

heterosexual gonad transplants. Further experiments along these lines are being conducted.

D. DWIGHT DAVIS

FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL  
HISTORY  
NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE

CHARLES R. LAW

### A CHAT

I HALTED to peruse a piece of modern commercial advertising and was excited by it. It was a neat pamphlet, entitled "——— News Chats," which is periodically published and circulated by one of our huge concerns whose business is the sale of scientific laboratory supplies. It announces itself as being "A bulletin of newsy information to those who know us well and an introduction to those who do not, who we hope will become our friends and customers."

Allow me to reproduce the titles found on some of the articles in the last issue—October, 1934—of this genial monthly visitor from the land of trade to the desks and minds of us lords of American science:

Thar's Sillimanite in Them Thar Hills  
A Field Trip in the Classroom  
A Hole in a Black Derby Hat  
Fitting Trees to the Soil  
Black Light from Sunshine  
Now Liquids Are Polished  
Lots of Agitation for a Little Money  
Keeps Storage Batteries Healthy  
On the Lookout for J. Pluvius

Furthermore, grant me liberty to quote, with briefest comment, several sentences from these articles—so cleverly and intimately, not to say adroitly, named!

Just being out-of-doors in the bright sunshine is stimulating, but the most excitement comes in searching out interesting insects and animals to see how they *build their homes and raise their children*.

"'Chose qui piait est a demi vendu,' runs the French saying; a thing that pleases is half sold—a truth we all must admit."—To be sure.

"Stranger, that 40 over yonder is the finest hardwood soil you ever want to see."—Yessiree!

"Light, the intangible something that enables us to see things and promotes the growth of plant and animal life, was so much a mystery to ancient mankind as to be deified in some form in almost all of the earlier religions."—Startling information!

"The value lies in the 'eye appeal' which leads prospective buyers to choose one in preference to the other."—I see.

"Only a *healthy*, active storage battery gives its owner a normal period of service."—Honestly?

However, if blame there be for this infantilism in these high places, do not suspect that I lay it upon the publisher. He has a business, and must chat accord-

ingly. This must be a proper approach—effective and profitable—to his audience, else, having tried it, he would not continue it. The great analyzers themselves are analyzed. The business sense has an instinctive power of psychological insight that amounts to wizardry. We are to believe that the "——— News Chats" is a shrewd, welcome and successful adaptation, in the tough realm of competitive trade. Why not?

The average scientist, even the super scientist, of the present day does likewise, as his turn comes to sell, so to speak, his products to his customers—the public and the world. It is the vogue. He cleverly composes his material; cites the business man or else Lewis Carroll as his justification, and then goes out talking folk-lore, even baby dialect, quite naturally and congenially. He acquits himself most adorably before "The Boy Scouts," "The Ladies Better-Fed Club," "The Tradesmen's League Against the Spinning Wheel" and other advanced organizations whose members are simply spoiling for enlightenment in the black magic of all the sciences. Yes, let a second and living Jacques Casanova call to-day upon a second and living Voltaire, and the latter mention some popular modern scientist—as he mentioned on that past day the name of Count Algarotti, the prominent Venetian scientist—and Casanova would be obliged to repeat his famous comment: "That is how he made his name. He constituted himself an admirer of Newton, and made it possible for the ladies to talk learnedly about light."

Though long neglected and out of use, the amazing pedagogical potency of "chat" or the "chatter" method has been rediscovered and re-employed. I am informed that scientific causerie is again very prevalent, even in the erotic wit of the best social circles. They say it is not unusual there, in these days, to hear sweet and burning passion vent itself and forward its cause in language such as the following: "In compound ratio of your affection," "In inverse ratio of my languor," "The mass multiplied by the velocity of my attendance equals the momentum of your passion," "The squares of the times of my hope are as the cubes of the distance of your consent" and so forth—quotations from a French work on Italy, in the second half of the eighteenth century. Sciencized gallantry—what can't science achieve, once it dismounts from its high-horse!

And so, to chat. Just folks, all around; just one big chatting family. Shan't we just sit down now, all together, and enjoy a little chat over a "true black body" or, what amounts to the same, "a hole in a black derby hat hung from a hook on a surface covered with black felt"?

JOHN W. CRIST

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE  
EAST LANSING