

WAR ON MOSQUITOES

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"**L**OVE THY enemy," runs a Biblical injunction. Can I love the mosquito? I asked myself. I tried to reason that the command refers only to human beings, not to His other creations. But St. Francis of Assisi, we have been told, loved the birds and other creatures. Fearful of the risk of hell, I sought a minister to get his assurance that the injunction does not include the mosquito. I got what I wanted. I can hate the mosquito with all my heart, and with all the will for vengeance I am capable of.

My hostility to the mosquito began at the breakfast table. I was hastily gulping my coffee when a last one alighted magnificently on the tip of my nose. I felt its sting and the heat of the coffee scorched my lips and tongue as I held the cup to my mouth still while manipulating my left to give it a slap. I struck. Holy cows! it escaped singing its way as it spiraled to the ceiling. The hot, black coffee spluttered all over my face and my newly-pressed clothes. I had never been mad in all my life. From that moment I swore eternal hatred for this base insect.

I have been thinking ever since on how best I can meet this enemy on even chances. In my almost daily encounters with these little devils, I have killed many, but many more have escaped my clutches. An effective device for defense is the mosquito net, but it does not satisfy me: it does not kill. By swinging a tin plate smeared with coconut oil in dark rooms, I can kill many, but they seem to multiply in greater number. I tried Flit now so extravagantly advertised in drug stores, but they have become wise to it: they flee on my approach with the mechanism.

After a long deliberation, I decided that my best weapons were my hands. I can clap and pulverize a mosquito in no time. Now I can meet it on its own ground. But where is its own ground? Is it not my flesh, my very own flesh? The mere thought of it sets my teeth gnashing with rage. Have you not felt your blood boiling within you at the sight of a flying mosquito after it has punctured your



epidermis? To me it is a crime that cries to high heaven for revenge. "All things that are, are with more spirit, chased than destroyed." I have all the enthusiasm and the indignation in chasing a mosquito, but the picture of broken legs and wings smashed against a background of blood on my palms is a source of extreme delight.

A health officer, a neighbor of mine, hear of my troubles with mosquitoes. He suggested a party of volunteers to help me eradicate the pest. I politely declined the offer. I want to meet my enemy in a single combat, I want to meet him man to man, for in a single combat fame speaks clear.

My hatred for this cursed creature is shared by all the members of the family. When I blurt out cursing unprintable words, the kids become silent in their play and begin to nod to one another, whispering, "It must be the mosquito." In our flower garden when I begin to slap my arms, my thighs and my face and shout at the maid, my wife would call, "Is it the mosquito,

Dear?" Often at the table when I appear cross and morose, the kids take turns in brogging, perhaps, in order to appease

me: "I killed two this morning, Pop," one would say. "I killed three myself," another would add, "they are in my arithmetic book."

I have often wondered what could be the most abominable enemy of mankind. Most people say it is the communist. I have not yet met a communist, so I cannot share their opinion. During the war many said the Jap was the worst enemy, but no Japanese ever laid his finger on any part of my body. I hate the Liberal administration but I hate the mosquito's suction more.

Because of the mosquito, I caught myself telling a lie once. I berated the students of my class for their negligence in their studies. "As for me," I announced, "there is nothing more hateful than a student who does not study his lessons." I bit my lips. I remembered the mosquito.

Ah! this world would be a happier place to live in but for the mosquitoes. If I had but one day to live and were asked for my last wish, I would kill a million mosquitoes before I breathe my last.