way. In what seemed like a moment, the midwife helped Annie deliver the baby, then cleaned him and handed him to me.

"Here, Mr. Clark. Why don't you sit right here and hold your son while I tend to your wife?" she said, handing me the baby.

I didn't want to sit. I wanted to take him outside in the light where I could see him. To see if he looked like me. To see if he was perfect. To see if I could foresee his life and guarantee his happiness. I was determined to be a good father and I wanted to begin that moment. To give evidence to this precious child that he would have the care and attention of a father whose love wouldn't falter.

My heart felt as though it would burst with love for Annie when he was born. A son. I called him Son, loving the sound and reality of the word. How can I describe to

you what that meant to me? I hadn't fallen in love with Annie. I grew into love with her. Every kiss, every tender touch, every smile added to that love. But with the birth of our son, I felt my love for her thunder in my heart. We had had happy moments, many of them, in our short marriage, but this moment was one of unbridled joy. I felt as if my life finally mattered.

One year later, Grace was born, on January 8, 1889. This time I was able to find a doctor who would attend Annie. He had come early the preceding evening and I expected delivery in a short time as my wife was in great pain. Midnight came and with it increasing agony. It wrung my soul to hear Annie cry "I shall die, I know I shall die." I shared Annie's fears and was confronted with the terrible conviction that I would lose both wife and child. So unconcerned was the doctor by Annie's cries that he slept on and off in an easy chair in a corner of the bedroom.

My anger was barely containable. How could someone who called himself a doctor sleep in the presence of a mother in such distress? He seemed to me to be unconcern personified - worse - he was indifferent! Just as the day began to dawn, he sent me to his house five miles away to get his instruments. I shall never forget the ride. Pippin galloped as I never had seen her gallop before. I was sure that Annie would die and Pippin seemed to sense my desperation.

As we raced back to my house in the grim gray half-dawn of morning, a light rain beat on my face, increasing my misery. When I entered the house, it seemed strangely silent. My ears strained for a clue to Annie's condition but I could hear nothing. I took the stairs two at a time, rushing into our bedroom. At once, I could see that Annie was asleep with our baby daughter, Grace, at her side.

I turned to look for Dr. March, who got up from the chair in the corner where he had been waiting for me.

"Sorry to send you out unnecessarily Mr. Clark. Your daughter was born shortly after you left. It was the great size of the baby that caused Annie so much trouble. I've never helped to deliver a bigger child. If you want to spend a few minutes with your wife, I'll wait downstairs."

When he left the room, I walked over to the bed and stroked Annie's forehead. Then I slowly lifted the corner of the soft receiving blanket from Grace's face. She looked perfect. I whispered to Annie that we wouldn't have another child if it meant so much pain for her. But she and the baby were sound asleep, unaware of my presence, exhausted from their mutual efforts. I strode out of the bedroom and downstairs to confront the doctor.

"Before you begin, Mr. Clark, let me explain," Dr. March said as I entered the kitchen. "I think you misunderstand my actions."

"Dr. March, there can be no explanation for the pain and suffering you allowed Annie to endure. To attend a birth without proper instruments is actionable," I said angrily.

"It is my custom not to carry my instruments with me. If I did, the single cry of a mother's distress would induce me to use them." Dr. March said. "I am no more heartless than you are but extracting forceps should not be used unless the baby or the mother is going to die otherwise. I do not carry them for that reason. And, as you see, you now have a beautiful baby daughter, unmarked and perfect."

He picked up his coat and the bag I had brought him from home.

"Pain is temporary. Brain damage is permanent."

"I won't forget my wife's pain." I said, showing him out the door. "Ever."

The trauma of Grace's birth caused so much internal injury that it took weeks for Annie to heal. It was apparent to me immediately that she would need a lot of help with the baby and our one year old son, Roy. Fortunately, Grace had arrived in late winter when the farm was idle, waiting for spring. Though Annie was familiar with my ability to cook duck and turkey, I surprised her with my baking skills, learned long ago from the cooks on the sailing vessels. Cakes, bread and pies were well within my abilities.

We thought we were well-prepared for Grace's arrival, having made dozens of additional diapers on my sewing machine, a foot-operated device that I'd bought from a neighbor during my previous stay in Kansas. But, we really needed a washerwoman. There was no one in Parsons, the closest town, who took in this kind of work and so the objectionable task of dealing with diapers fell to me. Gagging from the odor of the diaper pail, I was ready to pay a ransom to anyone if they would only relieve me of this foul labor. It took only a few days until it occurred to me that there was something completely wrong about the process.

I went upstairs to see Annie and the visiting nurse who was caring temporarily for Annie and the babies.

"Is my wife awake?" I asked.

"Yes, I just looked in on her," the nurse replied.

I turned and went into our bedroom.

"Philip," Annie said, extending her hand out to me.

"How are you feeling?" I asked.

"Better. Did you look in on Grace?" she asked.

"Yes, just now. She looks fine and Roy is napping," I said.

I held her hand for a minute not wanting it to be obvious that I'd come upstairs for another reason. But, time was passing and I was determined to come up with a solution before another day went by.

"Annie, at what age, will the children no longer require diapers?" I asked.

"Each child is different, Philip," said Annie. "There's no set schedule but I've heard that boys take a little longer than girls. So, Roy is just over one year now. He should be out of diapers by the time he's four and Grace should be trained by the time she's three. Why?"

"Oh, just wondering," I said. "Can I get you anything?"

"No, darling. I'm just happy to see you," she said.

"Well, back to my chores then. I'll see you later," I said giving her hand a squeeze.

I went back downstairs, sitting at the table with a pen and paper. My first thought was to make many more diapers, burying the used ones in a large pit far from the house. I calculated the number of months that Roy and Grace would continue to need diapers and multiplied it by the number of changings per day. My calculation came to nearly 6,675 diapers. It was immediately apparent that throwing diapers away was not efficient. I was going to need a pit the size of a quarry and my own cotton gin for the many bolts of fabric that I'd need.

My next thought was that we should move back to Boston immediately so that we would have access to a labor pool who would be happy to come and work for us. But, Annie's condition prevented us from going anywhere for several months. I didn't like that idea anyway since I wasn't about to be driven from my home by something as simple or as conquerable as dirty diapers.

It was clear that I was going to have to think of a way to launder the diapers outside the house in some mechanized fashion that would involve the automatic introduction of clean water, some form of soap and the automatic elimination of the dirty water. I jotted down on paper the problems and the solutions: Clearly, it would involve the well as a source of the clean water and a deep trench filled with gravel for the soiled water plus some sort of agitation device that would actually clean the diapers.

At the machine shops I'd worked at back in Boston, I'd been able to concoct labor-saving devices. It was simply a matter of studying the problem, taking it apart in steps and then thinking freely about how it could be improved.

By the following day, I'd devised a large round outdoor trough that Jacques could circle while being hitched to a pole that spun a series of baffles through the water. I dumped the diapers in the water, added soap and led Jacques around and around for ten minutes. Then, I released the soiled water into a makeshift gutter that would serve until I could dig the trench, and re-filled the trough with clean water. Jacques and I went for another circular walk and then we repeated the rinse once again. The result was quite acceptable. I strung extra clotheslines in the yard and the freshly laundered diapers flapped themselves dry in the Kansas wind.

In this way, we gradually became more and more self-sufficient, spending almost nothing on living expenses. When we did want something we couldn't or didn't grow or make, we swapped things. Sometimes it was excess game that I had hunted,

duck and rabbit. Other times, neighbors needed a well blasted for them or a dam designed for their ponds. They paid me in bushels of corn or bolts of cloth. Our only regular expenditures were for coffee, books and newspapers.

It suddenly seemed as if all of my earlier life, that I'd once thought a complete waste, was now contributing to our contented existence. My lack of a family when I was young caused me to enjoy my own family in a way that others who take a loving home for granted, could not. My education was finally put to work as I found ways to make our farm and home chores easier. Even the years I spent hunting and fishing paid off as I was able to supply my family with nearly any edible delicacy they could request.

Tangible waves of contentment swept over me in the evenings, sitting on the porch with Annie and the children, watching the sky repaint itself in pastel hues. My worries that I wouldn't find someone with whom to spend my life seemed part of someone else's past.

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