MR. ESHOLT'S YOUNG WIFE

BY T. W. SPEIGHT.

CHAPTER IX.

After a fortnight's absence, Mr. Esholt found himself at home again. He brought back with him a bad sore throat, which before long developed into inflammation of the chest, confining him indoors without hope of release for some time to come. This illness was especially annoying, coming as it did at such a time, for just then there occurred one of those ominous lulls in the commercial world which, like the intense quiet that often precedes a storm in the aerial world, caused the souls of many to quake within them. It is not well at such times when the captain of the ship cannot himself direct the helm; but Mr. Esholt was a man who never wasted his breath in bewailing the inevitable; all he could do was to make the best arrangements possible under the circumstances.

His old and tried head-clerk, Jabez Kimber, would continue to take charge of the business as heretofore whenever Mr. Esholt had been absent. Each morning Mr. Kimber would send up the letters, or such portion of them as he deemed it requisite that his chief should see, by pony express to Everton; but as Mr. Esholt himself was at present unable to use a pen, it became necessary to employ an amanuensis, to whom, after the letters had been read to him, he could dictate the answers, together with such instructions as he might deem needful for the proper conduct of the business during his absence. For this position of amanuensis Mr. Esholt selected Wilmot Burnell. As Wilmot lived across the water, and as Mr. Esholt would be likely to require his services to answer the late letters in an evening, it became requisite that he should take up his quarters for the time being at Everton. Thus, by a strange concatenation of circumstances, he and Agnes were brought together again. Agnes heard the news with secret dismay.

Neither she nor Miss Esholt could help being struck with the change in Wilmot's looks when, on the evening of his arrival, he entered the dining-room. Short as was the time since they had last seen him, he looked as if he had gone through some great sickness or great trouble in the interim. His cheeks had a hollowness such as they had never shown before; his eyes seemed to have sunk deeper into his head, and there were dark half-circles under them, the outward and visible signs of inward suffering either mental or physical. But his spirits were feverishly gay. All through the dinner he chatted with much animation with Miss Esholt; but he frequently laughed, and that rather boisterously, when no laughter seemed to be called for, and partook of the wine more freely than he had ever done before at Mr. Esholt's table. To Agnes he was studiously polite, but nothing more. To her that evening it seemed impossible to believe that this was the same man who, but two short weeks before, had told her in such impassioned accents that he loved her. He rose from the table with the ladies and bade them good-night at the door.

Except at the dinner hour, they saw little of him. He breakfasted alone, and after attending to Mr. Esholt's correspondence, he went down to the office during the middle of the day, returning about four o'clock. Sometimes, when there was anything very special to consult Mr. Esholt about, Mr. Kimber would come back with him; but on these occasions the head-clerk, who was of a nervous, fidgety disposition, with an old bachelor's uneasiness when in the presence of ladies, could never be induced to stop to dinner.

About a week after his return, Mr. Esholt's illness suddenly developed graver symptoms than had yet shown themselves. Agnes had seen her husband before breakfast, at which time he looked and declared himself to be considerably better than on the previous day. After breakfast she went out to buy some grapes and other articles, and was gone about an hour and a half. On going into the dressing-room which opened into her husband's bedroom, she found Miss Esholt installed there. She was passing through, when the latter held up a finger warmly. "My brother is asleep," she whispered. "He has become much worse during the last three hours Dr. Pyefitt has just gone. He administered a sedative, and has left word that the patient must on no account be disturbed. Until there is a change for the better. I have arranged to nurse my brother in the daytime with the assistance of Davry, and have sent for Mrs. Jukes, an excellent person, who nursed him when he was ill two years ago, who will take charge of everything during the night."

"But in that case, what is there left for me to do?" asked Agnes in dismay.

"Nothing," responded Miss Esholt icily.

"But, as his wife, it is my duty to remain by Mr. Esholt's side; and surely I can help one or both of you in the nursing!"

"Child!" burst out Miss Esholt, her stony self-possession for once deserting her—"and in many ways you are little more than a child—how dare you attempt to interfere in any arrangements I may think fit to make? My brother is very ill. It is imperatively necessary that he should be nursed by skilled hands, by those used to illness in various forms, and who are at home in a sickroom, not by raw inexperienced young women like yourself. What do you know of illness, pray? Whom have you ever nursed? Mr. Esholt is as dear to me as a brother as he is to you as a husband—possibly more so. Do you think, then, that I will willingly allow his life to be endangered merely to gratifiy the caprices of a wilful girl? Not so, Mrs. Esholt. You are his wife, and you can of course insist on nursing him; but if you do, will you be answerable for the consequences? I will not. Take the responsibility into your own hands, if it so please you? but remember that should my brother not recover, I shall assert with my last breath that it was your wilfulness and ignorance that killed him!"

At this juncture Mrs. Jukes was announced. As the nurse entered the room, Agnes left it. She was dazed, bewildered, heart-stricken, and yet that terrible woman's terrible words were not to be gainsaid. Of nursing, in the proper sense of the term, she knew next to nothing. Dare she take upon herself the tremendous responsibility Miss Esholt would thurst upon her if she No, she dare not—she dare not! Her husband was ill, perhaps dying, and she must be a spectator—nothing more.

It was dusk when she left her room, and a servant was lighting the hall lamp as she went down. During all those hours no one had been near her. Was her husband better or worse? She could rest no longer without knowing. She had a right to go to his room to ascertain that much, even if every other right were denied her. After pausing a moment, she turned to re-ascend the stairs, and as she did so, she saw Wilmot on the landing above, on the point of coming down. He had just left Mr. Esholt's room. His face flushed at sight of her, and then became as pale as Agnes's own. Next moment he was by her side.

"O Wilmot, how is he?" she cried, in her anxiety letting the old familiar name slip from her lips. "Is he better? Has he asked for me? Is there nothing I can do for him?"

"The symptoms have abated, and there is a slight improvement," he answered gravely.

"Thank Heaven for that!"

"He has even been able to dictate the outlines of two important letters, which is certainly more than he could have done this morning.—By-the-way, I was coming to look for you, Mrs. Esholt."

"To look for me!"

"Mr. Esholt has just handed me his bunch of keys with a request that I would see you and ask you to be at the trouble of opening the private drawer in his writing-table, where you will find a certain memorandum book bound in purple leather. This book you are to hand to me returning me the keys at the same time, of course after relocking the drawer. Mr. Esholt specified this one as being the key of the private drawer."

Wondering somewhat, Agnes took the keys. "If you don't mind, I will await your return here," said Wilmot.

"I shall not detain you more than half a minute," she answered, as she crossed the hall and then turned the corner of the corridor which led to Mr. Esholt's study. Wilmot stood without moving where she had left him. He was still very pale, and his teeth were fixed tightly on his under lip, as if to keep down some hidden emotion. "Will she never come back!" he muttered under his breath, for Agnes, instead of being away only half a minute, was fully three minutes before she returned. One glance at her face was enough. "She has found it!" he whispered to himself.

"Here is the memorandum book and here are the keys," she said in a dull expressionless voice, which contrasted strangely with her excitement of a few minutes ago. He took them, bowed, and, without a word, went back up-stairs on his way to Mr. Esholt's room. Agnes stood where he had left her till he was out of sight; then she too went up-stairs, slowly, and taking hold of the baluster as she went. At the top, she turned to the left and went to her room.

On opening her husband's private drawer in the study, she saw, lying close by the memorandum book of which she had come in search, a torn portion of a letter, to which her eyes seemed involuntarily drawn. It was written in a bold masculine hand; and quite unconsciously, for her mind at the moment was elsewhere, her glance took in one or two of the sentences. At first their sense failed to strike her, then all at once the hot blood crimsoned her face, and she read them again. Then she shut the drawer quickly and turned the key; but having done that, she stood without stirring for a full minute, her mind a chaos of conflicting emotions. Then she deliberately unlocked the drawer again, took out the letter, and read it slowly and carefully through. She read it more than once, more than twice, till, in fact, every word had burnt itself into her memory. Both beginning and end of the letter had been torn away; what there was of it ran as under:

"You are quite right, my dear Esholt, in terming marriage a mistake. I found that out long ago; you, I suppose, are discovering it by degrees. Young wives are kittle creatures to manage. I can fully sympathise with you, now that the first rosy flush of wedded life has faded into the dull light of this workaday world—now that you are no longer bride and bridegroom, but commonplace man and wife. Take consolation from one who has gone through the ordeal. New harness always sits uneasily at first. You say that whatever you may think or feel, you always show a smiling countenance: a wise policy on your part, which I hope"——

Here it broke off abruptly; but the young wife had read enough. She put the letter back into the drawer, and taking the memorandum book with her, went her way.

Although Mr. Esholt grew no worse in the course of the next two or three days, it might with equal certainty be averred that there was little or no change for the better in his condition. But while his bodily weakness was so extreme, his mind was as clear as ever it had been; and as he lay there through one weary hour after another, it was only to be expected that his thoughts should brood much over the disquieting tidings which reached him day after day from the office; and that of itself was enough to retard his recovery. Lying there helpless in the partially darkened room, difficulties which, had he been about and well, he would have smiled at disdainfully, assumed unreal proportions in his eyes, and although he knew in his mind that they were merely as dwarfs masquerading in giants' armour, he had not strength to combat them, but allowed them to torment him at their pleasure, while calling himself a weak fool for not trampling them under foot, as he would have done at another time.

Then, again, he was bitterly grieved at heart at seeing so little of his wife. "Where is Agnes?" he would sometimes ask when he woke up from an uneasy slumber and looked round with longing eyes for a sight of his young wife's pleasant face. Then his sister would put him off with some commonplace answer that Agnes was busy elsewhere, or that she had just been to inquire how he was; and would finish by saying that Dr. Pyefitt had forbidden all unnecessary conversation. He had not strength to press the point, but would murmur to himself: "She does not care for me. Why should she? She has loved once, and can never love again!" And then he would fall again into one of his frequent half-sleeps, in which with a sort of fearful facination, a huge dark cloud which was slowly creeping up towards the zenith, and ere long would enfold both his fortunes and his happiness in its pall-like embrace.

In the frame of mind in which he then was, his wife's desertion of him—for such he termed it to himself—seemed almost a matter of course; merely one more among the crowd of misfortunes rushing in from every side to overhelm him. Sometimes, however, on awaking he would find her there sitting by his side, for even Miss Esholt did not venture to keep her always out of her husband's room—and then it was touching to see the smile that brightened his wan face as he stretched out his hand towards her. "He is only trying to deceive me," Agnes would say bitterly to herself at such times. "He wants to make me believe that he still loves me; but after that letter, how is it possible for me ever to believe again?" Then, again, Miss Esholt was nearly always in the room, and that did not tend to set her at her ease. So she would mechanically press her husband's hand and ask him how he was, and sit a little while, gazing with a sinking heart into his worn face, and then hurry out to hide the tears she could no longer keep back.

Neither by day nor night could Agnes get that terrible letter out of her thoughts. She wandered about the great dismal house, pale and sad, like an unhappy ghost for whom there is nowhere any rest. Not a creature in the world was there to whom she could open her heart and unfold her sorrows. Never so much as now had she missed kind-hearted Aunt Maria's comforting presence. Sometimes a wild longing came over her to leave all this weary coil of trouble behind her and make her way to the far-off parsonage where her aunt now lived, and there claim the love, the shelter, and the rest which she knew would not be denied her. Whenever she and Wilmot chanced to encounter each other, his soft veiled glances and melancholy smiles were not lost upon her. They were not like words—she could not take open cognisance of them; and since the finding of the letter, the knowledge that she was still as dear to him as ever sometimes sent a faint momentary glow through her heart, which only served to make the drear reality seem more dreary still whenever her thoughts contrasted it, as it was inevitable they should sometimes do, with the golden possibilities of what might have been. And so the weary days sped slowly on.

At length there came a day—about a week after Agnes's discovery of the letter—when tidings went through the house that Dr. Pyefitt had pronounced Mr. Esholt to be much better, and that there was every reason to hope the improvement would continue. That same evening Agnes sat down to communicate the news to Miss Maria, knowing how glad she would be to receive it. Finding herself, when she had written her note, to be out of envelopes, she went down to her husband's study in search of some, feeling sure that at particular time Wilmot would be engaged with Mr. Esholt. She found the room empty, as she had surmised it would be. The lamp was lighted and the curtains drawn. The desk at which Wilmot usually sat was littered with letters and papers of various kinds. There, on the opposite side of the big square table, was the leather-covered chair in which Mr. Esholt sat when at work, and there in front of it was the private drawer in which she had found the fatal letter. An archway and *portiere* divided this room from the library proper. Agnes having found what she wanted, had just turned to go, when there came a ring at the front door. Who could it be? Probably Dr. Pyefitt, who sometimes made a second call about that hour. She heard a servant answer the summons, and then the sound of voices, but whose voices she was unable to judge. As she could not get back to her room without passing through the entrance-hall, and as she did not care to be seen by any possible strangers, who, for aught she knew, might be some of Miss Esholt's visitors, she decided to stay where she was for a few moments till the coast should be clear.

Scarcely had she come to this conclusion when she heard voices in the corridor—those of Wilmot and some stranger—and was dismayed to find that the speakers were coming in the direction of the study. She had just time to push aside the *portiere* and glide through into the library beyond, when the study door was opened and Wilmot and the stranger entered. The library was in darkness; but Agnes at once made her way noiselessly towards a door at the opposite end which opened into a side corridor from whence she would be able to get back unobserved to her room. Her heart gave a great throb when, on trying this door, she found it locked, and locked, too, from the outside. Her only means of escape was cut off! While she was standing in dire perplexity, not knowing what to do next, she heard the stranger say: "I suppose we have nothing to fear from eavesdroppers?" To which Wilmot replied: "Nothing." Then he strode across the room, drew aside the *portiere* and peered for an instant into the darkness beyond. Agnes, who was wearing a black dress this evening, had barely time to sink into a recess between two bookcases. Then the *portiere* fell back into its place, and all was darkness again.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Prosecution of De Lesseps.

The cable announces that De Lesseps is likely to be prosecuted for inducing the French people to put their money in the Panama Canal. The canal company broke down over two years ago after carrying on the work in a manner described by the commission appointed by the liquidator as "scandalously reckless and wasteful." The amount of money actually sunk in the enterprise was $280,000,000. The plant and material on hand was estimated to be worth $90,000,000 but though every mile of the route has been kept under surveillance the property has been gradually deteriorating in value from disuse and from the excessive dampness of the region. The commission referred to estimated that it would take $347,000,000 and twenty years' time to finish the canal. The twelve-year term of the company lapses on March 3, 1892, but the Columbian Government has agreed on rather stiff conditions to prolong it for eight years. It is not believed, however, that any more money will be spent in the enterprise. Besides the deadly climate, in itself no small drawback, it is believed that the canal would be of little use to sailing vessels. Owing to the uncertainty of the winds in the Bay of Panama such vessels would be delayed frequently for days and even weeks.

THE GERMANS DEFEATED IN AFRICA.

Unlike the British They Cannot Make Their Way in Foreign Lands.

The most stubborn resistance to the advance of the white race into Africa has been offered by the natives who live behind the German possessions at Cameroons. About three years ago, the expedition of Kund and Tappenbeck, who were on their way to Adamaua and the Benue River, was driven back with great loss, and for many days the explorers and their panic-stricken carriers fled through the jungle, beset at every moment by enemies concealed in the tall grass, who now and then brought down a fresh victim with their poisoned arrows. The cable now informs us that the punitive expedition sent out from Cameroons to punish the natives who inflicted such terrible defeat upon Dr. Zintgraff's expedition in January last, found that the natives had cruelly tortured the prisoners they took before executing them, and that many of the prisoners commited suicide in order to escape torture.

Only meagre details have yet been published of the terrible experience of Dr. Zintgraff. He started from Cameroons last fall with a very large expedition for the purpose of establishing the German pretensions to Adamaua and the adjacent regions. In his party were Lieut. von Spangenberg, the traders Jantzen and Thormahlen, with other white men, besides five hundred native carriers. The expedition safely reached the German station of Baliburg, which Dr. Zintgraff had founded on a previous expedition. Friendly relations had been established between the Bali tribe and the Germans, and trade had been opened between the Bali people and Cameroons. Just beyond the Balis, however, lives the hostile chief of the Bafuti, who sent word to the whites that they would not be permitted to travel further east. He murdered two messengers whom Dr. Zintgraff sent to him with offers of peace. The warlike Balis told the explorer that the Bafuti could be reduced to submission, and offered to reenforce his expedition by 5,000 warriors and sweep the enemy out of the road. The offer was accepted, and on Jan 31 last a stubborn battle took place, the result of which was that the chief town of the Bafuti fell into the hands of the white men and their allies and was burned to the ground.

On the next day, however, when the Balis had exhausted nearly their entire supply of ammunition, they were attacked by the enemy, who were estimated to number 10,000 men, and, after a terrible battle, Dr. Kintgraff and his army were driven pell mell from the field. It is known that the Bafuti suffered a loss of at least 500 men, but the loss of Zintgraff's army was still greater. Of his own force of 500 men nearly 200 were killed or left on the field. Among the dead were Lieut. von Spangenberg and Messrs. Thiebe and Nehber of the trading company. The cable despatch speaks of Germans among the prisoners taken by the savages, but this is probably an error, as it is believed no living white men fell into their hands.

After this terrible reverse Dr. Zintgraff remained for fourteen days unmolested in his station at Baliburg, and then retreated to the coast, in order to equip an expedition to punish the natives who had vanquished him. It is the expedition he raised and despatched to the interior, which returns with the report that unfortunate members of his party who were taken prisoners had killed themselves to avoid torture. But the cable despatch does not tell half the story of the party that was sent from Cameroons to avenge the defeat of the earlier expedition. All we know of it is contained in a few lines sent by cable from the mouth of the Niger River.

The avengers were themselves most terribly defeated, in spite of their superior weapons. The white leaders of the expedition were killed to a man, and those of their unfortunate followers who escaped the overwhelming onslaught of the enemy, straggled north to the Benue River, where they were found in woful plight by British traders and taken down to the sea. This year's sad record of German fighting in the unknown lands behind Cameroons is the most surprising and appalling chapter in the history of European dealings with African aborigines. For the first time the savages of Africa have offered successful resistance, not to a poor explorer with a handful of men, but to large and well-organized expeditions, equipped and sent out by a European Government and fully prepared, it was believed, to find a way or make one. The cheap muskets made for the African trade, and reputed to be more dangerous to the men who fire them than to any one else, have at last had their day of triumph.

When the complete story of these tragic events is known, it will not be surprising if it is found that the Germans are themselves responsible in large measure for the terrible reverses. Somehow it happens that the German pathway in Africa is usually marked with blood, where the men of other nations walk in peace. Compared with the British they are novices in the art of making their way in savage lands. Their experience both in East and West Africa seems to prove that they do not possess the art of conciliation; and when difficulties arise, they show little tact and are apt to precipitate serious trouble.

HAUNTED BY HIS CRIME.

Thirty Years of Remorse Drove a Murderer to Suicide.

A remarkable story of remorse comes to light in the suicide of Jesse Devore, an old man nearly ninety years old who lived in the country several miles from the town of Bridgeport W. Va. Forty years ago Devore murdered a negro and for the past thirty years has been at times tormented in imagination with gangs of negroes who pursued him to kill him for his crime. About twenty years ago he shot himself through the head in order to rid himself of haunting memories, but recovered. A year or two later he stood on the bank of a stream and struck himself on the head with a stone, knocking himself unconscious into the stream, where he would have drowned but for a passer-by who dragged him out more dead than alive.

Devore made several other unsuccessful attempts at suicide. Finally, on Thursday last he went to the house of a neighbor named Bumgardner, where he put up for the night. After all the family had retired he got up, secured a rope and hanged himself.

It is estimated that the amount of land under cereal crop this year in Manitoba is one million three hundred and eleven thousand acres, of which nine hundred and sixteen thousand are in wheat.

GREATEST OF THE OLD SLAVERS.

Traces Still Found of the Big Establishment of Pedro Blanco.

A recent visitor to the Gallinas River, on the west coast of Africa, just north of Liberia, says a great many traces yet exist of the large establishments maintained by Pedro Blanco, when he was making his enormous fortune in the slave trade, fifty years ago. The story of Pedro Blanco is a remarkable one. Of the hundreds of men who for three centuries engaged in the African slave trade, the Spaniard, Pedro Blanco, towered above them all in the extent and success of his operations.

Pedro Blanco was a man of education. He was born at Malaga, Spain, of good family, and had excellent advantages in his youth. He chose, however, to embark in a disreputable business, because he saw in it the prospects of a great fortune. At first he commanded a slave ship running from West Africa to the West Indies, where he sold his slaves. After a few years he established himself in Africa, at the mouth of the Gallinas River, for the purpose of accumulating the cargoes there which his

FLEET OF SLAVE VESSELS

were to carry to all parts of the West Indies and the South American coast. In 1836 Captain Canot visited Pedro Blanco and wrote the best description of his establishment that we have. It was written, however, in the blunt style of a sailor, and undoubtedly he omitted a great many interesting details.

He said as he entered the river, and pushed upward among the many islands, he was astonished at the great pains the Spaniard had taken to avoid being surprised by cruisers, which were constantly on the alert to capture slaving vessels. He saw at least 20 watch towers made of high piles, protected against sun and rain and enabling the watchmen to observe the sea at a height of from 60 to 100 feet above the ground. A number of these watch towers were fixed in lofty trees. Each watchman had a powerful spyglass, with which he was continually sweeping the horizon. Then there were other towers extending into the interior, within signalling distance of one another. Upon the appearance in the offing of a hostile sail, the news was telegraphed by signals in a few minutes from the coast for miles into the interior, and thus Pedro Blanco and his agents were instantly informed that there was danger in the air. Then there was a great hustling of the hundreds of slaves who filled the great traders' baracoons, or slave sheds, into the mangrove swamps, or

OFF INTO THE JUNGLE,

where there was not one chance in a hundred of their presence being detected. If the vessels sent a few boat loads of men ashore they found nothing in the sheds except bales of harmless merchandise, and Pedro Blanco was ready to receive them with the blandest of smiles and an apparently very hearty welcome, assuring them that he was glad to receive visits from people of his own color, that he had quit slaving for a living, and was now in legitimate commerce, and he hoped that they would come to see him often. At that very time he would probably have 2,000 or 3,000 slaves out in the swamps. The slave chasers could find no proof of his nefarious business, and off they would go to seek their prey in other directions.

In a similar way the news was communicated from post to post of Blanco's establishment whenever one of his little vessels returned from the Western world for a fresh cargo. It would lie at anchor off the coast, take on a little India-rubber, cocoanut oil, and other little articles of legitimate commerce, and wait for some dark night when nothing had been seen or heard of any cruiser, and then it would rapidly fill its hold with the poor wretches, who were tied together in the barracoons, and off it would start for America. Pedro Blanco was extremely fortunate. Now and then he lost a slave vessel, but the most of his cargoes of black people reached the Western world in safety and were sold at great profit to the traders there. He could afford to lose an occasional vessel, for the profits on a single cargo that safely reached America amounted to a small fortune.

Each of his slave depots on the islands was in charge of an agent. Upon one of these islands near the mouth of the river, Blanco had his business headquarters, but he resided miles up the river upon another island, where, for a long time, his sister shared with him business cares. There he lived in

ALL THE LUXURY

of a semi-barbaric prince. Further up the river, upon another island, was his seraglio, in which were his wives, who, after the custom of the tribes in that neighborhood, had each a separate dwelling. He built on the islands twelve large slave barracks or barracoons, each of which generally contained from 100 to 500 slaves. The walls of these barracks were made of a double row of thick piles driven five feet into the ground and fastened together with strap iron. The roofs were of poles, with palm leaf thatch, which kept the barracks comparatively dry and cool. Each of the barracoons was guarded by three or four Spaniards or Portuguese.

Capt. Canot described Pedro Blance as a sunburned little man, who for fifteen years, had not left the mouth of the Gallinas River, and received with the most bounteous hospitality every white man who came his way. In 1839 Pedro Blanco gave up the business, and retired to Havana with his fortune, said to have amounted to several millions of francs.

This famous slave dealer was known for a long time as the Rothschild of West Africa and his paper was current and accepted in the money marts of Europe. The king of the slave traders lived many years to enjoy his ill-gotten gains. At last the business that had enriched him was completely suppressed and there is little now to remind the world that Pedro Blanco ever lived except the ruins of his slave barracoons and of the little palace he built for himself on the island in the Gallinas River.

Among the natural productions of Ganjam, India, says a foreign contemporary, is the Strychnos nux-vomica, a forest tree of majestic appearance, bearing sea-green and golden colored fruit. In the pulp are embedded the seeds from which strychnine is extracted. The fruit and seeds are the favorite food of the grotesque bird known as the rhinoceros horn-bill. The bird fattens on the poisonous seeds, and yet it is eagerly sought as game, and its flesh is said to be excellent and perfectly innocuous as human food.