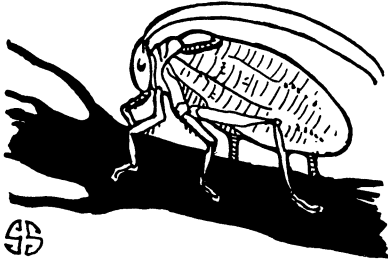

 NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE

*Katy Did*

Or did she? The most ancient argument in the world is being carried on in a million trees by ten million green-robed barristers, who have either had the case in court for so long that they have forgotten what it is about, or else regard Katy's alleged conduct as being of unmentionable enormity. At any rate, the prosecution shouts stridently all night long that Katy did, Katy did, she did, she did; while the defense maintains as stoutly and as repetitiously that Katy didn't. And the weary and disgusted human jury, knowing nothing about the case, drowsily curse Katy and wish that the lawyers would shut up.

But these green nocturnal grasshoppers have other business besides their eternal argument. There is the important matter of producing eggs, for instance. Nothing could be more nice and fastidious than the family arrangements that one of the southern katydid species makes. The maternal insect moves up a twig or the edge of a leaf, leaving a trail of pearly little oval eggs strung out in a curious double overlapping row. These split finally and out crawl the rising generation, very small and spectral-pale. They do not assume their robust greenness until after shedding their coats about half a dozen times.

There is another southern Katydid so large as to repay hunting with firearms. An ardent young collector, who had served in the war and knew something about night operations, fixed a small searchlight on his cap, to illuminate his prey in the tall trees. His artillery consisted of a small rifle loaded with dust-shot cartridges, to stun the giant insects and knock them off their perches.

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Thomas Jefferson invented the first plow to turn over the soil as well as lift it.

 Psychiatrists Not Ready for Crime Study

Psychiatry

If President Hoover's National Commission on Law Observance and Law Enforcement were to turn the whole problem of dealing with convicted criminals over to the psychiatrists, the psychiatrists would find themselves unable to offer an immediate solution to the problem.

"I, for one," said Dr. Nolan D. C. Lewis, of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a U. S. Government Hospital for the Insane, "would not wish to attempt it."

Not that Dr. Lewis believes crime outside the field of psychiatry. Quite the contrary. He says:

"Every man who commits a serious crime against either person or property is abnormal. No person who has been brought up with any knowledge of the law, and with ordinary training as to right and wrong will break into a house and rob or make a murderous attack upon another unless that person is in an abnormal state."

The principal contribution which the psychiatrist can make toward solving the problem of reduction of crime is to offer a new point of view.

"When you have studied a problem until it appears to present an impassable barrier," he said, "a fresh point of view will enable you to attack the difficulty with new weapons

and may lead in the end to the removal of the obstacle."

The psychiatrist would treat crime as a disease. He would give it the same systematic and thorough research that has been devoted to such diseases as cancer and tuberculosis. He would treat the criminal as enlightened communities treat those suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.

"Society has a perfect right to protect itself from these individuals even at the expense of the person afflicted," Dr. Lewis explained, "but imprisonment should be employed only as a matter of precaution, protection, or for the purpose of treatment; not in a spirit of revenge for wrongs done, or to satisfy the sadistic tendencies of the group.

"I do not object," he went on, "to the annihilation of the individual if he is incurably criminal and murderous, or if for any other reason the protection of society makes it desirable. I believe that we cannot emphasize too strongly the interests of society. This does not mean, however, that a life should be forfeited for every murder. Not every murderer is a permanent menace to society. The person who committed the Hall-Mills murder, for example, probably never committed another crime and probably never will. Under those circumstances it may be just as well for society that the murder should never be solved."

 Niagara—Cont'd

their geological and geographical position to those actually seen on the river Genesee at Rochester, would thus be formed. The recession of the uppermost must have been gradually retarded by the thickening of the incumbent limestone, in proportion as the Falls sawed their way southwards. By this means the second cataract, which would not suffer the same retardation, might overtake it, and the two united would then be retarded by the large quantity of rock to be removed, until the lowest fall would come up to them, and then the whole would be united into one.

Sir Charles Lyell (1797-1875) was one of the greatest of the long list of Scottish geologists. He contested the idea of violent catastrophes during the earlier epochs of earth's history, and pointed out that all the observed changes could be brought about by causes now in operation if only enough time were allowed for them to act.

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The psychiatrist would want to know what is being accomplished in reform institutions toward rehabilitation of the individual—toward the cure of his criminal tendencies. No physician would prescribe year after year a certain course of treatment for his patients, directing them to follow it for a definite period of time, as six months, a year, five years, or twenty years, and then dismiss them from his mind and never ascertain whether they improved or grew worse. When a new medical treatment is developed, it is tried at first with great caution. The patient is watched with the greatest of care, and if the medicine fails in its purpose, or if it produces any ill effects in the subject, it is abandoned.

Our judges, however, go on prescribing for their patients with no knowledge and perhaps no curiosity as to the result of the treatment. No one has ever demonstrated that a boy

Crime—Cont'd

has improved his character as a result of a course in a reform school. No one knows definitely whether the maximum sentence for drunkenness is more or less effective than the minimum sentence. The psychiatrist would advise looking into these matters.

The Commonwealth Fund of New York is fostering a very laudable movement toward the discovery of those factors in the child's environment which tend to lead him toward crime.

Dr. Lewis, while admitting the good that this has done in the specific cases where it has been tried, says the psychiatrist would hesitate to recommend the procedure as a universal practice. He said:

"If every child in the United States who is now living in an unfavorable environment should be removed and placed in a home where conditions are ideal for his development, I am not sure that the race as a whole would be benefited. Undoubtedly, many children who are now headed for the insane asylum or toward criminal careers would be salvaged and made useful citizens. But we must also look at the other side of the picture. We cannot ignore the fact that it is often the adverse condition, or rather the overcoming of it that builds character."

The psychiatric viewpoint toward crime is so new that this field of investigation is practically untouched. Psychiatrists have expressed great willingness to aid in the study of crime, but it is Dr. Lewis' belief that scientific research will have to be conducted for several generations before this profession is ready to make any final recommendations.

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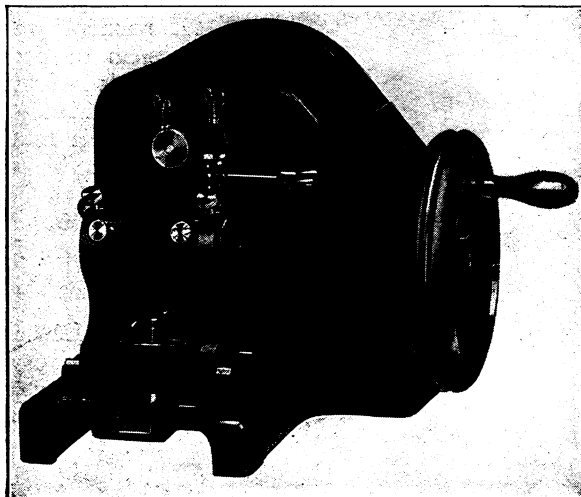
As the Fish See It

Ichthyology

The picture on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS-LETTER is an artist's idea of the apparition that must frequently startle the small fish in the shallow water among the mangrove roots around the seaward edges of Florida. When the water surface is thrown into ripples, it is as impossible to see up out of it as it is to see down into it, so that the bird's feet and his great, hump-beaked head appear as correlated but disjunct phenomena.

The painting is by Wilfrid Swancourt Bronson; photo by courtesy of the Buffalo Museum of Science.

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Minot Automatic Microtome

This instrument was designed by the late Doctor Charles S. Minot, and has been improved by us from time to time until it is now justly one of the most popular microtomes on the market. The latest improvement, of which this is the first listing, consists of a cover completely enclosing the feeding mechanism and a grooved balance wheel which provides for using a motor to operate the instrument. This microtome is an ideal instrument for rapid serial sectioning, cutting sections with accuracy down to one micron in thickness. While regularly furnished for paraffin sectioning only, this model can be equipped for cutting small celloidin specimen.

Two New Improvements

1. The entire feeding mechanism is enclosed in a metal case to protect the working mechanism and to keep out dust. The cam disc which controls the amount of feed is operated from outside the case. The figures indicating the amount of speed can be seen through a glass window provided for that purpose.

2. The jaws wheel is grooved so that the microtome can be operated by a motor when desired.

Send for complete information

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