

A PARABLE

The following was from the September issue of **Agricultural Chemicals News and Reports**, University of California:

One upon a time there was a man of good will named Goodwyn Goodwill whose only desire was to leave the world a better place for his passing through it. And he was happy.

He had a happy wife and three happy children and they lived in a happy house with a happy dog and a happy cat. And they had a lovely garden.

Then one day Goodwill took up the study of ecology—ecology having suddenly become quite the rage.

The first thing he read was that pesticides were leaching from the soil to poison the waters of the ocean. "I can't poison the waters of the ocean," he said. So he renounced pesticides and let the snails take over the garden.

The next thing he read was that the smoke and fumes he produced were befouling the crystalline air. "I can't befoul the crystalline air," he said. So he gave up smoking, driving the family car, and fires in the fireplace.

Then he read that overgrazing by livestock was causing serious soil erosion. "I can't erode the soil of my planet," he said. So he gave up eating meat and wearing leather products, going barefoot summer and winter.

Goodwill felt he was now at least holding his own until he read that he, personally, required more than seven tons of fuel each year to warm, transport and illuminate himself. And he was thus destroying at a prodigious rate irreplaceable reserves of coal and oil that nature had taken eons to create.

"Good Heavens!" he cried dazedly. And he turned off the furnace, doused the lights and gave up riding the bus.

In his cold, dark house he could now read only in the daytime. This was fortunate because it was a full week before he stumbled across still another staggering statistic: He, personally required no less than five tons of food, minerals and forest products each and every year to maintain himself in a civilized state.

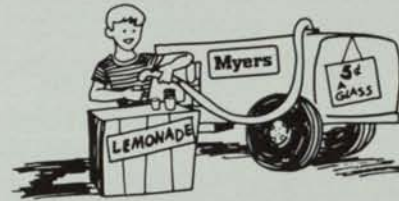
Worse yet, he threw away annually, all by himself, one ton of beer cans, pop bottles, milk cartons and other empty containers that now littered a once pristine America.

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To save on food, a panicky Goodwill went on a strict diet, eating nothing but dandelion greens and boiled thistles.

To save on minerals, he eschewed tinfoil, ballpoint pens and loose change. And to preserve the forests, he swore never to read anything printed on paper again.

That was good, because a full month passed before Goodwill heard on his neighbor's radio a scientist explaining how each of us breathes in life-giving oxygen and breathes out poisonous carbon dioxide.

It was then that the awful truth hit him: "On this overcrowded planet," he said to himself, "the only way a man can stop doing harm to the ecology is to drop dead."

So he gave up breathing.

His last wish was to take up as little space as possible in death. Thus, he was cremated and his ashes scattered. Most of his remains therefore became smog. And his ashes, containing ten parts per million of indestructible DDT, washed down to the poisoned sea.

MORAL: As you go through life, don't worry about doing the most possible good; just worry about doing the least possible harm.

—A parable by Arthur Hoppe, San Francisco Examiner.

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