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A Bizarre Weird-Scientific Story

The Frog

By GRANVILLE S. HOSS

NOVEMBER 4th.—It has long been my contention that the great difference in the intelligence and advancement of man, in comparison with the lower animals, has not been due to any innate superiority or peculiar advantage arbitrarily bestowed by the creator. I have held the theory that man's lead-

ership of all created life has been due to the more rapid absorption by his brain of certain chemical properties which have tended to promote growth of the brain cells with corresponding expansion of his intellect.

I have believed that if it were possible to reduce to concrete form the chemical elements which have given

growth and development to the mind of man, it would be possible to inject the resulting substance into the brain of one of the lower forms of life and raise the subject of the experiment to the intellectual level of man.

This thought first came to me in my college days. It has been with me throughout all the years since that time. Never but once have I shared these views with another. Fifteen years ago I admitted my closest friend, Dr. Mark Potter, to my thoughts. I talked enthusiastically and at length, giving in detail what I considered substantial reasons for my conclusions, ending by suggesting that he join me in the effort to verify the deductions at which I had arrived.

His laughter was like a basin of ice water dashed in my face. "Illingham," he cried, "you are crazy, or soon will be if you continue to dwell on such thoughts. Forget that idle twaddle and give your time to advancing in your profession. One way leads to fortune and renown; the other, to the madhouse."

I made no reply to this tirade, but changed the conversation and for the remainder of the time we were together discussed the latest issue of the *Medical and Surgical Review*.

But my efforts were continued. My leisure hours and for the past ten years my whole time has been given to what has become the one absorbing interest of my life, and now I am ready for the final grand test. I shall soon know if the years have been wasted or if I have found one of the great secrets of life.

I am too nervous to write any more tonight. I must go out for a walk.

November 5th.—While this diary is not meant to be seen by other eyes than my own, I shall nevertheless not go into details of the composition of my brain serum, as life is uncertain and the record might fall into the hands of others. It has been a weary task to gain the small phial of the

precious substance now reposing in my safe. In order to get it, I have been many times guilty of what the law pronounces to be serious crimes. I have not hesitated to violate the grave and betray the most sacred trusts. If failure is my portion, then my life will have been worse than wasted. In that event I shall not face the light of another day, but seek rest in Nirvana. On the other hand, success will wipe clean the slate and I will have added inestimably to the world's knowledge. The veil which hides many of the phenomena of earthly life will have been pierced.

November 8th.—For three days I have been attempting to decide on a subject for the final great test. Shall it be bird, beast or reptile? In my opinion, any specimen will answer. As my supply of brain serum is very limited, I think I shall select a small creature; so if the results are not immediately what I expect, I can discontinue the injections and select some other species. I must give this matter the thought it deserves.

November 11th.—My decision is made. I have chosen a bullfrog, a fine, healthy fellow which I obtained from the lake adjacent to the city. I have constructed him a home in my laboratory, a small pool of cement with a bottom of mud and water plants. My greatest difficulty will be suitable food, but I think it can be managed. Tonight I shall administer the first injection of brain serum. I am nervous and laboring under great excitement. This will not do. I must be calm.

November 12th.—Mr. Frog withstood the operation beautifully. I was quite alarmed at first, as he lay in a comatose state for an hour and was quite dazed for a much longer period. He is active now. I am unable to observe any change in him, unless it is that he moves about more than formerly. I feel much encouraged. The results are all I have hoped for from the first tiny injection of serum.

November 17th.—Eureka! Success has attended me. After three more injections of serum, my frog shows unmistakable signs of an awakening intelligence. He starts at sudden noises, and, instead of at once plunging into the basin, he immediately faces in the direction from whence they come, seeming to ponder the cause. He apparently watches me as I move about the room and seems to have no fear. He spends less time in the water and moves about the room in a restless manner. I wish now my selection had been different. A creature higher in the scale of life—a monkey, for instance—might in time have been taught to communicate with me. However, it is too late now for regrets and I shall keep on with the frog.

November 25th.—Undoubtedly, my theory has been proven correct. Each day my frog grows in intelligence. He watches my every movement and observes me at my meals, which I have formed the habit of preparing in my laboratory, where I also sleep. At first he would eat nothing but insects, but the other day I tried him with a small piece of vegetable on the end of my knife. His tongue at once seized the morsel, which he promptly swallowed. Since then, he always partakes with me when I eat. He seems to be losing his appetite for insects, for when offered a fly alongside a tiny bit from my plate, he rejected the fly for the other. He spends less and less time in the water.

I have been under a nervous strain since commencing the experiment and seem unable to throw it off. This positively will not do. I must relax.

November 30th.—My frog has developed a memory. He has seemed to recognize me for several days, and when I enter the room from an excursion to the outside he hops toward me with every appearance of delight, uttering queer little croaking noises. Last night I offered him a small portion of food sprinkled with quinine

powder; he accepted it, but immediately emitted a raucous cry and attempted to eject the bitter dose. He acted completely disgusted, moved from my vicinity and would have nothing more to do with me the whole evening. This episode is full of interest.

December 4th.—Mr. Bullfrog has become quite an imitator. He not only follows me about, seemingly interested in my every movement, but tonight attempted to stand upright. He was only partly successful, maintaining his balance for but a few seconds, then falling to the floor. He also tries to use his hands, keeping one continually moving, while resting on the other. He picks up small articles, such as match sticks and any other tiny objects he finds in his way. I now call him and he responds. He quails at a note of anger in my voice, much in the manner of a puppy. In the light of my present success, I now wish more than ever I had selected some creature higher in the scale of life for the experiment. However, it is too late. My malady increases. My nights are broken.

December 10th.—I am disappointed. While my frog develops in mind each day, I can now see that he has not a human mind and never will have. His brain might expand to the utmost in cunning, but it would still be reptilian. I experienced an example of this a few nights ago. I crossed the room hurriedly in answer to the ringing of the telephone and stepped on one of the frog's feet, with the result that he is now a cripple. He uttered a loud cry, sprang upon my foot and attempted to bite me. Of course this was impossible, considering that he has no teeth, but his actions quite shocked me. He now will have nothing to do with me, backing away at my approach and uttering ribald raucous cries. I know of no other words to describe his noise. He has formed a bitter hatred for me, watching me unceasingly with what

appears to be a baleful glare in his eyes, ready at my first movement in his direction to back away with his awful cries.

December 15th.—My old nervous disorder has returned upon me with full vigor. I have been unable to sleep for three nights and suppose I shall have to go back to drugs in order to get necessary sleep. The frog still refuses all my friendly advances and exhibits an unholy cunning.

December 20th.—Last night I enjoyed the first sound sleep I have had for a week, but was awakened in the most extraordinary manner, which would be ridiculous were it not for the shattered condition of my nerves. I was aroused by a cold sensation on my chest, to find the frog seated there, his little hands gripping my throat and apparently attempting to the utmost of his puny strength to strangle me. At my first awakening, he leaped to the floor and retreated to his pool, uttering his unearthly cries, which to my half-aroused senses seemed to be charged with threats. I wish I could kill the monster, but can not. He seems like a creature of my own creation, being, as he is, the culminating result of years of preparation.

December 22nd.—I was reawakened last night in the same ghoulish manner, with the addition that this time he was attempting to bite. Had he been gifted with fangs, they would certainly have been buried in my throat. I shall be compelled to confine the beast if this continues. I wonder if my snores annoy him. I am aware that I snore dreadfully and know it must be worse than ever when sleep is induced by artificial means, as is now necessary with me. Anyway, the hatred of the frog is mounting, as shown by attacks on two successive nights.

December 23rd.—Again! This time the rascal was clawing and tearing at my mouth. As I sat up, he leaped to

the floor and hurried to his pool, where I heard him plunge in. His cries were fearful, baleful, and to my drug-clouded senses, laden with warning. This positively will not do. To-day I shall build a fine wire fence about his pool. Let him use the brain I have given him and climb out if he can.

Extract from the Evening Star,
December 24th

Dr. John Illingham, a well known retired physician of this city, was discovered dead in his bed today. Death was due to strangulation. Lodged firmly in his throat, as though he had made an effort to swallow it, was a full grown bullfrog.

Medical examination disclosed the fact that Dr. Illingham had been in the habit of using large quantities of drugs, and it has been suggested that he had become temporarily insane and attempted to swallow the frog. Only a crazed man would attempt such a feat. The frog was quite dead when removed from the throat of the deceased.

In the combined laboratory and bedroom, where the body was discovered, a small concrete pool had been built and around it erected a fine wire fence about five feet in height.

A strange diary was found among Dr. Illingham's effects, which seems to bear out the insanity theory. In this diary is mentioned the name of Dr. Mark Potter, a well known physician of this city. In the absence of any known relatives of Dr. Illingham, the diary has been turned over to Dr. Potter.

Statement by Dr. Mark Potter

I HAVE read the diary of my old friend Dr. Illingham and have been asked to make a statement thereon. There is little I can say. It is true that years ago he mentioned some such theory as that described in the diary. Whether it contained any truth or not, who can now say? If the diary is a strict record of fact, then it is apparent that the frog took the only method at his command to make an end of one whom he had come to hate and fear. If the coroner's theory is correct and the diary contains the ravings of a madman, then the conclusion arrived at by that official is probably true.