

The CRUCIBLE



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This issue is dedicated to Dr. William R. North
in appreciation of his time and guidance.

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Superficiality, An Indignity

By ELIZABETH CLARK

People are so superficial. . . Filled with the vast power of their every-day affairs, they seldom stop to think of the really important things in life—the little things. Take, for instance, this question of the yo-yo. Anybody would think a yo-yo a device used only for the amusement of little children—something to prevent them from stealing cookies from the pantry shelf, or feeding the goldfish to their favorite neighborhood cat—for all the attention attributed it.

Now to show just how vital a yo-yo is in this old world of ours, let's begin with the subject of nerves. There are a few intelligent people today who realize all too well that the one thing we must constantly keep in good condition is our nervous system. Too many people have been seen keeling over in subway stations, or passing out in the movies, or practicing vulgar expressions on all the doctors in an institution for disobeying the instructions of the patient (poor thing), who thinks he's Einstein, for us to totally disregard the subject of nerves. But the sad truth is found in realizing that there are still fewer intelligent people today who know that one of the best nerve tonics (aside from Carter's Little Liver Pills, of course), available to this present generation is the yo-yo. Yes, the little five-cent (or, if you're a professional, you'll probably be more willing to invest in a genuine "ten-center") piece of wood, usually painted in some attractive color combination, is one of the best remedies that can be found on the market for calming the nerves. The very moment one feels that string attached to his middle finger, a feeling of divine inner happiness begins to swell within him, if for no reason other than the fact that he knows what's coming next. He lets go of the yo-yo, and the calm, even rhythm of a small, circular object, up and down, up and down, penetrates his being so completely that he hardly realizes, after a moment, that his entire train of thought has left business, or his wife, or the million other pressing problems of the day which would ordinarily be pervading his cranium. Nor does he credit the little toy for having enlightened his person in so subtle a fashion. No, he goes to bed, probably not even realizing why his spirits are so high, and the next morning finds him awakening to another day of the shallow, hum-drum existence he calls living.

Then take the good sportsmanship which yo-yoing develops in the younger generation. We may use the Alloway boys, each of whose tempers is as Irish as they come, and each of whom is noted for his "knock-out" ability, as examples. Mrs. Alloway insists that it was her heart, the other night, when, upon returning home from a shopping trip, she fainted just inside the front door. But we know better—it was merely the shock of a quiet household, and the picture of two small boys, peacefully engaged in yo-yoing. At first glimpse of the "brotherly-love" attitude of Johnny and Jimmy, Mrs. Alloway was amused and pleased, but, closing the door behind her and watching the rhythmic, vertical movement that is the essence of good yo-yoing, amusement turned to shock, and plop!!—Then, too, the dizziness

may have been caused by the circular motion of Mrs. Alloway's head as her eyes followed the yo-yos, first Johnny's, and then Jimmy's, up and down, down and up, up and down. And even Mrs. Alloway will admit, if you ask her, that since the purchase of the yo-yos, the Alloway house has been less of a headache, and more peaceful in atmosphere. She has to agree when we tell her that the good healthy spirit of the American sportsman is displayed by the hand that rolls the yo-yo.

Now, the yo-yo is a very modest little instrument. It can't fight for itself very well, so if someone wants to tramp on it or abuse it in any manner he may do so at will. But any intelligent person will tell you that, after all, it's the little things that count. And the yo-yo is one of them.

Pick-Up

By LOIS BIDDLE

Charl peeped into the wide window of Svelte's Fur Shoppe to see that her hair was smoothly combed. She set the pin straight on her blouse. "Okay, honey," she whispered and, straightening her shoulders, started down Pine Street, the heels of her new black pumps clicking rhythmically on the pavement. A block away was the town's one and only dairy store with its usual collection of hang-arounds. "Look at all of them out of the corner of your eye until you see the one you want," Cousin Alice had said. "Then look at him—no one but him and give a long slow wink. Like this," and she had dipped those fantastically long dark lashes of hers in a perfect little saucy wink. Charl wasn't so sure she could. For one thing all the boys were in uniform now, and there wasn't one she knew among those who came to town from camp. But she took a deep breath and suddenly was almost to them. She turned her head. Instead of several boys she saw only one as her eyes met his. Forgetting Alice's advice, she turned back viciously and marched straight ahead. "You little fool," she said. "You're just too dumb."

He fell in step with her near the brightly lighted movie house. "Don't go in," he said; "we can't have any fun in there." Charl pivoted slowly and gave him a languorous expectant look. "Why not? You can't stop me."

His voice was oddly tense. "You don't think you are getting away, do you? After I've seen you?"

She caught her breath and held it for a long instant. "Don't be too hesitant," Alice had said, "but don't be in a hurry. Just accept it all as perfectly natural." There was the empty house she had left a little earlier and there was the car Mother had left behind for the week-end. First there could be a car ride and then they could go to the house. No one need know. But she wasn't good at this at all—the first time and everything. Other girls were having their fun. Why shouldn't she? "Something to remember," they said. They seemed to remember with no regrets. Her arm slipped into his. "Okay," she said.

They paused in front of Smedley's Drug Store. "Want to go in for a soda," he asked.

She shook her head. "Not yet."

"What then?" he asked. "We can't just walk around like this."

"I have a car at home."

His eyes narrowed and he looked at her closely. "Let's get it."

Out the country road, around the bend, and to the river crept Charl's small blue roadster. She couldn't quite believe it, for the moon shone full and bright. Charl and a handsome soldier and a moon! She stopped the motor and braked beneath an overhanging willow. "We used to have moonlight picnics here before the war," she said.

"Yeh," he answered from the opposite corner of the seat. She couldn't think of anything more to say. He made no effort. What next, Alice, what next?

He raised his head and looked at her searchingly. "Well, what are you waiting for?"

"A low amused laugh is very effective when you don't know what to answer." Alice came to the rescue. "Keep him guessing awhile—not too long."

"I don't know," she said; "how about yourself?"

"Oh, cut it out," he said, and she felt herself roughly jerked from behind the steering wheel and held tight against the buttons of his uniform. "Let me go, you beast," she gasped, "Oh, let me go!"

He pushed her gently into her own corner and she sat there a moment staring at him. "Play up to him," said Alice. "You don't need to care. He won't know you and you'll never see him again." But she suddenly knew she wanted to see him again. She hadn't counted on that.

"You have pretty hair," he said, "so soft, so black. I've never seen any like it before. And you don't look angry at all with your scared-bunny face." His voice was low and mocking and touched with a bitterness. "Why don't you come on over? That's what you brought me out here for, isn't it?"

"Oh, stop it," she cried. "I can't help what you think of me, for I know how it looks."

"Pretty girl walks along the street, sees a soldier, flirts with him, and picks him up. Then she gets scared. What does the fellow do? Miss his chance just because the girl gets scared?"

"You didn't need to come."

"The girl wants some loving because all the home boys have gone to war. What's easier than picking up a soldier? Little soldier wants some loving too."

She couldn't stand the intense gaze of his eyes from the shadowy depth beneath his cap. "Take off your cap," she said. "I would like to see your face—in the moonlight."

"You're avoiding the issue, Bunny. Girls have a habit of doing that. But not my girl—oh, no."

"I'm not your girl."

"Right now you are." She felt rather than saw him place his arm along the back of the seat and she shrank even farther into the cushions.

"I'm sorry," she said. "It's all my fault. I know it is. I couldn't help it. I was lonesome. All the toher girls have fun but me. And why? Who could have fun when she's dumb like me?"

"You don't need to be lonesome, Bunny."

"And you are, too, or you wouldn't have come

with me. We're all so unsettled and so worked-up with things the way they are that we don't know what we're doing."

His expression had changed as he watched her, but his eyes were still veiled and withdrawn as though he feared they would give away some secret.

"It won't help us any to have a cheap necking party," she continued. "That's only a symbol for what we both want. We want love—real love—not a poor imitation."

Through the silence she heard a cricket near the car. What had she done now? It was just like her to spoil it all. And he was handsome and nice, she thought. Perhaps—

"You know, Bunny, you're pretty smart. Most girls don't think far, but they make us happy for a little while. It's girls like you who make us happy for life. I sorta thought that when I saw you walking down the street so prim and nice. It was awful disappointing when you looked at me that way."

"Then why did you follow?"

"You made me mad—doggoned mad. I thought—well, if that is what she wants she'll get it and she'll not forget soon either."

"I'm sorry," she said.

"I'm not."

She became aware then of their isolation, far from anyone who might interrupt them. "The moon is pretty," she said. "I'll always remember how odd it looks where your nose cuts off a triangle."

He laughed then—a hearty laugh that made his teeth flash in the darkness of his lean, tanned face.

"You're a funny girl, Bunny."

"Let's go back," she said. "Mother isn't at home, but I'll have to be getting in."

She dropped him at the corner, where he would take his bus for camp. He went around to her side of the car and looked down into her face intently for several moments.

"And I'll see you again?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," she said huskily through the lump in her throat.

First Furlough

By LE JUNE PIER

The girl came out of the station at the first long, eerie scream of the incoming train. She was small and insignificant, unnoticeable except for the hope in her eyes, the excitement around her mouth. She tried not to look at the approaching train. Instead she looked at the smoky old station, the drab November trees, the dull, familiar things all made bright by the autumn sun and the hope that Mil would come. As the train clanked to a stop, the girl fastened her eyes on its door. The conductor got out. . .

Maybe Mil wouldn't come. He hadn't been on this train yesterday. Maybe his furlough had been canceled.—The conductor helped an old lady alight.—The station was so different now from what it had been when Mil had left ten months ago. That day had brought one of the worst blizzards of the year, and Mil had gone to the Army through biting cold and whirling snow.—Another old lady descended.—The girl wondered how Mil would look. She hadn't seen him for so long. It just wasn't possible that Mil was coming. He wasn't a real person anymore; he had become a picture and a pile of

crazy letters and a source of the cute things soldiers send girls from Florida and North Carolina and Illinois. She tried to remember what the real Mil was like.—Two more old ladies and a younger woman got off the train.—Mil wasn't coming. He wasn't coming. Maybe tomorrow—

The conductor picked up the little footstool and turned to climb back on the train. He stopped as a battered suitcase followed by a boy in uniform pushed down the steps. The girl's eyes widened. Mil! It was Mil! For a split second his eyes took in the familiar little station, then they focused on the girl. In glad, dazed recognition his eyes held hers as they went to each other. The girl didn't kiss her Mil as she had planned. The moment they had dreamed for ten months had finally arrived, and they could only look at each other in a joy that was near to tears. Neither knew when the train left; neither knew what people came and went. Mil put his arm around his girl and led her back to the station. The girl spoke first.

"I just couldn't believe you were coming, it was so—"

"I know." Then Mil eyed her accusingly, "Did you cut classes?" The girl hesitated, groping for an excuse, and was saved by the station master's "Young man, you're supposed to call your dad up."

Mil turned and opened the station door. I'll not go in, the girl thought; he's been away a long time and he'll want to say intimate things to his dad—I'll not go in. But Mil, impatiently holding the door, insisted, "Come on," and she entered the station with him.

The girl watched her soldier as he leaned against the ticket-agent's desk, dialed his dad's office number with a stubby, man's finger, and, grinning at her, kept one ear attentive to the telephone. His appearance hadn't changed much. He was still the same stocky youth with a friendly grin that he had been last January. His khaki uniform fitted him as straightly and neatly as his blue suit ever had. The short, shiny, black hair showed around the edges of his visored dress cap just as it always had when he had worn his band uniform. He still had a funny little nose bumping out between his glasses, and the girl noticed that the khaki uniform just matched his eyes. To look at, Mil was still the same old Mil, except that his broad, solid shoulders were a little broader and more solid and his chest was a little deeper. He hadn't changed—or had he? Maybe he was different down inside where she couldn't see. Maybe he wasn't the same boy who had left her. Ten rough, lonely months in the Army would harden anyone, even her Mil. He might be serious, cynical, or even pessimistic now. The girl looked at him again and suddenly realized that she might be looking at a perfect stranger. The Army changed other men; it could change Mil, too, and if he could change, nothing was stable.

In a high, pseudo-feminine voice Mil squeaked "Goodby" into the telephone and hung up laughing. He resumed his natural baritone to talk to the ticket agent, and then he and his girl went outdoors again. The school across the road had just been dismissed, and children began to gather around Mil. They didn't see soldiers every day. The girl laughed and her

heart was lighter. The Army hadn't lessened his liking for children. It was funny to see a soldier, who had been a man among men for almost a year, surrounded by admiring children. It was sweet, too, and the girl looked into the future, seeing the outlines of something beautiful.

The youthful reception committee had left when Mil's parents drove up in the shiny, green Chrysler. The girl looked away while Mil kissed his cute, excited, little mother and shook hands with his short, jolly dad, calling him by his first name like a naughty child. That's how Mil had always been before the Army took him—a perfect twenty physically and mentally, but the "crazy little kid" around the house. Thank goodness he doesn't act that way in public, the girl thought. Why, people would think he was crazy!

"Well, Cly-y-yde," Mil's affected falsetto drawled, "Shall we go home?" He literally pushed his parents into the back seat and his girl into the front seat. He looked so natural behind the wheel, she thought. The Army hadn't changed that. He'd always love the car, no matter what happened.

"It seems like a dream," Mil said, "Being with you three, driving the car, going down this same old hill again—it doesn't seem real."

"I know," the girl murmured with a glance at him to see if his expression had changed. It wasn't like Mil to be serious; he'd never talked like that before. She looked back at his mother to see if she was thinking the same thing. Perhaps, but his mother only asked, "Mil, did you get those cookies I sent you?"

"You mean those chocolate ones with the frosting on top?"

"Yes—"

"No, I didn't get them." Mil laughed. His girl laughed. That was more like Mil. Maybe he hadn't changed after all, or was he merely reassuring his parents? The girl searched Mil's face for the answer and found none.

By this time the green Chrysler had pulled over to the curb in front of a rambling little white house that was Mil's home. After several unsuccessful attempts to make his girl friend carry his suitcase, the conquering hero surprised the neighbors by taking it into the house himself.

"You changed the furniture in the dining room! You repapered the living room." Mil inspected every familiar corner, then sank into his own chair by the radio. His father and mother watched their boy as closely and gladly as he was scanning the room—delighting in the old familiar things, quick to detect changes. The girl, too, looked at him with anxious eyes. He just couldn't change, and yet—

"Do you want your presents now?" Mil dug into his suitcase, scattering khaki shirts and G.I. socks, finally producing a satin pillow top for his mother and a silly, stuffed animal for his girl. No present for his father; men don't have to have little trinkets like that. Mil knew and his dad knew.

"I haven't slept or had a bath in thirty-two hours, Mother," Mil announced.

"Well, then, you run right upstairs and clean up while we get supper."

Mil gave his girl a parting hug and swung up the stairway as she and his mother dis-

appeared into the kitchen.

"I didn't know whether he was coming or not," Mil's mother explained. "First I'd put the chicken in the oven; then I'd think, he isn't coming, and I'd take it out. After awhile I'd put it in and then take it out again. Dad and I could never eat all that chicken ourselves."

"I couldn't believe he was coming myself. Doesn't he look wonderful?"

"I wasn't good for a thing all day—I was so excited. Now that he's here we can get something done, if he'll let us, the silly kid."

The girl leaned against the sink, listening to Mil's mother talk. It gave her such a comfortable feeling just to be there peeling potatoes and knowing that Mil was right upstairs. How serene life would be if she could always have the assurance that he was somewhere about the house. There was a bumping on the stairs and then Mil sauntered into the kitchen. The girl dropped her paring knife—

"Mil! Where's your uniform?"

"It's dirty and needs pressing and gosh, I haven't had these clothes on in almost a year!"

His mother laughed, "Then why on earth didn't you put on something decent? That old plaid shirt is so faded it looks pale pink and baby blue."

"It's a good shirt. Come on, kiddo, let's play the piano until supper's ready." The girl knew what he could play—a majestic little snatch from Schubert, part of some thumping boogie woogie, and all the marches he could remember. Half-way through the jumbled repertoire his mother called, "Milliard, play a hymn."

After leafing through an entire hymn book, Mil selected one and began. His dad rose to the occasion, leaned against the piano, and sang. In the middle of the piece Mil changed the key, throwing his dad off. As soon as they had got together again, Mil began to play in the original key. He kept this up until the father, laughing helplessly, cuffed his son several times and gave up. Mil finished the hymn with a special jazz ending and a grin at his girl.

"Don't you fellows dare get that cornet out—supper is ready." To the girl Mil's mother explained, "You get used to this after living with these two men for twenty years. The smile behind her eyes told that after twenty years she still thought they were the cutest boys she knew."

Four heads bowed as Mil's dad said grace. "Dear Heavenly Father . . . preserved our lives . . . united around this table again . . . and save us all through Christ, Amen."

The girl raised her head, blinked hard, and swallowed. It was so wonderful—thanking God because Mil was home. She mustn't cry—mustn't cry—Think hard about something else.—Concentrate on the sugar bowl.—Think about the sugar bowl.—Think hard—don't cry.

Mil reached across the table for his favorite spoon; it was in the jelly. The sweep of his arm upset the gravy which ran in little tan streams over the red and white table cloth.

"Oh, Mil, I wish you wouldn't do such things." His mother hurried to clean it up.

"I'm sorry, Mother, but I just have to have my little Mickey Mouse spoon."

The girl giggled. Mil's father tried to look stern. "You know, Milliard, a little of this foolishness goes a long way with me." That set

them all laughing. Mil's dad was as crazy as Mil, and he knew it.

Suddenly the girl looked at her soldier and realized that he could never change, that it would take more than ten months in the Army to alter even slightly a character that had taken twenty years to build. The world has always had funny people and always will have, no matter what happens. She looked at him; he looked at her. Example Number 14152913 of "Our Men in Service" puckered up his lips and whistled, "Cuckoo!"

You Never Know

By M. BURKHART

The soiled blue plush rasped against Lynn's cheek. She squeezed her eyes tightly shut and tried to imagine the smooth linen sheets and her soft pillow at home. A sudden swerve of the bus bumped Ruth's head against hers and they both sat up sleepily to observe the Texas morning. The young mother across the aisle smiled sympathetically, and Lynn wondered guiltily if she had been snoring.

The landscape bounced past. Desert country. Giant cactus and scrubby sage stretched out unendingly, flat and unbroken except for an occasional rickety cattle enclosure and well. Lynn wished idly for a toothbrush as she groped for lipstick and comb in the depths of their dusty black bag.

Ruth began making aimless little passes at her hair. "What time is it?"

"Nine. No, ten. . . Darn these time belts, anyway. I'm all mixed up."

"Let's ask some one. Must be nearly time for a lunch stop."

Lynn hesitated, the old shyness welling up again, then timidly touched the khaki shoulder in the seat ahead, and heard a muttered "eleven o'clock" as the head burrowed deeper into the plush. Ruth nudged her as they heard a familiar indignant snort from the overstuffed person dubbed the "countess." This time her indignation seemed directed at the wheezing gentleman on her right, who, blissfully unconscious of her annoyance, slept noisily on. Lynn felt almost impertinent watching them. There is something almost indecent in looking upon strangers in sleep. To see a face so relaxed, so defenceless—bobbing head and sagging jaw.—She had imagined the dapper little man to be an important producer or perhaps a director on his way to western studios, but now he was just another weary, dusty, middle-aged passenger.

The driver grinned back at her. He was by far the most exciting member of the little troop, lean and sardonic, with swarthy skin and crisply curling black hair. She had learned that he had eight years in service with the Navy. There was something ironic, Lynn thought, about a man with the love of blue water in his veins, navigating their clumsy bus over these arid wastelands. Lynn tried to imagine him at the wheel of a ship—calling to his men over the roar of a storm, and she could almost feel the salt spray against her face, and the slow roll of the deck under her feet. . . She sat up, an uncontrollable blush over her small, pointed face. She could hear her mother's voice: "Just reads and day-dreams—the wildest imagination—and no spunk at all."—And her father,

that night she had fled the room at the mention that she help at the USO: "Scared of her own shadow. Not like Ted or Jean, nor like us, Jenny—no-get-up-and-go to her."

She thought wildly. It's not true; it's not true! But it was true, and no one knew it better than she. This trip had been an ordeal all the way. Even this frightening bus of strangers. . . Oh, it was exciting, all right, but about as much fun as the excitement of seeing stones rolling down a mountain when they can start an avalanche at any moment. Ruth's plea that she couldn't travel West alone had all been part of the conspiracy. Lynn bit her lip nervously. Fritz surely wouldn't be overjoyed to see little sister tagging along as an unwelcome member of the wedding party. She shrank against the dusty plush. The turpor of the stuffy bus hung like a mist over her mind. Last night, in the excitement of adobe houses in moonlight, and the lonely flickering fires of the sheep herders, she had fought sleep, reluctant to lose a detail of the poignant newness of this western country.

Ruth blinked drowsily at her, slid her hand into a pocket and happily discovered a battered cookie from last night's lunch. They took turns, nibbling greedily. The sing of the tires against the hot asphalt drugged them into a dull apathy.

A sickening lurch tumbled Lynn into the aisle. The huge bus rocked threateningly, gave a convulsive shudder, then slid off the highway to come pantingly to rest against one of the huge cacti. The countess was on her feet, screaming wild threats to the reputation of the bus driver, between moans that assured the others of her dying condition. Ruth had given a little gasp, and now sat trying to stem the flow of blood from the cut where her chin had struck the window edge.

"He's drunk! He's drunk! Oh, I'm dying" . . . the strident voice went on and on.

"Someone shut her up," came the terse words from the little bespectacled man.

Just then a cry came from the front at the driver's seat, and Lynn cautiously picked her way over the tumbled luggage and people that filled the aisle. A curly dark head hung limply over the worn leather seat. She knelt quickly and opened a collar of the heavy grey shirt and loosened the wide leather belt. A soft sound behind her, and she turned to meet wide brown eyes in a tiny child's face.

"Him died?"—It was almost a whisper.

"No, dear, just—asleep for a moment." Lynn listened in amazement to this calm, confident voice coming from her own throat.

"Look out, Lady, we've got to get him out of here."

It was the khaki shoulder again, and Lynn smiled at him as she lifted the child and carefully carried her out into the sunlight.

The "countess" was standing in an anguished pose—imploping Heaven, or anyone available and equally sympathetic, to see her plight. Lynn led the child over to her, "Please—you see, her mother has the baby to look after."

The astonished woman attempted an indignant snort, but compromised with something that was surprisingly like a coo, as she took the child's hand. Lynn turned to enter the bus. The mother, her tired young face white

and strained, stepped down to the highway. "Judy?"

Lynn smiled and nodded towards the smallest of the cactus growths. A stout woman was pulling a coat over the green arms of the plant, while a little brown-eyed child laughed delightedly.

"Lynn". It was Ruth, and Lynn felt a pang of guilt that she had so long forgotten her. She saw, with relief, that the cheek was no longer bleeding. She knelt beside the driver, who, although still drawn and white, managed the old grin in response to her anxious look.

"Has anyone any water? First-aid classes didn't mention substitutes in case of a desert emergency!"

"The thermos—I'll get it." In her eagerness, Lynn tripped over the denim-clad legs of a slender girl who had propped herself against the trunk of the cactus. Lynn blushed, and nervously began an apology when she caught the other girl's friendly grin. She stopped short, a puzzled expression changing to an answering smile as she ran on her errand.

"She's carried more than her share," the driver declared, nodding affectionately towards the big bus. "The steering column must have given out first. Good thing the country is so level. I must have been knocked against the windshield, but I seem to be the only casualty. Sure are in a desolate spot, though. Hope some sort of vehicle passes so that we can get word into town. Desert gets damn cold at night."

Inside the bus, Lynn struggled to get her bag down from the overhead rack. "Easy does it". . . a calm masculine voice reassured her, and lean brown hands grasped the leather handle and swung it down. Grey eyes twinkled behind the heavy lenses, and she found herself smiling at the dapper traveling companion of the countess.

"Is the driver going to be quite all right?"

"I think so. It was only his head, you know. I'm going to make wet compresses to take the swelling down."

Her professional tone amused the little man. "And are you a nurse, little Florence Nightingale?"

"Heavens, no! I'd be afraid even to think of it. I'm too scared of strange people. It frightens me to even think of talking to someone I don't know."

"But you are talking to me. And you spoke to little Judy—and her mother, and even the "countess."

"It's funny, but I never thought of that." Lynn reflected, "They just seemed to need me, and I tried to help. Guess I didn't have time to be scared."

"Perhaps that is the answer to a lot of our problems, my child. It is only when we help each other that we can forget our foolish fears and be completely happy. But what a place to preach! Forgive me."

The other passengers, weary with the long wait, crowded past them to alight from the bus. Lynn followed, stifling a laugh as she thought of the childish rhyme about "two by two. . ." There was something like a picture of Noah's Ark about this strange crew.

The bus was obviously out of repair, and they could only wait until help came. The passengers milled around, tired and ill at ease. The

air that came over the desert was cooler now, and the cactus threw long-armed shadows on the sand. A young ruddy-faced boy in khaki began to gather some sticks. The shadows fell, but some twenty people sat around a cheery bonfire, telling of other adventures that had befallen them. Ruth told of a skiing trip in Canada, and being lost in a blizzard there.

"Tell us about your adventures," came the voice of the little man. The flames were reflected in his glasses and gave him a droll, elfish appearance.

Ruth looked at Lynn in alarm, knowing the usual reaction when she was made the center of attention. Lynn, too, was startled out of her own thoughts. She hesitated, then looked at the friendly faces about her, tightened her arm about little Judy and began:

"It happened one winter, when I was just a little girl. Dad had taken me out to Uncle Jeff's lumber camp, and I remember being afraid . . ."

Lynn leaned contentedly against the soft warmth of the blue plush. "What a lovely adventure, Ruthie. Aren't people fun!"

Ruth threw her a curious glance.

"And you know, Ruth, I don't believe the countess is such a bad sort after all . . . just lonely, perhaps."

A grey head poked around the seat ahead. One bespectacled eye winked broadly. "All well, Comrade?"

"All well." And Lynn smiled wisely to herself.

He - - -

By GLADYS GOSS

The sun was making a last curtsy on top of the mountain before it disappeared into the grey curtain of haze. The deep blue sky turned to a rose color above the mountain and a cool breeze stirred through the tall pines. A small stream gurgled at the end of the winding path.

Suddenly the peace of the pine wood was broken as a man came half running, half stumbling down the path. His face was a dark red from exertion and he was panting for breath. Frantic thoughts were reflected from his face. Seeing the stream he dropped flat on his stomach before it and drank in great gulps, lifting his eyes now and then to search the wood as though half bewildered and half afraid of what might be there.

Having drunk his fill he rose and crossed the stream to the opposite bank and from sheer fatigue dropped to the foot of a tall pine. It was nearly dark now. Maybe they wouldn't find him, or, even better, they might give up the search until morning. As though the thought brought him back to reality he looked around the dark wood. He was safe for the moment, but he was so tired. Perhaps he could climb a tree for the night; he had done it often enough as a child. No, they might bring dogs along to search for him. He had to keep going.

As he sat there leaning against the tree he looked as any camper might look. He was a tall, lean man with sandy hair and seemed to be about thirty years old. He wore tan trousers and a short-sleeved blue suit. A hunting knife in a sheath was fastened to his belt. His face had the look of a hunted animal.

His thoughts went wildly back to the afternoon. How could he have acted so insanely? Insanely—insanely—maybe he was insane. How did insane people act? He held his fingers up, one-two-three—. He could count, he could walk, he could talk, he could think, he could remember. He wasn't insane. Oh, God, he was just finding an excuse for himself. It was too late for excuses now. He had to plan a way of escape.

Why had Bob come over that afternoon? Everyone in town knew he and his brother were bitter enemies. But Bob had come. Bob had come to say goodbye to him and his wife Marie, and little Marie, for he was leaving for South America. He had been sitting on the back porch cleaning his gun with little Marie beside him when Bob had come. Immediately they had begun arguing about the way he was cleaning his gun, and soon they were quarreling bitterly about their father's estate that had gone to Bob instead of being divided. What had Bob called him? "A damn fool." That was when he had grabbed his gun and shot Bob—shot him through the neck. He hadn't realized what he had done until Bob dropped to the floor at little Marie's feet with blood all over him. Then he had dashed into the house and on toward the front door. He hadn't even stopped to explain to Marie, but had grabbed his hunting knife in the hall and had gone on running out the front door and down the street to where the pine grove began. He had just kept on running and running until he could go no farther.

Oh, God, forgive him. He didn't mean to do it. What would happen to Marie and little Marie?

Why had he shot Bob? He must be insane. He couldn't keep on running away the rest of his life. The police must be looking for him now. The thought terrified him and he jumped to his feet and looked around the dark forest. Someone was looking for him now, he knew. They were sure to find him if he didn't get out of here. They might even be coming down the path now.

Oh, he was innocent, he was innocent. But he knew a jury would pronounce him guilty. He knew that the penalty for murder was. . . He could hear the judge. "He will be hanged by the neck until he is dead."

No, he wouldn't die. He hadn't meant to kill Bob and he wouldn't die. He'd get away. They wouldn't find him. If he rested a few more minutes he could walk all night.

As he again sat down by the pine tree a full moon began to light up the wood around him. He would have to move on. The police would be sure to find him in this moonlight. He had to calm his nerves and think of a way out. Quickly he jumped to his feet. Did he hear voices or was that his imagination? There he heard it again. His heart began to pound and the blood drained from his face leaving it a ghastly white.

Suddenly he realized what he must do. He felt better when he had made up his mind and even smiled to himself. He pulled the knife from its sheath and looked at it. The cold grey steel glinted in the moonlight. It was a horrible thing to do, but Marie would understand and he asked God's forgiveness. Slowly

he raised his eyes from the knife in his hand, and looked around the pine wood he would never see again. Then placing the point of the blade at his heart, he threw himself face downward to the ground.

The moon continued on its ride across the heavens casting a dim light on the pine trees. A breeze made a moaning sound through the trees and a little stream gurgled at the end of the winding path.

There's One in Every Family

By ROSE MINNIE AKELEY

Perhaps I have a perverse disposition, but the only amusing incidents I can think of are those that were either very embarrassing to someone when they occurred or those in which the funny side was at first overshadowed by the seriousness of the whole thing. My many recollections of this nature include everything from the time one of our acquaintances sat in a plate of freshly toasted marshmallows, to the adventures of a crowd of friends whose midnight antics in the cemetery weren't appreciated by a rock-salt-shooting caretaker; or the incident of a fellow Thespian who lost his mustache in the middle of the big performance. Perhaps one of the most refreshing of these embarrassing tales is one in which I myself was the victim.

It happened long, long ago when I still thought the world was just standing breathlessly by, waiting for me to take over and straighten out its many difficulties. My parents and I were taking the typical tourist trip through the New England states, visiting all the proper monuments and stopping at all the proper places. As my aunt, who has a mania for staying at tourist homes, was not along. Daddy insisted we stay at the best hotels, where we wouldn't have to worry about such homey intimates as wash basins and springless bunks.

Under the kindly eyes of the regular patrons in each new hotel we lived in, I felt my long dormant personality begin to emerge from its cocoon and stretch its sticky wings. By the time we had reached Portland, Maine, I was already thinking of getting a little apartment in Greenwich Village and doing some painting, or whatever you do in Greenwich Village. Of course it would mean not finishing the sixth grade, but I felt I had already withheld my talent too long.

I was always very anxious to eat in the hotel dining room, as I found it extremely amusing to watch other people. Therefore, our first morning in Portland we duly went downstairs to order breakfast. Knowing that among other things Maine was noted for maple syrup, I ordered its usual companion—pancakes.

Taking stock of the room I found, to my satisfaction, that it was well filled. Immediately I began to radiate a little of my new found charm, which consisted principally of giggling hysterically at nothing at all. Just as I was beginning to attract the eyes of everyone present, our orders came, and I found I had worked myself into quite a state over the thought of real home-made maple syrup. Unconsciously I had been eyeing for sometime the bottle of golden brown liquid reposing in the center of the table along with the sugar and salt. No sooner had the waitress placed

the pancakes before me than I eagerly grabbed the bottle, unscrewed the cap and was just going to pour it on when bedlam broke loose. Five people roughly jerked my arm, from the other side of the room ladies were standing up, and everyone was shouting in a loud voice, "That's vinegar!"

When the truth dawned on me, I slowly pulled myself up to my full height, looked around at the sea of faces and in an altogether unconvincing voice said, "I like vinegar on pancakes," and proceeded to pour the horrid stuff on those beautiful flapjacks. My parents, realizing the inner struggle, said nothing, but along with everyone else in the dining room their eyes were riveted on my plate. With agonizing movements I at last cut the first bite and raised it very gingerly to my mouth; even during this moment of sore distress I realized that at last I was the absolute center of attention. I shall never forget the sensation of that first awful mouthful, and with each succeeding bite I felt my butterfly-like personality back tail first into its cocoon. Somehow I downed a convincing amount of the gruelling mess before it was necessary to leave the table rather hurriedly.

Our stay in Portland was brief, quite brief in fact, consisting of the time it took us to pack, pay the bill and get out. By the time we reached Pennsylvania, I was quite recovered and could hardly wait to tell the kids I had eaten vinegar on pancakes.

A Discovery

By JOAN VOGT

"Muggs! Muggs!" I called from our back porch. My voice went out into the light wind, bounced on Messerly's garage, and swiftly was tossed back to me. It was damp, and snow was clinging to the ground.

I waited a twinkling—no Muggs. I glanced at my watch: 12:20. Surely he has made the rounds by this time, I thought. Daily Muggs visits all the neighbors and their cats and their goldfish and their canaries.

I conceived that since he liked a variety of food, I would get him home with a variation in local summons.

"Muggs! Muggs! Muggs! Where's Muggs?" I called, but let the -ums on Muggs slip out quietly through my nose because I did not want the neighbors to hear me say Muggs. It was childish. But it's childish, too, to have a cat for a pet, I decided.

Looking down from the balcony moderne I scanned the immediate neighborhood. The pond toward the left of the yard below was frozen over, and the bare bushes were shivering in the outside refrigerator. Leaning over the banister I projected my voice toward the downstairs porch, from under which Muggs sometimes emerges.

First he pushes out a white paw and steadies it on the ground. Then show the four black streaks of fur extending from head to nape of neck as his head appears. His left ear is somewhat scalloped where a dog bit him. He has a few antennae, and his eyes are green only when they reflect light. His nose is usually pink in contrast to the fourteen white whiskers. His chest is white, and under each white fur legging a four-toe formation is revealed. Each

front leg meets each white paw in a dimple. The rest of him is variegated tiger with a skunk-like, eleven-inch, ring tail.

His meow is gentle, and sometimes the vibration frequency is so high that his mouth opens in an unheard cry. When he hears his name, he answers with a downward inflection.

I have called Muggs several times a day for two years, and I had taken it as part of a routine. But on this particular day when I saw Muggs coming almost a block away, I watched him carefully as people observe when they are touring. As he came closer home, I could see he did not like the snow. All at once it came to me that this cat of a Muggs had worn a definite path from Messerly's yard over to our own.

There were little holes in the snow. And prissy Muggs had a nonchalant air. Each paw landed in the cavity he made the first time he had cleared a way for himself through the snow. It was not even necessary for him to turn his head to see that his hind paws were doing all right. They were. He never missed a convenient hole in the snow.

When I went downstairs to let him into the house, I felt his paws. Not one of the four paws was the least bit snowy.

For the next few days I observed Muggs. Uniformly he traveled the same path. In certain places he makes a zigzag side track. This he keeps a zigzag side track.

A Look at Life in a Nightmare, with Thanks

By JOAN VOGT

for Life, The Birth of a Nation, and We the People; for the men who know tobacco best; for my "Maiden Form"; for the pause that refreshes; for the March of Time and the March of Dimes; for Chesterfields—they satisfy; for the love of Mike and the Fountain of Youth and Fountainhead, or is it Thunderhead? for Little Abner, Dick Tracy, and Annie Rooney, cold WAVES and warm WACs; for the clear heads that call for Calvert Ten Nights in a Bar Room, but I'm uncertain whether I appreciate The Ten Commandments and The Apostle. Nevertheless, I am grateful for my ma and Mother Goose and Father Time. At least I have something to look forward to when my Life Begins at Forty; maybe then I shall make up for my Life with Father. Some day I'm gonna go see that big Sugar Bowl, or is it the Rose Bowl? I always did like to "Ring around the Rosie," but, by darn, I was born thirty years too soon to flagpole-it around Betty Smith's tree in Brooklyn.

How I used to adore The American Boy who lived down the lane in Sleepy Hollow on Angel Street and was always getting a bag of wool pulled over his eyes. Then everybody called him the black sheep of the family—bah! bah!

I'm just tickled mad pink to know there's a Valley of Decision. Now I can go there when I can't make up my mind. We're all grateful for Paul Revere's horse, but why didn't somebody antique him for the Manhattan Merry-Go-Round?

I don't see why Webster had to go collegiate on us; why didn't he stick to standard? Why did Gregg have a shorthand? and why must sheets be gray before people can get them

white? Who's going to look out for my brother who's always wandering around lonely as a cloud? I've got it—I'll give him My Friend Flicka. Why didn't I think of White Christmas before ba-ba-ba-boo Crosby? and why does Kay Kyser possess all the musical knowledge?

Ring! Ring! Oh, my alarm clock! I guess I'm the person For Whom the Bell Tolls.

There Were No Tears

By ELIZABETH CLARK

The little white house with the blue shutters Susan had dreamed of for so long was finished at last. Any minute now Jim would come dashing in the front door of the four-room apartment, and together they would go to view the beauty of their dream come true. Three years was a long time to wait, but the young housewife felt it had not been in vain. Now, after many sacrifices, the reward was at hand. It would be only a matter of minutes.

Deeply engaged in such pleasant thoughts as these, Sue hardly even heard the first ring of the telephone. But repetition brought results. She jumped to answer. "Probably Jim, calling to say he's ready to leave the office," she thought, as she uttered a somewhat expectant "Hello?"

"Sue? Sorry, honey, but we're head over heels down here. I'll be late—or wait! Maybe it'd be better if you could meet me. Well-I-I, let's see—how 'bout six-thirty, north west, corner of Fifteenth and Market, by Ruggles'. O.K.? See you—and, honey—are you happy?"

"Silly," she laughed, as she replaced the receiver. Then, to herself—"Am I happy! Well, I don't know what else you'd call it." She settled herself into her favorite easy chair, humming softly.

The church clock struck five. Sue smiled to herself, as she recognized that it was exactly one hour and one half till heaven. Snuggled in her window-seat, her brown locks curling softly about her pale face, she suddenly saw herself a child again. She could see a small, frail schoolgirl, old for her age, coming home at night to a couple of dismal apartment house-rooms, and seeing there the life of a desperate widow. She could see the lines in her mother's haggard face, and feel the smile that wasn't a smile penetrating her young heart. She could remember all her childish exasperation muttering, "Why does Mother have to work so hard, and why can't I have a father, when all of my friends have one?"

It hadn't been too tough at school, though, Susan reflected. Always near the head of the class, she had actually seen a sparkle in the eyes of her mother, each time a report card was sent home. And then the two of them would celebrate—always a movie, with something to eat afterwards.

High school had been pretty good, too. Susan never had any trouble getting dates, and, although she was kept too busy for many, she always managed good escorts and fine times. Then she could remember philosophical talks with her mother (how she had loved them), all about the history of her family, and how she should learn to take life—the bitter with the sweet. How one should always look to a happier future, and never give anything up in

despair.

Sue had really loved that mother of hers, and no one knew the true agony she suffered when, in her senior year, she was called home to the bed-side of a hit-and-run victim. Looking down at that thin, lifeless form, Susan did not even think of tears. She just stood and thought, and the words "happier future" echoed and re-echoed in her tired brain. What was it Thomas Hood had said—

"One more unfortunate
Weary of breath
Rashly importunate
Gone to her death—?"

Somehow or other, Susan managed to finish the year at school. But the small sum Mother had saved for education at business college would not be used.

"Sue, you're nuts! Spending so much money for a tombstone, when you can't afford it!" Statements similar to this came from so many of her friends that Susan began to wonder whether she really had any friends or not. One thing was sure—they didn't know Susan.

Her first job as telephone operator in the Rittenhouse office had been fun in a way. She rather enjoyed the impatience of some of those "rich old fogies" on the wire, and, except at times when her mood was too irritable, she often found herself chuckling at the way a little thing like a telephone call could upset the entire nature of mankind. Working eight hours a day at a job where every muscle was exerted, and as many as eight separate conversations were in her hands at one time, Susan seldom found herself suffering from want of anything to do. Really, when you think of it, I don't accomplish very much, but I'm always busy. I read a little, go to shows, work, sleep, and eat. That's about all," she remembered saying to Jim on one of their earlier dates.

Jim! That had really been the beginning of things. Sue had often wondered just who that young guy was who visited the switchboard so frequently. Tall and blond, he certainly did attract attention. He seemed so in love with life, and the little wisps of conversation Susan overheard now and then seemed the very essence of intelligence. He seemed so adjusted to things and so completely satisfied with life that she wondered if it wasn't her imagination at times, when she would detect a hidden melancholy behind his smile—a funny look, as if he had so much to say, if someone would only listen.

And Susan remembered the first time she ever really conversed with Jim. It was during the lunch hour, on a dreary, sloppy day that was a mixture of snow, rain, and fog. The cafeteria where all the employees ate had never seemed so noisy to Susan before. This was one of her bad days, anyway—people had been driving her crazy all morning. She was in the midst of trying to reorganize her nervous state of mind by logical thinking when an exceptionally cheerful, "Why, hello, there!" greeted her ears, and a handsome set of deep blue eyes smiled down at her.

"Mind if I sit here?"

"Certainly not."

"You're in Rittenhouse, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Like it?"

"No."

Susan found herself chuckling over the results of that first conversation. She hadn't been very sociable, but daily lunches together followed, and with each meeting conversation became easier and more cheerful. Or maybe it was just more understanding.

The first time Jim asked for a formal date, Susan had been so shocked that she felt herself blushing, over her, "Why—yes—of course—I'd love to." And after that first real date, life had fairly bubbled with happiness. Susan began to feel a little different from any way she had known before. She began to feel wanted, and, after the course of about a year, she knew she was wanted.

The wedding was a simple one. A few friends of Jim's and Sue's, along with Jim's parents, were all that stood in that quieter-than-ever church on Pine Street Susan had attended all her life. It was a rather strange wedding, really. There were no tears. The April breeze blew gently through the open door, and Susan felt like somebody else. Once, during the course of the ceremony, she remembered her mother and "happier future," and she smiled. It was the wrong time to smile, but she didn't care. She wondered if life would always be like this—just she, and Jim, and not caring.

The honeymoon consisted of a week in the Poconos, and everything was perfect. Life was gay, and every morning the two of them would hike among the first grasses of spring. "The budding trees beside the stream" Susan had read about were not at all, she discovered, purely a romantic conception of life. They were real, vital, and moving. She found herself thinking in terms such as these more often each day, and she knew that it was Jim who had opened her mind to the more beautiful, simple side of life.

And now Susan was sitting in the three-year-old easy chair that they'd bought when they took their first apartment. Of course she had stopped working after the marriage and she found she loved housekeeping. She loved getting Jim off in the morning, and cooking, and sewing, and greeting him home at night. She loved planning with him—all about the blueprints for the new house, its location, and furnishings, and how they'd managed the budget. She loved their nights in, just sitting and reading or talking, and their nights out, always celebrating one thing or another—a new plan, or a birthday, or just a common feeling of love for people and a desire to be among them.

Three years were gone, and they had flown. Summer vacations with snap shots and souvenirs, cold winter days and hot summer nights together—everything had been so much enjoyed. Even the drawbacks. And now the house was ready, and she was going to meet Jim.

She heard that old, familiar church clock strike six. Outside the first signs of night were evident. Grey shadows penetrated the streets below and drab-looking individuals were walking along with that worn look that signifies the end of the day. Susan sighed for them, sentimental extrovert that she was, then slowly rose and dressed.

Outside the familiar breezes of April were

playing with men's hats and newspapers. Walking slowly up Fifteenth Street, Susan gloried in the window decorations, and the noise, and the people. Funny, how some of them seemed so discontent and bothered about something, and how some displayed a far-away, lonely look! And how others, like herself, seemed so happy about something or other, and so anxious for a successful evening.

By the time Susan reached Chestnut Street she found herself looking for him through the crowd. Silly, wasn't she? And she noticed several people smiling slyly at her as she passed. Was it because she herself was beaming, or was it just that they knew people, and suspected something nice was going to happen to her. Reaching Market Street, she glided across Fifteenth to the west side, and waited for the light. It changed, and, as she was crossing to Ruggles', she got a glimpse of him, waiting patiently. He did not see her, and she thoroughly enjoyed the self-satisfied look on his face. She felt like calling very loudly "Jim!"

Maybe she did, at that.

One year has gone by, and it is for you, the eaves-dropper, to see the look now on the face of Susan's husband. As he sits in the easy chair of the dingy, four-room apartment, he finds the *In Memoriam Column* of the *Evening Bulletin*, scans it, and reads:

Darwell, Susan Irene,
Whose life was taken one
year ago at Fifteenth and
Market Streets by a hit-
and-run driver.
Sadly missed by

Husband Jim

Parents Are Good

By LOIS BIDDLE

He lay rigid in his bed with cold perspiration breaking out all over his small body. He heard the crickets in the wheat field outside, and listened to the murmuring of the creek as it flowed over the rocks. Suddenly a vast deep snore broke the deep silence which had prevailed inside the house. Dad was asleep. With relaxed muscles he at last turned gently over on his side to look at Jimmy, curled up in a ball, his fair hair on with the pillow. "Bye, bye, baby brother," he whispered and for a moment a tear glistened in his eye. He wiped it hastily away. "Bye, bye, baby brother. Look, let me tell you something. When they start lying to you and being mean to you, just let me know. Big brother will take care of you."

He made no sound as he tiptoed in stocking feet down the stairs out over the porch, and into the driveway. There, with fists tight, he looked back. "Lie to me, will you?" he shouted in a fierce whisper. "Lie to me, and whip me when I catch you at it. We'll see about that. Some day I'll be a policeman and I'll come back here and put you all in jail."

Santa Claus! That was such a crazy, impossible story! But he had believed it so long. Why, even last year when he was nine and in fifth grade he had believed their story of how Santa Claus had made a mistake when he brought his wagon. All the time there hadn't been a Santa Claus at all. How the other boys

teased him—little sissy Davy believes in Santa Claus. How they laughed at him and called him names and said he ought to grow up! Their laughing was worse than anything else and he had fought back because he didn't think Dad and Mother would ever lie to him. They had, though. And they hadn't believed it was an accident when he found all the Christmas toys in a box behind the bedroom door. He hadn't meant to snoop, but the wind blew the door shut and there in plain sight was his soldier uniform and Jimmy's air corps suit and a lot of games and things. They had tried to make him believe Santa Claus had brought the things early this year. He probably would have believed it if he had not heard Mother telling Aunt Emma about the trouble she had had finding a suit to fit Jimmy. Parents weren't to be trusted any more at all.

He and Jimmy were having their usual tussle before supper on Thursday evening. "You better be good," Mother said, "Santa comes tomorrow night." "There isn't any Santa Claus!" he shouted into Mother's startled face. "There isn't any Santa Claus, and I wish you'd stop telling me there is when it's all a big lie."

"Why, Davy." Mother was terribly shocked and almost speechless.

"I don't know why you told me all that crap about his bringing me the wrong wagon last year. I don't know why you told us any of that. Dan Symonds says I'm a big sissy. Well, I won't be anymore!"

Dad had been watching with a frown growing deeper and deeper between his eyes. "David, is that any way to speak to your mother?"

"I don't care. You are all liars. You all try to make us be good by telling us a lot of junk. I'm not going to be good—not for a bunch of liars!"

"Young man!" Father's voice was calm and stern as he led him out of the house and to the stack of wood beneath the porch. "There comes a time in every boy's life when action does speak louder than words." Dad whipped hard when he whipped, and going to bed without supper was no fun either. Jimmy had looked on with expressionless, innocent countenance. Some day the same thing would happen to him. Poor kid!

The wind was even colder than it had been during the day. The town was only about two miles farther. It shouldn't take long to reach it. And then he remembered his paper route. How could he have forgotten that? Who would carry the papers to all the farmers around? Jimmy couldn't—not with this cold wind and with it getting dark so early in the evening. It was awfully dark now. He hadn't realized just how black the night was. The wind had an eerie sound as it howled through the branches of the trees along the road. There were no stars—only dark clouds scurrying hastily across the face of a hazy moon. A dark shape seemed to loom ahead of him. Everywhere he looked there were big, dark things. He'd never get to town.

The wind howled again. No, Jimmy couldn't carry the papers. Jimmy was home in bed. Jimmy was warm. Jimmy's toes and fingers weren't freezing like his. How good that bed would feel! How warm and cozy home would

be!

All at once, he knew he wanted to be back in his bed more than anything else in the world. Santa Claus didn't seem so important when you were out in the cold like this. He would get his toys anyway, whether there were a Santa or not.

But, wait, maybe there was a Santa after all. Maybe Santa was a spirit or something—just something that made Dad and Mother want to give him things for Christmas. That must be it. They had never lied to him before. Dad and Mother were good. If they said there was a Santa, there surely must be one. They should have told him what he was really like, instead of all that nonsense about a little fat man in a red suit.

"I won't tell Jimmy," he said, "not till he's much bigger. He's too little to understand now."

That tricky board at the top of the stairs creaked as he tiptoed back to bed. "Daddy, someone just came upstairs," Mother whispered.

"No one but Davy," Daddy answered. "Davy has started to grow up, my dear."

Better Late Than Boisterous

By LE JUNE PIER

The busses of the Susquehanna Transit Company don't like to be detained. In fact some of them won't even wait while a prospective rider combs her hair, dabs on a little lipstick, collects her belongings, snatches a coat, looks for the mail, buys a candy bar and proceeds towards the bus at a lady-like pace. Of course these are some of the more boisterous type of women who can actually halt a vanishing bus by running after it and screaming in loud voices. My opinion of this type of women is not exceedingly high, for I believe that a girl should remain modest and restrained, war or no war. Upon this ideal I found my behavior.

I was not surprised, therefore, to find myself sitting on the top step waiting for the 9 o'clock bus last week. The only thing that really worried me was what excuse I could give my supervisor for being a half hour late for work. I was sure he did not share my views concerning the quiet, feminine defense worker, and I knew he would mention the war. Supervisors just don't understand ladies.

However, the sky was blue; the sun was everywhere; the day was beautiful, a special spring premium thrown in free of charge with twenty-eight February days. The stone of the top step was icy through the thin blue denim dungarees that belonged to the girl across the hall. The wind, a thing apart from the sun, blew through my red plaid shirt and ruffled the braids of my hair. It was a good day to form a philosophy of life. I tried, but the blue sky infected me and I could only laugh—laugh at the sky and the sun and the bare old trees and the dirty old bus that was dragging past on . . .

"Hey! Wait!" I sprinted up the road after the disappearing vehicle and brought up at its rear just as the brakes scraped and an arrogant driver folded back the door. I tossed my ticket in his direction and contracted into the last inch of standing room. My pay checks

would be less because of this, but a lady must sacrifice for her ideals.

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever."

—King

Waiting

By MARTHA BADICK

The mailman's whistle brought Joan to the door almost instantly. She shuffled through the half-dozen envelopes; there was none addressed to her. This seemed to be a regular procedure. Every day for the past two weeks she waited expectantly for the mailman, and every day he had no mail for her. No news may be good news, but under some circumstances that's a little hard to believe. With that same dejected feeling, Joan re-entered the house.

"Here's the mail, Mother," she called, "and still not a word from Tom. He must have been sent overseas. That's the only thing I can figure out. I suppose I'll just have to do some more waiting. If this keeps up much longer, I'm afraid it will drive me to drink."

"Why drink?" asked her mother, teasingly. "Why not try something like knitting or reading? I'm sure you'd get a lot more out of it."

"That's a splendid idea," Joan replied ironically. "In all my spare time I could knit clothes for the whole family. How do you think Dad would like a pair of knitted trousers? Maybe I can bury myself in a book for a while."

Joan walked over to the bookcase, picked up **A Tree Grows in Brooklyn** and tried to find the place where she had stopped reading about three weeks ago. Three weeks ago—that was when Tom had his furlough. She remembered every minute of those ten glorious days. He was so sweet when he asked if she would wait for him. They made wonderful plans for the future, but when would they materialize? She remembered how, even though she was having such a grand time, she couldn't forget that it would last only a few short days, and then there would be nothing—just memories and more days of waiting. Now her thoughts were very confused. They didn't make sense. They were thoughts of the past, present, and future all mixed up. Also, the book she was trying to read could have been written in Greek. It had no meaning. It was merely a lot of words all wrapped around themselves and she was not capable of untangling them. She gave up. She put the book back in its place and went into the kitchen to tell her mother that she was going for a drive. It would be worth using her five gallons of precious gasoline and shortening the life expectancy of her tires, if it would get her out of this mood.

Joan Wheeler didn't always feel like this. She was very popular and her popularity was due to her pleasing personality and her vivaciousness. She could always think of something to do, but today was definitely an off day. What is there to do in a small town like Wyalusing on Saturday afternoon when even your best girl friend is away. Not very much. The ever-present twinkle was gone from those big blue eyes, and the usually up-turned mouth drooped at the corners. She donned her weather coat, that looked as though it had seen many months of active duty and, with a half-hearted

"Bye" to her mother, she proceeded to the garage.

"Supper's at six," reminded her mother. "If you drive out near Twin Cuts, stop in and see if Jim is getting any better. Tom would be glad to hear about him, too."

The day was perfect. It was April and the earth was all clean and fresh from its morning shower. The white clouds were like freshly laundered doilies in the blue sky. The light winds were playing tag all around the maroon convertible in which Joan was tearing along the highway. . . . Still deep in memories, she saw none of this beauty. To her, April showers meant more mud puddles and the winds were annoying. They mussed her hair.

Her drive took her five miles out of town. She stopped at the "Marie Antoinette" Inn, a combination gift shop and restaurant. It was here that she was to inquire about Jim. His mother, Tom's aunt, was the owner of the Inn, and if she could be seen puttering around the miniatures, antiques, and other novelties, it was a sure sign that Jim was better. The tinkle of the bell above the door announced Joan's entrance. Mrs. Anderson looked up from her task of unpacking an order and smiled, "Welcome."

Joan approached her. "I just dropped in for a few minutes to see how Jim is. From this cheery atmosphere, my guess would be that he's improving. Mother will be very happy to hear that."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Anderson. "He's getting along fine. The doctor said that he'll be sitting up in a few days. He's asleep now; otherwise I'd let you go up to see him. We haven't heard from my nephew. You know Jim is always anxious to hear about Tom, he looks up to him and uses him as a model. Yes, we all think Tom is a fine boy. You make such a lovely couple."

"Thank you. I'm glad you think so. I must leave now, but I'll come up to see Jim again—especially if I get a letter from Tom," suggested Joan. "I'm trying to drive the blues away."

They exchanged good byes. Joan walked over to her car. She turned and waved to Mrs. Anderson, who was watching her from the doorway. Instead of opening the car door she stood for a moment, then she strolled off, across the street to the newly constructed look-out. From here she could see the entire valley known as the French Azilum. Tom was very much interested in this place. He had taken her here several times. It fascinated him and he was always unearthing little bits of information concerning its historical background. They often sat here trying to figure out what this region would have been like if Marie Antoinette had arrived. In fact, Tom had begun a story with the French Azilum as the setting. He didn't quite know how to end it, and then he had to postpone further work on it until after the war.

The French Azilum is the valley to which the nobility of France fled during the French Revolution. Here they were preparing a refuge for Marie Antoinette. A house was built for her, and everything was arranged in anticipation of her arrival. Joan studied the scene. A train puffed along, parallel to the Susquehanna

River, spoiled her picture. She moved back just a little and cut the train from her view. Now she was back in the eighteenth century. Some of the old houses were still standing, like checkers on checkerboard farms. There were people working on the farms. Were they dressed in the silks and satins, ruffles and lace, of the French Royal Court? Those white heads—were they powdered wigs?

Joan saw Jeannette Chironand, the lovely young mademoiselle that Tom was writing about in his story. Mlle. Chironand had come to America at the outbreak of the Revolution. She was with her family and many friends. She would have been happy, but she wasn't. Her fiance had stayed in France with the party whose duty it was to bring Marie Antoinette to safety. Jeannette could endure the hardships of these refugees, if only she weren't so worried about her lover. She could not express her fears openly; she dared not inquire about Pierre. When the Queen was in such grave danger, it was not proper to worry about others. Her questions had to be worded about Marie Antoinette, even though they meant: How is Pierre? Where is he? When will he arrive?

Joan had been leaning against the rail for about a half hour. She was unaware of the cars that sped past behind her, and even of those that might have stopped. She was in a world of her own. A similarity in these two situations struck her. One was in the eighteenth century and the other in the twentieth. The two hundred years had made little difference in the lives of the two girls. Oh yes, their clothes were different and there was a change in material things, but the themes of their lives were identical. The keyword was **wait**. In both cases was was the disturbing element.

From her courses in history, Joan knew that Marie Antoinette never reached America. It was not very likely that her would-be rescuers did, either. The guillotine was a horrible death. But story-book heroines are always brave. They have to be to inspire all the Joan Wheelers that might read the book. Then, why aren't people like that? Why are humans so weak?

From that moment Joan decided to live her life as the heroine would. If Tom had been able to finish the story, surely he would have presented Jeannette as a courageous woman, spending her years of waiting in being helpful and cheerful.

That's it! That's what was wrong. Joan knew now. Her whole trouble was the futility of her life. She had that strange disease from which many retired men have been known to die. There must be something she could do, something that might help at least a little in winning the war. She felt better already. Now that she had diagnosed her case, she knew she could find the cure.

No, the gasoline had not been wasted. Her drive was certainly very profitable. She was in the car again, going back the way she had come. She smiled as the wind played with her hair. She raced up and down the hills. She was in a hurry, for there were so many things that she wanted to do. First, she wanted to make sure that her mother realized that April was by far the nicest month in the year. Then, she wanted to call the Red Cross to find out

where she could get the yarn and to see if they had anything else that she might do. Finally, she must write to Tom. She had so much to tell him. She had to thank him, for it was his story that inspired her and gave her this new outlook on life.

"He liked those chocolate cookies so well when he was home. I think I'll make a batch and send him some."

A Day With Grandma

By MERRILL C. JONES

Lizzy was tired. She had a right to be tired. It had taken eighty-seven years of hard work to make her so old and wrinkled and thin and bent.

Lizzy was tired, but she was busy. There was much to be done. The kitchen and living room were to be cleaned today, in addition to mending that she had been putting off for some time. Still, if she hurried perhaps she could get around to ironing her other dress. The faded blue calico one she was wearing would be in the wash in only three days for this was Thursday. Perhaps she could—but she wouldn't. She knew it, but she did not dare to realize it, for if she thought too much about it she would complain, and Miriam had enough trouble without having to put up with that.

Miriam was a fool—but a good one. She had stayed with her mother after all the other children had married. And Miriam was no sponger. Lizzie had some money, but it was Miriam who had really kept the home going for the last fifteen years. That was why Lizzie had finally signed the home over to her. If she would only get some sense and stop spending all her money on Robert's children. Of course, Robert had always been Miriam's favorite brother, but that was no reason why she should go to extremes with his children. It was no good for them. It had spoiled Mary, and it was spoiling Max. And the way they made a fuss over him every time he did something unusual was making him worse and worse. Olive, his mother, did not need to worry, though. She sent him to stay with Lizzie five days of the week from eight-thirty until four-thirty. Mary would be along with him any moment now.

Lizzie got her sewing basket from the top of the folded sewing machine and placed it on the table while she searched through the cupboard for her glasses. If that little scamp had—no, here they were. She perched them on her thin nose and retired to her rocking chair, taking the sewing basket with her. She was glad the rocker had been left by the window. The light was much better here, and she could see the birds busily gathering material for nests. They seemed to be hurrying to keep warm. It was a late spring and the frost had not yet gone out of the ground. Pools of water stood about in low spots. Lizzie watched the quick movements of the birds and somehow felt young and agile again.

A knock at the door startled her. Reality was forced upon her by a sharp pain in her left thumb. She had stuck herself with her needle. Blood was seeping through the wound. It would soon stop; there was not much blood in those bony old fingers. The knock was repeated. That would be Mary with Max.

"Come in," Lizzie called. A dark-haired girl of twelve entered pulling a boy of four years behind her. They left the door open.

"I can't stay," Mary said. "Mom wants to know if you found her pocketbook over here. She lost it." Her voice pouted. It reminded one of oversweet honey.

"No, I haven't seen it. If I find it, I'll see that she gets it back." Lizzie rose from her chair and hobbled over to help Max remove his snow suit. The pain in her back made her grimace. It was always much worse right after she stood up. Mary leaned against the wall near the open door and watched Lizzie tug at the passive Max's too-small suit. When she began to remove the snow pants, Max began to swing his foot vigorously to and fro like a pendulum. She had stooped to pull the leg down over his shoe and it caught her just below and in front of her temple. Her glasses flew into the middle of the room. She made her way slowly to them and picked them up. She went even more slowly to the open door and closed it. All the way she kept telling herself, "He can't help it. It's the way he's been brought up. He can't help it."

When she stood again before Max, he complained loudly, "I bump my toe."

"Yes, I suppose my head should be softer," Lizzie replied. All the dislike she could not help feeling for Max was in the subdued tone of that statement. The only effect it had was to relieve the tension inside her, for Max's young mind could not recognize sarcasm and Mary was too busy peeling films of scarlet from her finger nails to even notice that her grandmother had spoken.

Mary, who couldn't stay, finally left at a quarter of nine. She would make it with five minutes to spare if she hurried; it was only ten minutes' walk to the schoolhouse.

Lizzie resumed her mending, and Max busied himself with a toy jeep which he pulled from behind the stove and took to the middle of the kitchen floor. A week before it had been new. Now the wheels kept falling off. Max became very impatient, and banged the toy upon the floor.

"Dam," he said. He looked inquisitively at Lizzie. Deciding she was displeased, he continued.

"Dam, dam, dam, dam, dam, dam, dam." He paused for breath.

"Max," Lizzie began. He should be chastised.

"What?" Max responded.

Suddenly Lizzie realized that any scolding she might do would only make matters worse.

"What?" came again.

The word meant nothing to Max, she thought. His parents were to be blamed—or Miriam.

"What?"

He had heard it some place and somebody made a fuss over him when he said it the first time, because it was "cute."

"What?"

Now he would have to be punished to cure him. He was just like an improperly trained dog, with his bunch of tricks.

"What?"

That what business was another one of them. She would have to tell him something to shut him up. Perhaps . . .

"What?"

"Max, you can . . . say . . . that word . . . all you want to. I don't care," she said as pleasantly as she could.

"What word?" Max acted as though he did not know what she was talking about.

"Dam," she explained. It went against her grain to say it. She had to get behind it and push it out. It seemed to fall heavily and bounce just once. Max sat on the floor and looked at her. I've said the wrong thing, she thought. Slowly Max turned back to his jeep.

"Gramma funny," he told it as he put it away. "I no like her."

Eleven o'clock. The forenoon had gone very slowly and yet Lizzie felt that she had accomplished very little. Max had kept her busy most of the time. Now he was out in the yard. Lizzie had objected to his going out.

"You'll get wet feet and catch a cold," she had told him.

"I don't catch cold," he had replied. And so he had gone out not even putting on his jacket, in spite of Lizzie's protests.

The comparative quiet gave Lizzie a chance to collect her thoughts. She had tried everything she could think of to promote peace between herself and Max. All of it had failed. Sometimes it was not Max's fault directly; sometimes the things he did irritated her so that she just had to scold him about them even when she knew it would do no good. Like the time he had scribbled on the floor with wax crayons, or the time he fought her until she gave him some cookies, and then he crumbed them up and sprinkled them on the living-room rug. They were small things, as Miriam had said, but they were not right. Well, she would do her best to tolerate him until this evening, and when Miriam came home she would speak to her about telling Olive to get someone else to keep Max. She honestly wasn't able to do it anymore.

Meanwhile it was creeping toward noon. There would be only Lizzie and Max, and she decided to warm over some peas left from last night's supper and fry some potatoes. Slowly shuffling between the cellar and the kitchen she brought forth and placed on the table the peas, two granite cooking dishes—one for warming the potatoes and one for warming the peas—and the potato dish, containing four medium-sized potatoes, a considerable amount of potato parings, and a paring knife. The frying pan she carried across the room and placed on the stove. She had to use both hands to lift and carry it.

After this exertion she felt fatigued. She picked up her sewing and dropped into the rocking chair. She would allow herself to rest fifteen minutes. She would have to call Max then because he was so slow at coming. No, here he was now.

Max opened the door and burst into the kitchen. He ran across the room and stood on Lizzie's moccasined foot with his small hard shoes. The pressure sent long knives of pain up her leg. She withdrew her foot with difficulty. Rheumatism could be weakening as well as painful.

"Gramma," Max said, "tell me story." He repeated it, changing the tone from one of request to one of command.

"I don't know any stories." Lizzie replied earnestly. "What were you doing? Were you having fun?"

"What you care?" was snapped back. "I wanna hear story."

"But, Max, I must darn these stockings. And anyway, I don't know any stories." This must be a new game, thought Lizzie. She was not prepared for it.

"Don't you know any at all?" quizzed Max, jumping up and down on the rockers of her chair.

"I used to but I can only remember the parts of some."

"Tell me it."

"All right, but you sit over on that chair by the table. That's a good boy. Now, let's see . . . Once upon a time there was a little girl named . . ."

"Red Riding Hood," Max interrupted. "Don't tell me that story. I no like it."

"Well, now wait," she said, "and let me go on. I'll start all over again. Once upon a time there was a little girl named"—what was that name?—"Golden-Hair. One day she was going through a forest and saw a nice little house. She climbed in a window and found three chairs."

"Her name Goldlocks. You leave a lot out," said Max informatively. Showing no interest in the rest of the story he took the paring knife from the potato dish and began to score the oilcloth covering the table.

"Max, lay that down," Lizzie commanded. Max continued to mark the table.

"I'll slap your fingers," she warned.

"I cut you," he countered.

"Max!"

"I cut you." He advanced toward her, holding the knife in his outstretched fist. "You no good anyway. You not even tell good story. I cut you." Here was an interesting possibility Max had never explored. Perhaps it would be fun, he thought.

Lizzie did not know what to do. Probably Max was only bluffing but she could not be sure. She would have to take the knife from him. She reached forward and he struck at her hand. The blade creased the nail of the middle finger.

For a moment Lizzie felt helpless and then anger welled up within her. After all she had done for Max he was treating her like this. That he should threaten anyone was outrageous, but his threatening her was . . . was . . . Lizzie could not think of a word emphatic enough.

Lizzie stopped thinking and started acting. As Max brought the knife up again she managed to grip the breadth of the blade with her right hand. When she reached with her left hand to grasp his wrist he placed all his weight upon it and she had to reinforce her hold upon the blade by applying the full strength of both hands. After a few minutes her intense anger began to ebb, and with it her strength. She began to shake slightly. Her hands and arms felt very tired. They wanted to let go, but she forced them to hang on. Max was just stubborn enough to slash her badly if she released the knife. Her arms ached. She looked at them. They seemed to belong to someone else.

Fear was creeping in to replace the anger. Unexpectedly Max released his hold. He had decided it was not fun. Lizzie heaved a sigh of relief. She rose and walked to the table. Her brain felt smothered. Her hands trembled as she began to pare potatoes for dinner.

Dinner was commonplace. The afternoon was uneventful. Lizzie spent it washing up the kitchen floor and cleaning the living room. Max spent most of it outdoors. He had finally resigned himself to the application of a jacket, but had refused to wear rubbers. At four thirty-five Mary came. She had been home first and reported that Mom had given permission for Max to stay and eat supper with Gramma and Aunt Mim if he wanted to. He wanted to.

Lizzie had decided to speak to Miriam about Max at the supper table. She would have liked it much better if Max had not been present, but she decided to go through with it anyway.

"Miriam," she said, "I wish you would speak to Olive and see if she can't get someone else to keep Max."

"Why don't you want to keep him?" Miriam inquired.

"He gets on my nerves."

"Now, Mother, you just let your imagination run away with you."

"Well, my imagination had nothing to do with his kicking my glasses off this morning."

"Well, Max," Miriam said, smiling, "you're getting to be quite a high kicker." Max laughed.

"Of course," Lizzie continued, "that probably was an accident. But it wouldn't have happened if he had watched what he was doing. And it was no accident when he got the paring knife and was going to cut me with it."

"Well, why didn't you take it from him?"

"I . . . did."

Miriam gave her a well-then-what-are-you-gripping-about look. Lizzie ate the rest of her meal in silence.

After supper Miriam took Max home. Lizzie stayed at home and tried not to think. She could get no help from Miriam; it was impossible to make her realize what keeping Max meant to her.

When Miriam returned she stepped inside the door and said, "Well, you did it all right."

"Did what?" asked Lizzie.

"Got rid of Max."

"What do you mean?"

"Olive is burning mad. She got to asking Max what you two did today, and he told her that you told him to say 'damn.' Did you?"

"Yes. . . that is, not exactly. You see . . ."

"And on top of that," Miriam interrupted, "she says you had him running around in the yard without rubbers most of the day. Mother, why do you do things like that?"

"But . . ." Lizzie started to explain how those things had occurred. She changed her mind. She would not make excuses. Let them think what they would. Then she began to realize the full meaning of what Miriam had said. She would not have to mind Max anymore! When she could get help from no other source, God must have taken a hand in affairs. Of course Olive would be angry for a while and say mean things about her all over the neighborhood. But what did that matter? She would not have to

mind Max anymore, she told herself. Again and again, and after a while she believed it. Thanks, God, she thought. She leaned back in her chair and relaxed. It was wonderful! She felt almost the way she had felt this morning when she had been watching the birds. This time the knock at the door did not snap her out of it.

"Come in," she called. Even her voice sounded younger, she thought.

"Hello, Mary. What can we do for you?" asked Miriam with a smile.

"Mom says for me to tell you Max can't come over tomorrow because he's getting a cold and to ask you, Can Grammie keep him Saturday? Mom is going to a sale."

"Of course she can," Miriam assured her. "I hope your mother can get that cold licked before it gets a real start."

"All right. I'll go over and tell her. Good-bye." Mary slammed the door as she left.

Lizzie comprehended the situation immediately. Olive was over her rage now, and sorry for what she had said—because it meant more work for herself. Olive was not the apologetic type. She was simply pretending that nothing had happened. And Miriam, always the peacemaker, was willing to accept this move and call it good.

Suddenly it didn't matter. Lizzie felt old, and nothing really mattered. She climbed the stairs and said a prayer and went to bed, for she was very tired.

Sales Talk

By MERRILL C. JONES

Someone asked me recently what in my opinion was the piece of furniture that had the most universal appeal. After a period of deliberation, lasting at least fifteen seconds, I responded simply, "The rocking chair." My interrogator was taken so aback—no doubt he expected me to say the love seat—that he asked me to explain my stand. I did so in the following manner.

Most members of mankind become acquainted with the rocking chair early in their earthly careers. The fact that these small pink bundles of humanity find it a favorite retreat is attested by their unmistakable and persistent requests for it at all hours of the day and night. As man matures, he grows out of it and back into it again. Grandpa's friend is his pipe, but what would its value be if Grandpa had no rocking chair in which to sit as he smokes it? And Grandma would not be the same without that serene swaying to and fro as her knitting needles click like castanets in her hands.

People near life's extremities are not the only ones who derive benefit from the comfortable spaciousness of the high-backed rocker. Some young couples find it a very adequate substitute for the article of furniture mentioned above. Business men unofficially report that they have yet to find a better place to fall asleep with their evening papers. And goodness only knows what Old Salt will have to drink if he is ever forced to relinquish his rocking chair; maybe even water!

The rocking chair is of unestimable value to a young, active child on a stormy day. It is the best place to sit to hear a story, for it offers

ten times as many possibilities of bad posture as any other article of furniture in the home. But better still, it can be converted easily into a fort, the high back forming a roof that will prove impenetrable to any amount of bombing. The fact that one must be a midget or resort to crawling on all fours to take advantage of the protection offered by the super-fort is a very minor part indeed. It is more important that the fort can become a pig sty or a hospital, a cathedral or a pup tent, by the construction of very subtle variations. Indeed, I have seen Paris toured within my living room.

The social value of the rocking chair should not be overlooked. Make guests comfortable and they will speak well of you to others. Start a rocker room and watch your popularity soar. Let your nervous neighbor dissipate her excess energy by rocking. She will tell the story of her operation with better articulation and much less facial contortion than was possible with formerly prevalent chewing gum. And you, yourself, at the end of a long fatiguing day will find it an excellent place to relax without a care in the world.

By this time you are wondering just what I was trying to do to the unsuspecting individual mentioned in my opening remarks. To relieve the suspense I will let you in on a little secret. I sold him a rocking chair.

The Lost Is Found

By JOSEPH HUTNYAN

I am August Reinhard, a member of the German Imperial Army. I lie here somewhere in Italy, half of my body torn away by an exploding shell. There can be no doubt that death is not far away, for even now I am more dead than alive. All day men and their machines have been passing near me, so close that sometimes I hear their jabbering tongues probably proclaiming the victory they seem to be so steadily achieving. But none stop to look at me for they think me dead; and, occupied with the steady task of keeping after my comrades, they take no time to examine this huddled heap that was once a man. I am about to meet death and I should be able to face it like a soldier; yet a strange type of terror grips my troubled soul, a fear of uncertainty almost undefinable. I keep thinking, wondering, seeking. I must find the answer in these last few minutes. A pitiful feeling of helplessness is in my heart for I know not where to look or how to seek this thing. Yet it bothers me and the very thought of dying without knowing makes my blood run cold. The sun is setting now and just as the blanket of night is blotting out the brilliance of day, the cloak of death is slowly beginning to settle over my tortured body. But still I know not the answer and slowly but surely the time is growing short.

Pictures begin to fly through my mind—visions of youth, my father and mother, the quaint little village of Breisach where I spent so many happy days. With these recollections comes another of a boy sixteen singing in the church choir. I can still remember my first church service. Mother told me about God just before it was time to go. "God is a great person," she said. "The food on the table, the clothes on your body, and even the little red

vest you received for Christmas were gifts of God."

To me, God was great; but the puzzling question continually coming up in my mind was, "Where is this person, God?" I was told that he was never seen, but evidence of His goodness and mercy was everywhere. A little perplexed but satisfied with the explanation, I began to worship God.

And then one day the news reached me of another great man, a savior of the German people, a man who promised to put food on the starving German's table, clothing on his freezing body. I can still remember the first meeting I attended where they raved of this man and his doings. It was held on the athletic field in Brauham. Magnificently lit up with torches, it was a spectacle one does not easily forget. Everywhere bright-colored banners fluttered in the breeze and soldiers with their shiny boots and glowing armbands marched back and forth. I thought my young heart would burst with excitement and pride at the very sight of this glorious panorama. I was placed with the younger group and listened attentively as the uniformed person on the platform began to speak. He called our race the superior race, the one to rule the world. Germany was put above everything. Time and again he screamed the name of the Fatherland and was answered by rising masses who returned a strange form of salute that I had never seen. But what particularly impressed me was the faces of these people. Their eyes glowed. Mouths that had announced sad news so often, now joined together in loud fanatical shouting. I shall never forget the look on those people's faces—to my mind a mysterious look—and as I think back, an almost inhuman look. Soon I began to feel its effect. At the very mention of the Fatherland a feeling of pleasure and pride spread through my body, and it wasn't long before I found myself on my feet screaming and saluting with the others.

That night I walked slowly home thinking of what the soldier had said: "Hitler, the greatest man that ever lived, none having ever equalled him, was the saviour of the German people." Troubled, I asked myself, "What of God?" At this moment thoughts came back of the brilliant scene I had just witnessed, the glorifying of the Fatherland, the resurrection of the German people. The blood in my veins flowed with the lust to go out and serve Germany and "Der Fuhrer." Thoughts of God were now completely forgotten. Germany was my God and "Der Fuhrer" my saviour.

And now, with the seconds of my earthly life slowly ticking away, I begin to fear that I have made a mistake. Yet how can I know for sure? The very thought of dying without knowing is the terror that racks my brain. I learned in my youth that God was merciful and forgiving—maybe there is yet time. But nothing happens. Night is already here and life is rapidly draining out of my troubled body.

But suddenly as if in answer to August Reinhard's prayer, voices were heard singing a beautiful hymn, praising God. They were not angelic or sweet voices, but harsh and firm, those which could belong only to men.

He opened his eyes and raised his head, every move shooting pain through his mutilated body. But he felt no pain. His slow-beating heart now began to pick up speed and is throbbing with excitement and anticipation. August Reinhard was witnessing a church service, one of the many in the field, particularly after a battle.

He listened to the song and gazed at the faces. It was then he knew. Their calm but determined features had something that made him see the light. He remembered the faces of those he had seen at the mass meeting at Braunhaum and the hundreds of others he had attended after that. This was the look of man, a determined, fearless man; the other, the look of a human giving away his soul.

His head fell back and he lay still. He was almost motionless except for a slight movement—a quivering of the lips—he was praying. Soon his breath came in gasps; the blood began to pour from his mouth, stopping his lips; but he prayed on with his brain. At last his body was still. It was not a pleasant body to look at, but on his face there was a smile. His search had ended. The lost was found.

Every Drape Has a Silver Lining

By LE JUNE PIER

During the Thanksgiving vacation my roommate and I scrubbed our room from top to bottom. We went the whole way with the house-cleaning bug, and even took the curtains down. Once down, we decided to keep them down and buy new drapes. One of the girls had remarked that said curtains made our room look like Hallowe'en, anyway, and because a drapeless room is as bare as December, we decided to go a la April with flowered curtains. Of course we didn't have time to buy the material that day, or the next, or the next, or the next week-end, or the next month, or even—

That was in November. In January we woke up to the fact that bare windows create a dreary outlook. The time had come for action. We prowled the dry-goods stores of Lock Haven one whole day, and five minutes before time to go to work we found just what we wanted. The sales-lady produced a fatal yard stick and proved that there was enough material for only one curtain in the piece we wanted. Two heavy hearts entered Sylvania that night. Additional week-ends were spent fingering cloth we didn't want, until five minutes before basketball practice one Saturday morning we purchased five yards of big pink roses on a cream background.

Our adventure had really only started. The next morning I greeted Mrs. Glennon and her sewing machine with my mouth full of pins and heart full of hope. The fact that I had never used an electric sewing machine before did not disturb me or the curtains but I feel that it did disturb Mrs. Glennon. After much complicated fussing with four uncomplicated hems, the drapes were done, and I hurried to our room to unfurl them. My roommate was not there so I tackled the job myself. Pushing, pulling, stretching, fumbling, I finally hung the drapes, but it was labor wasted. The roses on one draped twined uphill while those on drape number two drooped downhill. In an hour I had this righted and stood back for a view. The

drapes were beautiful, but I could not find the window. No matter how furiously I pushed only six inches of dirty window-glass could be seen between the masses of pink roses. Several friends dropped by to murmur something about having cake and eating it two. In this hour of despair Roommate arrived and stated opinion Number twenty-five A, which is this: The curtains should be moved farther away from the window. We removed our friends and worked on this theory for several nights. We had to lengthen the curtain rod with an old one we found under the bed; we had to find out that nails or tacks will not stay in a plaster wall; we had to throw the hammer to the floor in disgust several times; we had to pick the drapes up every time they fell down; we had to neglect our studies; but we also had to get the drapes up—and we did.

The pink-rosed drapes have been hanging in splendor for two weeks now and with due care of the ceiling-shakers in the room above us, long may they wave.

Moral—Cleanliness may be next to godliness, but don't take the curtains down.

Retaliation

By LEONA HOSMER

The townspeople said Mr. Wise was a good supervising principal. He stood for stern discipline and hard work. He was my economics teacher.

One radiant May morning our lesson was about the position of the middleman in industry. Mr. Wise relied on his reputation to keep us attentive as he profusely marked X's on the blackboard for the various factors involved.

I intuitively felt remorseful for playing that trick on Paul Fry, the school's Puck, the night before. He was not the type to be made a laughing stock of by eating a piece of candy that cleverly concealed a cod-liver-oil capsule.

Suddenly my ankle was given a twist. I turned around to look at Paul just in time to see my new spectator pump being passed down the aisle. Now and then some of the more progressive boys would add an initial as the precious cargo made its way to the back, then to the front of the room. Meanwhile I was very attentive to Mr. Wise's drawings, choosing only the period's of my instructor's intense concentration to steal a glance at my prodigal shoe.

A boom in the waste-basket whirled Mr. Wise around. His face, scarlet, was creased with lines all pointing in the direction of the downward curve of his mouth.

The more attentive I tried to appear the more I could feel my face getting hotter and hotter, and with this I knew that color mounted. I tried to think that my face was not red, that it was just an illusion.

Every muscle in my body was tense. My stomach quivered. Mr. Wise prolonged the suspense. For about one minute he was absolutely silent. It was a silence that jabbed through the room.

Suddenly he said in a well-controlled voice, "Leona, discuss this outline."

I struggled with myself. Should I say I didn't know? Should I rise and recite? Maybe he wouldn't notice.

Then he boomed, "Rise!"

With trembling knees I rose and started to recite. It was so wonderful! He hadn't noticed.

To keep from laughing I cleared my throat and coughed. Suppressed giggles pervaded the room. Suddenly I relaxed and burst forth with a laugh that contained all my pent-up energy.

Mr. Wise remained calm. It was unbelievable. His expression did not change at all. But I knew something was coming.

Then he said: "Leona and Paul, you may count the tickets tomorrow at the marionette show instead of going to the performance." It hung in the air for a while, then it fell with all its stinging impact.

Arise My Love

By LE JUNE PIER

"Wee Willie Winkie runs through the town
Upstairs and downstairs in his nightgown.
Knocking at the windows, crying at the
lock,
'Are the children still in bed? It's past
eight o'clock.'"

The war has created serious privations which might be enlarged upon. One of the most alarming of these shortages is the shortage of alarm clocks. When I think of the scores of alarm clocks my brother used to take apart, I sigh and tenderly press the button down on one of the last specimens of **Chronometer Alarmus** in the girls' dorm. This cream-colored relic of the pre-war period may have seen better mornings, but it is still functioning loudly, and may it continue to do so until people no longer must attend eight o'clock classes!

Being the sole owner of this noisy time-keeper presents responsibilities as well as pleasures. Each morning after I have lovingly quieted my precious clock, I must stumble on my sleepy way from door to door on second floor arousing my less fortunate friends. This is no easy job and it carries with it the added tasks of closing windows, switching on lights, and generally making oneself motherly. Many people fight the process of waking; others go so far as remaining in a dormant state until dragged out on the floor. Some have the treacherous habit of talking very brightly to their getter-upper, making her confident that they are awake while all the time they are sound asleep. One ungrateful girl insists on my morning trip to her door but is invariably awake when I arrive.

A pajammed Paul Revere bears the brunt of many injustices. Many times her clients go back to sleep, forgetting that she ever was and scolding her later for her neglect. The terrifying outburst which follows the waking of the wrong person has sent many a human alarm clock on the road to a nervous breakdown. The installation of electric bells or telephones has been considered, but because of the war, these materials are unavailable. At present there seems to be nothing that the sleepy order of arousers can do but wait for the day of peace—the day of the peace of the jangling of everybody's alarm clocks—a chicken in every pot—an alarm clock in every bedroom—buy more war bonds.

Cinquains

REBIRTH

Dreams die,
Stars fade from sight,
The song of birds return.
Faint light creeps o'er surrounding hills,
Dawn comes.

—HELENE PORTER

FABRIC

Gingham . . .
The morning scents
Of fresh, damp earth and sun.
Silk . . . warm fragrance of a fireside
At night.

—MARION BURKHART

WAR

War came . . .
Bloodshed and tears . . .
Dead men alone on a
Field of mud . . . A lonely night filled
With sobs

—GLADYS GOSS

HAPPINESS

I walked
Alone through the mist.
The rain falling on my
Face was beautiful and I was
Happy.

—MARY DEBO

INDIAN SUMMER

At last . . .
We find ourselves
Content to just sit by
And watch our children walk their way
Of life.

—JEAN DRYE

DEPRESSING SILENCE

I fear
To be alone
In old deserted rooms.
Haunting shivers penetrate and
Chill me.

—LEONA HOSMER

SINCE YOU'VE GONE

Alone—
My heart knows it,
The winds are crying it,
And unguarded eyes repeat it—
Alone.

—ROSE MINNIE AKELEY

OGDEN AND I TRY, BUT—

Poems
Should be about
Serious things, they say,
But I, like Nash, can't feel that way
Today.

—LE JUNE PIER

First Snow

By LOIS BIDDLE

The white flakes dance,
And there is a rustling sound in the
wood
As the wild bold glory of fall creeps
stealthily away.
Over the world drifts a heavy blanket
of dreamy slumber,
And all is still.

Marie

By ELIZABETH CLARK

The sky is black, the moon is low,
The wind blows hard and fast;
The lonely mother dries her tears,
Her daughter's life, in early years
Was taken, and is past.

The day was cold when sweet Marie,
A child yet young and gay;
Went hunting in the old coundree',
Her father's sportsmanship to see,
(Her mother said she may).

Slow passed the hours, the mother stood
Awaiting at the door,
To greet her husband from the trip,
And kiss her only daughter's lip,
(Marie was only four).

She waited, and the skies drew dim;
The sun sank in the west;
She thought she heard the distant cry
Of hunters' voices, now nearby;
Her heart sang in her breast.

"But where is sweet Marie," she said,
When Daddy came in view;
"Oh, hasn't she arrived as yet?
You see, we made a little bet,
While coming home to you.

It looks as though I've won the race."
Tears dimmed the mother's eye,
She knew her child would never come
Again, to greet her sweetly from
A hunting trip, near by.

She saw the happy little girl
Alone and unafraid.
She saw the mighty river, there;
The child would try to cross, to where
Her parents' home was laid.

She saw the bridge, so weak and worn,
Give way to childish weight.
She heard the frantic little cry
Of one who was too young to die,
(Was only half of eight).

The sky is black, the moon is low,
The wind blows hard and fast;
The lonely mother dries her tears,
Her daughter's life, in early years
Was taken, and is past.

Writing - - My Hobby

By MERRILL C. JONES

When I'm discouraged, and I can't
See how things came to be so bad;
When thoughts are seething in my brain,
So that I feel it soon will burst;
I just must find some way to free
My teeming mind from such disgust,
I take my pen in hand and write,
And when I'm through, I'm satisfied;
Released from all that crying pain
And anguish that was there before.

And when on Nature's paths I find,
Or rediscover, by myself,
Some beautiful and bounteous gift
That God to us on Earth has given;
Some common thing, when looked upon
Or listened to from some new point
Of view becomes a thing so rare,

So beautiful, I feel I must
Sing forth with joy and tell the world—
I take my pen and write, describe—
Or try, for words are not yet made
That can paint pictures of His gifts—
And when I'm done, my writing's coarse
And rough and ugly when compared
To the original, and yet
When I am done, I'm satisfied;
When I am done, then I can rest.

When I have time upon my hands,
And there is nothing to be done;
Or, to come nearer to the truth,
Naught that really must be done,
And little that appeals to me;
But yet I feel an inward urge
To be at something, great or small,
I get my pen and sit and think
And write of anything that may
Come to my mind, till I am tired,
Till that vague restlessness is gone,
And I am once again at peace.

Matilda's Bonus

or

Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl

By LE JUNE PIER

Matilda was a working girl.
She worked from dark to dawn.
She welded metal in its place
And put the rivets on.

A whirring, humming war plant
Was where she spent her nights
Beside a dirty black machine
Beneath fluorescent lights.

She slept in sunlit daytime;
She didn't get a tan.
She worked in moon-lit day-time;
She didn't get a man.

In fact the only blessing
That Providence would send
Was an enormous pay check
She had no time to spend.

Her only recreation
From December until June
Was going to the movies
On Sunday afternoon.

Now do not think this ballad
(As all sad ballads go)
Will end in gloomy spinstershood
In sacrifice and woe.

The plant at which Matilda
Gave her effort to the war
Foresaw her drabby future
And knew the grief she bore.

And so they gave our heroine
A week in hot July
To spend in being normal
At a gay resort near by.

'Twas there she met and married
An Army man named Steve
And had a happy honeymoon
Until he had to leave.

Matilda now works twice as hard
To make the war end soon—
And she writes her soldier letters
On Sunday afternoon.