STUDYING NATURE with

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The present problems in agriculture seem to have arisen because of the disregard of the simple fact that, in the main, agriculture is normally the art of cooperating with the natural behaviors of the many life forms lower than man in the course of evolution. By the natural creation of these simple life forms and their products serving in his support, man and his survival are a consequence and not the creative power, nor the cause. We have erroneously assumed that agriculture with all its living forms of plants and animals may be managed with assembly line speed, and economic controls, from nature's raw materials to sales of finished products according to man's economic, industrial and technological planning.

In the economist's concepts, apparently the economic finality of agriculture consists of one that includes only buying and selling.

Slaughter is, too often, an economic venture in disregard of the animal's poor health under an inspection geared to the clinical cases only while it is unmindful of the sub-clinical and of incipient extinction of this domestic species.

No wild animal chooses to be fattened. While there is the increased enshrouding of every capillary of the blood vessels and every cell with a thickening layer of fat, the cells normally fed by the diffusion of the nutritives from the capillaries to them will become more starved. Their excretionary products will accumulate, since fat hinders the two-way ionic and molecular exchanges betwen the capilaries and the cells to give hidden hungers and excessive accumulation of metabolic wastes.

We are slowly accepting the postulate that selection and propagation of species, mainly for economic adavntage, may have accentuated successive losses in the generations moving the life stream forward.

Wild animals chose their own medicine according as the soil grows it, and thereby exemplify better health and survival on their own than our domestic ones do under our management.

We are prone to destroy the beast when it aborts, when it gives midgets or when it contracts a disease common also to ourselves. Destroying the evidence is apparently a more common practice than diagnosing it to find the cause of the abnormalities.

Our agricultural crops illustrate the fact that an evolution of species for speculative economic values only through man's management has increased pests, diseases and extinction, rather than their healthy fecund survival.

Man's failure to maintain such a flow from, and return to the soil of both inorganic and organic fertility under his crop removal from the soil rather than complete return, has been the quiet force pulling down to a lower and lower level the protein potentials of soils with each crop succession.

When man's production of crops depends more on blind faith in survival because of a certain perigree of the seed than on undergirding the potential crop with nutritional security through the fertile soil, the evolution so managed invites pests, diseases and crop extinction.

Depletion of soil fertility cannot mean successive crops of the same protein and nutritional potentials equal to those grown on the soil when first broken out of the virgin sod under a natural plant climax. Depletion of the soil has reversed the natural evolution which built the climax.

For the plants, the declining soil fertility functions like a kind of fattening and growing that transcend even those for the pig. It is declining soil fertility, then, as it is giving plant values of only fattening potential for animals, that is undermining the warm-blooded segments as well as the plant

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segments of the biotic pyramid, including animals and man.

When the farmer says, "I must get some new seed. My oat crop is running out", he is merely reporting that the regular use of some of his own grain as seed for the next crop, while depleting the neglected soil fertility, has demonstrated the extinction of that species.

The sudden ravages of crops by insects suggest a sudden shift in the chemical composition of their new crop victim, representing those resulting in a particularly suitable insect diet when formerly the victim's chemical composition was unsuitable for survival of the particular insect. Those shifts in the plant's chemical and biochemical composition result from unappreciated changes in the available fertility of the soil.

Plant destruction by pests and diseases may be due to failing plant physiology for which the killing of the insect is only an attack on the symptom and not a removal of the cause coming via the soil.

The tremendous amounts of antibiotics now being used in fighting bacteria point to the desperation with which man is grasping at the self-protecting biotics in the very lowest level of life forms. He has not fostered development of self-protection by his own body through guided nutrition.

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