

THE COURIER-JOURNAL, LOUISVILLE, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 10, 1916.

SECTION

FEATURE The Courier-Journal SECTION The Startling Theory that Love is a Germ Disease

Royal Dixon, Author and Scientist, Whose Study of Plant Love Has Revolutionized Nature Theories, Now Insists That Affinity Is an Actual Contagion Which Scientists May Yet Learn How to Control.

By Dr. Henry Clay Foster

Did you ever stop to think love may be only a malady? Did it ever occur to you that the theme of all the poems springing from a germ? So says Royal Dixon, distinguished author and scientist, whose "Human Side of Plants" has revolutionized the methods of nature study the world over.

"Yes, to my mind, love is a malady," said Mr. Dixon in reply to my question. "In the lives of mad people it is the precursor of insanity and whooping cough. At a certain period in the life of the average person—the early twenties, say—there is a particularly in danger of an attack of love-sickness. The symptoms vary with the sex, temperament and environment of the individual. The victims of a country youth in the first stages of the ailment would naturally differ from those of a city belle. But once the malady fast itself upon them, there is evident a distinct similarity of reaction. Any undue amount of giggling, staring, blushing, sighing, picking at the clothes in embarrassment, hiding the face, etc., is a sign that the subject is infected with the love-germ and it is only a matter of time until the case breaks out. A form of intoxication then sets in, with powerful impulses, and men to the hapless mortal who tries to thwart them."

"In these no means of escaping it?" I asked when he paused.

"At present there is no practical one," replied Mr. Dixon. "Absolute isolation for an indefinite period and careful protection from the rays of the moon, might delay or prevent development of the symptoms, but even then it is doubtful."

The Immense and the Susceptible.

"There are individuals who are by nature immune, as in other forms of ailment. There are still others, however, with whom love-sickness is more or less chronic. Some people are constitutionally susceptible at all times, often suffering several distinct attacks in a lifetime. There are cases on record where it has been known to return in the same period of the year like certain intermittent fevers."

"There are people who are 'terrible' and spread love-germs wherever they go. Such persons are usually perpetually young and beautiful. In the case of such persons epidemics of the malady follow their appearance wherever they are made. The months of May and June are the time of year when the epidemics are most likely to appear."

The Microscopic World Is as Yet Unexplored and No One Can Wisely Limit the Number and Nature of Its Mysteries.



During that season exposure to moonlight will invariably put the patient into the virulent stage at once.

"How is the germ transmitted?" I asked.

"By direct," quickly responded the scientist. "That is the most direct and fruitful method. But the germ goes into the body in all the ways of other maladies. The love-germ, however, can probably travel on a glance and water at the eye. It is also transmitted, the standard method, and has certain definite results—heightened irritability accompanied by nervous prostration, and, I am told, a kind of spiritual thrill. This last is likely to prove dangerous to elderly spinners who have sought the isolation cure. Perhaps it might be said that if one is blood too late it is dangerous for the same reason that cases of adult measles are serious."

Transmitting the Germ.

"But a kiss in time has no such terrors!" I asked.

"That a kiss in time has no such terrors!" I asked. "Possibly it may turn out that nothing is more beneficial to the health, spirit and physical. It may be proved that it restores the youthful feeling more surely than any of the magic nostrums. Notice the bearing of a newly married couple, for example. Kissing certainly seems to be as beneficial to the health as laughing at most times; it may be more so."

"For many years," replied the naturalist, "I have carried on researches into the activities of plant and animal life, during which time I have especially investigated the humanlike aspects. Next to unity I found love most prevalent. I have devoted careful study to the latter phenomena."

"The operations and activities of animals are hardly less complex than those of man, but in plants we have all the principles of life reduced to their simplest form, and therefore, more easily observed."

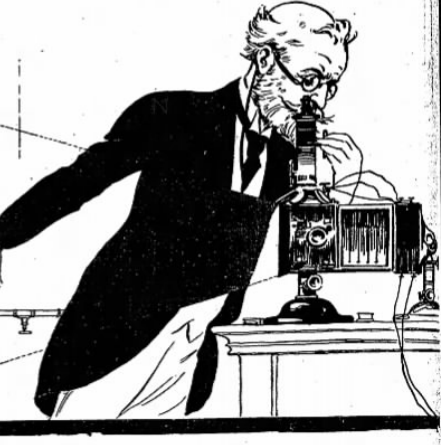
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"Why not?" Mr. Dixon returned. "In view of the intricacies of modern chemistry, it is not so absurd as it may seem. We know that most of the states of human beings are caused by germs, and we are learning to control them by bacteriology. Scientists look forward to the time when all ailments may be so conquered."

"And you plant love in that category?"

"I have found love in all its phases essentially the same as in man, and the processes are undoubtedly chemical. The Japanese vine or rarer grass—to cite an example oft-hand—disappointed in love, becomes poisonous to all other plants in the vicinity. Several questions a chemist active takes place; if the result is chemical, is not the cause of life nature? A score of such examples might be gathered from the plant world where love acts as surely as among animals and men."

"Do you believe, then, that the love-germ will some day be isolated?"



Royal Dixon, Whose Study of Plant Life Leads to His Novel Conclusions as to the Germs of Human Love.

observed. Here I have found love in all its phases essentially the same as in man, and the processes are undoubtedly chemical. The Japanese vine or rarer grass—to cite an example oft-hand—disappointed in love, becomes poisonous to all other plants in the vicinity. Several questions a chemist active takes place; if the result is chemical, is not the cause of life nature? A score of such examples might be gathered from the plant world where love acts as surely as among animals and men."

stars. The list of bacteria is constantly growing and there is no saying what it will be time include. Many scientists confidently predict that the germ of life will be produced by an artificial means. If this is accomplished of so vital a thing as life, why should love prove elusive? The microscope world is as yet unexplored and no one can wisely limit the number and nature of its mysteries.

"But to insure that love has its origin in germ life," I protested, "it would destroy the most sacred treasure of the human heart."

Nature's Methods No Menace.

"Not at all," Mr. Dixon rejoined earnestly. "To know the processes of nature by means now the universe of its wonder and charm. The civilizations of past ages are dying, and it is well that life is so. Would the discovery of the origin of life destroy all life? Certainly not. No would the discovery of the love-germ affect the sum total of love in the world."

"The great forces of nature cannot be reduced by man's power, only controlled; guided into these channels whereby he may be most benefited. To my mind, it would be one of the most desirable things imaginable, for love, I believe, is accountable for a large part of man's present problems. To control love by means of germs and control would be to possess a real panacea for spiritual evils at a vast economy in human energy and material. Study of the present movement and prevention of criminality, for instance, would be immediately made easy. All children could be love-inoculated, and it is well known that the child of a love match is of a superior type. The percentage of geniuses is very large."

"If a man fell in love with his neighbor's wife he could get cured and keep out of trouble," I remarked facetiously.

"It would bring order out of our present state of domestic chaos," Mr. Dixon declared, ignoring my interruption. "Divorce courts would have to go out of business. Bachelors and unfused spinners could be inoculated against the painful follies of second childhood."

"Exactly, as you see it," I said. "It is a consummating devotion to be wished."

"It is, I believe that in bacteriology may be found the physical and spiritual laws man has sought throughout the ages. And to isolate the love-germ and creative methods for controlling its dissemination will be a long step toward the millennium."

Sunlight and Health

THERE is a striking analogy between the beneficial effects of sunlight and air upon plants and upon human beings. One of the principal requisites for our physical welfare is hemoglobin, the coloring matter of the blood. Sun bathing and outdoor life are the best means of making it. Every one knows what happens if flowers that grow in the shade are placed in the sunlight. Physiologists say that hemoglobin of the blood is to the human body what chlorophyll is to the plant, and its growth is facilitated in the body by sunlight, just as the growth of the green chlorophyll in the plant is facilitated.

Miners who work under ground become pale. Flowers that grow in dark places have little chlorophyll and are affected in much the same way for want of sunlight, excepting those that by nature are adapted to life.

The sunlight does more than tan the surface of the skin. The coloring matter is formed and developed not merely so in a photograph on paper. The sun's rays strike down and the effect penetrates perhaps for an inch or two into the soft tissues, so that the influence of the sun is felt on the interior of the body as well as on the exterior.