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Winnower

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WINNOWER

The surgeon inserted:

one tiny incision

made the difference of

A wieldy blade of grass

cutting flesh of a curious finger.

He cut, the fervor filled him

The way summer days

spent stripping thorns

from a rose

Found him seeking perfection. The virgin

steel suffered so, how it cried

blood dew drippings:

A splattered chaste floor.

But what about

the girl? Where does

The life snipped from her soul

withdraw with satisfaction,

when he must discover

The frontiers of men

are behind them? O sure

the Knights will survive without

Him, the war will march on

stoccado, orchestrated,

in dying color, he will

Never even query of

the road not taken. The doctor

will wonder for both of them.

Christopher E. Heller
February, 1970

As state legislatures around the U.S. move to discuss and vote on liberalized abortion laws, a well-placed observer comments on the figures, arguments and experiences that mark the debate.

Reforming the Abortion Laws: A Doctor Looks at the Case*

DENIS CAVANAGH, M.D.

As I have traveled around the country this past year, I have been struck by the fact that everywhere I go there are programs designed specifically to push the case for liberalization of our "outmoded abortion laws." The situation with regard to liberalization of the laws seems to be this: About 15 per cent of people in the United States are opposed to abortion, even to save the life of the mother, and so are vocal opponents of any attempt at liberalization of the current laws. About 15 per cent are for "abortion on demand" and have as their aim the introduction of loose "mental health" or "social" clauses or the complete removal of the abortion issue from the law. About 70 per cent of the people would like a moderate degree of reform but have some consideration for the fetus and are definitely opposed to abortion on demand.

My own position with regard to liberalization of the abortion laws has changed over the past year. At the Senate Judiciary Committee hearings in the state of Missouri in the spring of 1968, I spoke in favor of moderate liberalization of the Missouri Abortion Law along the lines of the American Law Institute proposals. I took this stand because I was impressed by the arguments about the inclusion of cases of rape, incest and fetal anomalies and by the statement that a large number of physicians were not able to practice good medicine, in accordance with their conscience, because of the apparently