The Crucible

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PREFACE

"This is part of me. This is my creation." What words could thrill one more than these. You have made these writings and they are yours. Therefore to all of you is this magazine dedicated with the hope that an inner spark of compulsion will keep the creative in you alive, that part of you which not only sees and feels and hears, but knows and imparts. It is wonderful to live, but more wonderful to make live. If, as you see your work here in black on white, you are disappointed, don't stop writing but go on, giving a little more of yourself till even the pressure of cold, inked type on white paper can't take the life from your creations. They are yours and as much as you put into them. Do not be afraid to live and tell the world about it! Here is to you and all the glorious tomorrows that find themselves sharing you with you!

THE EDITOR

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Spring

By ROSE MINNIE AKELEY

God had spring-fever that first May day. He yawned, stretched and peered through the blue sky at the earth beneath. Idly fingering a small cloud, He thought of the day's activities. For one week now, preoccupied angels with determined faces had been scurrying from place to place gathering all the colors, buds and "grow" powders that the laboratory had just finished. Saint Peter with his usual love for authority was bustling around, waving his arms and giving loud commands.

"Oh, well," God thought, "he might just as well be in charge of the spring expedition as anyone; besides not many pass through the gate in this season, and he would be up here all the time complaining about business" God never had the heart to take people from the earth in the spring.

Pushing the clouds away, He saw the small garden He especially loved. He has hinted to Saint Peter how He would like certain trees and flowers and especially this garden to be, but Peter always told Him in a condescending way that after all, you had to grow just what they had planted in those places, and besides who ever heard of "orange-yellow" forsythia. Yellow was just yellow in any kind of bush. God smiled as He recalled this, for He knew Saint Peter was slightly color-blind and very self-conscious about it.

Waking the Almighty out of His reverie with his last minute commands and shouts, Peter burst into His presence.

"Well, Sir, everything is all ready, and we are leaving immediately. Any—ah, any last-minute instructions?"

God looked at Saint Peter and smiled. "No, nothing except I'm going with you."

"What! But Sir, you can't do that; we know what to do and you don't. Why—"

"Now, now Peter," God patted him on the shoulder, "I won't spoil anything; I only want to stay with you and see that nothing drastic happens. Oh dear, and there is so much to be done."

Saint Peter, wringing his hands in anxiety, called to one of his helpers to take over, and the expedition started for earth.

A blue and pink wisp of dawn curled in the dark and then another and another. God quietly walked in the garden planning His work. Peter had warned Him that He must hurry as he had the Alpine Gardens in Vienna to supervise.

Angels with great paint pots, and perfume bags stood waiting for the Master's directions. At last God walked over, and taking a fine, cobweb brush, He dipped it into a pot of dawn pink and tenderly began transforming the little green clumps. Scarcely moving the brush, yet gently touching each petal, He painted flowing, graceful clusters of mountain pinks Then dipping His hand into one of the perfume bags, He threw over these clusters a faint, dainty scent that might have been used by a Dresden doll. On and on God worked, substituting small brushes for large ones, pink paints for May blue, lavender, deep purple, and cool, clean green ones.

Finally, all that remained were the carefree, rollicking forsythia bushes. Taking a great brush and quickly dipping it into the orange-yellow, God started to paint when an agonizing wail came from Saint Peter.

"Oh, that brush is dripping yellow spots all over this beautiful grass, and this stuff is waterproof you know; we'll never be able to get it out."

God just smiled and finished the last forsythia bush.

Early that morning, a woman looked out of her home into the little garden and eagerly called to her husband, "Oh, Tim, you should see the lovely mountain pinks and forsythia."

But a little girl looking out of the window said in childish wisdom, "Mommie, I like the pretty dandelions growing in the grass the best."

This Is Idolatry

By GLADYS DETWILER

A youth died yesterday. Yes, a youth died yesterday as she watched the coffin of her uncle lowered into the grave. And as the first shovel full of dirt was put in the now partially filled hole she raised her eyes to heaven and looked for the inspiration and guidance she had once found in a pair of sparkling brown eyes.

She looked to the heavens knowing that the moment the coffin had an owner, someone to lay upon its satin folds—that moment she was no longer the "Kid."

He was not there to tell her to keep a "stiff upper lip" as he had been when her best friend had died. He was not there to stand protectingly by her side as she viewed the casket. Alone she stood seeking for the best in the worst situation.

Vacations would be empty now for he would not be waiting—ever willing to chatter and joke. This chattering and jesting had seemed aimless to others but she knew that from this clowning she had found all the morals any by-laws of her character. From this she had formed a personality that was to carry her through the today and tomorrow of her life.

Once as they were driving along in the country he had told her that there were too many unpleasant things in life and it was his and her duty to make things more pleasant for others.

From the time she first crawled upon his knee and ate hot cakes to the day she sat beside him at an important dinner, he had made her laugh and forget the little troubles that bothered her.

She remembered well the day he rode her tricycle while she had fits of laughter at his size. She remembered well the day he rode her scooter bike and gave it a flat tire because of his excessive weight. She remembered well the day he rode her big bike up and down the front street. She remembered well the day he had given her the other set of keys to his car. He never believed in ceremony. His gifts and deeds were nonchalant and matter-of-fact. He felt he owed everything to the world.

She remembered those long talks about people and what made them "tick." There had been nothing too big for him to explain, nothing too small to take his time. He had eaten ice cream cones with her, broken her circus balloons, played with her electric train. taken her to ball games as soon as she had been old enough to sit on the benches. He had given her responsibilities as long as she could remember. He tried to train her to be the person he thought she was.

As she looked at the heavens she knew her life would be devoted to youth. A little "hello," a smile, a joke, might make some child's day brighter. Yes, a youth died yesterday but a woman was born.

Dear Brother

By PAUL BALLOCK

Hawk Run, Pa.,
March 21, 1945

Dear Brother:

Since the day you sent Billy to visit us, I have been trying to make him speak more distinctly. I wanted him to learn English, and he wanted me to learn Infanto. From the beginning, the contest was lively, and not once did I dream of losing. Secure in my adult superiority, I regarded the young chap with amused tolerance. I am now willing to admit that I underrated my opponent. It was only a question of time, I thought, until he would be speaking my language. As it is, I have learned to understand his language, and he refuses to speak mine.

Had I foreseen what might happen, I could have taken the proper steps for a counter offensive. I could have stopped my ears with cotton, steeled myself against his blandishments and refused to listen to his sales talk. I could have surrounded myself with grammars and dictionaries, and mowed him down with six-syllable words. I neglected the proper precautions, and now look at me.

A few months ago, when he got his words jumbled I wouldn't have known what he meant. I would have handed him everything but the right thing until he spoke clearly. I don't know what happened, but I found myself absent-mindedly giving him what he asked for, no matter what language he spoke. I had handed him my unconditional surrender. I might as well have said, "You win. You don't have to learn my language. I'm learning yours." My first error was in accepting the task of teaching him to speak true English. My second error was in not saying, "Young man, we will have no words about this. When you have learned to speak so I can understand you, you will get what you want." I am a complete failure. Your son is a success. I'm sending him home by express on the morning train.

Your brother,

PAUL BALLOCK

Nature in the Fall

By PAUL BALLOCK

Did you ever wonder why one of our seasons is called fall? We call it autumn, too, but most often we talk about it as fall. We talk about fall days, fall colors, fall clothes. When you get to thinking about it, fall is a good name for the autumn season. Leaves fall, red leaves, yellow leaves, and brown leaves. It is a sign that the growing season has ended.

You always know when fall is here. It doesn't come in one day, and it doesn't come in one week, but sometime in October you know it is here. You can see it, you can hear it, and you can feel it. Many things tell you, in many ways that it is here. The days are shorter, the sun rises later in the morning and sets earlier in the afternoon, and you get home from school only a little while before dark. The days begin to get colder and you find it necessary to wear a coat or a sweater to keep warm.

There are many signs of the fall season. You may see a flock of geese flying high overhead or you may see groups of blackbirds chattering in the cornfield. The bright red caterpillars have now turned brown as though painted by the frost. The noisy frogs now stop their singing. They do not jump and splash about as they did in the summer.

The things people are doing tell us that nature is taking another course. The farmer is busy gathering his crops, and his wife is canning fruits and vegetables. The carpenter is putting up storm doors and windows, and Mother is busy putting away the lawn furniture. A truck driver pulls in next door with a load of coal, and smoke is seen rising from chimneys. If you walk down town, you will notice that the shop keepers have placed woolen clothes in their windows.

Every indication of summer's end is present. We know that cold and snowy days are just around the bend. Every living thing is getting ready, in its own way, for a long, dark winter.

In-Laws

By KAY JOHNSON TATE

Visiting one's future in-laws for the first time is an experience that to receive full justice should be completely expounded in a novel. However, I feel that my own adventure can best be related in a few descriptive paragraphs.

Ideal picnics are best held in late August when summer is beginning to fade into autumn and hot melting days anxiously wait for a cool evening breeze. On such a Sunday afternoon, I was being escorted to a family picnic by the parents of my fiance. Had he been there the situation wouldn't have been so serious, but he was engaged in air combat duty over Europe. I felt certain I'd be able to cope with the family since there were only four aunts, six uncles, four cousins and two dogs whose inspection I had to pass. But the whole generation was of German descent, and

if the main course was sauerkraut, I'd be blacklisted on the spot. Ever since I read how it was made in my geography book, my favorite food which I can't eat is sauerkraut. So instead of enjoying the ride through the low rolling country, I gradually worried myself out of an appetite.

As the car proceeded up the driveway, I looked for some one who might possibly serve as an ally, but there was no one in sight.

Just as we were walking across the lawn, we were greeted by the low growl of a terrier only a few feet away. Long ago I was told to scratch a dog hebind his ears to insure a life-long friendship with him. Anxious to begin my visit right I stooped to pet the dog. But just as my hand was a few inches from his head I heard a sharp snap and felt several pointed teeth pierce my wrist. The "fido" was quickly called away and one of my future cousins came running with a little brown bottle. I've always been in favor of mercurochrome, but like a true martyr I gritted my teeth while my wounds were treated with iodine. During the process I was sympathetically informed that Duke, my assailant, had an injured ear and refused to be touched. So I hadn't been the first victim.

Entering the front door, I heard a merry confusion of female voices coming from the same region as a pleasantly blended aroma of baked beans and apple pie. I was promptly escorted to the kitchen to meet the cooks. There were four of them hustling around in each other's way: Aunt Lou, supervising all the culinary acts being practiced; Aunt Helen, who insists she is dieting but sampled every delicacy in sight; Aunt Irene who winked at me and passed me an olive; then finally, Aunt Dottie who welcomed me into the teaching profession of which she had been a reluctant member for several years. I tried to remember my best manners, smiled at them all, blushed furiously, and said a few expected introductory words.

Next, I was let into the living room. Peering through the foggy blue smoke, I was aware that six pairs of male eyes were focused on me. One cheerful gentleman, whose face betrayed the subtle joke he must have heard, came forward asking to escort me to the picnic table. Finding an excuse to escape this staring judgment, I quickly accepted his invitation. Emerging into the familiar out doors I involuntarily breathed a deep sigh. Uncle Les smiled at me and then began an endless volley of chatter like a sight-seeing guide. He led me past the fragrant bushes of yellow and red roses, through a multi-scented flower garden with its endless color patterns to a shady nook near the farthest corner of the lawn. Here the grass was deeper and greener. As I walked in it I could feel the tiny blades reaching through the openings in my sandals to tickle my feet. The path guided us over a small moss-covered bridge under which a tiny sparkling brook bubbled noisily. It probably had no in-laws.

I found my hand had ceased to sting and I'd nearly forgotten the panic caused by all those strange faces. Just then we reached the picnic table. A snowy white tablecloth was laden with an unending supply of appealing food. There were tangy pickles and olives on a small silver tray with crunchy celery and carrot sticks, huge bowls of potato salad dotted with sprigs of parsley and dashes of paprika, mounds of various shaped sandwiches, pies and cakes of every size and color, icy pitchers of lemonade and a huge platter of steamy roasting ears.

By now the family had gathered around the table and as we sat down my escorting uncle said, "You know, I was born in Pennsylvania and spent most of my childhood in Mt. Carmel." At last, there was someone who could talk about God's country with me. Besides here was no sauerkraut I must pretend to like. Suddenly I realized I had an enormous appetite and I involuntarily smiled at everyone.

For Friendship's Sake

By MARIAN KRATZER

The three girls walked silently, but none too slowly to keep pace with their thoughts. They were thinking about the same thing—the cigarettes. They had promised to buy them for a friend. Why they had promised was more than they knew. Perhaps it was only for friendship's sake.

Marie pulled at the button on her coat. "Who's going to do the asking?" she mumbled.

"Not I," came Lou's quick reply. "I said I wouldn't, and I don't intend to change my mind."

"Then you'll have to do it, Meg."

"But I don't know anything about cigarettes."

"All you need to do is to tell the clerk what kind you want."

"What if you don't know?"

"Listen what the other people ask for. Try to sound as though you knew what you're talking about."

Marie cleared her throat. "I guess it isn't as easy as it sounds, either. Here's the drugstore. Come on."

Meg and Marie fumbled with their pocketbooks.

"Wonder how much they cost. Have you any idea, Lou?"

"No."

Meg picked out a fifty-cent piece, and held it tightly. "Dd you think this is enough?" she whispered to Marie.

Marie looked serious and nodded her head. Then she pulled open the heavy door.

"It certainly is full of people in here." Meg took in the whole sight with a sweeping glance. "I wonder if all these people came for cigarettes too," she added while a quizzical look was registered on her face.

"I wouldn't be surprised. It reminds me of waiting for French fries at a carnival. Come on, Lou, let's get in line."

Lou's eyes searched the place from the floor to the ceiling. She clasped her purse tightly. "All right," she said, "but I'm not asking."

Meg and Marie kept hoping that the line would move faster. They talked in a low voice.

"Hope nobody that we know comes in."

"If they do, I'm leaving."

"So am I. I'd be embarrassed to death."

"I am anyway," Lou broke in. "I think I'll look at the get-well cards."

"Okay."

Meg shifted her weight to the other foot, and felt like looking at the cards too.

Marie nudged her in the ribs. "We're almost at the end of the line. What shall I say?"

"Anything. Anything at all. How about Camels?"

Marie kept her distance from the counter. "Two packs of Luckies," she said in the boldest sounding voice she could manage.

The clerk shoved one pack across the counter. "Do you want a pack for her, too?" he asked as he pointed at Meg.

"Yes."

Meg's face began to feel warm. She looked at the floor. Marie stuffed the cigarettes in her purse, and snatched the change from the counter.

The two hurried to the door. Outside they found Lou waiting. "Maybe you'd like to carry them, now that we've done the asking," Meg suggested, but Lou walked on. She either didn't hear, or didn't want to answer.

Meg and Marie exchanged glances. "It was funny how we bought the last two packs, wasn't it?"

"It certainly was. I still feel like giving them to the poor disappointed people in the end of the line. It's funny, too, what one will do for a friend."

Harriet

By LEONA HOSMER

When, as a little girl, I went to the new bakery, a motherly voice from behind the counter seemed to stoop down to ask me, "And what would you like, honey?"

This pleasant manner is warmly natural to Harriet Carter. It highlights her personality and brightens her appearance.

She has large, steady eyes. She is neither beautiful nor homely, but strikes that medium that "looks nice when she's fixed up" and is never objectionable in appearance. She has a cozy smile formed by rather thin, practical, unlipsticked lips, and supplemented by glowing eyes. Her well-disciplined, permanent-waved brown hair is forced into a tight roll around the back of her neck. She is "a perfect 36" because she has always worked hard enough to keep her weight under control.

Through trading at the bakery we became attached to Harriet and her husband and small son. From that time they have been our intimate friends.

Harriet and John both worked in the bake shop so that they could accumulate money for Charles' education, and for old-age security for themselves.

Harriet was getting a big thrill out of life. Business was flourishing. She was prominent in church work. Charles was getting a good start in school. She had everything she wanted. Clair was enjoying life too, and was proud of his son.

When we went on trips together Harriet would hold me on her lap and feed me Edgemont Graham Crackers and tell me stories. She was carefree, yet always thoughtful.

Then the depresson came, and the profits would not pay for the new bread-slicer they had installed on time payment. Harriet began making chicken soup from boiling together the bones and fat of the fowl for broth. She made over John's shirts for Charles, and put whole new feet in worn-out socks.

As time went on debts accumulated, and they had to sell the bakery to pay them. Harriet never worried outwardly. They rented a cheap house and she would tell us in a strained voice that hardly concealed her sorrow, "It seems so good to not be tied down to the bake shop. We could never plan on going any place for a real visit. We always had to get back to work the next day."

With John's meager salary as a clerk in a business office Harriet watched bargains for clothing, bought A&P store brands of food, and entertained her Sunday school class on one-egg cakes and gelatin salads. Her church work went on unchanged. Now she had more time to help people who were in trouble. My sister was sick for nine weeks, and every day Harriet would come to see her and to help Mother with the ironing and the dishes. She always brought a cellophaned and be-ribboned package of dates, or a flaming apple, or a good book.

By worthy example she and her husband gave Charles a sound foundation in character training.

Then John received a thousand-dollar legacy from his aunt. Both Harriet and John had been reared on a farm, and they knew that this life would hold some degree of security, even now that John's health was failing him.

They bought a run-down farm that seemed to have promise. It was a square modern house that had never been finished. Electric lights and running water had not been installed. The roof leaked and the barn had curvature of the spine. On that day just after they bought the home we tried to be enthusiastic as we roamed from room to room. The damp chill of the empty building was intensified by a gray that crept from the gloomy atmosphere outside and pervaded our beings.

Charles, now in high school, visibly tried to cover disappointment at moving away from the football team, the church, the movies, and their friends. Even John was discouraged by the enormous task ahead of them. It was Harriet's job to enthuse everyone about it. "Won't it be lovely when we can have picnics under the trees in the grove? We'll build a table under those tall pines. We can hear the brook in the distance, and there's a bank of laurels that will bloom in early summer. We'll just have the best kind of times here."

John's stomach ulcers became more and more troublesome. The meager money that

Harriet salvaged from each pay to improve the house had to be spent on medicine and doctor bills. The ground was poor, and John was unable to work hard.

In the winter Harriet carried water over the long, icy path that led to the spring. One time she fell and broke her arm when she was bringing wash water in early so that John and Charles would not have to get out in the cold before breakfast.

Harriet crept into rummage sales and came out feeling thrifty but grossly poverty-stricken. She bought day-old bread for lunches and baked bread for their home use. She kept the clothes of the family as meticulously clean and pressed as ever. She camouflaged patches and darns.

It was hard for Harriet to go to commencement when Charles was graduated from high school because she could not quite convince herself, though, she tried her best, that Charles' secondhand suit looked as good as those of the other boys. She hoped that she was not conspicious in her six-year-old navy blue coat on which she had changed the lapels. She shuddered when Charles walked across the stage with squeaky shoes to get the science prize. She had hoped that nothing would call attention to those cancelled styles from Goldberg's Bargain Store. But she chided herself for thinking of material things, when she should be so proud of her son. After the service she told Charles, " We'll see that you get a college education some way, won't we, Dad?"

John's "Of course we will" sounded like an echo of willingness from a fairy land where nothing was really possible.

Harriet did not talk much about the farm to her friends. It was an open wound to be borne with as few painful reminders as possible. When the subject turned to her wretched lot she always gave the funny side. When her Sunday school class members were sympathizing with her over the pigs' destruction of her carefully cultivated flower garden she cheerfully related, "You should have seen me. I was like a single circus performer trying to entertain in three rings at the same time."

In all this time she was faithful to her church duties, even when she, in her threadbare coat of the ripe age of six years, had to sit next to a condescending furred and jeweled lady-about-town.

With the present period of prosperity came an opportunity for a high-salaried position for John, whose physical condition had improved. Not until after they were established in a magazine-picture-type modern bungalow did Harriet make known her feelings about the life of drudgery she had lived. Just as she was enjoying the feeling of satisfying her material wants Charles decided that he would enlist in the Army. "I can go to college after the war, Mother," he assured her.

When Harriet tells you that Charles will be sent overseas in the near future she tries to control her voice as she says, "It's no worse for Charles than it is for the rest of the boys."

Naivete

By EMILY DAY SMART

He was only six. He was short, stocky, and freckled, and had to wear suspenders because the belt on his pants didn't do its job very well.

He held the cat on his lap, feeling the warmth of her body against his. She certainly was a nice cat, and clean too. The boy caught her face on either side of her mouth, and pressed gently with his thumb and forefinger to open her jaws.

Boy, her teeth were white. He wondered how they could be that white without brushing. Her little tongue was pink, and looked soft. Carefully he inserted his finger, and grinned a little at the roughness he felt.

Suddenly, puzzled, he let go of the cat's face, and stuck his finger in his own mouth. Yep. His tongue was just like the cat's only bigger. He stretched it away out and looked down his nose, but as he couldn't see it very well he quit.

His hand aimlessly caressed the back of his passive pet, curving delicately around her hip bones. He certainly liked the fur. He petted it for several minutes; then, slinging the cat over his shoulder he went around the house, raised the cellar door, and found his way through the gloom to the dark corner behind the coal bin where he lifted the cat into his lap, and began stroking her fur furiously. Yes sir, by golly, it did! Just as his Dad had told him! It gave off sparks! He watched and rubbed the cat with intent fascination.

He was so interested in this that he jumped when the restless cat sprang from his fingers, and ran off into the recesses of the cellar.

The boy looked for it a few seconds, then lost interest and made his way to the kitchen to see if mother would give him some ginger cookies.

How to Be Popular in College

By MARTHA BADICK

Popularity is the main road to happiness and, since everyone wants to be happy, everyone wants to be popular. The proof of this statement can be easily seen by the number of books and articles that have been written on the subject. In college, students strive for popularity almost as hard as they work for the education they came to receive.

To begin with, you have to hit college with a bang. When you arrive, let everyone know you're here. If you've been around in your day, tell everyone about it. They'll all be delighted to know. If you haven't been around—— well . . . you can tell them you have, anyway. This procedure always makes a big impression. Since the first impression is lasting, be sure it's big enough.

It's easy for those students with outstanding ability to get attention, but the rest of us have to find some other means. If you have some particularly bad habits, you can elaborate on them. For instance, if you smoke, you can start chain smoking, like a regular fiend. Or, if you've been accustomed to having an occasional drink, you can begin to drink heavily. The most important thing, however, is to be certain that you talk about your bad habits. Give them plenty of publicity. Tell everyone whom you're trying to impress how "stinko" you were last night or how many packs of cigarettes you smoke each day. Make a dramatic confession. It's more effective that way.

Sad as it may seem, there are some students who have no outstanding ability and—what's worse—who have no bad habits to develop. If you belong to this group, in order to be noticed, you might try being late for classes, meals, meetings, or anything that is set for a definite time. Coming late gives you the opportunity to make a dramatic entrance. Don't try to slip in unobtrusively. Then. you'll always be remembered by the others who were foolish enough to be on time.

You should think up endearing nicknmes for all your instructors, and never bother very much about having your work done for them. Maybe your instructors won't like you too well, but that doesn't matter. It's your classmates that you have to impress.

The next thing to work on is your language. Learn all the newest slang expressiions, and use them as frequently as you can. (Your vocabulary is another sign of having been around). A little cuss-word is acceptable, but no real honest-to-goodness profanity. Remember, you don't want to be vulgar.

Oh yes, dates. Dates are very important. If you can possibly do it, try to make two for the same time. (You don't have to be too fussy about the persons). Two dates are sure to cause a lot of interesting talk. You'll have to get out of one of them, and the clever way in which you do this will arouse great admiration for you.

If you apply yourself wholeheartedly to a couple of the above-mentioned approaches to popularity, you can't help being a success. You'll be the leader of those who count in the school. You'll always have your satellites around you, watching your every move, listening to your every word, trying to imitate you. You'll be the most popular person in the school, and what's more, the happiest.

On My Neighbor's Child

By ELIZABETH CLARK

That little boy next door is a darling! Throughout the day you can see him, happy and laughing at play, or intent and serious over his "study." Johnny is seven, and his greatest hobby is the study of insects, dissected.

But there are many other traits that spell Johnny. He is amazingly considerate, for a youngster. When you awaken in the morning with the loud blast of an automobile horn pounding through your head incessantly, you know all the time that Johnny isn't doing it. You may even prove it to yourself, by asking him. Johnny never lies, and he'll always tell you, 'Why, no, Mrs. Brown, I didn't sound that horn. That's baby play. I'm too big for tricks like that."

During the course of the day (probably when the baby is sleeping on the porch), if you should hear a child screaming excitedly, and see a small boy jumping up and down on your newly planted grass, you may not be able to tell from where you are who the disturbing factor is, but you know who it isn't, anyway. It isn't Johnny.

And if you should ask his mother (out of mere curiosity, of course) whether her only son just MIGHT have, accidentally, knocked the two quarts of milk from your back porch and scattered its contents in all directions, you feel inwardly guilty for even having dreamed of such a thing. You can hear her answer even before she starts, "Why, that couldn't have been Johnny, I'm sure. He's too little to even know where the milk's kept." And so she smiles, and you smile, and Johnny, from behind his mother's flowered housedress smiles, and you go back to your housework until the next time Johnny doesn't do something.

Then on Sunday morning in church, when the little girl directly in front of him gasps and begins to "pretty her hair" back into position, you just know that her ribbon must be too tight—or something. And then your eyes travel back a row, and you see a perfect angel with the smile of a saint peering up at you. You can't help smiling back at him with your heart in your eyes, and thinking how lucky you are to live next door to such a darling as Johnny.

Tamed Nature

By LEONA HOSMER

Three small goldfish stare at me
From round black eyes in silver frames.
They say, "We're captives that man tames
In sport's cruel jest at liberty."

They leave their watch for kind release
And swim around their prison home.
They briskly nibble off a piece
Of stale green seaweed. Then they roam

Through green-vined arches, darting;
Filmy arms and legs go floating,
Reminding one of hula dancers, parting,
Meeting always, on their pleasure doting.

A Snowflake

By HELEN LAWRENCE

The flurries of snow
Swiftly go.

A snowflake floats down
Without sound;

It brushes one's cheek
As a leaf,

And flutters on by
With a sigh.

So Live . . .

By ELIZABETH CLARK

When the world is so full of pathos and hate,
how can you be strong?
When you hear the sobs of the broken-hearted mother crying over her dead;
Or the still, slow melancholy of the under-pup, pouring forth his burdened heart to an utter stranger;
Or when you see the worn-looking farmer, weary over his vain attempts to live, while the drought is growing longer;
Or while the proud sophisticate sitting alone in her window-seat and sighing, because she has forgotten how to cry;
When you feel the dreams of youth grow faint in people, and see the agony of one resigned to his fate,
And when you know that the world is so full of it all, how can you be strong?
Yet, when the world is so full of rapture and love, how can you be weak?
When you hear the rhapsody of wild geese, exuberantly fanning the waters with their wings;
Or the happy cry of childish adventure ringing clear in the mid-day sun,
Or when you see the yellow leaves waving in the breeze of an early summer;
Or the happy mother smiling over the cradle of her first-born;
When you feel the dreams of youth grow real In people, and see the tenderness on their faces, and the peace in their hearts dancing before you,
When you feel the blessing of those who are happy, and you see them bubbling with the joy that they cannot hide;
And when you know that the world is so full of all THAT, how can you be weak?

Your Acquaintance

By HELEN LAWRENCE

You know her well, my female friend
With tailored coat, long, gray, and sleek,
Her hairs with murky corners blend.
No welcome guest, she's Mousie—EEK.'

Nightfall

By HELEN LAWRENCE

The birds are trilling in the fading light;
Their symphony of sound swells suddenly
Before the last pink flush fades from the sky.
A satin-coated blackbird swoops to perch
In grandeur in the lofty pine. The green-leaved trees are almost black against the
Sharp blue sky of summer evenings criss-crossed limbs
Of weathered poincianas weave a web
In which the leaves are fairy threads that
Stretch a filmy canopy above the earth.
The inky heavens are but shadows sketched
In shades of gray and black. The night has come.

Consolation

By ELIZABETH CLARK

Beyond the river I can see the mountains
Engulfed in blue reflected from the sky;
I hear the sighs of mystery announcing
The coming of the night, and far and wide
I see the farmers leaving for the day
Their many duties, and I see the fields
Left vacant, with the shadows of the dusk,
That penetrate their beauty, and suggest
The close of day. I hear the friendly call
Of housewives from the door, who welcome back
Their tired workers with a cry of cheer;
I hear the birds of daytime, clear and sweet,
Trilling their songs, with camouflage of dread
That day is done, or that their hearts are weary,
And glad that silence rules the earth again;
I hear the soothing melody of wings,
That tell me of the pigeon's homeward flight,
And sound more vibrant, now that day is done.
And half the world is sleeping; and I see
The waters, calm and smooth, and slowly flowing
Besides the mountains; and the earth is glad
With solitude and inner satisfaction
Of having done its duty. I can feel
A certain happiness within myself,
At being in the midst of all the joy
That nature can convey. We can be sad
Or feel the thorns of life, when all around
His being is a scene of quietude?
And who can feel defeated, when he knows
The utter silence of the close of day
That makes his heart be humble and content?
And, when his life is filled with rush and anger
And active, nervous energy demands
The utmost caution of a tired mind,
Who can deny the remedy of Nature
And all her dear components? Who neglect
The river over there, or the green mountains,
Engulfed in blue reflected from the sky?
Or who the sighs of mystery announcing
The coming of the night, or who the essence
Of mood that is serene, because the air,
The grass, the waters, and the very night
Are saturated with a world at peace?

It Seems to Me I've Heard This Dream Before, but—

By LeJUNE PIER

Remember, dearest when we planned
A little cottage painted white?
White houses dominate the land.
I guess white cottages are trite.

It seems that every couple dreams
About blue roofs, and fireplaces,
And gardens out behind the house,
And little, sticky children's faces.

The life plan is just the same
As everyone's, but when life's through
I hope that I've spent all of it
In being common, dear, with you.

A Busful of Life

By LEONA HOSMER

The mellow roar of the bus engine silences the little girl's whine of "I want to start."
The streamlined, blue cylinder whirrs dauntlessly as if to jeer at the saucy rain of the night.
The bus is filled with people, ciragette smoke and a hodgepodge of words.
Fragments of life philosophies swirl in the atmosphere.
And drift unheeded around the isolated groups of humanity.
Two white-haired matrons relate living portraits of their grandchildren.
A little girl cuddles a doll.
A man, half-ruled by alcohol, tells a giddy girl across the aisle of his wife's divorce.
A mother quiets her small daughter with "Daddy will be home soon from the war."
A workingman grunts and sprawls across a seat
While a college student sighs and snatches a few words from a novel.
They are both weary from a day's work and are relaxing.
A small boy tries to make a pillow of the vibrating leather armrest.
Farther up the aisle two heads close together in the darkness
Are building post-war visions of an endless furlough.
Some of the riders look out of the window or sleep.
A passing headlight half-reveals the passenger.
Now and then a cigarette arches tiny meteoric path in the darkness.
A hand reaches up and pulls the starting buzzer.
As the lights shine on they animate the shadowy figures in the seats
While they gaze at the mother leaving the bus to take her drowsy daughter home.
She hesitates, as will the others, before she ventures into the rain and her own little world.

Iturbi

By LeJUNE PIER

The conductor raises up his hands and lets them rest
Upon the air.
The music waits until the hands swing down
And then the silent hall is filled with sound.

The lean, quick hands
Draw the great music out to every corner.
The lovely, dancing hands
Pull rich notes from silence into sound.
The soft caressing hands
Soothe great, loud music into quiet prayers.

The music stops; the hands stop, too,
But still are living, throbbing, feeling
The sleeping tone yet at their fingertips.

The Muses and I

By EMILY DAY SMART

I certainly am impertinent,
Sitting here, trying to be eloquent,
Like the muses.

I bite my pencil, and scratch my head,
Furrow my brow, and eye with dread
This paper.

I look at the ceiling, can't think of a thing,
Look at this poem, and give it a fling;
It's hopeless.

I—Expectancy

By ROBERT MARKS

Over the earth a hovering hush has fallen.
Blue needles of the pine are quivering with expectancy.
Tired willows tease the languid pond.
Everywhere there is a longing for the rain to come.

II—Rain

By ROBERT MARKS

The heavens pour forth their deluge of tears
To ease the earth's sorrow.
The brown bird sits on the window ledge
Watching with jeweled eye.
The rain crowns in the dusky puddle mirror.
The white iris lets cool drops course down the new wrinkled petals:
Its leaves stretch heavenward—drinking in the blessed life.
Everywhere hearts are radiant thinking of the goodness of the Lord.

Manna for Hanna

By ADELE L. FORSYTHE

"If she'd only learn to mind her own business," exploded Hanna, her blazing jet eyes following through the kitchen window the bepetticoated and bonneted lump of a mother-in-law. She plunged her arms recklessly into the dishpan full of Mason jars. It was almost time for the next batch of snap beans to go on. This was a hot business in the midst of a miserable hot wave. Hanna's temper was a match for the weather.

"What's eating you now, Hanna?" called Lois as she scaled the porch railing separating the back doors of the double house. Without waiting for an invitation, she opened the screen door and walked in. "Has Grandma been at you again?"

"That old bat out of hell gets in my hair," replied Hanna with vehemence. "Why the good Lord lets people like that live, I'll never know. That's an awful thing to say," she added apologetically, "but if you had your in-laws to put up with ever since you were married, you'd understand."

"Aw, ignore it," said Lois hoisting her skirts as she climbed astride a straight chair. "The

old gal never budges beyond these two houses, so what else does she have to do but pick on you—or the kids in the neighborhood."

"Well, you know something, Lois! I'd give anything to live miles away from here. Then George and I could be completely happy. But as long as we live next door to that," she said indicating her mother-in-law's domicile with a slight jerk of the head, "there's no hope. I've never told you this before, Lois, but I've never known what it is to have a home of my own." And with this, Hanna's usually cheerful face took on a sad and far-away look. Lois was deeply touched by the longing in that look. It was as though her friend had let down the bars for a few minutes, revealing a dual personality. She remained silent while Hanna continued.

"You've met my mother," said Hanna, looking up at Lois. "Well, she really isn't my mother. She's my foster mother. Now, don't misunderstand me. Mom and Dad have been grand to me, but——. Well it just isn't the same. It seems I've been destined never to have anything that's truly my own. When George and I were married, I thought at last I would have a home and a husband I could call my own. Yeah, that's what I thought," she added bitterly. "Even my own child has been more Grandma's and Grandpa's than mine. That's why she's spoiled. Sue is an adorable little vixen, but she's hopelessly spoiled. Whenever I try to discipline her, Grandma interferes. And Sue's only five now. What'll she be like when she grows up. Well, it's just been a hell of a mess. It was even worse when we lived over there. You knew, of course, that we lived with them when we were first married."

"No. I didn't," replied Lois with a look of astonishment.

"We did, and that was something! They insisted that we live with them, and like the nincom-ninny that I was, I agreed. That's where I made my first mistake. Never live with your in-laws should be the first law of marriage. The second, don't live next door to them. If you can live hundreds of miles away. Now you wouldn't believe this, but it's the truth. That woman had the colossal nerve to invade the privacy of our own bedroom—"

"You mean while you and George—," interrupted Lois incredulously.

"I mean just that."

"Boy, that takes the cake! I'd be darned if I'd put up with it!" said Lois emphatically.

"But what can I do. I love George, and I know he loves me, but he seems to feel he owes them a debt of gratitude. They built this house for him, and he feels obligated to them. Actually, as I see it, it was a clever scheme on the part of his mother to hang on to him.

"Uh, Oh!" she said as she looked out the window. "Must be time for Grandpa to come home from work. There goes Grandma hustling out to the garden to make him think she's been working herself to a frazzle all day. Then she'll line up a half-dozen jobs for him, while she stands around and superintends. She sneaks in for a nap every afternoon, but you want to see the burst of activity about the time Grandpa's due home."

"They're an odd pair, Hanna," commented Lois thoughtfully. "He's such a nice old codger. A bit talkative at times, especially when he starts rebuilding this house for the one hundred and fiftieth time. I've heard him rehash the history of the building of this house so many times, I could scream when he starts all over again. But I can't help liking the old gent in spite of it. There's a wealth of wisdom in that scantily-haired head. And you know,, it's a funny thing, Hanna; he seems to love children as thoroughly as Grandma dislikes them—with the exception of Sue of course. He reminds me of a Pied Piper the way the kids always hang around him." Looking over her shoulder at the clock on the wall, Lois jumped up and started for the door. "Holy smokes, Hanna, I've got to get back to the rock pile. I haven't done a thing today. I'll have to step on it if I'm going to have supper ready before John gets home. S'long, see you later."

After testing the jars for leaks, Hanna arranged the fruit of her labors in neat rows on the cabinet and stepped back to survey her work with a sense of satisfaction. She then went about the business of preparing the evening meal. Hanna was glad that Sue was visiting a friend and would have dinner out, because she wanted to have a serious talk with George. This had gone on long enough, and it was time to make a break.

Recalling her first meeting with George's folks, that was surprise enough. But Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania—well that was something out of this world. She couldn.'t stand the funeral-looking women-folk, who floated about the streets like phantoms in flowing black raiment, in sharp contrast to their cold, faded-looking faces. There was something eerie about them. It gave her a chill just to look at them. Their heads were always capped with that gruesome-looking bonnet that fitted over a knob or hair on the back of the head, giving this noble part of the anatomy a grotesque, misshapen appearance, reminding her of pictures she'd seen of certain Africans, whose heads also jutted out in the rear disproportionately. To save her life, she couldn't understand why they were called plain people. They looked decidedly fancy to her, always masquerading in mourning clothes. It was depressing to say the least. And the shopping center —here was indisputable evidence of the town's impregnability. The stores were as antiquated as their shopkeepers, and they were utterly impervious to change. Even the bank officials belonged to the tie-less hierarchy, that body of Mennonite males that dared not flaunt such bodily adornment. She suspected this was merely an excuse for their miserliness. She was certainly glad that George had had the intestinal fortitude to break with their ridiculous customs, even though he wasn't able to break away from his parents. She was sorry for the young Amish women who had to put up with a long, black beard when they got married. The young Amish men were obliged to grow one upon marriage in order to distinguish them from eligible bachelors. What a life! The only thing for her to do was get away from it all.

George's footsteps broke in on Hanna's thoughts. He always came in the side door and proceeded down the cellar steps to shake down the bucket-a-day. It was usually his second stop. The first was his mother's. This irked Hanna no end. Third fiddle was what she called herself, much to George's amusement.

When he finally arrived in the kitchen, he found Hanna in a sulky mood.

"Hello, It's been a pretty hot day," he ventured chattily, sizing up the situation in a glance.

"Yeah."

"What's the matter, Hon. Don't you feel good?" he said, reinforcing his conversation with a slight peck at Hanna's cheek.

Hanna hesitated a moment, and then turned saying fervidly,

"George, please let's move, to Philly, or any place for that matter. Just let's get away from here. I can't stand this place a day longer."

"Look's like Mom's been over again,"

"She's always over here. You don't see me going over there. But that doesn't stop her from coming here. Not by a long shot. She might miss something. Why, she even stays awake nights just to hear Sue cry. This morning she insisted that someone has Sue pow-wowed, and that's the reason Sue wakes up nights crying. I told her if that was so, then she was the one who had her pow-wowed, because she's the only one around here who believes in such bunk. She was furious and told me what she thought of me—as though I didn't know already—and steamed out of here in a first class huff. I tell you, George, I just can't go on this way. If you won't move, I will. I'll go back to Philly and take Sue with me."

George laughed carelessly and said, "What, again?"

"Yes, George Aldinger, again. Only this time I mean it."

"When are you leaving?" queried George teasingly.

His bantering tone infuriated her. Stabbing him with one of her fiery looks, she rose from the table and stalked out of the kitchen in grim silence. He could see the walls of Jericho were up again.

"Women," he muttered under his breath. "You can never figure them out." Then with a resigned shrug he lit his pipe and strode into the living room. He picked up the paper and settled himself comfortably in the easy chair next to the radio.

The following day, after his customary stops at his mother's house and the bucket-a-day, George sauntered casually into his own kitchen. The table wasn't set for dinner. He thought that was odd. And Hanna wasn't at her usual post—the kitchen stove—preparing the evening meal. Quickening his pace, he walked into the living room. The place seemed strangely empty. She couldn't have—no that was absurd—they only did that in story books. She wouldn't leave him. After all, hadn't he been a good husband and a good provider?

But to allay his misgivings, he bounded up the stairs and through the long hallway to their bedroom. He stood riveted to the spot. The closet door was wide open and practically empty. The dresser was bare. Then she hadn't been joking! What a heel he'd been. Beautiful, dark-haired Hanna, with black eyes that could dance or spit fire at a moment's notice. It was a comfortable thought, though, to blame his mother. It made him less of a heel. Or did it. He should have broken away from his mother's apron strings long ago. Now it might be too late. He slumped dejectedly into the boudoir chair cursing the fate that had planted him in this ancient town with its ancient populace. What chance did any man have in such an environment—and with an over-solicitous mother to boot.

Hanna was right. Their marriage hadn't had a chance to succeed. He saw it all too plainly now. Hanna was right; it was a diabolically selfish scheme on the part of his mother to build this house right next to her own. And her attempts to discredit Hanna at every turn—this was probably just what she wanted. Well, he'd have it out with her, once and for all. He'd make his own decisions from now on!

George's distraction was so complete that he didn't hear the footsteps in the hallway until Hanna's voice startled him into consciousness.

"What in the world are ou doing up here, George?"

"But, but,—Hanna, the closet, your clothes, the dresser," he said haltingly with a bewildered look on his face as he rose from the chair.

"What about them? I've been housecleaning. I made up a bundle for the clothing drive, and rest are out on the line airing. I was so tired I decided to dine out with Sue, and I thought you could have your dinner with your mother. She'll love that!"

"Oh, Hanna, Hanna, darling," he said, hugging her till she thought her ribs would crack. "You scared the daylights out of me, When do you want to move? Just say when."

If the Shoe Fits

By EMILY DAY SMART

I am not much of a writer. This is about the first thing I ever wrote outside of letters home and such, but I feel as though I ought to tell this story because it might make one of you civilian dames see the light.

I am a sergeant in the United States Marines, which is the best damn outfit in this damn war, and if a guy's a Marine he is OK for any man's money. Well, as I said, I am a sergeant, and I know how sergeants are hated —almost as much as second looies—but I am a different kind of sergeant. I'm soft.

On board the boat coming over I was sergeant of the Guard, and a second looie didn't like the way I combed my hair, but that didn't make any difference to me. I went about being Sergeant of the Guard just as professional as I knew how, but for one exception. You see, when a guy is on guard he dares not smoke, and I neglected to inform the boot whom I put

on guard in the "head" that he couldn't smoke. Now, in these convoys the only place anyone is allowed to smoke—after the lights-out signal—is in the "head"—bathroom to you—and I couldn't see the point in anyone's standing guard four hours not smoking while every other Joe in the place was smoking, so I didn't give this guy his orders.

Well, he had just lit a cigarette and was taking about the third puff on it when this second looie who didn't like me walked in, "Private, put out that cigarette!" he ordered in a bellow.

"Yes, sir," the boy said as he tried to stand at attention, put out his smoke, salute, and grab his rifle all at the same time.

"You had your orders not to smoke while on guard, I presume?" the looie rasped in his college-bred, superior voice.

"Yes-er-no sir—I mean sir," the private stammered, trying to be loyal to me and honest with the looie, when I had to walk into that particular "head" on inspection of the guard.

"Sergeant," the looie shouted, "I am charging you with negligence in carrying out your duties as Sergeant of the Guard! Report to Captain Arnold immediately!"

"Yes, sir," I said meekly, knowing the uselessness in arguing with a second looie. So. I slapped the kid on the shoulder, shrugged, cocked an eyebrow in the direction of the looie's back, and followed him down the corridor to the Captain's quarters.

Well, there's no point in describing the scene in the Captain's office; it's sufficient to say it was rugged. The dressing-down brought my ego flat against the deck, and I was lucky I didn't lose my stripes. Only one good thing came from it. The private whose name was Bill became my best friend.

Now I realize it is unusual for a buck private and a sergeant to be pals, but as I said, I am not like most sergeants—I am tender-hearted, and that is why I got all mixed up with Bill's private life.

This first encounter with Bill took place when we were pretty close to our base, and I didn't see much of him for the next two or three days, but when we landed and got settled in our tents on this beautiful Pacific isle that ought to be sunk in the Pacific, who turns out to be one of my five brother tent-mates but Bill? We clapped each other on the shoulders as if we were equals in rank and we were the emotional type like the Army men.

We didn't have too much to do those first couple of months in the Pacific. The Marines had already taken this island and had prepared it for our replacement troops. Our streets of tents was appropriately called "Gravel Gertie's Alley," and we decided to call our tent "The Dairy" because dairy was synonymous with milk, and we were more hungry for a glass of milk than anything else we'd ever tasted. There wasn't much point in the name, but there is no point in spending your life in the middle of an ocean, either.

Our tent was pretty swell. We rigged up a stove out of a large can with air-holes in it, and a piece of old rag soaked in kerosene for a wick. All the guys on our street would bring their gifts from home and we'd make coffee on our stove, and have feeds.

Those mail-calls were wonderful. Man, how we waited for the letters and boxes from home. If a guy got a box we all headed for our tent, and how we'd eat!

However, it was about the second week that I first began to notice Bill's peculiar actions. Oh, I had noticed all along that Bill was different from most of us. First of all, he didn't have any pictures of girls, not even magazine pin-up girls, and he never talked about girls. One night when we had just polished off a big box, and everybody was in a relaxed mood the conversation naturally turned to women.

"What I would like to know is where is all them hula girls we see in the movies?" Curly Winters, a red-headed kid from Brooklyn, wanted to know.

"In Hollywood, yuh herd-rider," Herb Westley, a Texas cowpuncher, answered, cryptically,

"Well, I sure could do with a little report from my Sugar," I couldn't help adding on an exaggerated sigh, because you see, I am footloose and fancy free and any USO is my apple.

"What's the matter with you, Bill? Has your woman got you to the place where you can't describe her?" Brooklyn spoke up, and we all got silent to hear what Bill was going to say.

When he didn't say anything, but just tightened his lips in a way we'd discovered meant he wasn't talking, I began singing some ribald song, too loud. No one seemed to notice, though, and pretty soon the guys went to bed, and I suggested to Bill that we step outside for a smoke.

We had smoked a few seconds in silence when Bill said, "Sarg, I want you to know that I am married."

I didn't say anything. He'd never mentioned being married before, and I knew from experience he would talk only when he was ready. Pretty soon he said, "I'm married; that's all. I have been married about three months now. I don't know how it's going to work out." He stamped out his smoke, stretched, and we silently undressed and hit the sack.

Another thing that was strange was that Bill didn't seem to want to read his letters. He would stuff them into a pocket and sit lonely-like, smoking, while the rest of us compared sugar-reports from our girls, or sat misty-eyed over letters from our families. After a while Bill would read his letters through once, and then put a match to them, and when the paper turned blac, grind the ashes into the dirt with his heel.

About that time, too, we began hearing rumors about our outfit's getting its initial firebath. We became more sure of it every day as the tempo of our traning stepped up, and our drills and weapons were inspected more frequently. Then we began seeing combat movies, and getting pep talks from our commanding officers. We knew we were being prepared for something big all right.

Our feeds were over too; the guys were so tired from training they went right to bed, and even the men in our tent talked very

little about what we were getting into. We were all pretty much scared.

Then one night when Bill and I were alone for awhile Bill broke a silence by asking, "Sarg, do you ever think maybe you won't come back alive?"

"Sure, Kid, I suppose everyone does. This ain't a situation you go into like a football game. I know one thing, though; if I get a chance to take a bunch of Nips with me I'm going to."

"Yeah, but Sarg, did you ever think you wanted to maybe not come back?"

"Hell, no, Kid, I'm not one of those martyrs. I want to come back. I want to go back Stateside, and see that those damn politicians don't mess up what we're fighting for. I'm not going to die if I can help it."

"Yeah, Sarg, yeah. I guess you're right." Bill went on cleaning his rifle, and I didn't have the nerve to question him.

Well, it happened two days later. We landed on this Japanese island that turned out to be a fair facsimile of hell. I decided during those ten days of fighting that Heaven was worth being good for because Hell sure couldn't hold any attractions.

I had been kind of worried about Bill. He had smoked incessantly, and had been so quiet the two days aboard ship that no one had had a chance to talk with him. When we prepared to land I stuck by him, and had decided I'd be there in case he needed any help. We hit that beach together.

There's no need for me to tell you about that beach except to say we didn't do a whole lot of fighting. We couldn't raise our heads high enough above the ground to aim. However, pretty soon, our navy support had cleaned out the machine gun nests that had been harassing us, and we set about capturing that island bloody inch by bloody inch.

We had reached the first straggly trees when this second machine gun opened up on us. God! It was awful. We screamed, and cursed those Japs while we tried to find enough covering to let us get at our hand grenades. It was then that Bill rolled into the shallow ditch that gave him the chance that probably saved all our lives.

In that ditch Bill found the covering he needed to pull the rings and throw the grenades that scattered the enemy machine gunners. The rest of us opened up with rifle and machine gun fire, and Bill rolled out of the ditch. Grabbing a kid who had been hit he hoisted him into his arms and started back towards our beach.

A sniper got Bill and both he and the kid fell.

I kind of lost my head then. I hit those tree tops with all the ferocity my machine gun had, and then ran to Bill.

Well, we got Bill back to the shore, where a couple of Medicos took charge of him. There were nine more days of hard fighting before I found the time to look him up.

When I did find him he looked pretty good. His upper body was swathed in bandages. A rib or two had been shattered and, of course, flesh wounds, but he was alive. We sure were glad to see each other.

The tears stung my eyes, and I turned my head so Bill couldn't see. I was sure he'd say I should have joined the Army, but he didn't. I guess he was feeling about the same way.

Pretty soon we quieted down a little, and he said to me kind of timid-like, "Sarg, you don't have to worry about me any more. That firebath fixed my mind ok."

"What d' yuh mean, Kid?" I asked, not wanting to let on I knew what he was talking about.

"Well, see Sarg. I knew you were worrying about me, but I couldn't tell you beforehand that I'd got my problems straightened out. I guess, maybe, I thought for awhile that this would have been an easy way out, but that last night before we went into battle I got to seeing the whole thing in a different light, and then, out there when I saw I was the only one that even had half a chance to save my squad I knew I didn't want to die. I wanted to live just as you said, back there, remember?"

"Yeah," I said, not wanting to break his train of thought.

"Well, that's all. I'm alive. You're alive, and that's all." Bill stopped talking, and we were both silent for a minute.

"Bill, there's one thing I gotta know. Where in hell did you get the complex, anyway?"

He was silent for a long time, and then he said, "Maybe you don't know how it is, Sarg, but, well, my mother died not so long ago, and I felt pretty bad. Then, one night I was eating in a little restaurant in town, because I didn't have a home anymore, when my girl whom I had been in love with for a couple of years came in. She sat down with me, and pretty soon, I just said, "Judith, would you marry me now, even though I am in the Marines? I don't want to wait until after the war, and she said, "Oh, yes, Bill."

Well, we walked out of that restaurant, got a license, and were married. We were pretty happy, and she said she'd go back to camp with me, but first we wanted to tell her parents.

"We never thought they'd take it like they did. They raised hell. Her mother bawled, and her father ordered me out of the house. My leave was up the next day, and I tried to telehone Judith before I had to go back, but I couldn't get her.

"Well, to make a long story short, her father was quite influential, and he got our marriage annulled because Judy had lied about her age.

"Then I got shipped overseas, and even though I wrote to Judith all the time I never got any answers from her. I just got letters from her mother, and a lot of other people telling how Judy was having a wonderful time, and had just felt temporarily sorry for me. Then, right after I was wounded, I got this letter from Judith."

He handed the letter to me, and I read it silently. The first part of that letter isn't anybody's business except Bill's, but it was pretty sweet. The rest of the letter went like this:

"I never knew you had written. Mother has said incessantly that you couldn't have loved me, or you would have written. I never knew she had destroyed your letters. But, Bill, I'm still your wife if you want me. I just found out through a friend of Mothers' that you had written, and I made her give me your address.

"I'm going to school this summer. Mom and Dad think it will make me forget you, so I'm giving in peaceably, but Bill, I could never forget you. I had wanted so long to have you love me. Don't blame Mother and Dad; they're old, and they didn't know what they were doing, but I'm going away to school, and the minute you get back, Bill, I'll marry you again anytime, anywhere . . . . "

I didn't say anything for a while after I read that letter because those damn tears kept choking me, but when I looked at Bill I saw a look of absolute triumph all over his handsome face.

So—you see,' I had to tell this story just in case there are any more mothers back Statesside who think they know more about love and kids than their own children do.

I might just say that this story happened a long time ago and since then Bill has come pretty close to being a legend in this war. It seems as if he wants to lick all the Nips single-handed so he can get back States-side and marry his wife.

Life With Grandpa

By MARIAN KRATZER

Aunt Mame beat vigorously at the mashed potatoes. They just had to be done before Grandpa—or "Grumpy," as some of the grandchildren called him, got home. He liked his meals on time and he expected them to be ready. At precisely ten minutes past twelve Grandma stretched her neck toward the door. "He's coming," she said.

In less than one minute he had entered, plunked his old brown hat on the sewing machine, washed partially and wiped the rest of the dirt on the towel, and seated himself ready to eat.

Aunt Mame hurriedly put the dishes on the table while Aunt Sadie bustled her broadening figure to and from the faucet where she filled the water glasses. Aunt Mame and Sadie had just time to sit down and bow their heads as Grandpa said "Amen" to the grace. Nobody could understand what he said for grace. It might have been Chinese or Greek for all they knew.

The meal began as usual. Aunt Mame took her green and yellow capsules and Aunt Sadie her nervine pills and cathratic. Grandma cut all her meat in small enough pieces for six teeth to chew. By that time Grandpa had eaten everything but his dessert. He stared blankly at his plate for a second or two.

"Wonder what he's getting ready to lecture about now," thought Sade.

"Say, where's Australia, anyway," it finally came out.

"Who wants to know?" Aund Sadie queried not willing to show her ignorance.

"Oh, Neut said this morning that it was in Canada. I bet fifty cents he was wrong."

"Where did you say it was?" broke in Aunt Mame.

Grandpa sipped his coffee loudly and then put down the cup. "In Europe, of course. I just saw in the paper yesterday that American troops landed in Australia. In the next column it said that the invasion of Europe had begun."

"And I read this morning that the Germans were wonderful mean to their prisoners. Mind you, it's a sin the way people act nowadays," chirped Grandma.

That brought the conversation to the place that it always reached sooner or later. Grandma told about what the paper said. That included all the murder cases and ended with a philosophical note about the war.

"Why can't we ever talk about anything but war?" Aunt Sadie asked in an irritable voice. "It's war in the morning, at dinner, at night. Other people can talk about pleasant things. Why don't we?"

"Well think of something else, if you don't like this," Aunt Mame replied.

That settled the conversation for a while. Aunt Sadie broke the silence. 'I wish somebody would go to the carnival tonight, and take me along," she said.

"It's a sin the way people waste money at carnivals," Grandma added. "Why it used to be that decent people wouldn't have even thought about going to carnivals. And now, even the married people with children go."

"Next year I suppose the crowd will include the old men and women too," Aunt Mame ventured to say.

"I wouldn't know why old people wouldn't go," Grandpa retorted. "If it's a sin for one, it's a sin for everybody."

Aunt Mame and Sadie tittered a little about that. Grandma looked shocked. Her look as much as said, "Well, knock me down with a tooth pick. I've heard about all I can stand now." She sighed to herself as she had a habit of doing and then settled back in her chair.

The next day it rained, so nobody went to the carnival. Aunt Sadie, in spite of her twenty-nine years, pouted and complained. Aunt Mame said, "There's no use acting like a baby about a carnival." And Grandma said she guessed God had a good reason for sending rain because he didn't want people to go to carnivals.

Saturday night was the last night of the big affair. Aunt Mame and Sadie were both going. In fact, everybody was going but Grandma. Grandpa had announced his intention at the dinner table. It made Aunt Mame and Sadie furious inside, but they didn't say anything—that is not to him.

"I hope he changes his mind," Mame confided to Sadie later.

"Don't worry, he won't. He never has yet," Sadie said.

"I don't see what an old man like him wants at a carnival anyway. He'll probably dash around the place in ten minutes and then keep telling us that it's time to go home."

"Just so he doesn't get lost or have a heat stroke or a heart attack," added Sadie.

At seven o'clock, when Mame and Sadie were all dressed and looked trim, they found Grandpa waiting on the front porch. Cousin Madge was taking them all in her automobile. Grandpa, for the first time in a year, had on a white shirt and a rayon neck tie instead of the usual khaki shirt and knit tie. The big cigar he was smoking was so long that it came near touching the end of his curved nose.

"Mom—Mom, don't sit up waiting for us," Aunt Sadie yelled nervously out the window as they prepared to drive away.

"Don't worry about me," Grandma said quietly. "I know how to take care of myself."

Aunt Mame and Sadie had a wonderful time. They listened to the medicine man on the soap box for about half an hour, and then they turned to watching the ferris wheel and the merry-go-round. Afterwards they watched the high-pole acts, and before they knew it, the evening was over. It was midnight and time to go home. Mame and Sadie met Cousin Madge at the car. "Everybody ready?" Madge said.

"Everybody but Grandpa," Sadie answered. "You might have known we'd have to wait on him."

"I wouldn't be surprised if he had hitchhiked home because he was tired of waitin' on us," Mame suggested.

"Probably home in bed while we're wasting time hunting him."

"Why don't we go without him?"

"I think we'd better hunt for him first," Madge answered.

And so they searched the carnival grounds, but no Grandpa could they find.

"Oh, let's go home," Sadie coaxed. "I bet anything he's in bed."

But Grandpa wasn't home in bed when they got there. So they went back and searched the carnival grounds again. "I told you fried potatoes weren't good for people with high blood pressure on hot days," Mame taunted. "Mom would never get over it if Grandpa spent his last night at a place like this."

"I don't see why he ever came in the first place," Sadie answered in a distressed voice. "We never have good times without something terrible happening."

"You don't suppose somebody would have kidnaped him, do you?" Madge wondered.

"I wouldn't know what for," snapped Sadie.

"The last time I saw him, he was watching one of those cowboy shows," Mame said after a thoughtful silence. "He wouldn't have been crazy enough to go along with them, would he?"

That didn't seem probable, so they tried to find some other solution. Every search ended the same way. He was gone.

"Why didn't we wait and hunt again in the morning? If we don't find him then, we can report it to the police," concluded Sadie.

The morning dawned clear with a blue sky. At daylight Mame and Sadie had made up their minds. They asked Madge to take them to Independence to call the police. They stopped in front of the police station and walked briskly up the steps.

They heard the door open and said "Good morning" to someone without looking in that direction. They were both craning their necks to see whether they might catch sight of Grandpa before they informed the police.

"I guess it's the only thing," Sadie said in her distressed voice. "I hope they find him before Mom's blood pressure gets any worse."

"And your nerves," Mame answered.

Sadie turned around and opened her mouth to say something, but she stopped. Mame looked too. Grandpa had just emerged from the door of the police station.

"Who was in a hurry about going home this time?" he said as he headed for the automobile.

The Victory Garden

By LOIS O'NEILL

"Did I tell you about my daughter, Edna, and her victory garden?"

Mrs. Sommers clasped her hands across her comfortable stomach. She sat in the place of honor that she has occupied for 35 years. Hundreds of girls have come and gone from the office, but she stays, gaining in energy and liveliness through the years. She can do anything in the office from operating a switchboard up to supervising the 20 to 25 girls of all ages, although supervising is all she really has to do.

She's a little under 5 feet tall and close to 5 feet wide, and she sits on a high stool up on the supervisor's platform. Right now she has a "baby" hair-cut and the curls never seem to be organized. They fly in all directions but the right one. She looks like a precocious white-haired baby.

She lives with her daughter, Edna who is 45 if she is a day, but to Mrs. Sommers she is just past the high school age and just before the marriageable age. Edna is not quite as round as her mother, but each chocolate sundae brings her closer to it.

We all have a fifteen-minute "relief" period about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and everyone files out to the lounge to talk and smoke and relax. We always stay 20 minutes or a half hour.

On hot days, Mrs. Sommers takes advantage of her rest period to sprinkle herself madly with Johnson's baby powder. She pours it down the front of her dress and into the folds of her arms. Some of it is always visible above the "V" in her dress. She says she knows it is foolish, but when she it hot and sticky, it makes her feel so cool and refreshed— just how she imagines a baby feels.

Today we all went out together for relief period and the conversation veered around to war activities, and branches of the service. Each girl contributed some item on her soldier or sailor or marine. Except me. I didn't men-

tion my 4-F. But the general conversation didn't last long. Mrs. Sommers as usual took the floor. We smoked and listened, some perched on arms of chairs, a few on other girls' laps.

"You know my daughter, Edna, has a victory garden. It's about 3 miles from the house, and every night after dinner she rides up on her bicycle. At first, she didn't go so regularly. But she got so interested in what they were growing that now she goes every day, even Saturday and Sunday, and works for 3 hours.

"Edna thinks she should do something to help win the war. Besides, it's so healthy for her to work outdoors. Keeps her waistline down, too. You know, Edna has a tendency toward plumpness. She gets that from her father. You wouldn't think it to look at me, but when I first came to the office 35 years ago, I was so tiny they used to put me on the freight scale every day, to see if I had gained an ounce.

"My Edna's best friend, Hilda, goes with her. She has a garden, too. The two of them have been friends since they were children. I don't know—all of her friends just seemed to drop off and get married, but neither Edna nor Hilda could just seem to find a suitable husband. My Edna is so particular. She finds some little thing wrong with all of them. I liked them myself. I thought they were all very nice boys. Even Tom Harris. Of course, it was a little trying the way he had of saying, 'Quite right, quite right' to everything no matter what it was.

Well, after a few trips, Edna mentioned to me that there was a Naval Training Base in the same park as the victory gardens, and the boys passed every night on their way from the parade grounds. She said they looked so nice in their white uniforms. They all looked like admirals and she couldn't tell one rank from the other. A few nights later she told me casually that the boys stopped and looked at the gardens and commented on them. My Edna is friendly and she talked to all of them. She said probably they were home-sick.

"Then one day, Edna remarked that their chief petty officer—by then she could distinguish their ranks—had stopped to talk to her and complimented the gardens. She said he was very nice and friendly and such a gentleman. He seemed to know a lot about vegetables. She didn't mention him again for a long while afterward. She just continued going to work in the gardens, and once in awhile she would say 'I saw the boys again,' or 'They're getting so brown from the sun.'

"One night Edna came home and said that the petty officer had stayed behind and talked to her and Hilda for half an hour. 'Only, Mother,' she said, 'he only talked to me. He didn't say anything to Hilda and I think she's angry with me.'

"I thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice if Edna would meet some nice young man and marry him.' Of course, I didn't know what he was like, if he was nice or not. Edna didn't say much about him.

"And then one Sunday afternoon," Mrs. Sommers fluttered her arms, "Edna said, 'Mother, do you think it would look out of place if I wore a silk dress to the farm today?' She calls the garden her farm. 'I am just going to pull some weeds and I couldn't get it dirty.' And then she added, 'I don't think I will take my bicycle either. I'll go up on the trolley.'

I didn't say anything but I thought, 'Wouldn't it be nice if Edna were dressing up just because the petty officer was passing and would stop and talk to her?'

She returned very early that night. She came in just as I had finished putting the house in order after dinner, and I was sitting there sewing. At first, I didn't mention the petty officer and she didn't say anything. She told me about the vegetables and how well they were growing—different things about the garden. Finally I couldn't resist, so I asked, 'Did you see that nice young petty officer today?' Edna said.

'Oh, mother it was terrible. It was awful. The boys stopped to talk to us tonight while all the girls were still there working in the gardens pulling weeds and things. And he stopped and I introduced him to all of them. He stood with us awhile and he and Hilda went over to look at her garden. The other girls started to tease me. They said that was why I wore my silk dress. It wasn't, of course, I wore it because today is Sunday.

'I went back to my planting and he came over and stood there talking to me, and imagine, mother!—oh, it was awful—I planted the tomatoes right on top of the corn! And, mother, he noticed! If he didn't know, it wouldn't have been so bad, but he laughed and I was so embarrassed that I didn't know what to do.

'Then they went back to their weeding and he asked be if I would like to go to a movie after I was finished. I said I was sorry but I had other plans for the evening. You know, mother, it wouldn't look well if I said yes the first time he asked me. I will wait until he asks me again and then I will go.

She didn't mention him again but honestly, girls, it was so sweet. Edna began to wear her best dresses on week days. And she looked so nice. She wore her navy blue on Tuesday and her print on Wednesday. The print has such nice tailored lines. On Saturday, she had her hair done in nice soft curls off her face. I tried to persuade her to get a feather cut like mine, but she said she would feel too frivolous.

Wednesday night she came home and said that he had asked if he could come to the house. But Edna said, 'I don't know, mother, I think I'll wait until he asks me the third time.'

She didn't mention him again and I didn't, either. I just thought, 'I'll let things take their course.'

When Edna came home Sunday evening, I don't know what made me think of the petty officer, but I thought I would tease her and I asked, 'Where's your petty officer?' She just said:

'He's coming. I told him I had to come home

and dress. He was in his fatigue clothes and he said he would change, too, but I told him he needn't bother.'

My cousin Lizzie was staying with us that week-end and I decided that Lizzie and I could just stay upstairs and Edna could be alone with her young man. We just got up stairs when we heard him come in. I had to make some telephone calls, and I wrote a letter to Aunt Jane. I had owed her one for more than a month. Lizzie just sat and read a book. Downstairs we could hear this real deep voice talking just about a mile a minute. We didn't hear a word from Edna. I finished everything I had to do, and I guess I hurried a little, because both Lizzie and I were just dying to see him.

You know, since Mr. Sommers died, we have hardly had a man in the house. Last week, Lizzie's husband came to the city for some X-Ray treatments, and he spent the week-end at our house. Neither Edna nor I could sleep all night, it was so strange having a man in the house. I couldn't stir out of my room, and I couldn't go into the bathroom and I didn't know what to do. I was afraid I would meet him coming out of his room to go into the bathroom.

Well, Lizzie and I had to see Edna's young man, so we both went downstairs. We went into the living room, and then something embarrassing happened. I thought I would make him feel at home, so I said, 'Hi, soldier,' and imagine! he is a sailor.

We all sat in the living room and talked to him. It seemed he was a reporter before he enlisted in the Navy and since Mr. Sommers' brother was a reporter, I told him all about him.

He looked so nice sitting there, a fine figure of a man, although he had on those, what do you call them?—yes, fatigue clothes. I suppose when Edna said not to change he thought he he shouldn't. But I think Edna wished he had worn his 'whites.' She wanted him to look like an admiral.

Edna had never learned his name, so I just had to find out. I don't know how I got around it, but I asked him. He said it was John. He told us he was from the south, but I don't know, there was something about his voice that sounded Irish. There was just that touch of brogue. Honestly, girls, you should have seen him. He just sat there with his chin sort of up in the air, and the words just seemed to pour out. His speech was simply elegant. He really was a beautiful speaker. And he recited some poetry for us. I forget what it was, something about a captain coming home after a trip. Just the way he sat there with his head up in the air, and he talked as much with his hands as with his mouth. He told Edna all about Navy life, and he seemed to be talking to her alone. I just winked at Lizzie. He didn't seem to remember that we were there. And my, he was a talker!

I thought that we should serve some sort of refreshment. You know how I love ice cream. Marie, did you put my pint down in the water cooler where it will keep nice and firm? It stays so nice in those little boxes. So I decided to get some ice cream and we could serve him that. Lizzie went down to the store to get it, and I went out to the kitchen to get some little plates. I was sorry we didn't have some little sandwiches ready to serve with it. When Lizzie came back, I filled a big dish for him. Edna came out to the kitchen to carry it in. She said she thought he would rather have beer, but I don't know, I don't think a girl should serve anything intoxicating to a young man visiting. And, anyway, there is something 'special occasion' about ice cream.

Maybe he would have preferred beer but he certainly ate up every bit of that ice cream. Then Lizzie and I went upstairs and he and Edna just sat down there and talked. He stayed real late. It must have been 11:30 when he left.

Then Lizzie and I went to bed, and Edith came upstairs. She came in to say goodnight —she always comes in to see if I want anything before she goes to bed—and I waited for her to say something about him. I asked her if she had a nice evening. She told me that she had, but she didn't say anything else. I thought she would tell me everything he said. I used to tell my mother all about the boys who came to see me.

All the next week Edna went to her victory garden, and I was so puzzled. She didn't mention the petty officer again. He didn't come to the house again, so I finally asked Edna whether she cared for the young man. Edna said,

'No, mother. I don't think I will see John anymore.'

I was so surprised. He seemed so nice, I liked him very much and Lizzie did, too. He looked so manly, and while I did not like to lose my Edna, it would be nice if she would settle down with a good man. With the grandchildren and all, I guess I could keep busy. But she said,

'Mother, I don't think I care to see him anymore. You know, he is over 45, and he is so nice and sensible, I think that a man like John is bound to be married and have children or even worse, he might be divorced. I never found out all about him. I never really asked him, but I don't even know his last name. It would be different if someone had introduced us. But he could be from anywhere. I would never know. And mother, I couldn't get any information about him, because everytime I tried to say something, he would just continue what he was saying, and I couldn't get a word in. I don't think that of all the time I have been talking to him, I have really had a chance to say anything.'

I didn't tell Edith, but I am just as well pleased. I think she had better wait awhile. She still has plenty of time before she settles down."