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 articles, criticisms, and discussions in this publication.

ON PLEASURE

"A man possesses nothing certainly save a brief loan of
 his own body; and yet the body of man is capable of much
 curious pleasure."
Branch Caball

Pleasures may be physical, sensual or intellectual; there are also pleasures of
 accomplishment and of society.

Of the physical pleasures, those of the bed and of the table are sometimes
 called gross and even deemed sinful lusts, although it is apparent that the Creator
 provided them for his own purposes. The sheer exuberance which comes from the
 muscles, the joints and the digestion are in tone is another physical pleasure.

Sensual pleasures come from giving delight to one of our five senses, of touch,
 hearing, sight, smell and taste. Their utility is open to question; is it of use to be
 tickled?

Intellectual pleasures come from delighting the mind, from the contemplation
 of the beautiful, the unusual, or the interesting.

These forms of pleasure may be combined. The refinement of the physical
 pleasures by combining them with the sensual is a mark of civilization; the sensual
 may indeed predominate. The savage tearing out of the liver of his victim has little
 in common with the gourmet sitting down to a plate of *pâté de foie gras*.

Romantic love, which many think to be the epitome of human happiness, can
 involve sensual and intellectual pleasures as well as those of society and achievement.
 Music provides a blend of sensual and intellectual pleasure which is no doubt why
 Dr. Johnson called it the only sensual pleasure without vice.

The idea that pleasure is vicious is widely held. Perhaps because experience
 has shown that excess of pleasure can bring pain; perhaps because indulgence may
 distract from toil. This view may be carried to extremes as by the Puritans of whom
 Macauley said that "they hated bear-baiting; not because it gave pain to the bull,
 but because it gave pleasure to the spectators."

The King of France had an officer in charge of his *menus plaisirs* (diversions).
 Few of us could afford to do so but we should take care that our pleasures, like our
 friendships and our fences, are kept in good repair. A rational man will seek to
 maximize his pleasures, always taking care that he does not give pain to others and
 indeed seeking to increase their pleasures too.

Actuaries are fortunate that in the exercise of their profession they may derive
 not only intellectual pleasure but, in large measure, may enjoy the pleasures of ac-
 hievement and of society. Their education fits them also to enjoy many extraneous
 intellectual pleasures, particularly those of mathematics, which have delighted think-
 ers from long before Euclid and Pythagoras.

Apart from the beauty which many find in mathematical theorems — for ex-
 ample, in the conciseness of the proof that there is no largest prime, or in the
 unexpected relationship $e^{i\pi} + 1 = 0$, pleasure may be found in puzzles and games
 based on mathematical principles. It is therefore not surprising to find that an actu-
 ary is a leading authority on bridge and other card games, as well as on backgam-
 mon — and that another has written a book on mathematical diversions.

They deserve the commendation of their colleagues for having added to "the
 public stock of harmless pleasures."
 C.E.J.

VITAL STATISTICS

Carl L. Erhardt and Joyce E. Berlin, editors,
Mortality and Morbidity in the United States,
 Vital and Health Statistics Monographs, Amer-
 ican Public Health Association, Harvard Uni-
 versity Press, 1974.

by Frederic Seltzer

The publication of this volume by Har-
 vard University Press completes the
 series of Vital and Health Statistics
 Monographs initiated by the late Mort-
 mer Spiegelman, FSA, in 1958. The
 work was carried out in the offices of the
 Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
 until Mr. Spiegelman's retirement in De-
 cember, 1966. He then devoted his full
 time to the Monographs at the offices of
 the American Public Health Association
 until his untimely death in 1969. Dr.
 Carl L. Erhardt completed the job.

This sixteenth volume in the series
 analyzes mortality and morbidity trends
 in the United States since the beginning
 of the century, with particular attention
 given to the 1960s. Data are presented
 by age, sex, race, marital status, geo-
 graphic region, and for various causes
 of death and illness.

Other specialists provide coverage
 of such subjects as health, illness, dis-
 ability, and the use of medical service
 by the aged; as well as projections of
 health service personnel and facilities;
 infant mortality; and variations in mor-
 tality, morbidity, and health care by
 marital status. International compari-
 sons of mortality and longevity are also
 presented. There are many tables and
 figures, an extensive set of references,
 and a detailed index.

Rapid change in the interval from
 data collection to publication has di-
 minished the value of some of the ma-
 terial. However, a good deal of it has
 not been published elsewhere nor is
 there any comparable compilation with
 such useful cross classifications.

The 15 volumes published earlier are
 as follows:

Accidents and Homicide by Albert P. Is-
 krant and Paul V. Joliet.

Infectious Diseases by Carl C. Dauer, Robert
 F. Korns, and Leonard M. Schuman.

*Trends and Variations in Fertility in the
 United States* by Clyde V. Kiser, Wilson H.
 Grabill, and Arthur A. Campbell.

*Infant, Perinatal, Maternal, and Childhood
 Mortality in the United States* by Sam Sha-
 piro, Edward R. Schlesinger, and Robert E.
 L. Nesbitt, Jr.

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