

Wimbledon Gladiatrixes

July 4, 2009

Since the window of my present habitation looks out in the distance over Wimbledon Park, I have been seeing for the last week or so crowds of sports fans often camping out overnight to get good seats for the world's top tennis tournament held every year close by. Example pulls. One evening I went myself for a few hours.

Evening entry is neither to the best seats nor to the best games – as an air stewardess once unforgettably said to me, “You can't get champagne for beer money” – so I saw none of those singles matches which are the greatest spectacle in the noble sport of tennis: one mind, will, and strength pitted in single combat against another in an eminently skilful contest, as of two gladiators, only without the bloodshed. However, I could watch part of several men's and women's doubles games, two against two.

All the men I saw playing were dressed to my surprise in virtually knee-length shorts, which one supposes therefore cannot hinder a tennis-player. Yet the dress of the women-players reached at most halfway down the thigh. Of course nothing seemed more normal, indeed a number of the female spectators were dressed even more briefly. Now the weather was hot, but are there no menfolk left to tell their daughters, sisters, wives – or mothers! – that such dress is fit for the eyes of a husband only?

Yet another problem was going unnoticed, still more serious. Tennis is then a gladiatorial sport in which a thundering service, powered drives to the baseline and vollies punched away are at a premium, making physical strength and stamina, a fighting spirit and the will to dominate all-important. These being male prerogatives, naturally the women do their best to

imitate men, which may flatter macho pride, but do we men ever stop to think how we are de-naturing our womenfolk by admiring and encouraging them to gladiate? The one gladiatrix who might have looked graceful the other evening turned graceless the moment she prepared to deal out or receive balled thunder!

So here is a practical question: when a woman commits herself to championship tennis or any other male-enhancing sport, can she regard as anything other than a nuisance to be got rid of, that sometimes crippling reminder each month from God that she was designed for the continuation of the human race? Scorning or blocking her fertility, how can she foster it for maternity? Can then the countrymen of Wimbledon, Roland Garros and Flushing Meadows, etc., be surprised if their native birth-rates are collapsing? Have they any right to complain if their countries look like being taken over by immigrants in a not too distant future?

Kyrie eleison.