THE American MAGAZINE

EVERYTHING COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

December 35¢

THEY ESCAPE INCOME TAXES— BUT YOU CAN'T!

(See page 15)

★

COMPLETE MYSTERY:

MURDER BY MOONLIGHT

By Lew Dietz

★

COMPLETE NOVEL:

DO YOU TAKE THIS WOMAN?

By Margaret Culkin Banning

★

America's Greatest Manhunt!

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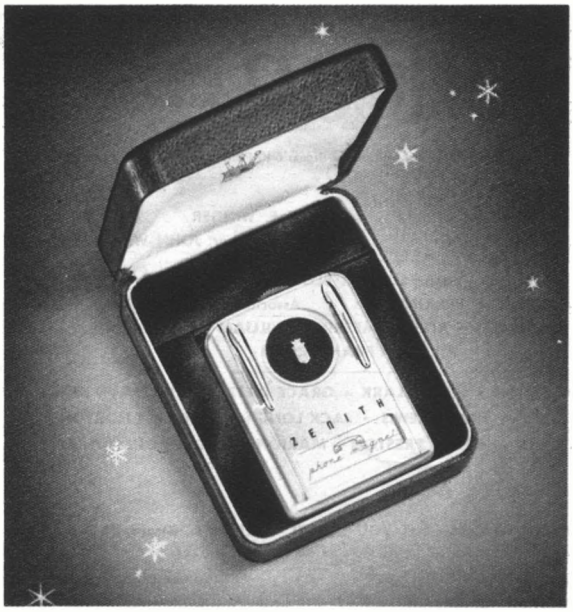

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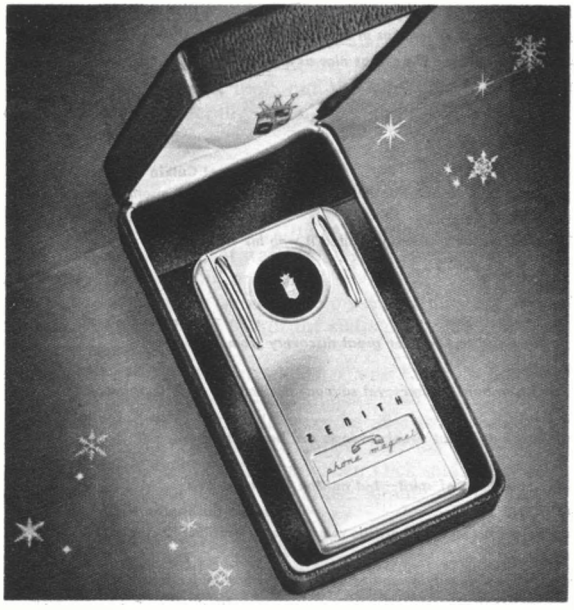

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TEN-DAY MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE. SEE YOUR LOCAL ZENITH DEALER.

PICTURE OF THE MONTH

A few years ago, Esther Williams starred in M-G-M's musical of happy memory—"Bathing Beauty." Now in "Million Dollar Mermaid", she portrays the queen of *all* bathing beauties—Annette Kellerman.

"Million Dollar Mermaid" is, itself, something of a millennium in Technicolor musicals. It weighs anchor on the imagination and disports among rolling seas of rhythm and revels. Curvaceous Esther swims into your vision attended by a retinue of a hundred aquabelles; she is clad in a gold net swimsuit, bedecked by a jewel-encrusted crown, the veritable personification of Neptune's daughter.

To recreate the story of a star whose rise to fame as a water-nymph was meteor-like, M-G-M splashes the screen with spectacle. It tells not only her story but the story of the lavish days of the incomparable Pavlowa and her unforgettable ballets . . . of Marceline, the renowned international clown . . . of the colossal New York Hippodrome . . . and of Boston's fabulous Revere Beach, where ladies were shocked at the appearance of the one-piece bathing suit.

Esther Williams was the perfect choice for the role of "Million Dollar Mermaid". As the promoter who skyrockets her to success, handsome Victor Mature has his happiest hit. Versatile Walter Pidgeon returns to his first love—musical comedy, and David Brian also contributes his talent to a generally wonderful cast.

Eye-filling sights light up the screen. The cascading spectacle of the Water Curtain number . . . the pyrotechnic splendor of the Quartz Ballet . . . the kaleidoscopic beauty of the Rainbow Smoke extravaganza. If our adjectives have become somewhat barnumesque, it is because there are no others that will do such wonders descriptive justice.

The director is Mervyn LeRoy whose directorial achievement in "Quo Vadis" ranks him as one of the tops in the industry, and the producer is Arthur Hornblow, Jr. "Million Dollar Mermaid" is truly a one-in-a-million entertainment for millions to see.

★ ★ ★

M-G-M presents "MILLION DOLLAR MERMAID" starring ESTHER WILLIAMS, VICTOR MATURE, WALTER PIDGEON, DAVID BRIAN with Donna Corcoran. Color by Technicolor. Screen play by Everett Freeman. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy. Produced by Arthur Hornblow, Jr.

THE American MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 1952
Vol. CLIV Number 6

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LETTERS

ACROSS THE EDITORS' DESKS

The other day we heard about a man in West Hempstead, N. Y., whose family were watching Abbott and Costello on television, when he decided he didn't like the show. He whipped out a pistol and eliminated the program and the entire TV screen with one well-aimed shot. The incident made us think how much more peaceful it is in the publishing business than in television. After all, who can get any satisfaction out of shooting a hole in a copy of a magazine? When aroused to the point of mayhem, our readers simply write us letters.

We received the following protest, for example, from Vance P. Packard, New Canaan, Conn., a youngster of 10 who happens to be the son of author Vance O. Packard, who wrote our recent article on home movie making, We're in the Movies Now *(Oct.). "Dear Editor," writes young Vance in a free scrawl which we have edited only slightly, "You have a article in which my dad says his kids pestered him to buy a movie camera. Do not believe it. My dad brought home a camera and made my mother take movies of him first. Then he took pictures of us."*

The same mailbag brought in a note of correction and reproof from Mr. W. S. Duniway, an official of the University of Southern California:

"Dear Sir: Just noted in Don Eddy's travel article, I'll Take Southern California *(Oct.), that he mentions visiting Westwood, 'home of the University of Southern California at Los Angeles.' There is no university by that name. He means the University of California at Los Angeles."*

Well, some of our editors have lived in California, so we'll explain the whole thing. First, there's the University of Southern California, which is *in* Los Angeles. Then there's the University of California *at* Los Angeles, and that's the one in Westwood. You'll also find a University of California at Berkeley, and in addition—but maybe you'd rather forget the whole thing and just call 'em the Trojans, the Bruins, and the Golden Bears.

Our November cover painting of a honey-haired little girl shrieking with joy over a hand puppet has brought us a flood of cheers and questions from readers. One typical comment: "Where did your artist find such a sweet child and such a wonderful idea to paint?" We didn't have to go far to find the answer, and neither did New York artist William Rose to find his inspiration. Mr. Rose has two beautiful daughters, Penny and Tina, and it was Tina, age 2, who got a puppet as a present and became Daddy's model. If you'd like to compare the painting with the real Tina Rose, here she is (above).

She inspired Papa

From Odette Gough, of Victoria, B. C., comes the following adventurous query: "Your September 'American Family of the Month' was that of Bert and Ellen Law, who left California to make a new life in the Yukon. After my marriage my fiancé and I intend settling in the Yukon and would appreciate it very much if we

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The characters in all short stories and novels in this magazine are purely imaginary. No reference or allusion to any living person is intended.

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could write the Laws. Being a subscriber to your magazine, I would also like to know if it is delivered direct to the Yukon. You bring the farthest parts of the world into a few pages, and we certainly enjoy it."

We've told Miss Gough how to get in touch with the Laws, and reminded her to be sure to notify us of her and her future husband's new address. They'll get their copies of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE *even if we have to lug them up the Alaska Highway by dog sled.*

Mrs. L. W. Hale Jr., Seattle, Wash., congratulates us on Kate Smith's own story, *Don't Let It Get You Down* (Oct.): "This is one article that I will always treasure. You can pick up any magazine and be told how to lose weight, but this is the first one that has told people how to make the best of their better points, instead of worrying about their bad ones. Kate Smith has always been an inspiration to me. How about some more articles of this kind?"

Further inspiration, as well as a few howls of rage and pain, resulted from another October article, They Solved Their In-Law Problem, *which described the happy home life of the William Oliphants of New Jersey. For example:*

Mrs. L. T. Breedlove, Boone, Iowa: "Keep up the good work. Just read *They Solved Their In-Law Problem*, and it seems to me that thousands may profit from reading of this one family's adjustment. . . . I'm a mother-in-law three times, and never had a harsh word with any of my son-in-laws."

Mrs. Marguerite Upham, Portland, Ore.: "Your article on the in-law problem is an all-time high in asininity. . . . It isn't normal or healthy for adults and children to be so rigidly disciplined. Show me any family where occasionally there isn't a free-for-all over cleaning the party room and I will show you a group of people who are afraid to call their souls their own. To me it sounds more like a powder keg than a happy family life."

The letters indicate that a lot of American families have faced the in-law problem and managed to find solutions of their own. This one is typical:

Mrs. Lin S. Way, Orangeburg, S. C.: "To my mind, the Oliphants didn't have too many hurdles to leap. My husband and I have been married for 17 years, and for 15 of those we have had in-laws. First, we had my husband's mother and her two teen-age boys; then, during the war, my mother, father, and family, totaling 6, moved in. . . . We have lived in comparative harmony, cooking and eating together. . . . To our way of thinking, that is some kind of a record!"

●

ADDRESS YOUR LETTER TO:

The Editors, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N. Y.

WHY DON'T THEY?

DEVISE a double-handled cream pitcher with a pouring lip in the center on both sides, to facilitate passing it at the table?—*Mrs. Frank Finders, Waterloo, Iowa.*

PUT a flashlight in the handles of umbrellas to light the way at night and save carrying a separate torch?—*Elizabeth Paik, Mt. Holly, N. J.*

PROVIDE an auxiliary strip of "unrolling" metal on those cans which are opened by keys, so if the first strip breaks off there is a second chance to open without using a can opener?—*Samuel Lafferty, Camden, N. J.*

BUILD rowboats with handles on the sides and bottom, so a person has something to hold on to if the boat capsizes?—*Burgess Bunn, Charlotte, N. C.*

Boats with lifesaver handles

MARK a person's blood type on his driver's license, to aid in case of accident?—*Mrs. J. W. Wise, Lindsay, Okla.*

MAKE bias tape, rickrack braid, and other trimming materials so that they can be ironed on like mending tape?—*B. H. Crawford, Tujunga, Calif.*

PRODUCE "rugpins"—clothespins large enough in size to hold a rug on the clothesline?—*Mrs. Wm. Gartner, Meriden, Conn.*

INVENT a combination automatic clothes washer and dryer for those who want both appliances but have room for only one?—*Mrs. Wilfred J. Carr, Waldwick, N. J.*

Blankets for bed readers

MANUFACTURE cotton blankets (wool is too scratchy) with sleeves in one end for people who like to read in bed on cold winter nights?—*Mrs. Frank A. Bogard, Omaha, Nebr.*

MAKE small, attractive tissue dispensers that fasten to a person's belt, where they will be handy at all times and places?—*Mrs. John Bazan, Milwaukee, Wis.*

DEVISE a rubberized feeding spoon whose pliable edge would protect a baby's mouth and tender skin?—*Mrs. Eleanor M. Forbes, Fresno, Calif.*

MAKE waterproof, sunproof American flags for use on soldiers' graves?—*Dixie Weymouth, Howland, Maine.*

ISSUE gift certificates at auto service stations so one could make a present of gasoline, oil, tires, or lubrication service for the "hard-to-buy-a-gift-for" car owner? —*Mrs. E. F. Yates Jr., Norfolk, Va.*

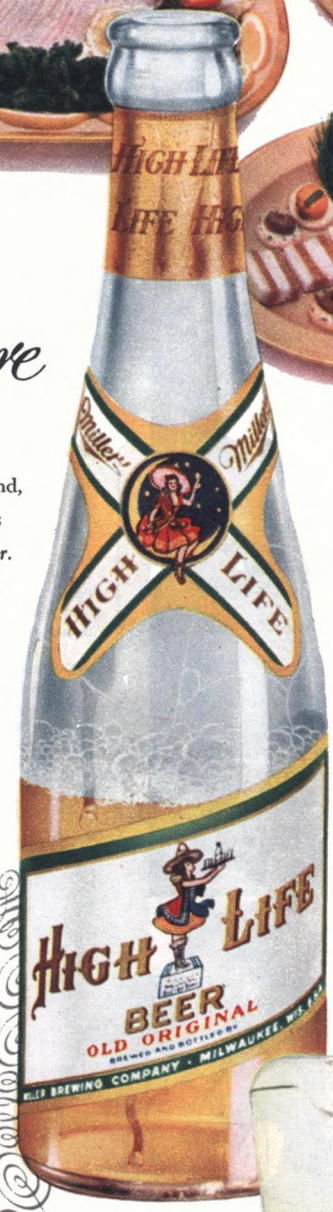
Gas station gift certificates

PACKAGE small steel-wool swabs on sticks, like cotton ones, for cleaning hard-to-reach parts of pots, percolators, and the like?—*Mrs. Thomas J. Massiell, Budd Lake, N. J.*

Have you any ideas no one else seems to have thought of? Send them on a postcard to the "Why Don't They?" editor, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N.Y. We'll pay $5 for each suggestion accepted. None can be returned.

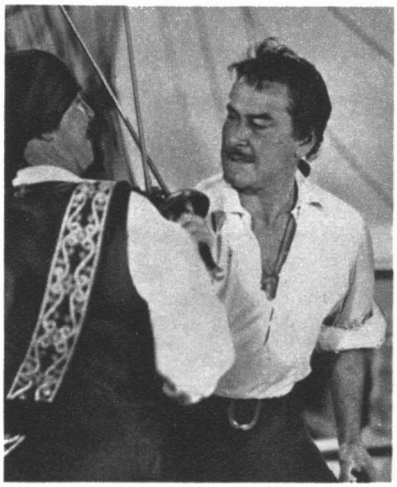
Recipe for Pleasure

Take the bright, friendly spirit of the holidays... blend in an eye-pleasing array of succulent snacks... and, for the fitting, final touch, add the golden, gleaming goodness of MILLER HIGH LIFE... *the Champagne of Bottle Beer.* Here indeed is a recipe rich in the finest traditions of holiday hospitality! During these festive days when friends and family get together keep a supply of MILLER HIGH LIFE on hand. You give your guests a royal welcome when you invite them to *enjoy* life with MILLER HIGH LIFE... the *genuine* Milwaukee beer that's brewed and bottled by the Miller Brewing Company ONLY and ONLY in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



TUNE IN!
***March of Time* on TV!**
Check Your Newspaper for Time and Station

Miller's
HIGH LIFE
The Champagne of Bottle Beer

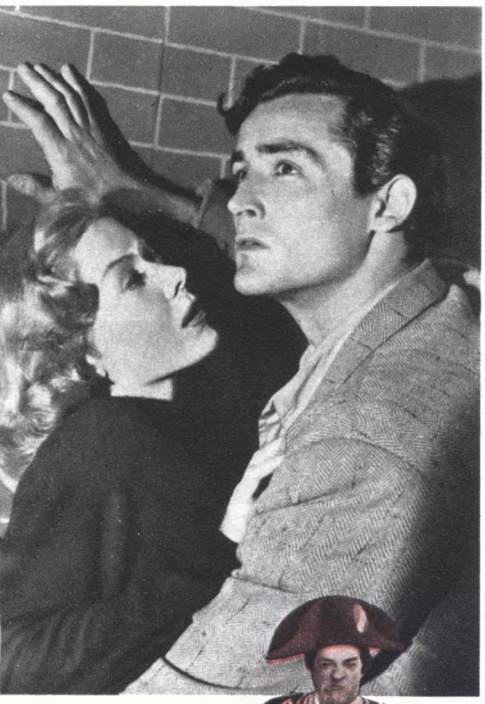


Errol Flynn duels in *Against All Flags*

Stars of *Eight Iron Men* seem to like this pretty pin-up

A PEEK AT THE

Movies of the Month



Gloria Grahame and Vittorio Gassman, lovers in *The Glass Wall*

There's trouble ahead when Costello mimics the fearsome Captain Kidd (Charles Laughton)

A HOLIDAY PACKAGE of entertainment in a Technicolor wrapping for movie-goers is **HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN,** with comedian Danny Kaye in his first "straight" role as the Danish cobbler who enchanted generations of children with his fairy tales. Young Joey Walsh plays Andersen's apprentice who accompanies him to Copenhagen, where Hans meets and falls in love with a beautiful ballerina (French ballet star Jeanmaire). Unfortunately for Andersen, she and her director-husband (Farley Granger) are happily married. But the real stars of this movie are Danny and the children as they romp through musical versions of such familiar stories as *The King's New Clothes*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *Thumbelina*, and *The Inchworm*. (RKO)

Two biographies in Technicolor share the spotlight this month. One is a rousing musical based on the life of the beloved "March King," John Philip Sousa (1854-1932). Named for one of his most-famed marches, **STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER,** this 20th Century-Fox picture has Clifton Webb starring as the colorful, eccentric band leader who wrote more famous marches than any other composer.

The other is the story of Annette Kellerman, the plucky young Australian swimmer who shocked Boston by wearing the first one-piece swimming suit in the history of feminine attire. MGM has told her story with glamorous Esther Williams as the **MILLION-DOLLAR MERMAID.** Victor Mature and Walter Pidgeon are the men in her life. You'll enjoy the elaborate water ballets patterned after those staged in the famous old New York Hippodrome, where Miss Kellerman starred before World War I.

In **AGAINST ALL FLAGS** (Universal-International), redheaded Maureen O'Hara, as Spitfire Stevens, leads a pack of pirates in lusty forays against British and Indian shipping. But she runs up against a British naval officer (Errol Flynn) who eventually diverts her thoughts from piracy to romance.

Another lady pirate is Hillary Brooke in the hilarious comedy,

Soulful Bing and wary Bob watch sultry Dottie dance in *Road to Bali*

It's story-time, Danny Kaye presiding, in *Hans Christian Andersen*

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET CAPTAIN KIDD (Warner Bros.), which features, besides the comics, Charles Laughton as the notorious buccaneer. When Hillary falls for Costello, it's a tossup as to who will walk the plank—the captain or the comedians.

THE GLASS WALL (United Artists) is a gripping drama of 24 hours in the life of a young displaced person (Vittorio Gassman), who tries desperately to get into this country from Trieste. A girl (Gloria Grahame) befriends him after he has jumped ship, and they play tag with New York police in a thrilling chase through the city.

Here's a war picture that actually seems authentic—**EIGHT IRON MEN** (Columbia). It's a story of a battle-weary squad of men pinned down by enemy fire in Korea. The boredom and monotony of their foxhole life is relieved by their dreams of a luscious pin-up gal.

Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, and Dorothy Lamour are off on another jaunt, this time on the **ROAD TO BALI** (Paramount). Hope battles a giant squid, Dottie does Balinese dances, and Bing sings some songs. There's even a bizarre native wedding ceremony in which Bing ends up married, not to Dottie but to Bob!

Esther Williams as Annette Kellerman, plucky young Australian swimming star of another era, in *Million-Dollar Mermaid*

As John Philip Sousa, Clifton Webb conducts the band in *Stars and Stripes Forever*

RADIO - TV - RECORDS

AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT

" 'Twas the night before Christmas, and . . ." says Nila Mack in *Let's Pretend*

DURING this holiday season, you'll find plenty of Christmas entertainment to choose from on radio and television and among recordings.

LET'S PRETEND, a Saturday-morning fantasy, ostensibly for children but even more popular with adults, is celebrating 22 years on the air. It was back in 1930 when Nila Mack, a childless widow and ex-actress, launched the series to provide something suitable for children of all ages. She and her troupe of young actors have been going strong ever since. Her dramatization of the famous poem, *A Visit from St. Nicholas*, is scheduled for December 20 (CBS-Radio).

Another favorite, **THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD** (ABC-Radio), dramatizes tales from the Holy Bible. Again this year, the traditional Christmas story is being told in two installments—*No Room at the Inn* (December 21), depicting the birth of Jesus, and *Flight into Egypt* (December 28), telling how Joseph and Mary escaped from the tyranny of King Herod.

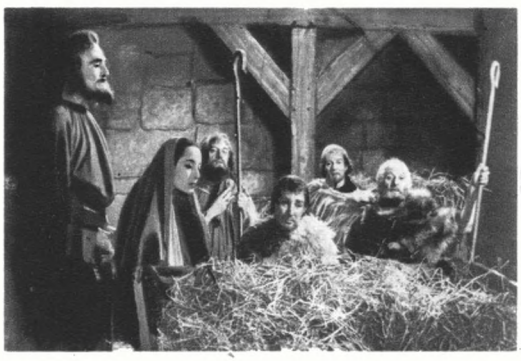
Mutual Radio's Wednesday-evening FAMILY THEATER presents such stars as Ethel and Lionel Barrymore, Irene Dunne, Bing Crosby, Margaret Sullavan, Ann Blythe, and Gregory Peck in dramatic stories of everyday life. On Christmas Day the program presents a special show called *The Joyful Hour*, with an all-star Hollywood cast.

MGM Records has come up with a collection of holiday tunes appropriately titled **MERRY CHRISTMAS.** Judy Garland, Jimmy Durante, David Rose, Art Mooney, Lauritz Melchior, Blue Barron, and Tommy Tucker play and sing such favorites as: *Holy Night*, *Santa Claus Is Coming to Town*, *Frosty the Snowman*, and *Jingle Bells*.

On Christmas Eve, for the third time, NBC-TV is staging **AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS,** Gian Carlo Menotti's opera celebrating the three Wise Men's search for the newborn King. In it, a young cripple offers his crutch as a gift to the Christ Child and is cured of his lameness. It's also available on RCA-Victor records, with Chet Allen and Rosemary Kuhlmann of the original cast.

This year, for the first time, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth of Great Britain will make a special Christmas-afternoon speech to the world (CBS radio).

Right: Menotti's TV opera—*Amahl and The Night Visitors*



A Saviour was born—*The Greatest Story Ever Told*

Veteran comic Bob Hope is back on radio with a brand-new show—this time a morning program for women, with lots of typical wisecracks and even an occasional recipe (NBC-Radio, Monday through Friday). Bob begins his regular 1953 evening radio show on Wednesday, January 7.

The **METROPOLITAN OPERA** has just opened its 13th season of Saturday-afternoon broadcasts. Here's the December line-up: Dec. 6, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; Dec. 13, Puccini's *La Tosca*; Dec. 20, Verdi's *Don Carlo*; and Dec. 27, Puccini's *La Bohème*. Milton Cross is commentator for this ABC-Radio series.

Jerome Thor, *Foreign Intrigue*

As a complete change of pace from holiday fare, try **FOREIGN INTRIGUE**, the spy-adventure tale, starring Jerome Thor and Sydna Scott of Sweden. The current episodes, filmed in Paris, are packed with action. The program is telecast on different days over various networks throughout the country. Check your newspaper for date and time.

Singer Jane Froman (*With a Song in My Heart*) now has her own TV show called **U. S. A. CANTEEN** (CBS-TV, Saturday). Each week she plays hostess to talented GI's selected from service bases all over the country. They perform right along with Jane.

Columbia has pulled out a 15-year-old ace in the hole for swing-addicts. It's the **BENNY GOODMAN 1937-38 JAZZ CONCERT NO. 2**, just repressed from tape recordings of broadcasts made during those two years. The two-volume set contains 37 tunes played by the Goodman All-Star Orchestra, Trio, and Quartet.

Danny Kaye and Jane Wyman record songs from *Hans Christian Andersen*

.From the motion picture **HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN** (reviewed in our Movie section this month) Decca is releasing an album of music with Danny Kaye (who stars in the movie), Jane Wyman, and Gordon Jenkins, his orchestra and chorus. L. T.

HELP FOR YOUR HOUSE

MEAT WHICH HAS BEEN FROZEN is no more perishable in the refrigerator than "fresh" meat which has not been frozen, according to U. S. Dept. of Agriculture research. You need not feel that for safety you must cook meat the moment it has been thawed, if you keep it in a good refrigerator.

MECHANICS' SAFETY GOGGLES are a wonderful aid for anyone doing overhead work, such as cleaning or painting ceilings, repairing or installing ceiling fixtures, or cleaning chandeliers. They fit snugly around the eyes and prevent annoying dust and dirt or paint from getting in.—*Mrs. Gordon Washburn, Thornwood, N. Y.*

SMART TRICK to use when darning sheets: Put a piece of paper over a hole in a sheet and then stitch it on the machine, back and forth and across. The paper dissolves in water but the stitches remain, making a perfect darn.

IF A STORM INJURES A FAVORITE TREE, saw off the split or broken limbs with a smooth cut as near the main branch as possible. Coat the cut surface with fresh shellac to protect the tree.

YOU CAN CUT DOWN your cleaning bill by sponging soiled necklines and cuffs with carbon tetrachloride after each wearing.

TO KEEP rubber boots or tall overshoes handy and in good shape, clothing specialists suggest a peg rack. Old broom handles, cut longer than the height of the boot, may be nailed to a shelf or board, so that each boot can be placed upside down over its own "peg." This saves rubber boots from flopping over and eventually cracking at ankles. Keeps them clean, too. Rubbers may be saved from cracking by stuffing with paper to hold them in shape when they are stored.

IF YOUR FLOOR MOP, dishcloths, or towels become sour- and musty-smelling, an easy way to get rid of the odor is to boil or soak the material in hot water and a bleach. Use a cup of bleach to a gallon of water.

HAVING TROUBLE applying wallpaper to plaster that is very chalky? Try coating the wall first with a thin coat of fresh shellac, which will dry quickly and allow you to apply the wallpaper in the usual way.

A GOOD SUBSTITUTE for a sleeve-ironing board can be made by wrapping a clean tea towel around your rolling pin. All sized sleeves may be ironed quickly and nicely.—*Louise Folden, Falls City, Nebr.*

TO MAKE THE BRICK FACING or hearth of your fireplace easier to clean, apply one or more coats of clear wood sealer. This also brings out the color of the brick and provides a nice gloss. If you wish to change the color of the brick, you can, of course, paint it.

FOR HEATING ECONOMY, it may be wise to repaint your radiators. Recent research shows that more heat comes through a flat paint than a glossy-surfaced coating and that the old stand-bys—the metallic finishes—were probably the most uneconomical that could have been employed for this purpose. They kept the heat in.

WHEN YOU REPLACE A PLUG on an electric appliance cord: After fastening the wires, fill the center of the plug with melted wax from a candle or paraffin bar. It will anchor the cord and make the plug sturdier.—*Mrs. Ralph M. Wilson, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*

TO AVOID that occasional bump on the head from a low basement door, provide a headboard with an air-conditioned bumper. Partially inflate an old auto inner tube and stretch it across the top of the doorway with two wooden pegs. This is an effective way to use your head to save your head.—*Clara Ruch, Shubert, Nebr.*

TO ENABLE US TO KEEP HOUSE PLANTS on the radiator in our large living-room window, my husband made a box, slightly larger than the radiator and about two inches deep. Before closing it he put in a layer of powdered asbestos, which keeps the heat from coming through. Molding around the top edge keeps the plants from slipping off, and with two coats of paint to match the walls, I have a cool show place where plants thrive regardless of how hot the radiator becomes.—*Mrs. George Latimer, New Toronto, Ont., Canada.*

TO RENEW cracked and peeling leatherette-covered hassocks inexpensively, first scrub with soap and water and peel away all the loose leatherette. Dry thoroughly; then daub the peeled spots with a coat of one of the new washable paint mixtures that are based on emulsified synthetic rubber. Let dry, and then give the entire hassock two coats of the paint, drying well after each coat. You can choose any color you wish. It stays flexible and can be wiped clean with a damp cloth.—*Mrs. W. L. Simmons, Pocatello, Idaho.*

TO KEEP ANIMALS out of your garbage can, attach one end of a screen-door coil spring to one handle, pass the spring through the cover handle, and attach the other end to the opposite handle on can. The tension of the spring keeps the cover on the can. Animals can't get at the garbage, and the lid won't be lost.—*Mrs. Millie Schnur, New York, N. Y.*

FOR YEARS I was bothered by dripping or sweating cold-water pipes. I wrapped them with aluminum foil, labeled *aluminum foil food wrap*. One thickness does the job. Result: No more dripping pipes. —*B. B. Rayford, Cleveland, Ohio.*

AN EXCELLENT TIP given to me by a thoughtful plastering contractor: Add 1 teaspoon of furniture polish to each gallon of warm water, and you will wipe away all traces of plastering dust. If it's a large room, change the water often.—*Mrs. Lawrence R. Leitch, Springfield, Ill.*

TO SMOOTH DOWN cigarette burns on a polished wood surface, it's best to use a hard, felt-faced block to back up the sandpaper. Among the best lubricants are cottonseed oil and corn oil, which work without softening the finish being sanded.

If you know of a new trick that has helped you fix or improve things around the house, and might be useful to others, send it in. We will pay $10 for each suggestion published. Address Help for Your House, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y. No suggestions can be returned.

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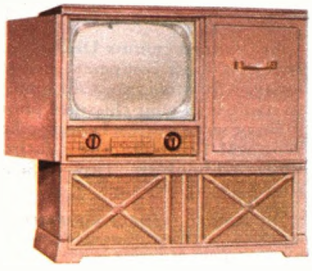

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They Escape Income Taxes— BUT YOU CAN'T!

If you draw regular salary or wages, chances are you're paying far more than your fair share of income taxes. A noted economist points out glaring loopholes in federal laws that give tremendous advantages to more fortunate taxpayers . . . and their gain is your loss

by Richard A. Girard, Ph.D.

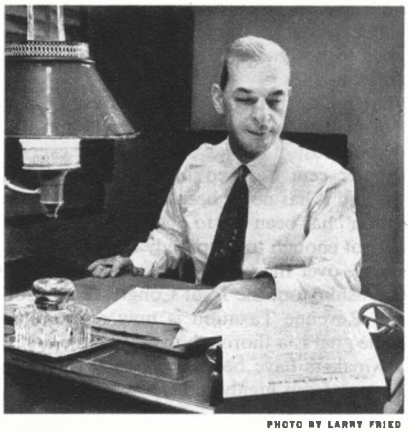


PHOTO BY LARRY FRIED

THE AUTHOR, Associate Professor of Economics at New York University, finds no tax relief

IF YOU are like me and about 40,000,000 other Americans, you draw your income in straight salary or in a regular pay envelope. A chunk of your income is automatically sliced off every payday for federal taxes. All, or nearly all, your net income is on the block when the tax-withholding ax falls. If your family's income has kept pace with the cost of living, including taxes, you are less concerned. But you are likely to be deeply concerned if your family depends on salary checks.

Like most of you, I find on my salary check every month a stub notifying me how much has been withheld for taxes. To earn this money on which taxes have been withheld, I serve as an economics professor at a great university. I try to teach earnest students the facts about our taxation system. The proclaimed principle of that system is that taxes must fall fairly on all. Yet on every side I see people who get preferential treatment because they can take advantage of weaknesses in our tax laws; weaknesses which give them an advantage you and I do not enjoy. Not all of those taxpayers are in high brackets, either.

Today, fortunate taxpayers can receive extra compensation in forms not liable to taxation. By doing this, they pay taxes on only part of their actual income, while you pay taxes on *all* your net income.

You and I can only envy the executive who gets a part of his income in the free and untaxed use of a yacht . . . the architect who deducts from his income the cost of memberships in two country clubs . . . the farmer who gets part of his income tax-free because he grows his own food and lives on his own land . . . the sales manager who, instead of a taxable salary raise, receives $10,000 in expenses, for which he makes only the vaguest accounting.

In recent years a flood of these schemes for by-passing the tax collector has appeared. Most of them take advantage of legal loopholes and weaknesses in our income-tax law. They cost the Gov-

Pictured here are some of the legal loopholes in the federal income-tax law which benefit specially privileged Americans—at the expense of the salaried worker imprisoned in the tax spider web: Tax-free yachts and cars . . . horse-and-dog "farms" . . . company-paid memberships in country clubs . . . free meals . . . liberal expense accounts . . . annual Christmas presents . . . protected oil-well profits

ernment billions of dollars in lost taxes, and cause widespread resentment, particularly among "tax-withheld" taxpayers who cannot go and do likewise.

Recently the general counsel of the U. S. Treasury voiced concern over the "growing practice" of escaping income taxes by receiving pay in such odd forms as "houses, hotel rooms and apartments, automobiles, airplanes, yachts, expensive free vacations, and the like." As an economics professor I find these schemes intriguing. But, as a withheld taxpayer myself, I confess they offend my sense of fairness.

I believe that the situation, unless swiftly corrected, threatens to become as corrosive to our public morals as Prohibition.

What makes the state of affairs even more unfair to those of us who must still pay taxes is that we have been stripped of most of the tax protection we ever had. We lost our 10 per cent "earned income" credit during World War II, and it has never been restored. And our "personal exemption" has been cut to $600 a person, which for most of us is not enough to keep body and soul together. At the same time, over the years tax rates have risen.

In Washington, the Joint Congressional Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation is now re-examining our tax laws. The goal is a thorough overhaul, the first in 25 years. The lawmakers have been receiving thousands of suggestions, many from highly indignant taxpayers.

LET's look at some of the situations which seem most urgently in need of correction if taxes are to fall according to the expressed intention of Congress. Most of the people who avoid paying what Congress has declared their fair share of income taxes do so in one of six ways. They are:

The hidden raise: A money raise in salary doesn't offer much appeal to a person in an upper tax bracket who can keep only half or a third of it. Clever men have been devising ways for such a taxpayer to get raises in forms he *can* keep. This trend is so widespread that a few weeks ago a management-consulting firm announced, after surveying 164 companies, that only 8 per cent of those surveyed now pay their executives by salary alone. It found that 31 per cent of the firms have devised new methods of "compensation" just in the past two years. Another consulting firm furnishes its clients with a guidebook on *Executive Pay Plans to Combat High Taxes.*

Labor unions have also become tax-conscious. In negotiations they often spend more time arguing for low-tax or tax-free "fringe benefits," such as pensions and free lunches, than they do for dollar-and-cent raises.

We are fast drifting toward a situation such as already exists in high-tax England. There a job applicant may be more interested in the "perks" than in the listed salary. "Perks" are perquisites that go with a job, such as a limousine or a free, hand-tailored wardrobe. In America, this seeking of "perks" is becoming known as "nest-feathering." Nest-feathering makes it possible for thousands of taxpayers to live high on seemingly moderate incomes and to pay taxes lower than Congress says are fair and just.

If you are on straight salary, these nest-feathering strategies are not for you. In fact, you must pay *more* taxes to make up for the Treasury's losses from these tax-avoidance schemes.

You are forbidden to deduct the expense of getting to work every morning. But many companies free their officials of commuting costs. Company-owned limousines pick them up, and relieve them of that real expense.

The president of one firm has five residences in various parts of the country. His "commuting" costs would run into thousands of dollars if he had to pay them himself. The company's lawyers came to his rescue when they drew up his contract. It provides: "The corporation shall be committed to payment of all his expenses incident to his travel to and from each of the aforesaid points . . . and maintain transportation facilities at these points." The excuse to justify this bonanza is that company business is on his mind wherever he happens to be residing or sunning himself!

My teaching business is very much on my mind, too, sometimes even in my sleep. But taxpayers like you and me have to use hard-earned, tax-withheld dollars if we must travel to work.

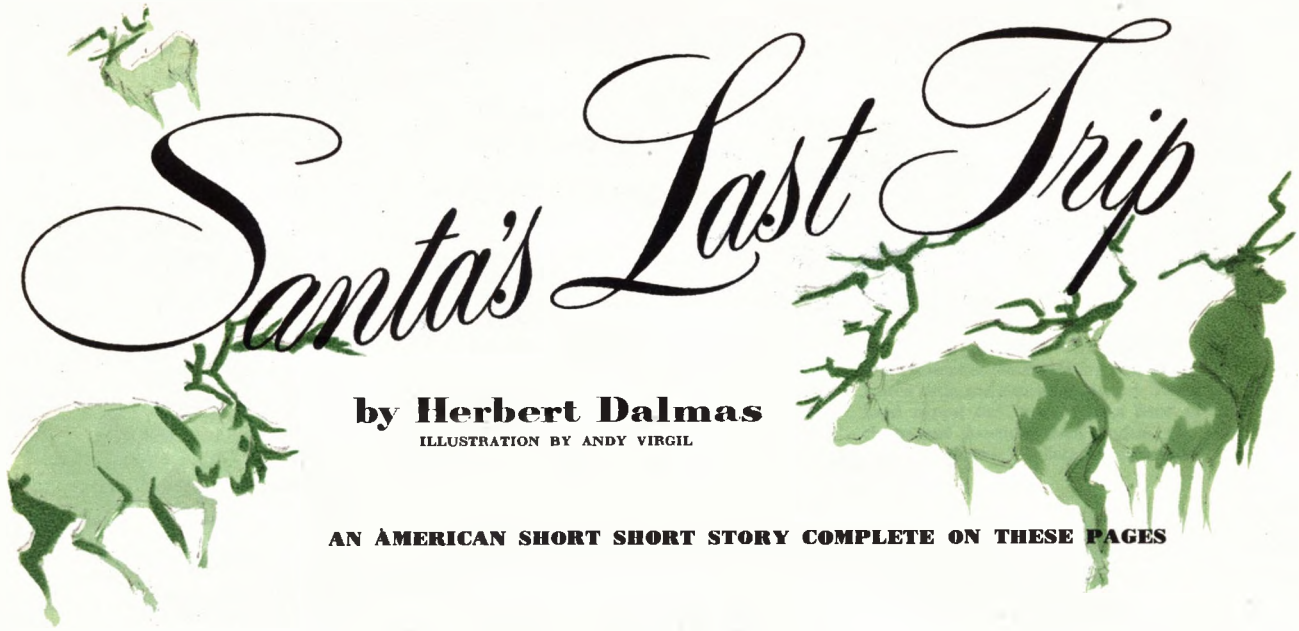
A machinery company provides all its executives with

automobiles, plus 100 gallons of free gasoline. The company keeps title to the cars and trades them in for new ones each year, at no cost to the executives. They use the cars as though they are their own, not only for commuting but also for anything else, including hauling their sons and daughters to dances.

You can figure how much of a hidden raise that is by recalling how many hundreds of tax-withheld dollars you spend each year to operate the family car.

Some companies find they need not only limousines, but also yachts. This gives them another chance to permit their officials to live like princes without paying princely taxes.

A large corporation I know of owns three yachts. One of them is more than 100 feet long, has a crew of more than a dozen. The head of this company is a passionate yachtsman and spends most of his week ends aboard playing genial host to business acquaintances. If he takes a two-week cruise he will drop in at a port and invite a client aboard. Then he will charge the (*Continued on page* 88)



Santa's Last Trip

by Herbert Dalmas

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDY VIRGIL

AN AMERICAN SHORT SHORT STORY COMPLETE ON THESE PAGES

THE other two girls didn't know Judy was listening to them at recess. Alice was nine and Joyce almost nine, and at that age you sometimes don't even notice anybody barely six. Alice and Joyce were talking about Christmas, and Joyce had just said thank goodness she didn't have to pretend to believe in Santa Claus any more.

"I know," Alice said. "I think it's corny."

"My mother and father don't even *want* me to believe it this Christmas," Joyce said. "I really stopped two years ago."

At this point they saw Judy.

"I suppose we'd better not talk like this," Alice said in a slightly superior tone. "She probably still believes in Santa Claus."

"I do not!" The words came out indignantly before Judy realized she had said them.

She went away, then, because she had to think. The part about believing in Santa Claus didn't make so much difference at the moment; as a matter of fact, she'd been having little doubts for some time. The important part was Alice's implication that Santa Claus was only for babies, and what Joyce had said about *her* father and mother not even wanting her to believe in him this year.

Judy was pretty sure Daddy wouldn't want her to, either, though he'd never say so. And she knew how important her being grown up was to him. For he depended on her; he'd said so.

The depending on her had started last spring when she went to stay with her grandmother because Mommy got sick. It had been a frightening time, with people looking worried and lowering their voices and putting on quick, unsmilelike smiles when she came into a room. Then there was a long, halting talk from Grandma about how Mommy wouldn't be with them any more.

It was quite a while before Judy realized that her grandmother was trying to say that Mommy was dead. She could have understood it without all that talk; she knew about it from having seen a dead bird once. Dying meant a special sort of stillness that gave you a feeling near your stomach, and while it was strange, there was nothing really bad about it.

Daddy came for her a couple of days after that. He walked slowly from the car, but when he saw her he grinned and said, "Hiyuh, Champ."

She said, "Hello, Gus." It was Mommy's special name for Daddy.

Judy had never called him that before, the words just popped out. He stopped short; the smile left his face, and for a moment she was frightened. Then he stepped forward and picked her up and held her so she could hardly breathe. It was awfully uncomfortable, but it made her feel pleasant inside, and safe.

He set her down and said, "You know, Champ, I think maybe you're a lot more grown up than any of us realized."

That made her proud. And the next night at dinner he said he wished she'd sit across the table from him because she was the lady of the house now. So she did, and told him all the things that had happened that day at school.

A couple of days after that he asked her if there were any of Mommy's things she would like in her room. There was a gaily painted chest she had always loved, so he moved it in and gave her the key. He said it was for her private possessions and no one else would ever be allowed to open it. That was pretty grown up.

AND now, knowing for sure about Santa Claus was going to help with Christmas. She had heard Daddy say to Dick Stanley, his best friend, that Christmas was going to be rough this year. But now she could take Mommy's place. It would be nice to make a surprise of it, get some presents for him and have them under the tree Christmas morning the way Mommy used to.

The presents required some thought. She finally decided to get the pictures they had taken the last summer when the three of them had been together, and paste them in a little book she would make, herself, out of colored paper. This turned out very well, a little bulky maybe, but, with Daddy's name lettered on the front, she really thought she had never seen anything nicer.

One day she went downtown. She went into a store and, after a search, found a necktie exactly like one Mommy had given Daddy once. A polite elderly man agreed to let her take it along and pay for it a quarter at a time, her allowance for six weeks.

The night before Christmas, Daddy said, "Well, Champ, what about a story and then bed? Santa's on his way by now. You want to be asleep when he gets here."

The night before Christmas, Daddy said, "Santa's on his way by now." . . . But Judy knew better

Judy said all right. After the story she went to her room and set the little alarm clock to ring at just past twelve. She put it under her pillow and hurried into bed.

Daddy came to say good night, and after he went back downstairs she lay there, thinking about the two brightly wrapped packages in her private chest. . . .

The muffled drumming of the alarm wakened her. There wasn't a sound in the house. She got out of bed, opened the chest, and took out the two presents. She opened her door carefully and tiptoed along the hall, her feet noiseless on the carpet.

But, halfway down the stairs, she heard a voice and saw there was a light in the living room.

Dick Stanley was saying, "It's a beautiful tree."

"It certainly is." That was Molly, Dick's wife. "I never saw so many wonderful presents."

A sudden curiosity about these presents almost started Judy running down the rest of the stairs. She sat down to be sure she wouldn't.

"I guess she'll like them." That was Daddy's voice. "She's an appreciative little character." He stopped for a second; then he said, "I'll never be able to give her a millionth of what she's given me these past few months."

There was a silence after that. Then Dick said, "We've been having quite a time at our house. Jimmy's found out about Santa Claus."

"And so have we," Molly said. "The sly questions about what Dick and I want for Christmas, the shopping trips, the wrapping and hiding of packages— Such sophistication!"

Dick chuckled. "Judy doing any shopping this year?" he asked.

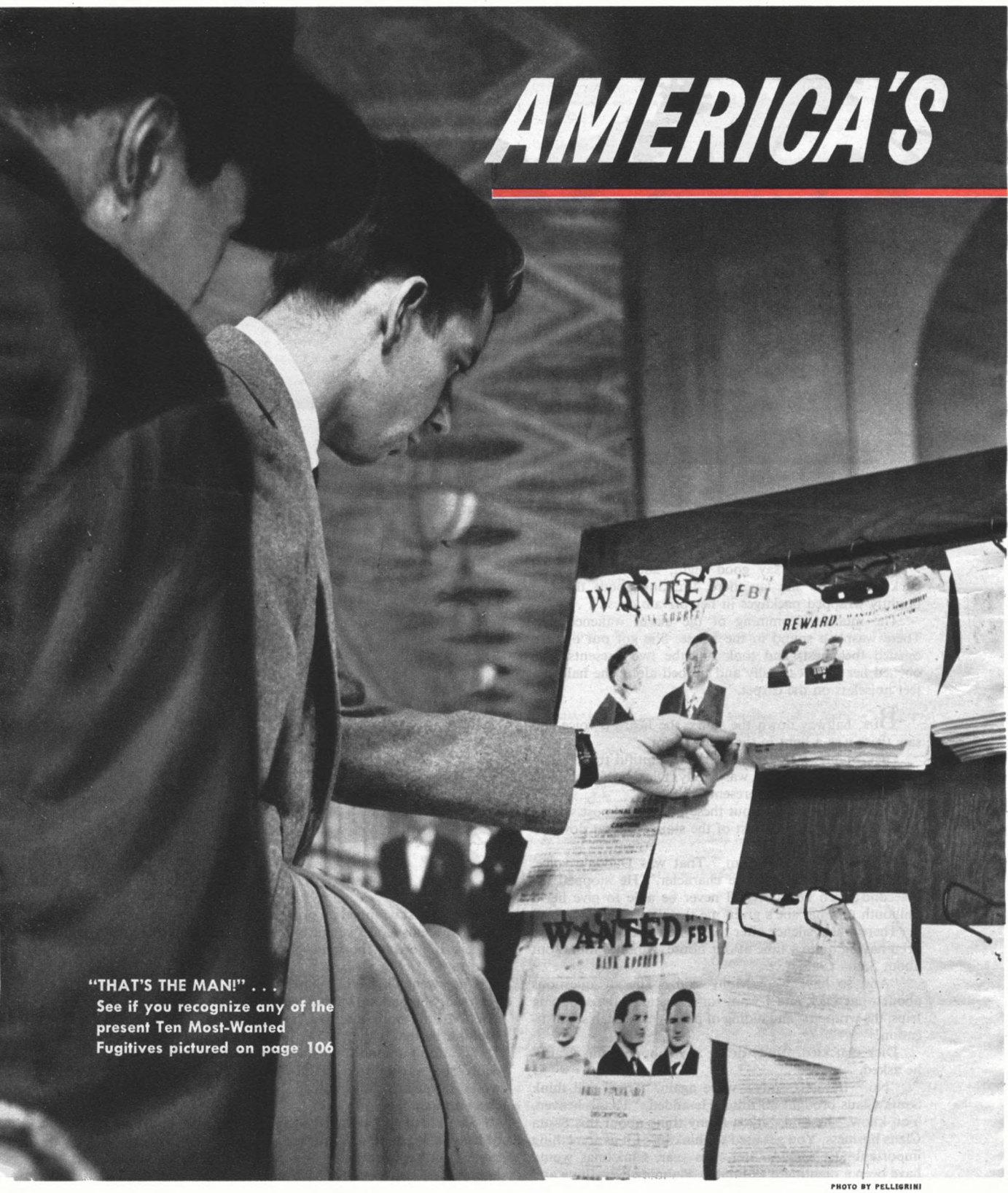
"No." It was Daddy's voice again. "She'll still think Santa Claus brought all this." He added, "Thank heaven. You know," he said, "it's a funny thing about this Santa Claus business. You get used to thinking of it as something important just to kids. But, this year, Christmas would have been a nightmare without it. Planning everything and getting it ready—it's been as if Marion were still here doing it with me. I don't think I could take it this year if Judy and I just wrapped up presents and gave them to each other. It seems as if I've got to see her face when she runs in here tomorrow morning—just once more, the way it used to be."

They went on talking, but Judy didn't listen. She felt very sad. She had so wanted to see Daddy's face when he saw the little book she had made, but she knew now it couldn't be that way.

She stood up and tiptoed carefully back upstairs. Suddenly she remembered Daddy's birthday. The presents would do just as well for then. She put them back in the chest and climbed into bed.

She felt better, as if she had been carrying an armful of heavy things and had put them down. She was suddenly excited about tomorrow morning; more excited and happy than she had ever been about being grown up. It was going to be wonderful to be able to pretend it was all Santa Claus—for just one more Christmas.

AMERICA'S



"THAT'S THE MAN!" . . .
See if you recognize any of the present Ten Most-Wanted Fugitives pictured on page 106

PHOTO BY PELLIGRINI

GREATEST MANHUNT

Ever since the FBI began listing its Ten Most-Wanted Fugitives, plain citizens, including women and children, have played an increasing role in hunting down the country's most dangerous killers and outlaws. This is their thrilling story

by Clarence Woodbury

ON a snowy Minnesota morning a couple of years ago, two St. Paul schoolboys tingled with goose pimples as they stared at a picture in a local newspaper. It was a photo of a stocky, sullen-faced man who looked familiar. The newspaper said the man was William R. Nesbit, a cold-blooded killer and jailbreaker whom the Federal Bureau of Investigation had just placed on its list of the Ten Most-Wanted Fugitives.

"Gee!" one of the boys exclaimed. "He looks like the hermit!"

"He sure does," the other kid agreed. "Let's go see!"

The boys, Jimmy Lewis, 14, and Jimmy Radeck, 13, clipped the picture from the newspaper and, without telling their parents what they were up to, assembled a "posse" of their eighth-grade pals. Armed only with "atomic-ray guns," Boy Scout knives, and slingshots, they crossed railroad yards and hiked to a lonely bluff overhanging the Mississippi River where they frequently played "cops and robbers." The man whom they called the hermit lived there in a cave. They had tried several times to get acquainted with him, but had found him surly.

On this morning, smoke was curling from a tin stovepipe above the roof of the cave, but when the kids called to the hermit and beat on his door he refused to answer them. To make him show his face they dropped snowballs down the stovepipe and literally smoked him out of his cave.

The hermit was sore. He swore at the kids and chased them away, but before taking to their heels Jimmy Lewis and Jimmy Radeck got a chance to compare his features with those in the newspaper photo. The man in the picture was fatter than the hermit, but otherwise the two were exactly alike!

THAT was all the evidence the two Jimmies needed. With hearts beating wildly, they sprinted to the nearest telephone and called the police. Officers arrived promptly, surrounded the cave, and captured the man who lived there. He didn't resist arrest, but he was found to be carrying a long knife, and when his fingerprints were checked it was definitely established he was the much-wanted Nesbit. A convicted murderer, he had been a fugitive for three years after breaking out of the South Dakota State Prison.

Nesbit was returned to the prison and two boys became local heroes, sharing a $100 reward paid by the prison warden.

Surprisingly enough, the daring feat of those youngsters in helping to run down a dangerous (*Continued on page* 102)

PHOTO BY ACME

CLOSING IN: After a tip from a private citizen on the whereabouts of a wanted criminal, police rush to capture him. Here Chicago detectives shoot it out with cornered murderer

CONGRATULATIONS: Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, thanks James Radeck (left), 13, and James Lewis, 14, who spotted a wanted fugitive, William R. Nesbit, at St. Paul, Minn.

There was hungry longing in Kitty's voice. "Mike," she said, "you would marry me again, wouldn't you?"

A

Words to the Song

by Mary Knowles

Maybe a big guy like Mike couldn't say them, but the words were in his heart—deeper than even Kitty had dreamed

MIKE watched Kitty as she lay sleeping in the other twin bed. This was their eighteenth wedding anniversary, and according to the knuckleheads at the plant he should be calling her "the old lady," and she should be fat and middle-aged-looking.

But she wasn't. Her dark hair was a tumble of curls on the pillow and her lashes were long and black against her cheeks. She slept like a child, with one arm curved above her head and her lips turned up at the corners in a smile.

"Maybe she's dreaming of Clayt Hawthorn," Mike thought. The events of last night came back to him. Clayt was the new Western Division manager. Yesterday he had arrived for a routine plant inspection, and stayed for the company dinner dance at the Granada Hotel.

From the first moment of introduction Clayt had given Kitty a rush. He had held her hand and his right eyebrow had gone up in an intriguing way. He'd said softly, "You are not only the most beautiful woman in the room, Mrs. Hurrel, but you're also an angel from heaven."

Kitty's cheeks had gone pink, and she'd looked happy and pleased as a child. "Why, thank you, Mr. Hawthorn, but I'm afraid I don't quite fit into the angel category. Just ask Mike."

"Husbands never appreciate their wives."

Mike had protested, "Just a minute now!" He could feel himself getting hot under the collar at the way Clayt was looking at Kitty and the way she was liking it. He'd wanted to smash Clayt's handsome face, Western Division manager or not.

But Clayt had gone on as smoothly as if Mike had never spoken. "I was standing here praying for a miracle to release me from a dull evening of pushing fat women around the floor, and then you come walking in the door, Fifth Avenue and glamour all in one lovely little package. Now you couldn't pay me to leave."

He'd turned to Mike: "You don't mind if I monopolize your wife, do you, Mike? I know she's a perfect dancer."

"We always dance the waltzes," Mike blurted out.

"We do if I twist your arm back far enough," Kitty said wryly.

"The waltzes you may have," Clayt had laughed. "But the rumbas, the fox trots are mine. That is"—he'd hesitated and managed to look humble and pleading—"if it's all right with you, Mrs. Hurrel."

"Why, I shall be delighted. I love to

rumba." She'd laughed in that breathless little way she had when she was especially pleased.

Mike remembered that now, and he was angry with himself. Angry because he hadn't been able to say these things to Kitty. He thought of his life before he'd had Kitty and then Chuck and Susan, and the loneliness and emptiness came back to chill him.

He'd lived in a room above Finney's Drugstore. He'd worked hard at the plant. He'd risen from apprentice to foreman, and he'd loved the job. But there were the evenings and the Saturdays and Sundays when the hours dragged, when there was an aching loneliness inside him.

And then he'd met Kitty, and he'd known that this was what he'd been saving his love for. . . .

He watched Kitty sleeping, and all at once he loved her so much that his eyes filled with tears. He wished he could say pretty things to her in the smooth way that Clayt Hawthorn had. The words seemed to slip off Clayt's tongue as if they were oiled.

Mike wanted to kneel beside Kitty's bed and take her in his arms and tell her what she meant to him. He never had. The right words would never come to him.

When he'd first met Kitty he'd written a poem to her. He'd called it, "To Kitty, My Love." He could remember the first two lines:

You are my life, my soul, my heart.
Desolate are the hours when we're apart.

But it had seemed too corny. He'd torn it up, and so she'd never known how he felt about her. And that wasn't right. A woman liked compliments. Look at the way she'd lapped them up last night. Truth of it was that she had looked like springtime last night. But he should have been the one to mention it, not a long-fanged wolf like Clayt Hawthorn!

From now on, he decided, things were going to be different. This was Saturday and his day off and their wedding anniversary. He'd make a production of it. He'd send Kitty a corsage and buy her a gift, something very expensive. He could afford it. He was superintendent of the plant now. And he'd take her to The Silver Slipper for dinner and dancing.

As soon as she opened her eyes he'd say something nice. He tried to think of what it would be. "Wedding anniversary day greeting, and may we have many more." Oh, no! Sounded like the form holiday greeting from Kitchie Plumbing and Heating Company!

Kitty opened her eyes. Clayt had said, "Your eyes are like a dollar's worth of violets, Kitty." Why the blazes couldn't he think of something pretty like that to say?

She wrinkled her nose at him. "Good morning, Mike. Remember what day this is?"

"Sure; the day I married you and my whole world lit up." He tried to speak the words, but his face grew hot, his mouth dry. Sounded like he was describing an electrical phenomenon. "A guy doesn't forget the day the ball and chain was clamped on his ankle, does he?" The words rushed out before he could stop them. "Nice going, you big dope," he thought.

Kitty made a little face. "Lovely sentimental way of putting it, darling." But she got out of her bed and crawled in with him. She lay warm and desirable in his arms. She nibbled at his ear, and he grumbled, "Stop biting me and quit crowding. Can't a guy have any privacy?"

"Mike, you would marry me again, wouldn't you?"

He saw Peg reach and slip her hand into Chuck's, and again that warning look which made Mike feel like a brute

"I'd catch the first fast freight out of town."

"I'll bet you wouldn't. And this time you wouldn't forget the ring, and you'd be sure we had reservations at the Granada Hotel."

"That stupid desk clerk!" Even his wedding night he'd messed things up. They had arrived at the hotel to find that their reservations were for the following day, and they'd driven around all night trying to find a vacant motel or hotel room. "This time I'd wipe up the lobby with the stupid lug and demand the bridal suite."

"Oh, so you would marry me again. Say you would, darling. Say 'I love you, I adore you.'" There was a hungry longing in her voice. Her lips were warm on his, and his heart pounded and the wonder of Kitty's love was still sweet.

Mike murmured, "Oh, Kitty, I—"

And then a sound broke the magic. It was the sound of a car motor kicking and sputtering and gasping for breath.

"What's that?" he demanded. "Sounds like it's in our driveway!"

Kitty's body went tense in his arms. "It is in our driveway, Mike, and for heaven's sake don't make a scene! Chuck—"

"He wouldn't, Kitty! Not after I—" Mike jumped out of bed and strode to the window, a tall, broad-shouldered man in striped pajamas.

He opened the window wider, leaned out, and saw a small black coupé shaking and shivering in the driveway below. It was of such ancient vintage that it was built high off the ground with wide running boards. There were polka dot tie-back curtains at the side and back windows and a bushy fur tail was fastened to the radiator cap.

Kitty was beside him. "Go down and talk quietly to him, Mike!"

"Chuck!" he yelled.

A head thrust out. "Hi, Dad. What do you think of it?"

"You know what I think!" Mike sputtered. "Of all the stupid, thickheaded—"

"Aw, Dad! Take it easy," Chuck grinned.

"I told you not to buy it!"

Chuck's chin jutted out. "I bought it with money I earned!"

"Take it right back. That is, if it will hold together long enough to—"

"Look, Dad; I'm old enough to make my own decisions!"

"To let some crook sell you a heap!" Mike shouted.

"I think it's a beautiful car," a voice said, and Mike saw fourteen-year-old Susan leaning out the window of the next room. Her blond hair was in pin curls, her face dotted with white salve.

"Nobody asked your opinion!" Mike said angrily. The head disappeared with alarming swiftness, and the window banged shut. "You are not keeping that car," he warned Chuck.

"I *am* keeping it," Chuck cried. "I'm seventeen. I'm old enough to live my own life." There was the supreme confidence and egotism of youth in his voice.

"You're still under age!" Mike cried. "It's me that's responsible if anything happens!"

Kitty said angrily, "I doubt if the McCleans, six blocks away, are interested!"

"I'll be the one who'll have to tow you home when you break down! But don't bother to call me because I won't—"

"Don't worry. I won't bother you, and that's for sure! And it won't fall apart. It's good for years yet." As if encouraged by such faith, the engine throbbed with sudden life, and the car backed out of the driveway and chugged up the street.

Mike turned from the window. "The blind, deaf young fool, Kitty!"

"Well, the neighbors aren't deaf!" Kitty's eyes didn't look like a dollar's worth of violets now; they looked like a bunch of sparklers all going off angrily at the same time. "You should be very proud of yourself telling the whole community how stupid you think your son is!"

"But, Kitty, you *cannot* buy a car that's worth anything for seventy-five dollars! He's bought a headache. I tried to tell him—"

"So he wouldn't listen to your sage advice!" Kitty cried. "Because he wanted that car more than he's ever wanted anything in his life. Couldn't you have been gracious enough to say, 'It's a nice car, son. I hope you enjoy it.' But no! You predict it's going to fall apart—"

"Kitty, honey." Mike's voice became almost calm with infinite patience. "The kid's got to learn a lesson. If he won't take advice from someone who's been through the mill, he's got to take the consequences. That's the only way to build character and—"

"You and your character building!" Kitty was opening the closet door, grabbing her housecoat. "Name one boy in town finer than Chuck. Name one!"

Mike sighed. No good trying to remind Kitty that the reason Chuck was such a swell kid was because he had been disciplined since he was born. Sometimes Kitty had a blind spot where Chuck was concerned. There was a silence while Kitty brushed her hair and Mike pulled on dungarees.

"Who made the lace curtains?" he asked finally.

"Peggy Britton. They're going on a picnic. She packed a lunch."

"Maybe the car can make it as far as Washington Park. That's only a mile away. But I'm telling you, Kitty, that heap is going to fall—"

"And if it does," Kitty said calmly, "Chuck has enough surplus saved to take care of incidentals."

"So he told me." Mike laughed shortly. "What do you suppose he means by surplus?"

"You can bet it's enough so he won't bother you."

"We'll see," Mike said. "When the telephone rings and—"

"You are mean!" Kitty stamped her small foot. "You're hoping that will happen so you can say, 'I told you so!'"

Mike had to stalk out of the room to keep from turning her over his knee and spanking her. He went into the bathroom to wash and shave. He looked in the mirror and groaned. A vision of Clayt's handsome face rose to taunt him: dark, wavy hair with just a touch of gray at the temples, a boyish one-sided smile, and that educated eyebrow.

Mike examined his own face coldly and logically. The only thing in his favor was that he didn't have a receding chin and he still had his hair.

Kitty went by the bathroom door. Even mad, she looked pretty and young in the chintz housecoat. No wonder Clayt had thrown her those compliments! And Mike was going to be just as tender and admiring to Kitty from now on. Instead, they'd had a battle royal. Nice going!

There for a minute in bed he'd almost told her the way he felt about her. But the thing was you had to maintain a mood, and that was almost impossible when there were children's problems to cope with.

He remembered Clayt and Kitty (*Continued on page* 85)


It was a great day for Grandma
when she discovered Pop's
one weakness...but sweet revenge
turned into a
devastating boomerang

You'll be sorry

by Sam F. Ciulla

ILLUSTRATION BY FREDRIC VARADY

POP wasn't really serious about joining the Valley Country Club. Not at first, anyway. He wasn't the club-joining type and, besides, it wasn't as if it would have helped his business any. Pop has a plumbing-appliance store, a good business but it's all retail. You don't have to join a fancy club to sell a piece of pipe.

To tell the truth, I'm not sure what did make him start thinking about it in the first place. Mr. Bradford'll tell you *he* got Pop interested. Mr. Bradford is Pop's wholesale supplier and a member of the club. He offered to put Pop's name up for membership, so maybe he did start the ball rolling. Just the same, I think the real reason was Grandma.

Maybe I'd better explain about Pop and Grandma. In the first place, they really like each other. Whenever Pop gets sick it's Grandma who pampers him back to health, and whenever Grandma needs a new coat or dress Pop's always the one to notice and do something about it. That's the way it is, but you would never know it, because they're always arguing and trying to do each other one better.

Take this Valley Club business, for instance. For years Grandma had been throwing it up to Pop that she and Grandpa Bailey had been members. Not that it wasn't true, but it was just for a year—'way back in 1929—only, the way she told it you'd think she had lived on the club grounds half her life. It really got Pop's goat, her carrying on that way.

"For cat's sake, that was years ago!" he'd growl.

"Now, what does that matter?" Grandma would fire back. "Once a member always a member."

That was just the club's motto, but Grandma didn't care to look at it that way. That one year's membership was the biggest thing in her life, (*Continued on page* 75)

"Oh, I'm sorry," Grandma whined. "I thought your company had left." Boy, was she putting on an act!

SIGNALS: Kids of Roberts Dairy team, Omaha, Nebr., look like old pros in practice session

GANGWAY for the Mighty Midgets

THE star halfback took the kickoff on his 20-yard line and started down the field as the crowd roared, "Go, go, go!" and "Stop that man!" He twisted and straight-armed and bulled his way through lunging tacklers, eluded the last desperate defender, and fell across the enemy goal line, helmet over eyes and pants drooping dangerously amidships.

The "man" they couldn't stop on the opening play of the game was no 180-pound collegiate all-American, but a 12-year-old flash named Dick Lawrence, backfield mainstay of the PAL Midgets, of Phillipsburg, N.J. I was getting my first view of football in the bubble-gum league, and it was the greatest game I've seen since Michigan swamped Northwestern in 1948. It was football with everything cut down to miniature scale except the thrills and chills, and those were twice life-size.

If you've never seen this thing called midget football, don't worry. You will. It is being played today in parks, schoolyards, and community-house fields in some 250 cities and small towns, and has become a nationwide movement supported by civic-minded businessmen all over America. Kid football is getting bigger every season. Everything gets bigger, that is, except the players, who are limited in most localities to the 9-to-12 age group, and to a maximum weight of 100 or 105 pounds.

In the last few years a series of mammoth midget-bowl

PHOTOS BY SHOSTAL, ARD LONG

PHYSICAL CHECKUP: To make sure the youngsters are in good shape to play hard, fast football safely, a doctor examines them periodically

SKULL SESSION: Coaches Turdo (left) and Franceschino give pointers to Phillipsburg (N. J.) Parochial backfield

by Joseph Cloyd

More than 50,000 gladiators, aged 9 to 12, are now playing spectacular half-pint football on gridirons throughout the country. Their well-trained teams are equipped by local sponsors. And their national championship will be decided this month at the Santa Claus Bowl in Florida

games has sprung up to decide regional championships in various parts of the country. There is the Toy Bowl in Birmingham, Ala., and the Milk Bowl in Rosenberg, Texas, which has achieved the distinction of being broadcast on a coast-to-coast radio network. The grand national climax of kid football is played during Christmas vacation in the Santa Claus Bowl at Lakeland, Fla., and it attracts visitors from all over America who regard it as one of Florida's top holiday attractions. Especially active local centers of midget competition are found in Omaha, Nebr., whose mighty mites won last year's Santa Claus Bowl battle, and in New Orleans, La., Roanoke, Va., and Las Vegas, Nev., which teams have all been Santa Claus contenders.

Phillipsburg, where I saw half-pint gladiators in combat, is a typical midget-football town, located on the New Jersey–Pennsylvania border in a sports-mad section of the world. It is a member of the Warren County Midget Football League. Nearby college games—Lafayette, Lehigh, Muhlenberg—divide the entire population into loyal and rabid partisans. High-school games between Allentown, Bethlehem, Phillipsburg, and (*Continued on page* 83)

BEFORE GAME: Referee Sorenson reviews rules with Phillips team boys, Edward Vasek and Carly Meyerson, at Omaha

Going for a touchdown: Murphys vs. Kelly-Ryans, Omaha, Nebr.

BENCH: Stewartsville substitutes watch tense game with the Riegel Ridge Rams, both of Warren County, N. J.

NATIONAL AWARD: George Dishmon (left) and Jerry Sutton, Las Vegas, Nev., co-captains, receive 1951 "Character Trophy"

It's Easy

THE MOST COMFORTING FEELING in the world . . . when the doctor says there's nothing wrong after your regular health checkup

To Stay Healthy

No matter what your age, you've missed a rewarding experience if you've never had a regular checkup and heard the doctor say: "You're in tiptop shape." Here are hints on what to look for if you agree that an annual physical examination can be your best protection against disease, debility, and death

by J. D. Ratcliff

NOT long ago, on a motor trip, I stopped off at Rochester, Minn., where the renowned Mayo Brothers' Clinic is located. There I fell into conversation with an attractive, middle-aged couple who appeared to be in their early fifties. I complimented them on their youthful appearance.

The wife smiled and said I had misjudged their age by 15 years; they were both nearing 70.

I was amazed. "You certainly don't *look* sick," I said.

"We aren't."

"Then why come to a clinic?"

"We start our vacation here every year with a checkup," the husband said. "Been doing it ever since we got married."

"Ever find anything?"

"Not so far." They looked at each other happily. "It's the most wonderful, comforting feeling in the world—to be told there's absolutely nothing wrong with your health."

When I got home from my trip I couldn't get that couple out of my mind. They were a living demonstration of what a marvelous mechanism the human body is—the only machine on earth capable of mending and renewing itself over the years, provided it is given reasonable care. I was impressed by the soundness of their conviction that they could provide such care for their bodies by going for regular checkups.

But it didn't occur to me to follow their example and do likewise. After all, I wasn't 70, or anywhere near it. And I never felt better in my life. The docs and the insurance companies, I told myself, weren't going to frighten me into looking for trouble. Oh, I'd get around to it sometime, sure. But not now.

Then, within a few months, three of my friends died.

One was a promising young businessman, 33 years old. Ten years ago, in 1942, his draft board rejected him. The doctor wasn't specific as to what was wrong but strongly advised that my friend see his family physician for a complete physical checkup. The young man neglected to do so. Last summer he toppled over at his desk, dead of a heart attack which might have been prevented.

The second case was the pretty young wife of another friend. She had heard of the possible significance of a lump in the breast. Yet when she discovered such a lump in her own breast, she did not go to a doctor for a complete examination. Finally, months later, she did go. It was cancer, and the operation was a failure. Cancer cells escaped to other parts of her body and she died five months after surgery.

The third case was a hard-driving, hard-living salesman, 40 years old. He boasted that he had never visited a doctor in his life. Then one day he spat up blood. He went to a doctor, and found he had cancer of the lung, which had progressed too far for surgery. He lived three miserable months.

These stories have a common denominator. In every case, a condition existed which would have been detected had the victim spent an hour or so having a physical examination. Each died of an ailment that might have been cured or controlled by prompt medical attention.

CASES like these are fairly familiar. Yet everyone—or almost everyone—takes the attitude: It can't happen to me. Result: Not more than a tiny proportion of the population bothers with annual physical examinations.

Most of us visit the dentist with respectable regularity and have our eyes checked periodically. We fret about our touchy molars, stew about our falling hair, and worry if our eyes go fuzzy when we read the phone book. But we expect other essential organs—liver, kidneys, (*Continued on page* 121)

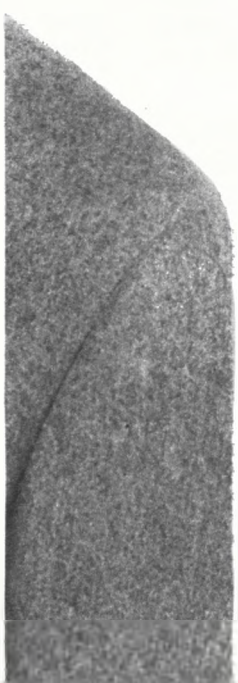


PHOTO BY PAUL WING

The Pink Tree

IF YOU are female and married, your personal life is apt to be more hectic than happy around December twenty-fifth. Especially if you are a combination shopper, house-cleaner, and tree-trimmer. Christmas Eve usually finds you in A State. This temporary collapse of women is universal, and the only thing that saves us is Christmas itself.

Christmas may come to you for only a second, or it may last a whole day. Or you may have a moment from another Christmas you can bring out of your mind, dust off, and find as shiny and new as a dime-store star—and the minute you think of it, it will bring you Christmas.

I have such a moment. I may think of it after I fall exhausted into a chair from trimming the tree, or when the pudding disintegrates as I turn it from the mold. When trivial things crowd in on me, when I begin to make Christmas my own private package and find I have forgotten it is universal and big as the world, then I bring out the Moment. I think of Mindy Conrad and the pink tree.

A Bolton-Missouri Christmas is pretty much of a set thing, with lights festooning the streets and crepe-paper twists in my father's drugstore window. Here in Bolton we think Christmas is wonderful, and we are apt to be pretty smug about it.

I would never have known any other kind if it hadn't been for some nasty little corn worms.

Father's drugstore provided us with bread and butter, and our farm with the extras. At the end of my second year in Bolton Junior College, the corn worms ate up the corn, terminating my education, which had come under the heading of "extras."

Since going on to the university was out of the question, I decided to go to Kansas City and become a buyer of women's (*Continued on page* 127)

by Marjorie McIntyre

ILLUSTRATION BY J. FREDERICK SMITH

There was nothing in Mindy
that said Peace and Good Will—yet
she found the spirit of Christmas
under that unbelievable tree

Mindy shoved Rolly's hat at him. "You were leaving, weren't you?" she said languidly

AMERICAN ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTOS BY DAVID STROUT

WHAT PICTURES DO YOU LIKE? Trueman T. Rembusch (right), Indiana theater operator, checks customers' preferences

Back to the Picture Show!

by Martin Bunn

How's your love affair with the movies? Cooling off? What will it take to win your heart again? A veteran picture-theater man has questioned folks all over the country, and now comes up with startling discoveries about the kind of films that are packing 'em in today. See how nearly you agree

IF YOU are a long-time lover of the movies, as I am, but have found your ardor cooling off in the last four or five years, I have news for you:

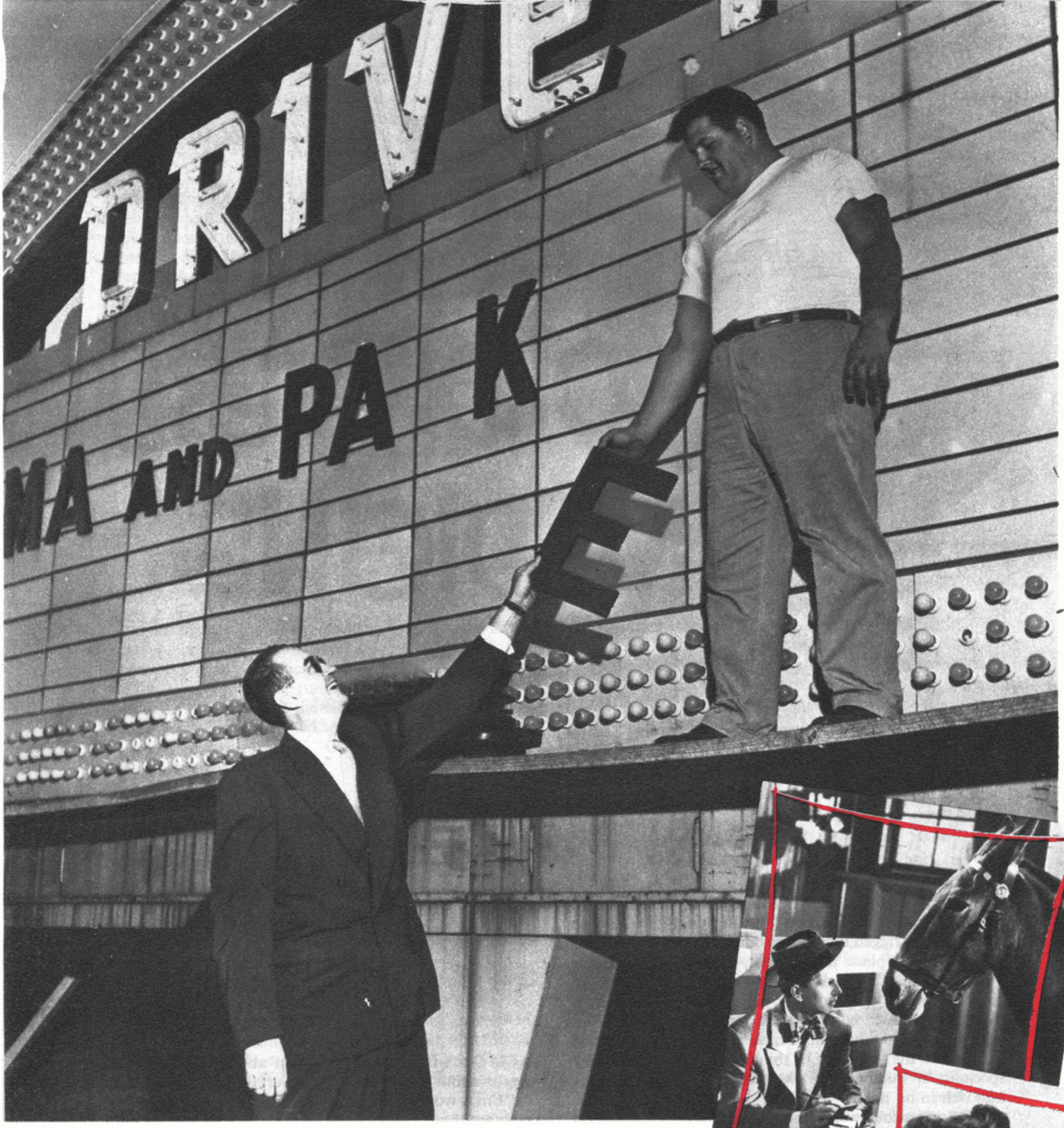
The guy who runs the leading movie house in your town has at last got a pretty good idea of just what kinds of pictures you want to see most. He and thousands of other local movie exhibitors across the country have tightened the screws and persuaded jittery Hollywood producers to turn out a lot more of such pictures. And they swear that in the coming months they are going to lure you away from television with a batch of movies you simply can't resist.

In place of all those boring psychological problem plays, all the unfaithful husbands and neurotic wives, all the sociological "messages" and long-hair ballets highly touted by arty big-city critics and Hollywood brainpots, they are going to show you films that you can really enjoy . . . films that make you laugh and make you cry, starring actors and actresses you can love.

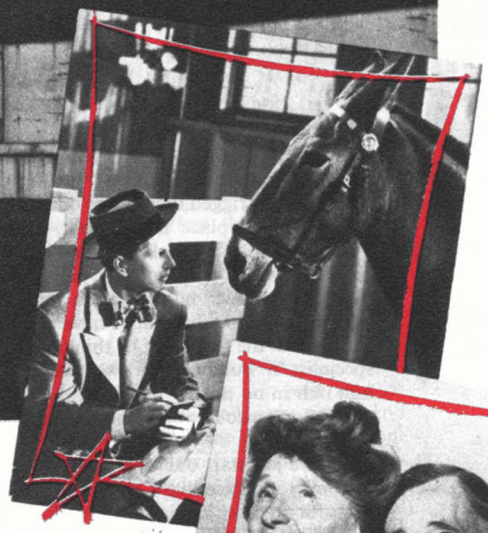
This is not the idle prophecy of a picture pollster or rating "expert." It comes straight from the horse's mouth. For several weeks now I have been jaunting around, asking questions and getting answers from movie-theater operators in towns just like yours, big and small, over the country. They confirmed to a man what you and I have been observing for some time—that up to now our local movie houses have been getting emptier and emptier; or, as one exhibitor put it: "The bottoms of empty seats gather no chewing gum, and in the lobbies the bags of unsold popcorn grow as cold as the fickle hearts of the fans."

But—and here's the big news—these chaps with the last word on pictures have at last actually got the ball rolling to entice you and me back into those empty seats. They are busy on a formula to give us what we want and so win back our affection. Already many of them can hear the beat of shuffling feet and are joyously chorusing: "The crowds are coming!"

What is happening, I learned, stems largely from the foresight and enterprise of a hard-hitting young Hoosier of 43, who grew up in a movie projection booth and now operates a chain of theaters in the heart of America. His name is Trueman T. Rembusch, and he is said to know more about the likes and dislikes of us fans than any other man in the country. He lives in Franklin, Indiana, a town of about 7,000, some 19 miles from (*Continued on page* 80)



DRIVE-IN THEATERS have given the movies a shot in the arm. American families love 'em for their convenience and informality, says Rembusch, especially when they show a Ma and Pa Kettle picture, which he and an assistant are posting here



FAVORITE STARS: At right are some of the most popular drawing cards with movie audiences throughout the country, according to Mr. Rembusch. Top, Francis the Talking Mule; middle, Ma and Pa Kettle (Marjorie Main and Percy Kilbride); bottom, The Bowery Boys

Scattergood Baines' prescription might save

COLDRIVER'S MEDICINE MAN

by Clarence Budington Kelland

"WHEN I come here fifty year ago," the Old Doc said to Scattergood Baines, "young doctors wa'n't so choosy. They rigged themselves out with a bag full of pills 'n' picked out a place 'n' went to it. There they stayed, like I've stayed here, 'n' took their pay in potatoes 'n' eggs 'n' chickens—when they got any pay at all." The old man snorted. "Naow," he continued, "a young feller startin' out with his M.D. has got to have an office full of electric gadgets, 'n' the fust thing he thinks about is gittin' to be a specialist 'n' buildin' up a swell city practice that'll make him rich in no time."

"I don't calc'late it's as bad as that, Doc," Scattergood said.

"You jest start out 'n' try to git some young spriggins to come to a place like Coldriver, where folks think fifty cents fur an office call is high," he challenged. "Jest try it."

"What is the p'int, Doc? What's vexin' ye this mornin', eh? What's caught crossways in ye?" Scattergood asked.

"I'm a-pushin' seventy years and the only doctor in this here taownship, hain't I?"

"So ye be."

"Wa-al, the time's come when I hain't able to carry the load no longer. Yeah, Scattergood, I'm jest an ol', wore-out, back-number quack."

"Be ye," Scattergood asked, his shrewd eyes steadily on Old Doc's face, "be ye a-worryin' about your own hard fate, or about the folks in Coldriver? Eh?"

"I'm a-worryin' about me. I want rest. I want sleep. Dang and blast Coldriver 'n' everybuddy in it," the Old Doc said harshly.

Scattergood grinned. "I hate to up 'n' call any feller a liar," he said. "Doc, you 'n' me have growed old together. I mind the day ye come here 'n' I sold ye a hoss 'n' rig on credit. Ye wouldn't change a day of it. Ye hain't got rich, but you've et pretty good. Yeah, and the' hain't been a day but what somebuddy's thanked God fur ye. The' hain't a fambly here that wouldn't ruther have you when the' was bad sickness than the most famous 'n' expensive surgeon in the world."

"I tell ye I'm nigh wore out 'n' I got to have a young feller to prop me up," the old man insisted. "And where'll I git one, Scattergood? I want a (*Continued on page* 123)

Staton glared at the young doctor. "If you kill Ann," he said, "I'll blow a hole through you"

Young Doc, but would it kill the girl the doctor loved?

Whether it's skyscrapers, millionaires, glamour girls, scenery, oil wells, beefsteaks, adventure, weather, highways, roses, spinach, or nuts . . . the Lone Star State claims the mostest and the bestest. And to the amazement of our touring reporter, he discovers most of the mostest is true!

by Don Eddy

I DON'T know how you feel about it, but I have always been sort of skeptical about Texas. Maybe I've met too many guys called Tex. You know the type—leanish, drawly, dryly droll, thoroughly likable jokers, mostly. You can't tell for sure when they're kidding. They are sure and quick in emergencies; good Joes to have along for a fight or a frolic. But, Lawsy massy, how they brag!

I suppose there isn't a place where Texas isn't known, thanks to guys called Tex. They have spread the fame of their state across the Seven Seas from Tibet to Timbuktu. But the thing that always stuck in my craw was this: How on earth could any one place be as wonderful as Texas is cracked up to be?

To me, Texas has always been a big, wide hunk of stuff to get across as rapidly as possible, and I have crossed it countless times. It's big, all right; so big that it makes most European nations look like cow pastures; so big you could hide inside of it all of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Vermont, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Illinois, Massachusetts, and Ohio, and still have 213,760 acres to raise minks for the Fur Deal.

But Texans won't let it stop there. They think up the darnedest things. A guy called Tex said to me one day, "I reckon if all the people in the United States moved to Texas, they wouldn't be any more crowded than the folks in Massachusetts or New Jersey right now." I looked it up, and doggoned if he wasn't right!

Another time, a Texan said he wished he owned all of Texas. I foolishly asked why. "Why, son," he said, "I'd rent it out at $1 an acre a year, so I could sit on my front gallery and hire me a small boy to count my income. You know how much it would be?" I said I didn't. "It'd be $19,531.50 an hour," he drawled.

I wore out a pencil trying to divide 24 hours a day


HAS EVERYTHING
LIVE STOCK EXCHANGE
THE FREE STATE OF
BANDERA
RIO GRANDE
art seiden

STATE CAPITOL in Austin, mecca for tourists. To pay for it, Texas gave the builders 3,050,000 acres of public land

SMART SHOP of Neiman–Marcus department store in Dallas which sets feminine styles for all the fashion world

PRETTY GIRLS abound. Here a group of them practice for the South Texas High School Band Festival in Victoria

into 171,096,960 acres, but I couldn't make him out a liar.

I thought to myself, so what? So the Sahara Desert is big, too, but who wants it? And they've got the answer to that. They've got *all* the answers.

I was sipping a nourishing sarsaparilla in a Miami Beach bistro one time, when a 9-foot-high customer on the next bar stool wheeled around, studied my tan gabardine suit (all loyal male Texans wear tan gabardine) and boomed amiably: "You from Texas, podneh?" I said, "No, sir. I got this suit in California." He shook his head pityingly. "Now, that's a downright cryin' shame," he observed. "It looks prett' near good enough to have come from Texas."

I TOOK a character-building slug of my sugar water and told him: "Yeah. I heard about Texas once." He eyed me with that good-natured appraisal Texans put on when they're about to start chipping their china, and then he cut loose about the glories of Texas. I don't have to repeat all he said; you've heard it from dozens of guys called Tex.

You let 'em get started and they'll tell you that Texas has the biggest men with the widest hats and the fanciest boots; the loveliest women; the finest horses; the most millionaires; the most and biggest and deepest oil wells; the straightest and smoothest highways; the best and cheapest beefsteaks; the fastest-growing cities, and the most remote frontier habitations.

Texas, they'll tell you, is where you have to go to find

PHOTOS BY FPG AND MONKMEYER

TOOL DRESSERS at work on an oil rig in the rich fields of East Texas, which claims to have the most and biggest wells

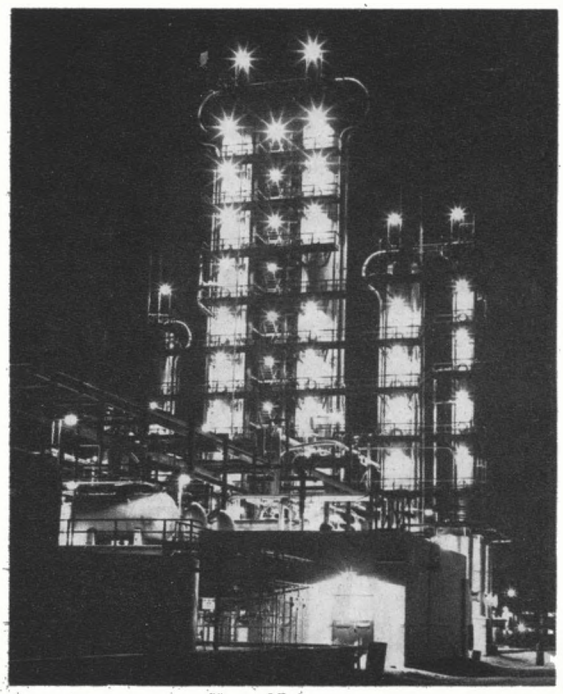
the tallest monument, the highest state capitol, the greatest climatic range, the most churches per capita. Also the most airports and the most farms. They'll swear up and down that only Texas produces the pinkest grapefruit, the most cattle, sheep, mohair goats, roses, spinach, bees, and nuts—pecans, that is—among countless other things. And that's only the beginning. They go on and on and on.

AFTER the first 100 years of listening to this bragging, I'll confess I began to get curious. If all this stuff was there, why hadn't I seen it in my many crossings? So, when my chores took me across the nation recently, I decided to steal a week or two and see just how wrong these guys called Tex could be.

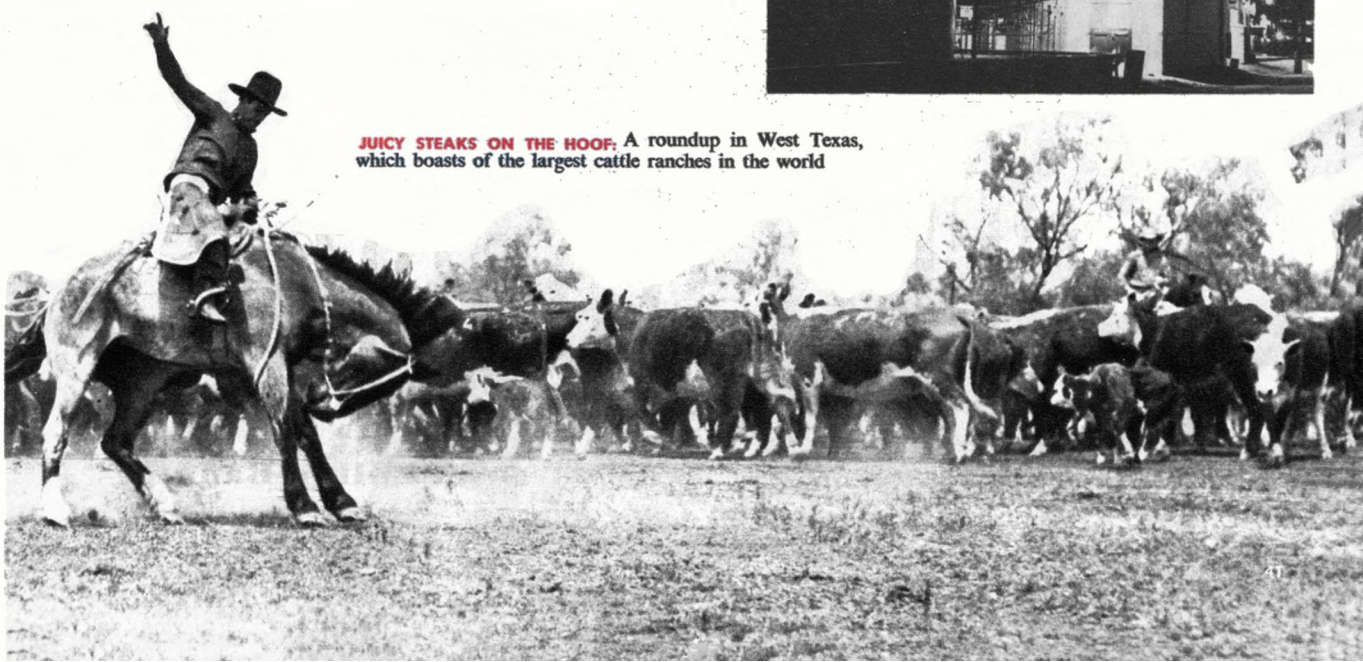
Well, my two weeks stretched into a month and a half. I wore a good automobile down to roller-skate size. I ate so much beefsteak that all I can do is moo. I piled 4,172 miles on the speedometer. And still I didn't see half of Texas. The secret in finding interesting places, I discovered, is to take it slow and easy. Unlike Florida and California, Texas makes no particular effort to exploit its charms; the state constitution, in fact, classes tourists with immigrants and prohibits trying to attract them. I found almost no roadside signs pointing to local marvels. Nine tenths of them aren't even marked on a map; you have to ferret them out.

And yet, going over my notes, I hardly know where to begin. All I can say is that any inkpot who could tell all about Texas in one magazine article could copy a Truman budget on the point of a needle with a stub pen. . . .

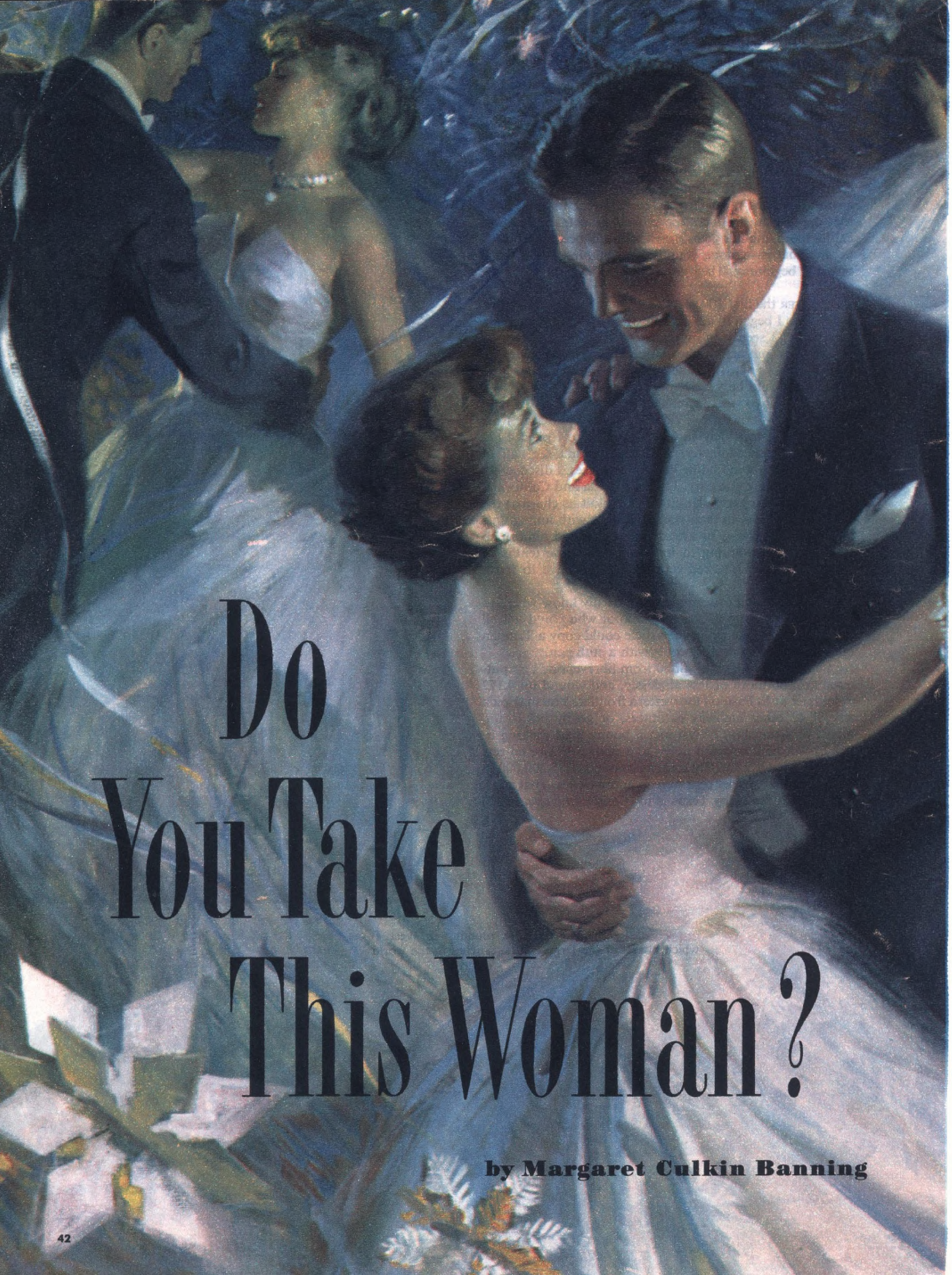
I entered Texas on U. S. 80 from Shreveport, La., puttered around more or less aimlessly, and wound up 4,172 miles later at El Paso on the western frontier. You may pick any of 42 other highway entrances, or go by bus, train, plane, or steamship. I even met a bonny Scot walking it, but I'll bet he'll be worn down to a midget before he gets out of there. Of 9,156,000 tourists who left $375,200,000 in Texas last year, 96 per cent were in automobiles. That adds. The best way to enjoy Texas is to (*Continued on page* 93)



ALL LIT UP: Billions of gallons of aviation gasoline are produced by Texas refineries like the one below in Port Arthur



JUICY STEAKS ON THE HOOF: A roundup in West Texas, which boasts of the largest cattle ranches in the world



Do You Take This Woman?

by Margaret Culkin Banning

Jeremy hadn't planned to take Gail to the Angels' Dance

A story for elusive bachelors, and for the girls who hope to catch them. It holds a warning for both

IT IS quite a show, Jeremy Troy said to himself, as his car came within sight of the Pidgeon house, decorated for holiday hospitality. He wondered what it would be like to give a party as big as this one, and if Harry Pidgeon felt that he had to do it, as part of his public relations job with Liberty Metals. Everything in connection with that job interested Jeremy, its opportunities, its salary, even the social responsibilities that probably trailed along with it. For there was a chance that Jeremy himself might step into Harry Pidgeon's place, if the corporation was reorganized at the annual meeting. It was in the cards. Harry had as much as said so.

Jeremy drove past the ranks of parked cars. "A man could never swing an affair like this by himself," he thought. "He'd have to have a wife. Lorna Pidgeon is a great help to Harry, even if she does ride him pretty hard. But Margot would be much more of a help to a man—to me. She has everything it takes, the looks, the brains, and she understands public relations, too, after working for Harry. Together, she and I—" His heart warmed as he thought of Margot, now inside this gay house, waiting for him.

The highest pine tree on the Pidgeon grounds was decked with hundreds of frosted colored lights that swayed among the branches in the wind like magic winter fruit. A great, silver-ribboned holly wreath on the door was merry with dangling, tinkling sleigh bells, and circles of holly accented all the bright windows.

The lights of Jeremy's car touched a couple of people who were walking up the side of the driveway. Jeremy recognized the girl by the cut of her hair. So the Trowbridges were back from their honeymoon. At one time Jeremy himself had played with the notion that he might marry that girl with the cap of red curls. The idea had never grown to real desire, and now that she belonged to another man, Jeremy felt neither the jealousy nor the pain

→ THE MONTH'S AMERICAN SHORT NOVEL COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

of loss. But as Bill Trowbridge stopped in the shadow of a pine tree and turned his wife's face up for a long kiss, the young man who watched them felt lonely and impatient.

What would it be like to come to a party with your wife, to feel that way about her before you joined the crowd, to take her home, and have it your home, too? It was a rhythm of living that Jeremy Troy did not know. He had reached the point where he wanted to learn it, to practice it. Not with Lois Trowbridge. Not because people kept harping on his getting married. But because it was less and less good to be an unmarried man. It used to be fun to be free, but there came a time when you grew tired of approaches and limits. The time came when you wanted some girl to establish a claim. People would begin to think that you were like your uncle Heath, cynical about marriage, a deliberate and professional bachelor.

You could even lose out in business if you didn't have a wife.

Harry Pidgeon had meant that when he said the other day, "In a job like mine the woman's important, Jerry. A successful executive has to have a woman who will go along with him, know what it's all about. I've been lucky because Lorna has an instinct for those things. And let me tell you, Jerry, the man who gets Margot Tapley is going to be lucky that way, too."

NOTHING could be much plainer than that in the way of recommendation. "And he's right about Margot," Jeremy said to himself. "But there's more to it. I wouldn't want Harry—or her—ever to believe that I would ask her to marry me because I need a wife like her at this particular juncture. If I've held off it's because I had to convince myself that I could make her happy. I think I can. But I never want the woman who marries me to regret it. I saw enough of that when I was a child."

He manipulated his car close to a hedge near the house entrance. As he turned out his lights, another car stopped before the door. Jeremy saw Mrs. Theodore Burrell, wife of the president of Liberty Metals, step out, drawing her mink coat around her. The familiar Burrell chauffeur was not in attendance, and Jeremy could not help hearing what was said, as a girl's head appeared at the driver's window.

"I can't park anywhere near here, Mother. What about my doing those errands and coming back for you in half an hour? You said that you didn't intend to stay very long."

"It's just a matter of putting in an appearance. Since your father wouldn't come."

"Can't I skip it, too?"

"No, I wish you'd come in, dear—really—enjoy it—many young people—"

JEREMY TROY was not trying to listen and he missed the details of the argument as the words whipped in and out of the wind. What stuck fast in his mind was the statement that Mr. Burrell had refused to come to the Pidgeon party. Having seen him only a few hours ago in the Liberty Metals Building, Jeremy knew that it wasn't a matter of illness. It was only more evidence that the president of Liberty Metals would do nothing that might in any way build up the head of the public relations and advertising department in his own firm.

Mr. Burrell couldn't be blamed too much for that, thought Jeremy. Of course, he, more than anyone else, must realize how ambitious Harry Pidgeon was. And where could that ambition go, as it swelled out of the public relations division of the firm, except after Mr. Burrell's own job? Jeremy, completely aware of what it could mean to himself to have Harry Pidgeon become president of Liberty Metals, nonetheless had a feeling of regret that a man like Mr. Burrell might have to give way to the driving force of Harry Pidgeon.

The lady in mink had entered the house and her car had swung off in a well-handled curve. Jeremy wondered who had won out, the girl or her mother. Jeremy had never met the Burrells' daughter in the three years that he had been in

"It might be more fun to be by ourselves tonight," Jeremy said to Margot

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM LOVELL

Lincoln City. Vaguely he knew that she held some kind of job and that she had been living in France. He had heard her called a nice girl. No one had ever told him that she was beautiful, or especially popular with men.

Suddenly he was impatient to get inside the house and see Margot. But as he heard light, steady footsteps on the crisp snow, he stayed where he was to see if it was the Burrell girl coming. The steps paused, and Jeremy turned to look through the back window and see why.

The girl had stopped and was apparently staring around. He could see only that she was slender, wrapped in a bulky coat, and wearing a beret. Without the big car, without her mother, she did not seem like a party guest. More like a stranger who belonged beyond the fence and had stopped to look at things impossible to share. It might be the beret that made Jeremy think of children, gamins. As he slid out of his car, the Burrell girl gave him a glance and went quickly on to the house. They reached the terrace at the same time from different angles.

Remembering how she had tried to duck out of the party, Jeremy couldn't help feeling a little sorry for her. It was hard for a girl to go to a party without a man. His own girl was inside this bright house, confidently knowing that he would turn up to take care of her, but he could imagine the dread and shyness that might be in this other girl's mind.

He gave her a friendly glance. "Looks like Christmas, doesn't it?" he asked.

"Isn't it beautiful!" exclaimed the girl. "Did you see what the wind is doing to the Christmas tree? And the shadows on this house are beyond belief!"

She did not sound at all shy or repressed. She spoke as if it were the most natural thing in the world for two strangers to exult over beauty. Jeremy had an odd, surprised feeling that she did not even appraise him for looks, age, or station in life. Yet she seemed glad he was there.

He could see her face now. She wasn't pretty. She wasn't trying to be. Her hair was brownish and drawn back under the edge of the red beret which cleared her forehead and showed a clean, unpretentious face with its own eyebrows. She seemed younger than he had thought she would be. Her father was sixty, according to the office records. But this girl looked not much more than teen age.

"You hardly want to go inside on a night like this," said Jeremy.

"Definitely I don't!" she said. "It seems such a pity to waste this, to leave it out here by itself. It's the way Christmas weather ought to be—all tossed about with the shadows, excited-looking stars—"

"And noisy bells," said Jeremy, pulling the sleigh bells on the holly wreath and laughing at the big jangle.

She laughed, too, with a quick lift of her chin, and she flung a shining and friendly glance into his eyes. He had only time to think that it was queer that she had not found herself a man when the door opened. The jangle had done it. Beyond the formality of the black-and-white maid was a confusion of moving figures, a clash and battle of voices, and a thrust of heat.

"I guess we're hooked," he told her. And instantly someone called, "Well, Jerry Troy—I knew this party lacked something!"

Harry Pidgeon, standing in the hall to welcome his guests and to urge them to stay longer, seemed energized by his own hospitality. He was a big, powerful man, still handsome, with curly black hair only tipped with the gray of maturity, and shoulders straight in spite of their heaviness.

"Well, young man," he said jovially to Jeremy, "that girl of yours is certainly going over big! You're building yourself up a lot of competition."

"I'll have to do something about that," said Jeremy.

The Month's AMERICAN Short Novel

begins on page 42

The Burrell girl went by her host so quickly that he had no chance to greet her. A maid directed her upstairs and to the right, where the furniture in the bedrooms was almost concealed under a mass of fur wraps. A young woman was pulling on a black-furred carriage boot over a stubborn high heel, and talking the party over with another girl at a dressing table, who was also getting ready to leave. They both glanced at Gail Burrell in her cloth coat, but not knowing her nor being impressed by the coat, she ceased to exist for them. They went on with what they were saying:

"Everyone says Jerry Troy's going to marry that Tapley girl; the one from Harry Pidgeon's office. That's how she happens to be here today. She used to be a bathing beauty or something like that."

"Well, you can't deny she's wonderful-looking."

"The thing is that Jerry's been so hard to get!"

"That kind always falls hardest in the end. And for just that type, too."

Jeremy, coming out of a room farther down the upper hall, where he had left his own coat, looked around for the daughter of his employer. He intended to be polite and give her another lift, but since she was not in sight he felt a certain relief. He had no idea that Gail Burrell was listening with some interest to an analysis of his emotional habits.

Jeremy went downstairs to his own sure welcome. His appearance was always in his favor. Jeremy was tall, with just enough weight for it. His manner could be friendly, flattering, teasing, or deferential, depending on what another person wanted it to be, but it was always honest. Because he was known to be unmarried at an age when most men had young wives and emotional obligations, it was easy to read loneliness or a desire for romance into his thin, mobile face. And often there was something puzzled and almost sad in Jeremy's expression. A laugh would make it fade out, and then it would show again, like a scar cut deeply and long ago by some early unhappiness.

It took him some time to make his way to the dining room, where Harry Pidgeon had told him he would find Margot. Jeremy was interrupted and delayed by the claims of business as well as those of friendship or flirtation. Men stopped him to exchange a few affable words. Women wanted to know why they had not seen him recently.

Lois Trowbridge seized him by the arms. She would have kissed him, but he kept her at a discreet distance as he admired her. "You're wearing a very becoming marriage," he said.

She gave a rapturous sigh. "Jerry, just tell me this—How can you bear not to be married?"

"Maybe nobody could bear to be married to me."

"You don't fool anybody with that kind of talk! Anyway, I hear there is hope for you. Is it true about you and the beautiful Margot Tapley?"

"Now, look, you've got your own responsibilities—"

"I'll always feel just a little responsible for you, too, Jerry. And I think it would be wonderful. I really do. It's the person and the way you feel about her that really matters. And people are quite excited about your Margot. The men have been simply swarming! She's lovely-looking. Anyway, Jerry, I'm for it. Because until you're married—"

"You never know," finished Jeremy, detaching Lois with a manner just on the sunny side of rudeness. He had felt a slight jump of jealousy at the mention of men swarming around Margot.

There was pride, too. He was (*Continued on page* 60)

BY THE WAY—

Wives, Golden Curls, Eskimos, and Things

PEOPLE write to me about the darnedest things. A woman in Tennessee wants to know if I think it fair that her husband gives her for a household allowance only the same amount he pays for alimony to his first and divorced wife.

Another woman, in Maine, asks me to tell her at what age she should permit her 3-year-old son to become a boy by cutting his long, golden curls, which she and her friends greatly admire. The father, it seems, urges an immediate visit to the barber, arguing that otherwise the child will soon be called a sissy by his playmates.

And a man in Illinois wants my advice on the selection of a television set.

★ ★ ★

To such requests obviously I can offer only whatever wisdom I have gained from everyday experience, personal observation, or from experts. It didn't require a Solomon, of course, to tell the Tennessee wife—offhand, and without knowing the exact situation or legal requirements—that she is certainly entitled to an allowance larger than the first wife's alimony. Doesn't she have to air out the draperies after he smokes his smelly pipe? Listen to him tell stories she has heard a dozen times before? Remind him to put on his rubbers when it rains? I told her I thought all this was worth a little something extra.

To the woman in Maine who can't bear to part with her child's golden curls I could reply feelingly out of my own experience. While I could understand her point of view, I advised her to have the curls shorn at once. I have a very vivid recollection, I told her, of being ordered to register for my first year in high school in a costume consisting of bell-bottom trousers and a blouse with a sailor collar! That was my first successful rebellion.

And to the man in Illinois who asked my advice on the selection of a television set, my answer was much the same as that which I gave to a woman in Florida who wanted to know which electric light bulbs were the best. I replied to both that I didn't know. I told them further that television sets, iceless refrigerators, oil burners, automobiles—and light bulbs—all vary in construction according to the individual manufacturer's ideas and the wants of his customers.

I added, however, that for myself I had found that most nationally advertised goods offer fair value for the money, otherwise the money spent to purchase advertising would be wasted. And I pointed out that most manufacturing concerns who spend money for advertising have a great belief and pride in their products. Therefore, I suggested that if my correspondents select the equipment which best suits their needs and pocketbooks from among products backed by substantial advertising, they can be sure of getting their money's worth.

From these glimpses of my daily mail I hope you won't get the idea that I'm a professional adviser on family problems. On the contrary, I learn more from the good people who write to me than I can hope to give in return. For instance, from a man in South Carolina I learned the answer to a question which has always puzzled me: Where do all the old magazines in doctors' and dentists' offices come from?

This man writes to tell me that his copy of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE, after it has gone the rounds of his family of five, is passed along to his brother, who, in turn, gives it to a neighbor, who finally gives it to his father, a dentist, who puts it on the table in his waiting room!

In thanking my friend for this interesting piece of information, however, I had to inform him that I couldn't award him any long-distance medals. I told him about *Peace River Jim*, famous pioneer and empire builder of the Mackenzie River district of the Northwest Territories in Canada, about whom THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE published an article.

Eight years later *Peace River Jim* wandered into my office in New York carrying a soiled and tattered copy of the issue in which the article appeared. He told me he had found the copy the previous summer in the home of an Eskimo about 100 miles from the Arctic Circle—an Eskimo who could neither read nor write English, but had recognized Jim from the photograph illustrating the article. The magazine had been left with the Eskimo by a trapper, to whom it had been sent by his brother in Edmonton, Alberta.

Jim told me that he had tried to trace the magazine back to its original purchaser. He wrote to thirteen people who answered his inquiry, but the fourteenth, a woman in Texas, failed to reply. So Jim never knew exactly how many people read that one copy of the magazine. Neither do we. But we do know from our Research Department that the average copy of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE is read by at least four people before going to the Salvation Army or some other collector of used paper.

★ ★ ★

From these random ramblings perhaps you can understand what makes the job of editing this magazine so fascinating from day to day. It gives the editors a sense of deep gratitude and pride to know that our readers look on us, not as impersonal figureheads off in some other part of the country, but as intimate and trustworthy friends who have minds like their own; who live the lives of normal people with personal problems akin to theirs.

The Editor

SANTA SEES ALL

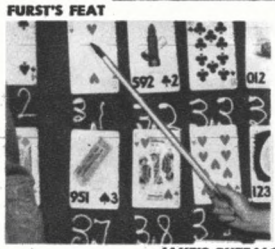
PRESENTING TWELVE EXCITING PAGES OF
UNUSUAL PERSONALITIES IN TEXT AND PICTURES

America's Interesting People

HOUSEWIFE AT WORK

DOLLIE TAKES TEA

FURST'S FEAT



JAKE'S BUFFALO

December 1952

PHOTOGRAPH BY NELSON MORRIS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

James Cheney of Schroon Lake, N. Y., decorates a tree with his entertaining, handmade Christmas ornaments

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE CLARK FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

In his carpenter's workshop in Ann Arbor, Mich., Albert Warnhoff makes thousands of toys for children across the land

WORLD'S BIGGEST SANTA —AND COMPANY

AS LONG AS THERE ARE PEOPLE IN AMERICA like Raymond Fry, "Shine" Smith, James Cheney, and Albert Warnhoff, there will be a Santa Claus. Each in his own unique way brings the season's joy to others. Raymond Fry of Minerva, Ohio, for instance, is the world's biggest Santa—500 pounds of rollicking, jovial Christmas spirit. Each year he, with Mrs. Fry's help, struggles into his ermine-trimmed suit to make dozens of visits to happy, goggle-eyed youngsters in Minerva's schools, churches, clubs, stores, and homes.

For years the Navajo children in Arizona had no Santa. Then came Hugh Dickson Smith (nicknamed "Shine" by the Navajos). A Presbyterian minister, he left his pulpit in an Arizona town in 1936 to become a roving missionary. On his first journey into the desert he became lost, was found several days later, almost unconscious from thirst, by a band of Navajos, and was nursed by them back to health. He then determined to devote his life to the Indians. Each Christmas he dons a Santa Claus suit, hitches a pair of donkeys to a gift-laden cart, and brings blankets, clothing, toys, and food to his Navajo friends.

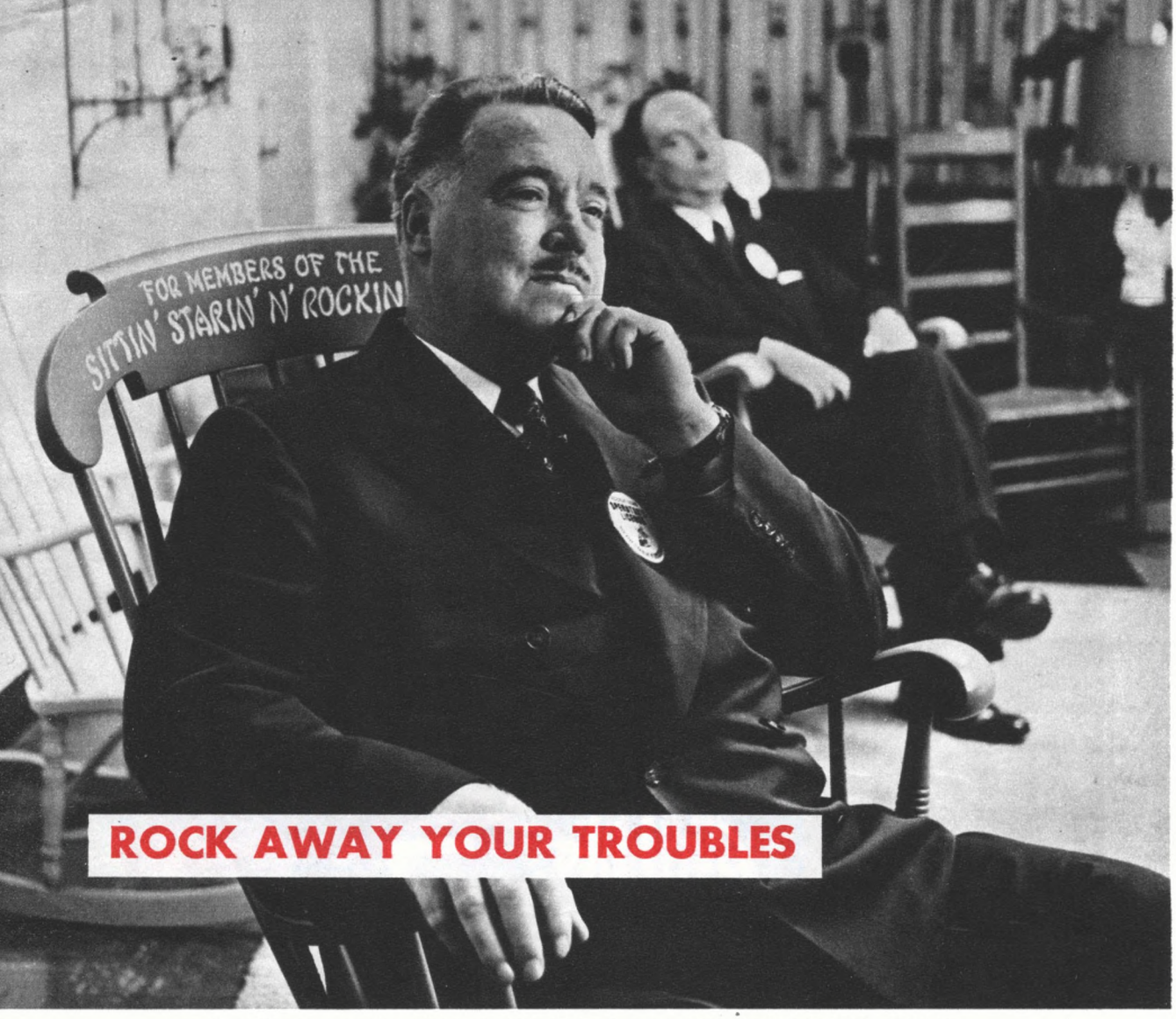
James Cheney, during the depression, left his work as an artist in New York City for a job at a soda fountain in Schroon Lake, N. Y. He hadn't lost his sense of humor, and soon that and his artistic bent found outlet in making caricatures of famous people from soda straws. Before long he graduated to plastics, making unusual Christmas-tree ornaments. Today he employs a large, year-round staff turning out thousands of unique Christmas ornaments with a sense of humor.

Many years ago Albert Warnhoff, a carpenter of Ann Arbor, Mich., made a wooden toy for a little girl in the neighborhood who was seriously ill. Her doctor credited the happiness she received from the toy with being responsible for her recovery. Warnhoff was soon spending all his spare time in his workshop making, without charge, hundreds of toys for youngsters in hospitals and orphan homes. When Christmas approaches, he mails his toys all over the country. Last year he turned out 1,700 toys, bringing his total to 21,500.

Navajo children thought that Santa visited only white boys and girls until Shine Smith came to the Reservation

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE WUNDER FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

No Christmas celebration in Minerva, Ohio, is complete without 500-pound Raymond Fry. Sixteen yards of red velvet went into his costume encircled by an 89-inch belt with a 12-pound silver buckle



ROCK AWAY YOUR TROUBLES

Uncle Tom Saxe practices a bit of relaxin' in the headquarters of his Sittin' Starin' 'n' Rockin' Club

"FRETTIN' AND FUSSIN'," Uncle Tom always said, are twin instigators of gray hair, sour dispositions, short breath, long arguments, high blood pressure, low vitality, swollen ankles, and an early grave. He's ag'in' all that. As an antidote, he believes in relaxation, a practice conducive to happy thoughts, a settled stomach, clear head, steady hand, and prolonged life.

Meditating along these lines one balmy day in 1949 as he sat rocking on the veranda of a Florida hotel, Uncle Tom suddenly got a brain wave: He would spread his easy-goin' gospel across the land! Without leaving his rocker, he called a couple of friends to his side and outlined the practices and principles of an organization to which his relaxed mind had just given birth—the Sittin' Starin' 'n' Rockin' Club.

In Uncle Tom's words, the club's objectives are: "To advance the art and science of sittin', to develop new techniques of starin', to promote improved methods of rockin', to practice the enjoyment of all three simultaneously while in a completely relaxed state of mind and body, to bring back the quiet, peaceful, rhythmic squeak of an old-fashioned rockin' chair; it's an all-American custom. NO DUES—NO DON'TS."

Thousands of persons have heard Uncle Tom's gospel, taken heed, and today are members in good sittin'. They carry membership cards, and when the day's work is done, pin large Rockin' Chair Operators' Licenses on their lapels, then sit, stare, 'n' rock. Should they live around Stamford, Conn., they can drop in the Sittin' Starin' 'n' Rockin' Club's national headquarters, a room furnished with plenty of rockers, including one bright-red one, Uncle Tom's own, mounted on a platform.

Uncle Tom, sometimes known as Thomas E. Saxe Jr., is 48, was born in Milwaukee, Wis., heads a big chain of hamburger shops, is a widower who now makes his home in New Canaan, Conn., and has one child, Brock, aged 9.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PELLEGRINI FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

SO SHE UP AND WROTE A SONG

Mrs. Chilton Price works up a new song as her husband, Bob, and daughter, Terrie, wonder what Mom will come up with next

NOT BEING A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN, Mrs. Chilton Price hadn't heard the talk that to write a successful song you have to know the right people in New York's Tin Pan Alley, belong to the right composers' organizations, hire a press agent, and be a pal of disk jockeys from coast to coast. Strictly an amateur, she thought all she had to do was get the inspiration, jot down a tune and some words, and put the completed job on the market. So that's exactly what she did—and it worked. She has twice rung a loud bell during the past year with two song numbers, *Slow Poke* and *You Belong to Me*, each of which the public has acclaimed as No. 1 hits.

Mrs. Price, whose main job is being a housewife in Louisville, Ky., plays the violin a little—she took lessons as a girl—and with a bit of concentration can pick out a tune with one finger on the piano. Like many housewives, she spends considerable time telling her husband, Bob, and daughter, Terrie, to "hurry." One night, while waiting for them to get dressed for a dinner party, she sat down at the piano with the words "Slow poke," running through her mind, and in her one-finger style tried this key and that until she had worked out a tune. A few days later she showed her melody with appropriate slow-poke words to Pee Wee King, a Louisville hillbilly band leader. He liked it, and with another musician, Redd Stewart, made an arrangement which included the song's tick-tock effect, tried it out, and sent it to a recording company. Next thing Pee Wee knew he was being hustled off to the studios to record the tune, which every juke box in the country was soon tick-tocking out.

No one was more surprised than Mrs. Price, who soon after sat down at the piano and just for fun knocked out *You Belong to Me*. Husband Bob is both amused and amazed at his wife's success. When he's not on the job as a Louisville businessman, he acts as Mrs. Price's business manager.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES KEEN FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

WATCH THE BIRDIE

Three-year-old Chrissy Cahill's eyes pop as she watches Dollie, Mrs. Tuttle's performing canary, ride a toy merry-go-round. Below left, Dollie makes like Santa Claus, one of her special Christmas acts

MRS. LOUISE TUTTLE of San Francisco, Calif., began training Dollie for show business when Dollie was a two-week-old ball of yellow fluff. In one year the pet canary had mastered a sizable repertory as an actress! Today Mrs. Tuttle's protégé, now 6, delights thousands of youngsters in hospitals in the San Francisco area, where Dollie regularly performs a series of astonishing acts.

The bird rides a miniature merry-go-round, teeter-totter, and tricycle which Mrs. Tuttle built for her, jumps through a series of hoops from a moving swing, takes her breakfast propped up in a doll bed, sits at a tea table, and sings in a clear canary soprano when asked to. She appears in gaily colored clothes and, with a bit of help from Mrs. Tuttle, changes her costume for each act.

It's difficult to say whether Dollie, Mrs. Tuttle, or the kids get the biggest kick out of the performances. Dollie never displays temperament, doesn't give one coloratura hoot whether she gets any publicity or not, and never fusses over contracts. She works for the sheer fun of it. Mrs. Tuttle's reward comes in the smiles that light the youngsters' faces. Dollie is their favorite entertainer, even though some of them are puzzled at first. One small lad watched intently without saying a word until Dollie hopped on the merry-go-round, when he excitedly called out, "Why! She's alive! She's real!" Up to that time he thought he had been watching some fancy new toy.

Mrs. Tuttle started training Dollie as a hobby, then put on shows for kids in her neighborhood, and finally took the talented bird to a hospital, where it made such a hit with the kids that they asked for repeat performances. Mrs. Tuttle has shown many of the children how to train birds of their own.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM KING FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

BEST SKATE IN SCHOOL

Marilyn Scarbrough, Southern Methodist University sophomore, skating for her degree

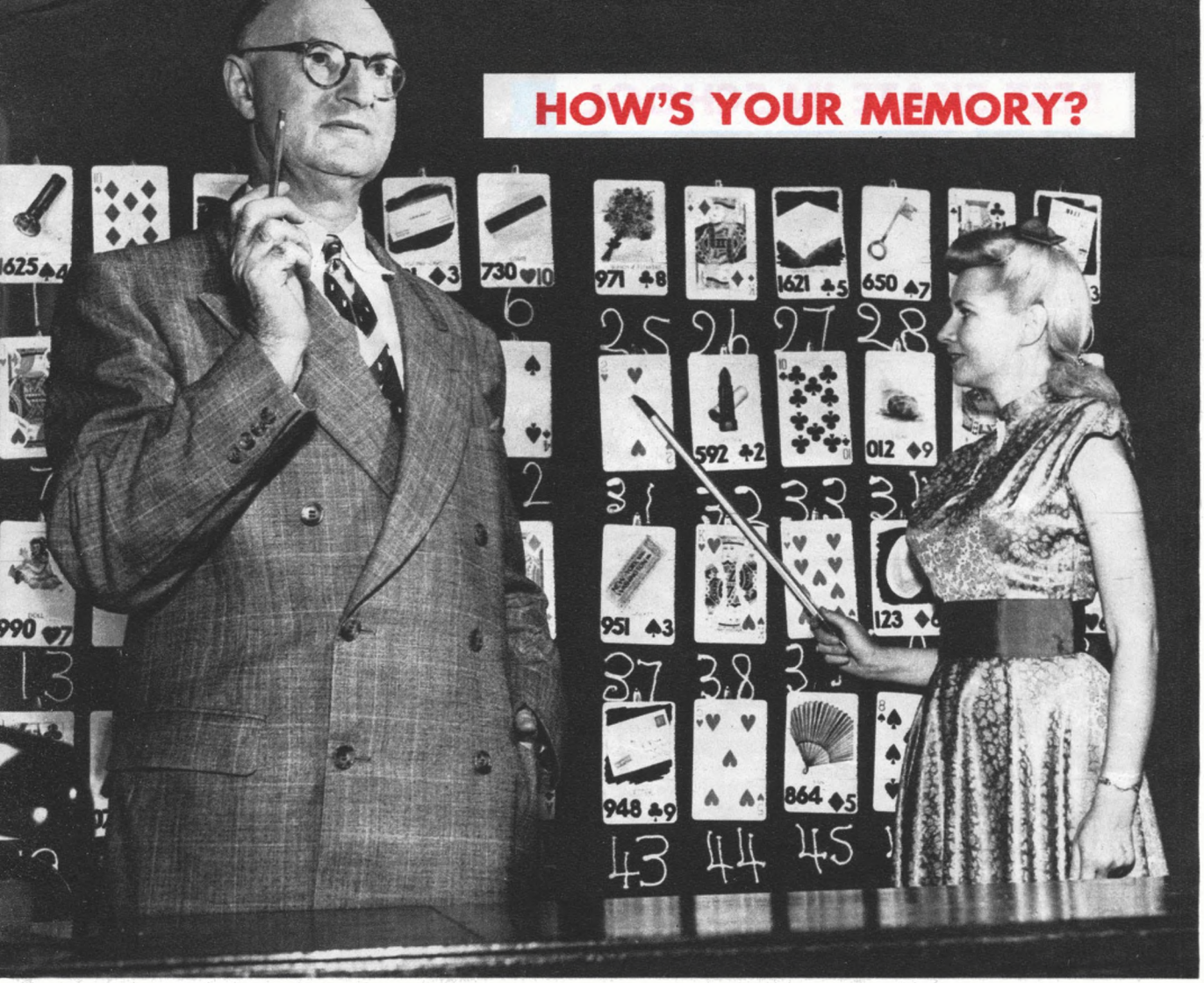
MOST PATRONS of a popular hotel restaurant in Dallas, Texas, think that Marilyn Scarbrough, who appears there three times daily in an elaborate ice-skating routine, is just one more attractive professional skater. What they don't know is that 17-year-old Marilyn is also an honor student sophomore at Southern Methodist University, takes part in many school activities, is a member of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority, is music director of the Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, and in her spare time (!) works as a model.

Marilyn's ice skating not only pays all of her expenses at SMU, but also has bought her a snappy red convertible. She began her career on skates at the age of 9 when she saw Sonja Henie perform, and made up her mind on the spot that she would do likewise. With money she had saved she bought her first pair of skates, and spent every spare moment on them. By the time she was 14, she was skilled enough to turn professional. Today she is an expert and performs the trickiest kind of figure skating and ballet dancing on ice. Included on her list of ice specialties are the Charleston of 1920's renown, cowgirl dances, and a difficult tap-dance routine. Marilyn's three daily shows last a half-hour each and go on at 1:00, 8:30, and 10:45 P. M. She works solo and with a troupe of other skaters. Because of the mild Texas climate, Dallas and Fort Worth have built indoor ice-skating arenas, and it is here that Marilyn practices.

Marilyn was born deep in the heart of Texas, and now lives in Fort Worth with her parents, her younger sister, Linda, and 5-year-old brother, John. She took her freshman year at Arlington State College, where she made high grades, played in theatricals, and worked on the school's newspaper and annual. Marilyn is used to having people quip that she has the coolest job in town. She agrees with them, but adds that so far as she's concerned, it's also the best.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ULRIC MEISEL

HOW'S YOUR MEMORY?



Dr. Bruno Furst, memory expert, recalls each playing card by its numbered position on the board behind him

WHEN YOUNG BRUNO FURST was a university student in his native Germany, his professors shook their heads and told him he might as well forget a professional career. Trouble was, he had fallen behind in his work because he never could remember what he had studied. Instead of dropping out of school, however, he quietly worked out a system enabling him to remember vast amounts of facts and data. He was graduated with honors, going on to become one of Germany's top criminal lawyers.

Throughout the years Dr. Furst constantly worked over his memory system, perfecting it until, in 1938, when he came to the United States to make his home in New York City, he could perform fantastic feats of recall. He could, for instance, flip through a thick magazine for a minute or two, then give in considerable detail the page-by-page contents. He amazed people by glancing through a thoroughly shuffled deck of cards, then naming each card in order. Or he could be introduced to 50 or more strangers in rapid succession, then correctly identify each, either in the order he met them or name them as they passed before him in a completely shuffled order. And he could name for you the same persons one year later or five years later, accurately describing each person. Such feats established Dr. Furst as an authority. Today he could earn a fancy living as a luncheon club or stage performer. He shuns such activities, preferring to teach others how to train their memories as a constructive aid to them in their social or business life. Since 1938 several thousand persons, by mastering a reasonably simple system, have learned from him how to memorize long lists of names, columns of figures, facts, faces, dates, or where they left their reading glasses last night. His students include businessmen, lawyers, policemen, professors, clerks, hotel managers, and housewives. Dr. Furst says that everyone is born with a potentially good memory. It merely needs training to work properly.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN BERNEWITZ FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

THE TOP KICK AND THE KIDS

M/Sgt. Jack Lewis, left, and some of his 32 recruits get thanks from Col. James B. Tipton for help they gave to the base's mechanics

AIR FORCE SGT. JACK LEWIS is self-appointed top kick to 32 small sons of U. S. pilots and ground crewmen stationed in southern Japan. Each morning, when the fathers take off from the air base for their grim work in Korea, Lewis rides herd on their sons. He not only has reduced juvenile problems to zero, but has channeled the boys' energy into a surprising amount of useful war work.

When the families of military men arrived in Japan from the States during the occupation, Lewis was supervising construction at the air base. He soon ran into trouble with a gang of boys, sons of the soldiers and their wives, who broke windows and electric lamps as fast as he could replace them. One day he set a trap and caught a group of them. In his best top-sergeant manner he dressed them down, but learned that the only trouble with the boys was that they had no interests to absorb their energy. Lewis took care of that by organizing his rookies into The American Boys' Club and having them start work on a clubhouse, ordering them around as only a tough sergeant can. While the parents at first thought Lewis was being too hard-boiled, they soon discovered that their young offspring loved it. The clubhouse was gradually made comfortable with furniture left by families rotating to the States, and Lewis and the boys built playground equipment from salvage material. When cash was needed, it came from the sergeant's own pocket, a fact he tries to keep secret.

The boys of the club help their fathers win the war. When the commanding officer of an F-80 Shooting Star wing recently needed rags for his mechanics to use in cleaning their planes, he called on the club for help. The boys soon collected 1,000 pounds. They take their work seriously. One day a 6-year-old had been collecting reading material for wounded vets. The youngster came home soaking wet, for when a shower came up he took off his raincoat and covered his load of books.

PHOTOGRAPH BY I. G. EDMONDS FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

BUFFALO ON A BUN

They look gentle enough in the picture: Part of Jake Kohberger's buffalo herd at Lockhaven, Pa.

LOTS OF PEOPLE have been piqued by OPA price fixing, but usually don't do anything about it. Jake Kohberger is one of the few who did. This Lockhaven, Pa., farmer got so mad a few years ago because OPA fixed the ceiling price at which he could sell his beef that he sold his entire herd of cattle. He still had 70 hogs, a stable of riding horses, favorite dog and cat, and a pet black bear to keep him company. Yet he felt lonely for the cattle.

One day he recalled that 150 years ago wild buffalo had roamed Pennsylvania. He also recalled that at a club dinner he once had eaten a delicious buffalo steak. Then he remembered what seemed to be most important of all: There was no OPA ceiling on buffalo meat.

The next day Kohberger was headed in his truck toward Denver, Colo., where he had heard a few excess buffalo were on sale for $150 each. He bought 6 mated cows, got them back to Pennsylvania, and thought he had the problem licked, especially when 4 calves were soon born. Kohberger learned, however, that raising American bison is a different matter from handling gentle cattle. The wild, suspicious, rampaging critters were constantly fighting. Two of them brawled one day in the barn until both were killed. Soon afterward the remaining 4 almost trampled to death a huge Guernsey bull with which Kohberger had tried to cross-breed them. Then one of the cows died in calving.

Eventually Kohberger learned that a buffalo hates confinement worse than a gypsy hates jail, and that each animal requires a minimum of 10 acres to graze in. Then he bought a buffalo bull which will take no nonsense from the cows, and things have been going better ever since. With 26 buffalo in his herd today, his project is now on the profit side of the ledger. On the highway which runs by his farm he operates The Buffalo Inn, where dozens of tourists stop daily for choice buffalo steaks and buffaloburgers.

PHOTOGRAPH BY RUDY ARNOLD FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

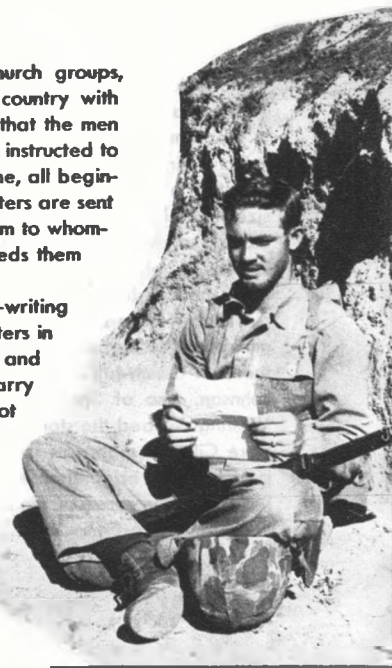
HIS LETTERS CHASE THE BLUES

Larry Perkins outside his Beverly Hills home with volunteer workers who help him send letters all over the world

BEING A BACHELOR, Larry Perkins knows just how lonely a person can get. Fact is, this former actor, merchandising manager, and now landscape gardener in Beverly Hills, Calif., believes that loneliness is the world's worst plague. And so he has sparked an action-packed, one-man campaign to beat loneliness wherever he finds it, concentrating on shut-ins and the UN fighting forces in Korea.

To begin with, he brushed up on his old vaudeville routines, gathered a troupe about him, and put on shows in vets' hospitals in southern California. Some of these servicemen, who later went to Korea, wrote him letters telling him how much they liked his stuff. They told him, too, that they never got as much mail as they would like. It was then that Larry dreamed up a relay letter system which supplies hospitalized people and the Korean fighting men with thousands of letters each week. For the GI's he named a relay letter agent, usually the mail clerk, in each military unit and on every warship, then provided hundreds of clubs, church groups, and individuals throughout the country with a list of his agents, telling them that the men wanted mail. Letter writers were instructed to keep the letters on a friendly tone, all beginning with, "Dear Cousin." The letters are sent to the agents, who distribute them to whomever in their outfits they feel needs them most.

Now world-wide, the letter-writing organization supplies tons of letters in every language to the UN forces and hospitalized vets and civilians. Larry says even this huge number is not enough, and invites others to write him at Box 491, Beverly Hills, California, for a list of his agents.



PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED SWARTZ FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

Mrs. Harold J. Whiting puts finishing touches on inaugural gown she suggests for our next White House hostess. Other gowns: Mrs. George Washington, Mrs. James Madison, Mrs. John Q. Adams, Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, Mrs. Calvin Coolidge

FIVE YEARS AGO Mrs. Harold J. Whiting of Springville, Utah, took in the sights of Washington, D. C., including the Smithsonian Institution. What impressed her particularly in the famed museum were the inaugural gowns of the nation's First Ladies. Being an expert seamstress and interested in designing clothes, she stood before each life-size model of a President's wife or official hostess, making sketches and taking notes. Then, with a book containing photographs of the gowns in her traveling bag, she headed back to Springville.

Today, as a hobby, Mrs. Whiting has duplicated in miniature the elaborate gowns of 35 First Ladies, fitting them on 8-inch-tall mannequins made by a friend, Zina Johnson, also of Springville. To make the gowns, Mrs. Whiting combed the stores in Springville, Provo, and Salt Lake City for materials to match the texture, color, and pattern of the original gowns. Merchandise buyers helped her to find the rarest of the silks and satins. At the request of The American Magazine she recently created a new gown which she felt would be appropriate for our next White House hostess to wear at the 1953 inaugural ball.

Mrs. Whiting's description is: "This gown is high fashion made in peacock-green satin. The overskirt is split down the side with a cascade effect and is underlined with gray satin. The underskirt and bodice are of silver lamé. It has dainty white net ruching across the top of the bodice in front."

Mrs. Whiting has had a number of bids from collectors across the country for her assembled First Ladies, but she prefers to keep them for display purposes at schools, clubs, and stores. Recently a leading department store in Detroit invited Mrs. Whiting to come to the store to show her gowns. Her husband is a city councilman, and the couple have four active children besides being busy with church, school, and civic affairs. Mrs. Whiting says this just goes to prove you can do anything you really want to.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLARD LUCE FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

LAST OF THE LAMPLIGHTERS

Twilight finds Dominico Aromando, last of St. Louis' lamplighters, on his daily round

IN 1923, WHEN DOMINICO AROMANDO MOVED to St. Louis, Mo., from his native Italy, the city had 28,000 gas lamps on its streets. Dominico soon became one of the army of men whose job each night was to light them. Then, the very next year, St. Louis decided to replace the outmoded fixtures with electricity. As one by one the lamplighters were laid off, Dominico and his Italian bride began wondering how, when his turn came, he would make a living. The problem was solved by a group of residents in an exclusive district of the city who, unknown to Dominico, got together and decided that for the sake of old-time sentiment, they preferred to retain the 83 gas street lamps in their neighborhood. When Dominico heard of this, he applied for the job, and because of his enthusiasm and good record, he got it. Today he still holds it, being the last of St. Louis' lamplighters and one of the few left in the entire country.

Each evening at dusk Dominico inspects his 83 ancient charges, making certain they are ready to burn brightly through the night. His work methods, though, have progressed with the times, even as his 83 lamps, although burning gas, resemble the gas street lights of the early 1900's in appearance only. Instead of covering his route on foot as in the old days, Dominico now steps into his car, which he packs to the hilt with glass globes, ladders, cleaning equipment, and other paraphernalia essential to his tending. And instead of actually lighting each lamp, he merely checks to see whether it is already lit, for an automatic 8-day clock does the work, going on 15 minutes after sunset and off 15 minutes before sunrise. But the lamps need regular cleanings, mantles must be replaced, minor adjustments made, and once a week Dominico winds the clocks and regulates the timing. Because of this modernization Dominico's working time has been cut almost in half, so he supplements his income by being an apartment maintenance man.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK ZEHRT FOR THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE

(*Continued from page 45*)

glad that Margot was getting along so well. He had asked her if he could bring her to the party today, intending to fix up the invitation for her if she were not included. To his surprise, she had told him that she was going to have to be there earlier than he would want to go, because Lorna Pidgeon had asked her to help with the guests. Margot said it in a matter-of-fact way, as if it were the most natural thing in the world for her to be an assistant hostess to the wife of her boss. She had that way of taking success for granted when it came, no matter how hard she had worked for it.

But Jeremy knew that this was the first time that Lorna Pidgeon had given her husband's super-secretary this kind of social recognition. It was high time she did, but Jeremy knew that Lorna was on the jealous side, especially of a girl as attractive as Margot.

He saw Margot then. She was wearing a black satin dress that gleamed where it touched her throat, and above it her darkly golden hair held luster in the same smooth, deep way. She did not have to use a trick of coquetry to attract admiration. She was always better-looking than anyone else. It was because of the perfect balance of her features, the curious gray of her wide-spaced eyes, the flight of her eyebrows, the glow of her skin.

In her black dress, holding a little silver cocktail cup, she looked cool and defined among all the men and women whose skins were beginning to burn with heat and drink, and whose clothes and jewelry sparkled at random and made no sure pattern.

For a moment sheer admiration held Jeremy, and then the man to whom she was talking moved into sight, and Jeremy saw with astonishment that it was his own uncle, Heath Troy. He had not even known that his uncle had planned to come today, and it was an obvious sign to Jeremy that Harry and Lorna Pidgeon were becoming important, and that their invitations were not slighted or overlooked. His uncle was on the Board of Directors of Liberty Metals, but Jeremy was quite sure that he had never been in the Pidgeons' house until today.

Heath Troy was a narrow-faced man, handsome in an aristocratic manner, with a skin permanently tanned by many holiday suns. Even across the room he looked like the wealthy, privileged bachelor that he was. He was monopolizing Margot Tapley, but he did it with a connoisseur's air of detachment, as if he held a crowd away from a beautiful object instead of joining a swarm of admirers. His compliments, Jeremy knew, would be clever rather than fatuous. And Margot deserved the best he could offer today. But of course Heath would not have any idea what Margot has really accomplished, thought Jeremy, making his way toward them. The things he knew about her life were in his mind. Some she had told him. Some had come through comments of Harry Pidgeon....

Margot Tapley had been awarded a beauty prize in a local photographer's contest when she was sixteen. There had been a couple of bathing-beauty contests after that. "I hated the things, but at least I got to see Atlantic City and Miami," Margot had told him.

At eighteen she had been elected Queen of Lincoln City in a competition sponsored by the largest evening newspaper. In a low-cut, trailing white satin dress, amid a bower of red roses (courtesy of Flynn's Dress Shop and the Midwest Floral Supply) she had ridden up and down the main streets of the city on a float in the parade on Civic Day. She had been beautiful in a white ski suit at the Winter Carnival, lovely in green tulle (gown from Apley's Store) when she and the Mayor had led the grand march at the opening of West Park Pavilion. For a year, packed with civic events, Margot was the official Queen of the City.

She got some free clothes, though none of them was very practical for ordinary wear, dozens of sample lipsticks, small boxes of powder and tubes of cold cream, tickets for Good Will Trips to small towns, and innumerable turkey dinners: "I got to loathe the sight of a turkey, alive or dead!"

But the Queen of Lincoln City would not have been sent an invitation to the Pidgeon party tonight.

Not that Harry Pidgeon did not support many civic projects. That had always been part of his job, and that was how Margot had happened to meet him. He always had a warm smile for the lovely, overdressed Queen.

"She was just a kid then, green as grass, but she used to carry off those commercial shows like nobody else," Harry Pidgeon had told Jeremy.

Riding up and down on the floats, sitting on the platform with the Mayor, wearing the dresses that the shops donated as advertisements, Margot carried them off. But she knew that her reign was as temporary as it was powerless. She also knew two Lincoln City Queens who had preceded her. Both were still under twenty-five. One lived in a three-room bungalow with three children and a husband who was turning out to be no good. The other Queen did occasional modeling for a local department store.

Margot had no hope of Hollywood. There had been screen tests when she was a bathing beauty and they were disappointing. She apparently could not project glamour in pictures.

On a platform one day, while the band was playing, she asked Mr. Pidgeon if she could get a job with Liberty Metals. It was the biggest corporation in the city and its towering building was a distinguished local landmark.

Her inquiry wiped the smile off Harry Pidgeon's face. He had almost frowned at Margot, lovely though she was in pale-blue velvet at the Home Appliance Show, and he answered, "I'm sorry, child, but the corporation has to employ girls with considerable business training."

"I suppose they do. But if I got some business training, Mr. Pidgeon, would you give me a job? If I got enough training?"

The smile came back and he said indulgently that he sure would. "But I'm afraid some young fellow is going to carry you off long before that," he teased.

Harry Pidgeon was fond of telling that he forgot all about that promise. There was a new city contest for the Queenship before long, and a redhead won. But a year later, Margot, in a dark-blue cotton suit, turned up at Mr. Pidgeon's office and reminded him of his promise. She had graduated from a local business college in the meantime, at the head of her class. Also, she had taken a correspondence course in advertising methods on the side.

"I really worked that year," she had

told Jeremy. "My father sold out—he had a shoe-repair place here in town—and my folks went back to the town they originally came from in Iowa. Pop got enough for the business so he paid for my course. And I had a job nights, selling tickets in a movie house."

Jeremy remembered that she had done all that as he saw her now smiling at his snobbish uncle. It did not take Margot very long to accomplish anything. She was still only twenty-six and she had made a place for herself in Liberty Metals. In six years she had worked up from an ordinary stenographic job to a position that was actually unofficial assistant to Harry Pidgeon. She was officially his personal secretary, but Jeremy knew that it was a far better and bigger job than the title implied. Harry Pidgeon counted on her, trusted her with important information, and left many arrangements in her hands when he was out of town.

Jeremy only said, "Hi," and touched Margot's elbow. But the way she looked when she saw who it was told Heath Troy that these two young people knew each other well. Heath could feel a subtle possessiveness come into the girl's attitude, although there was no gesture to prove it. It was the atmosphere created by a woman who had the man she had chosen beside her, and Heath had long been sensitive to that atmosphere and wary of it.

"Are you cutting in on your old uncle?" he asked.

"Something like that, sir," Jeremy said deferentially. Then he grinned at Margot, showing that they shared secrets, and asked, "How are you getting on?"

"That seems a superfluous question," remarked his uncle, "addressed to the most beautiful girl at a delightful party."

"Your uncle is wonderful, Jerry," said Margot. "I know now why I like you. What Jerry means," she explained, "is that Mrs. Pidgeon asked me to help, this afternoon, and I wasn't sure that I might not be more of a hindrance. I don't know many of the guests. Of course, working downtown, I know some of the men in a business way. But this is different."

"Mrs. Pidgeon is very fortunate in having you to assist her," said Heath Troy gallantly. But he meant it, for though he had spoken of the party as delightful he thought it overcrowded, strident, and striving. He had come because if Harry Pidgeon were to be made president of Liberty Metals, as seemed highly probable, he and his wife would have to be recognized socially.

THIS secretary girl was the only woman in the room whose looks survived the heat and press. She handled herself well, too. No pretense. No bowing or scraping, either. How seriously was Jeremy involved with her? What she wants is a wedding ring, thought Heath, observing them.

He said to Jeremy, "My friend Harry Pidgeon introduced me to this young lady, Jerry, telling me that her beauty is only matched by her brains."

"Mr. Pidgeon can have the brains," said Jeremy cheerfully. He took the silver goblet out of Margot's hand, peered into it, and sniffed. "Ginger ale? Bluffing?"

She smiled, and it made her mouth even more provocative. "It's a trick I learned on good-will tours."

"Margot," Jeremy explained to his uncle, "used to be Queen of Lincoln City."

"I've no doubt it was the best government the town ever had," commented his uncle in an amused, unperturbed way. "Jerry, I hope that Miss—may I say Miss Margot?—will do us the honor of coming to our little party on next Tuesday. I have no hostess, Miss Margot, but, in our helpless bachelor way, Jerry and I have a holiday party for our friends each year."

"I've already asked her, sir," said Jeremy.

A slight restraint came into his uncle's manner. Heath Troy did not like the implication of that invitation. This was a handsome girl, and well-behaved, but Jeremy could have almost anyone if he wanted to marry. And he would marry. "Someone's going to get him in the net pretty soon," thought Heath. "He should get a little money along with it. He could just as well as not. All he has is his salary."

"Thank you so much, Mr. Troy," Margot was saying; "it will be wonderful to come to your party. It's a legend, you know."

HEATH liked that, but was not beguiled. Something that his thoughts had been fiddling with a half-hour ago came back to his mind. He gave Margot a little bow for the compliment and spoke again to Jeremy.

"We must have Gail Burrell, too," he said. "I've just been talking to her mother and she tells me Gail is home. Here today, I think, though it's impossible to be sure when guests are crowded in with no regard for the fire ordinances. Have you seen Gail?"

"I don't know her," said Jeremy.

"You don't know Gail? That's extraordinary. But of course she's been abroad so much and you've only been settled in here for three years. She's a great pet of mine. A very intelligent child."

It would be foolish, Jeremy thought, to contradict himself and say that actually he had talked with Gail Burrell, even though he had not met her formally. That took too much explaining, and Jeremy let his first statement stand.

"What did you think of my uncle?" he asked Margot, as soon as the older man left them to themselves.

"I think he's fascinating. He talks just like made-up conversation—like a play."

"Yes, it's an act. But he lives the part, too. Wait till you see him at home."

"Didn't he ever marry?"

"No."

"Doesn't he like women?"

"He likes them very much. But he doesn't want to marry them."

"Why not?"

"I don't know. He's always been cynical about marriage. Ever since I can remember."

For a moment memory fanned out in Jeremy's mind. Heath had been his guardian since Jeremy was thirteen, and the boy had been thoroughly inoculated with the idea that all men were either bachelors or captives. Deeper, making his uncle's attitude believable, lay the memory of his mother's unhappiness. It was an unfair unhappiness. Even when he was a little boy he knew that his father could not be so much to blame as his mother said.

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Her unhappiness and blame went on even after his father went away, which Jeremy realized later was the occasion of divorce. But not for long. When she had died, after a quick and ravaging illness, Heath Troy had said, in the hearing of the boy, "Of course, he should have known better than to marry her." The words seemed to Jeremy to fix the blame for the dreadful pity and loss squarely on marriage.

Jeremy grew up thoroughly distrusting marriage. He had a natural hero worship for his handsome uncle, who had taken over the problem of finding the right schools and summer camps for Jeremy and for housing him in the brief periods between their terms. There were no quarrels in his uncle's apartment, no struggles over comings and goings. For there was no wife. Jeremy's own father became remote. For a while there were brief letters from him to his son. The postmarks were usually from somewhere in the Far East. His father finally died there during the war, which Jeremy had also helped to fight.

Heath Troy got Jeremy a job with Liberty Metals when the war was over, and continued to advise him with general and particular satire to avoid feminine traps. But his uncle was no longer a hero to Jeremy. His wit had begun to seem jaded and repetitious, even spiteful about women.

"Are you cynical about marriage, too?" Margot was asking him. "Do you feel as your uncle does about it?"

HE WISHED painfully that they were alone. Lorna Pidgeon had taken Margot's attention, pausing in one of her swift flights through the rooms to introduce a guest. But now Margot turned to him again and came back to their conversation.

"You know I don't. Heath is a wonderful guy in a lot of ways, but I wouldn't want to live his kind of life."

"He's clever," said Margot, "and I've heard that he's very influential on the board of directors of Liberty."

"He got me my job with the company."

"Well," she smiled at him, "you made good. At least, Harry Pidgeon thinks so."

It seemed to Jeremy that they were getting off the subject, that things were being left unsaid that should be said immediately. "Never mind about me," he told her, "but do you know how lovely you're looking?"

She touched the dress and asked, "Do you like it?" as if she spoke of herself.

"Yes," he answered, "more and more."

"It's fun to be at a party like this with you, Jerry."

"I know what you mean. I feel that way, too. Is it going all right?"

"Oh, it's a great success! Lorna Pidgeon is simply in heaven. Everybody seems to be here. I haven't seen Mr. Burrell. But I saw his wife a few minutes ago."

"The big boss wouldn't come."

"What makes you think that?" Margot asked, quickly serious.

It was something he had overheard, Jeremy realized, and had no right to know. He was ashamed of himself for having mentioned it. A remark like that could be exaggerated out of all proportion, could start bad feeling or make it worse.

"I don't know a thing about it, really. I was just talking. But you're taking this party much too seriously."

"It's pretty serious for Mrs. Pidgeon. I don't want to let her down in any way, since she asked me to help her. I can imagine how I'd feel in her place, running this big show."

"You'd just toss it off. You'd be a wonderful hostess."

Margot said, "I'd certainly try. I'd work at it. I wouldn't ask so many people at one time, I think, if I were doing it. It would be pleasanter, and you could do yourself just as much good."

She stopped talking, for they were passing from one room to another and people were watching them. No doubt listening if possible. Certainly guessing. Jeremy steered her into one of the small open spaces that occur like oases at crowded parties. This one was near a sofa.

"Let's sit down and look it over," he suggested.

She shook her head. "That's not what I'm here for. I'm supposed to see that people have a good time."

"I'm one of the people," said Jeremy; "give me a good time. I'm your duty."

She turned, coming closer. "Are you, Jerry?"

The answer was that he wanted to be her special and permanent duty. All he had to do was say it. She was waiting to hear it. It was usually so easy and natural for Jeremy to give the right, the hoped-for response. But he seemed to stumble over some inhibition, some involuntary fear.

"I'd like to be. If I could be sure I wouldn't ever be an unpleasant duty. That's a thing that has always bothered me. How can a man be sure he wouldn't get to be a nuisance? To a woman, I mean. How can he be sure that he could always keep a woman happy? Even if he wanted to more than anything else?"

She said, "I think, Jerry, that a lot of it is up to the woman. She shouldn't let herself be unhappy. Of course, it's a matter of adjustment. The way it is in an office. If you take on a job you want to make a success of it. No matter what the job is or where—in a home or in an office. Don't you think that's right?"

"Absolutely," he agreed, with a flat sense of disappointment. What had he wanted to hear? What had he hoped that she would say? The moment when they had almost faced up to what was in their minds passed and was lost. The girl seemed to feel that. She looked at Jeremy. The latent puzzlement and sadness were clear on his face now. She smiled again and touched his hand. She said, "You shouldn't worry so about—things, Jerry. They work out."

Then she made her next remark casual: "I wonder which is the Burrell girl. I've never seen her."

Jeremy scanned the crowd. "There she is. The girl with the red beret. Talking to Minnie what's-her-name, the waitress that they hire for all these big parties."

Margot said, "I thought you didn't know her."

"I don't. But I saw her outside the house tonight with her mother. That's how I know who she is."

"I thought from what Lorna Pidgeon said that she was just back from Paris. She doesn't look very chic."

Gail Burrell lifted her head as she laughed at something the elderly waitress was saying to her. It was a gay gesture. Jeremy had noted it outside when he was talking to her, and now it seemed entirely characteristic.

Heath Troy and Mrs. Burrell parted the crowd with their importance, evidently looking for Gail. For they bore down upon her, and the waitress went quickly on her way. Heath Troy kissed Gail on the forehead. Then he held her at arm's length for inspection and shook his head, making remarks that were evidently very personal. He is saying, thought Jeremy, that she should be married.

"Your uncle is beckoning for you," Margot told him a minute later. "I suppose he wants you to meet the Burrell girl."

"I have."

"You told him differently. Better go over there, Jerry. He'll think it's my fault if you don't. Please, Jerry. I don't want to get in wrong with your uncle after he's been so nice to me."

Jeremy agreed with that. Everything would be smoother and more pleasant if Heath did like Margot. And the beckoning was insistent.

"Come along with me, then," he demanded. "If I once let go of you I wouldn't get you back for hours. Let's get Operation Burrell over with."

Mrs. Burrell knew Jeremy and gave him a cordial greeting. Her daughter offered less. She gave him a quick smile of recognition but seemed more interested in admiring Margot Tapley than in making an impression on Jeremy.

"Jeremy says he's never met you," said Heath.

"Yes, he has. We were anonymous," said Gail, "but for one moment we seemed to know each other very well."

"That's right," agreed Jeremy.

He could see now that she was older than she had looked on the terrace. He had an impression that she wasn't a girl who would follow her mother's classic social pattern.

"She's been about," Jeremy thought. "She may have some man in the background." When a girl doesn't seem to care whether she makes an impression or not, there usually is a man she is sure of somewhere. He wondered for a second what she was thinking. Usually he could guess, but he wasn't sure about Gail Burrell.

Of course, he knew what was in her mother's mind. Jeremy could always tell when a mother was deciding that he might be a good candidate for a son-in-law—if he could be persuaded to run. There was a familiar analytical look, an extra affability, a sure invitation in the offing. With Mrs. Burrell all this was very gracious and deft.

"There are so many parties this year, so much going on," she said. "We are looking forward to yours, Heath—everyone always does—and I think the Angels' Dance on Christmas Eve is such a delightful occasion for the young people to get together, especially when they have

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY A. CRAMER

been out of town. We are having a little buffet supper after our New Year's Eve reception—just a few of our friends to welcome the new year together—we'd like to have you join us, Jeremy. Heath will, too, of course. It will be so good to have young people in the house again."

There was a touch of command about that invitation. It was one that might flatter a young man very much, coming from the wife of the president of his company. But it baffled Jeremy. He could hardly refuse without explaining that he and Margot would want to see the new year in together. It will take care of itself, he thought, as he thanked her for including him. And it would be possible to bring Margot, if things were settled between them and everybody knew it.

"Are you going to behave yourself, child, and stay home for a while?" Heath Troy was asking Gail.

"For a while." The girl gave her mother a fond look with a promise in it.

"What were you doing over there? Some travel agency?"

"Yes, I had a job with a New York agency. Then they opened the Paris office and I was there last year."

"Did you enjoy it?"

"It was a wonderful job. There are all kinds of people going to all kinds of places. Nothing—and nobody—ever happens twice."

The enthusiasm which Jeremy had heard in her voice when she spoke of the beauty of the scene outside was audible again.

But Heath Troy interrupted to ask about people he knew. They alone made places and events real for him. "Did you see the Phil Wellands in Paris? They were at the Ritz for a month."

"The Ritz wasn't my beat," said Gail. "No, I didn't see anyone from here except Mrs. Darius Montgomery. She let me do the booking for her last trip to South America."

That name made a difference to the older people. Mrs. Burrell glanced at Heath Troy as if it would have special meaning for him. But his comment was dry and critical: "So Nina's still traveling?"

"Is she as beautiful as she was?" asked Mrs. Burrell.

"As she always will be, I think," answered Gail. "Yes, she still travels. But she told me she was coming back here for a visit this winter. To see her sister. She ought to be here now."

Jeremy thought Mrs. Montgomery was one of the women his uncle had deliberately not married. Heath Troy had never talked about her, but Jeremy remembered the name, although no face went with it. The talk had become remote to him, though it was interesting to find out what the Burrell girl had been doing. It fitted in. Bored rich girls, who were not popular, who didn't get married at the right time, often took jobs to keep themselves busy and to work off their inferiority complexes. Not that this girl seemed to be bothered that way. She was giving another confidential smile to Minnie, the waitress to whom she had been talking before.

He heard Gail Burrell say to his uncle, "It's such fun to see Minnie again. Isn't she wonderful?"

"She's a town character," said Heath. "My man always gets Minnie when we have a largish party. But he says she won't stay in the kitchen, where she belongs."

"Do you know what she just said to me?" asked Gail. "She said, 'Do you remember when your mother gave the big children's party and you ran out of the house and down the street because she was trying to get the boys to dance with you?'"

"Gail, what a silly story!" protested Mrs. Burrell. "That wretched Minnie ought to be ashamed of herself."

Gail really thought it was funny. She kept on laughing. "It's pretty accurate. I can distinctly remember Minnie telling me that yellow curls were not essential to a happy life." She glanced at Margot Tapley and added, "I'm still not so sure about that."

Margot's smile was like a little bow to applause. Jeremy, feeling as if he were filling in an awkward pause, said, "I don't believe you have to worry much about yellow hair. Have you any more jobs to do, Margot? . . . She's one of the sergeants-at-arms around here."

Mrs. Burrell turned to Margot pleasantly: "I think it's so nice for Mrs. Pidgeon to have you to help her today. She told me that she borrowed you from her husband. I only wish Mr. Burrell would be as generous with me! . . . Come to see us very soon, Jeremy, and remember that we'll expect you on New Year's Eve." Her attention was sharply caught by seeing someone. She almost exclaimed, "Why, Heath, there is Nina Montgomery with the Dunlops! She did come, just as Gail said."

Their eyes followed the direction of her interest, to see a tall, gray-blond woman who had a look of permanent beauty. Instantly Jeremy remembered her, and how much he had liked it when she came to see his uncle. A vague feeling of hurt and comfort welled up with his memory of her. She was talking to Mr. Dunlop, the banker for Liberty Metals.

Mrs. Burrell moved in that direction. Heath Troy followed, seeming to straighten his shoulders and make sure of his tie, though he did not touch it. His expression was casual, unsurprised. Gail Burrell was first of all. She wanted to speak to Mrs. Montgomery, and her face was alight again.

Jeremy had a feeling that he and Margot were forgotten, even by the Burrell girl. Not that he wasn't glad to break up the conversation. In spite of Mrs. Burrell's graciousness to Margot, she had not included Margot in the invitation for New Year's Eve. Obviously it had seemed completely unnecessary. "But if I go, I bring Margot," thought Jeremy. "Heath can fix it up."

Margot herself seemed to have no sense of being slighted. Jeremy could feel the exhilaration in her, self-possessed though she was. People were inquiring about her, admiring her, wondering about her and Jeremy. "I'm so proud of her," he thought. "I always would be proud of Margot. She'd be a credit to any man."

He turned to her: "Aren't you about ready to go?"

"Jerry, I haven't had a chance to tell you. The Pidgeons want us to stay after the party breaks up and then go to dinner at the Athletic Club with them."

"Oh, no! I don't want to listen to Lorna Pidgeon all evening."

"Harry made rather a point of it," she said slowly. "What could I say?"

"That we have a date. And by ourselves."

"But, Jerry, you don't want to be rude. Harry Pidgeon is a good friend of yours. It would be stupid to hurt his feelings. Now, with the annual meeting coming up."

Jeremy drew back to stare at her. He frowned. "Don't be silly, Margot. A little thing like that doesn't affect the annual meeting."

"Maybe not," she said, "but it could. I've worked for him a long time. I know that small personal things affect him more than almost anything. He's quite sensitive that way. So is she. About things like Mr. Burrell's not coming today."

"You think Harry cared about that?"

"Do you imagine that he didn't?"

Jeremy didn't argue. He went back to the other point: "I planned on our having dinner by ourselves."

"We can do that tomorrow."

"But I planned on tonight," he thought stubbornly. He felt as if he were breaking a promise. "Why don't we just duck out now?" he said to her. "They haven't said anything to me about staying on. Let's go."

"Jerry, how could I?"

He didn't know how she could. It wasn't polite. It wasn't reasonable. But if she only would, if he could get her to come out with him into that night with the excited stars, as Gail had said, if they could run away and settle this and prove to each other what came first—

"I'll be back in just a minute," said Margot.

The crowd was thinning out. Jeremy stayed where Margot had left him. He did not see Nina Montgomery until she spoke:

"Aren't you Jeremy Troy?"

"Yes, I am. How are you, Mrs. Montgomery?"

"I didn't know you were here. It was the likeness to Heath that made me recognize you. Though you don't really look like him. Perhaps it's mannerisms, the way you were standing there. I do recognize you now. The boy isn't quite lost in the man."

"You were very kind to the boy. I remember that," said Jeremy.

Her voice and face built up the memory. It was associated with trust, fun. He had gone with her—

"We went to the zoo," she said.

"That's right. It was a wonderful day."

"It was for me, too. You were such a brave child and you looked so puzzled. There's still a trace of that, you know, though you must understand now all the things you couldn't be told at the

MADE a tweezer with a built-in magnifying glass that enlarges tiny splinters, burrs, hangnails, blackheads, and other objects to three times ordinary size, so you can see and pluck them readily.

CONCOCTED a new chemical jell that cleans your iron when you need it—while it's hot. Rubbed on with an old Turkish towel, it gets rid of dirt, soil, and starch so the iron glides instead of drags.

MADE wallpaper in squares, instead of rolls, to simplify your paper hanging. The 14-x-14-inch squares are designed so they need no matching or trimming, and the seams are almost impossible to detect.

DEVELOPED a new cleaning paper said to halve cleaning time for windows, tile, and porcelain, and to avoid lint, streaks, or film. The paper sheet is chemically treated for strength and absorbency, and a ripple finish supplies traction to carry away dirt without leaving streaks or lint.

BROUGHT OUT a glue pen which leaves a dot of adhesive when you press it to any surface. A replaceable cartridge in the pen provides 5,000 dots. The new invisible glue is waterproof, and is said to hold immediately.

MARKETED a tiny tape message repeater—a box about the size of a Brownie camera—that will speak to everyone who passes near it. In addition to many commercial uses, it can be used in the home to deliver messages from one member of the family to another, such as, "Dad, I'm over at Grandma's. You'll find some cold meat in the icebox—and, Junior, don't forget to take your medicine!" New messages can be recorded instantaneously to replace the old ones.

PRODUCED a tiny magnet you can slip onto the barrel of any mechanical pencil to turn it into a magnetic one. Result: You can keep a pencil always handy on cabinets, car dashboard, workbench, typewriter, and near the telephone—wherever there's a magnetic metal surface.

DEVELOPED a new liquid cleaner for silverware said to remove tarnish in seconds without rubbing. You dip the silver in, rinse, and that's all. The cleaner is also claimed to be nonpoisonous, nonflammable, completely safe.

MADE lamp shades with real heather, grass, or leaves sandwiched between translucent plastic sheets. As light filters softly through, it illuminates the fine tracings of stalks and leaves, offering interesting effects.

PRODUCED a liquid said to make ivy, philodendron, and other hard-surfaced leaf plants lustrous and dust-resistant for life when you dab it on once. It's said to aid plant growth by preventing dust-clogged pores.

BROUGHT OUT, to solve the Christmas-gift-wrapping problem, a dispenser that contains 10 spools of ribbons (210 feet) in a variety of colors and patterns. There are slots in the box through which the ribbon from each spool can be threaded for ease of handling.

DEVISED a photo dater that fits readily on any camera and prints the date on the upper left-hand corner of the negative at the same time that you shoot your picture.

CONCOCTED a new rust preventive you can spray or brush on new or rusted metal. Combining a cold galvanization process with the base metal, the coating prevents rust. It requires no previous treatment of iron or steel, gives a dull battleship-gray finish, and can be used as a prime coat for decorative paint. It's recommended for preserving leaders, gutters, pipes, and iron fences.

LAWRENCE GALTON

Names and addresses of inventors and manufacturers of items mentioned in these columns will be sent to any reader who requests them. Mail your inquiries, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to Now They've Done It, The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N.Y.

time. Let me see. You must be—thirty?"

"Exactly."

"Is the lovely blond girl your wife?"

"No," said Jeremy, "I'm not married, Mrs. Montgomery."

"Not yet? Not even a failure to your credit?"

He smiled and shook his head. "Is it a fault?"

"Now you sound like your uncle. Of course, it's a fault. Young men should marry before thirty. Unless you have given your emotions to a church or some great cause—"

"I'm afraid I haven't done that."

"Then why haven't you a wife? Do you mind if I ask you?"

"I don't mind at all. I don't really know. I was in the war. Then I had to make good on a job."

"Those are no reasons."

"Well, perhaps nobody wanted me."

"Don't talk like Heath," said Nina Montgomery. "Of course, this is none of my business," she went on, "but I never let that fact stop me any more. I've ceased long since to be interested in my own business."

"Please go on being interested in mine," said Jeremy. "I wish you'd tell me why you feel so strongly about this. Why should young men marry?"

"How strange— I don't think I've ever answered that in so many words. No one ever asked me point-blank. But I think I can answer. Because if they don't marry they miss the deepest joy and the worst pain and the greatest comfort and the most real fear—which is, of course, fear for someone loved—and because their capacities for all those things will wither if they don't."

Someone called impatiently, "Nina, we're going," and she laid her hand on Jeremy's shoulder in accent or apology and went across the room in a swift, graceful walk. Now the room was empty except for Jeremy. The last guests were being sped on their way by Harry and Lorna Pidgeon in the hall. . . .

In the kitchen Minnie Carroll looked at her swollen left ankle.

"It always gets like that," she said, "and it will be worse by the end of the holidays. Night after night there's parties. Of course, some of them aren't so big. But there's Mr. Heath Troy's party, and he always has to have everything just exactly the way he wants it, and the Angels' Dance on the twenty-fourth—I always have to help the girls at the club—and then the big Burrell party on New Year's Eve. I never could turn down the Burrells; they've been too good to me. And I suppose, with Gail back now, they'll have a bigger party than ever. Not that she'd care, but her mother would. She'd love to see that girl married."

"How old is she?" asked the Pidgeons' housemaid.

"Gail will be twenty-six in April," Minnie stated definitely.

"Funny she hasn't got herself a man, with all that money and such a beautiful home—"

"It's because she'll never go after them," said Minnie. "She was always like that. Not exactly shy, but a proud

little piece. She'd make a lovely wife for some man, if they only knew it, and a true one. I thought when I saw her standing there with young Mr. Troy, the nephew—"

"He's going to marry Mr. Pidgeon's secretary," said the housemaid. "I heard them talking about it at the table one night. Didn't she look just beautiful today?"

"So that's the way the land lies," Minnie said with interest. "Well, his uncle stayed out of the marriage business entirely, though there was a time when I thought he was caught. But that's neither here nor there. I'll go along now and Mrs. Pidgeon can send me my check. You might hint to her that for a party like this she should have a few more silver platters for the appetizers. But it went all right. She had a nice party," Minnie finished, with some reservation in her tone. . . .

LORNA PIDGEON was looking at herself in one of the Venetian mirrors that the room featured since it had been last redecorated. She was thinking that this was the way she had looked that afternoon to the more than two hundred guests, and it pleased her. She liked her own style of make-up and clothes. The glossy auburn hair was licked back to a taffy-like swirl, and the green, slightly protruding eyes and very red mouth were accented by the pallor of her skin.

She asked, "Who was the stunning woman with the Dunlops?"

Margot told her, "Mrs. Darius Montgomery. She's just come back from Europe to visit her relatives."

"Who did she use to be?"

Now Jeremy answered: "Her name was Nina Wales." He couldn't have told her a minute before. He had just remembered the name and a little more.

"But our Margot was the girl who made the real hit," said Harry Pidgeon.

His wife did not say anything, which was one way of making her husband feel that he had gone far enough. Lorna was sick to death of Margot Tapley and her beauty-contest face. She wanted it out of Harry's office. Lorna had not wanted her here today. But Harry had made a point of it. He had said that Margot was going to marry Jeremy Troy, that Jeremy would have Harry's old spot after the company was reorganized and he, himself, took over the presidency of the company. Harry had said that as a pair they could be very useful to him, loyal, and influential, too, with Heath Troy.

That had made sense to Lorna. She had invited Margot. But she wished, if Jeremy Troy were going to marry the girl, they would announce it. Then when Harry got to be president he would have a man secretary.

"Where was Mr. Burrell?" she asked.

The geniality on Harry's face faded. "Yes, I wondered where the old man was, myself," he said, pretending a chuckle. "I guess he couldn't take it. He's probably seen the handwriting on the wall."

But it had spoiled the party for Harry Pidgeon. Under all his bluff cordiality, his hearty welcomes, the stimulus of giving hospitality to important people, he had been conscious that he was being ignored by one man. Publicly. Harry had been bitterly disappointed ever since Mrs. Burrell came in alone.

It meant resistance, and Harry Pidgeon didn't want that. He was sure that he would have enough votes to put over the reorganization, to be elected president of Liberty Metals and ease Theodore Burrell upstairs to the position of chairman of the board. But he had a deep respect, financial, social, almost physical, for Mr. Burrell. He had an inferiority complex in his presence, dating back a long way to the days when he had been a raw young salesman and Mr. Burrell had taken over the presidency of the company from his wife's father. It was the inferiority complex that smarted again tonight.

"Maybe he was ill," suggested Lorna.

"He was fit as a fiddle this morning," Harry answered. "Well, I know one party that Ted Burrell will attend, and it's coming on the second of January. The annual meeting. He may not altogether enjoy that one."

"Don't talk about that now, Harry," said his wife, "and let's get started if we're going to the club."

"But I'll tell you this, boy," he said to Jeremy, "you're going to be all right. You're going to be taken care of. I told your uncle that this afternoon. Heath's a good friend of mine. Tell me, why didn't he ever get married?"

Jeremy said that he really didn't know.

"Probably he's got compensations," remarked Harry, "but that's no good for a young man in business, Jeremy. Mind that. If a man wants to get ahead he needs a wife to back him up. Companies like their executives to be married—if they have the right kind of wives. Isn't that right, Margot?"

Margot was trying not to hear him. She said, at his insistence, "I wouldn't know, Mr. Pidgeon."

"We're late, now, Harry!" said his wife almost fiercely. "Come, Margot; let's get our coats."

SHE went impatiently out of the room and Margot followed.

Harry looked sheepish. He said, "Lorna thinks I talk too much. She thinks I favor Margot. But I have a feeling of responsibility toward that girl. And I've come to rely on her judgment in many ways. I'd certainly feel lost for a while without her—not that I'd ever want to stand in her way." He stopped talking and took some time to light a cigar.

Jeremy could guess that Harry Pidgeon was reminding himself not to go too far in conversation with a subordinate, and retracing what he had said already.

He said, at length, in a quite different tone, "Of course, I have the highest regard for Mr. Burrell. Don't ever misunderstand me on that, Jeremy. And I suppose he has come to the point where he wants to slow down a little. Nobody can take these parties day after day at his age."

"I was surprised that his daughter is so young," said Jeremy, shifting the subject of conversation.

"They'd been married quite some years before she came along. I think they'd stopped hoping. I remember it was quite an event. Ted Burrell stepped into a very nice thing when he married the boss's daughter. But I don't know. Myself, I'd sooner have a smart girl who could help me make my own way." He clapped Jeremy on the shoulder and said, "Our Margot's a better bet than any of them. You can go to the top with a girl like that. And enjoy it all the way."

There was something a little wistful in Harry's last statement. Jeremy could feel his own emotions take cover, determined not to be drawn into open expression by Harry Pidgeon. He didn't want anyone appraising what he could gain by marrying Margot. Of course, she was clever. But that wasn't what mattered. If the two of them could break away now—but they could not.

Lorna Pidgeon and Margot came back. Jeremy gave Margot one pleading and suggestive glance but her eyes answered, laughingly, "What else can we do but go with them?"

THE club was crowded. It was nine o'clock when they began to eat food without appetite for it, and after eleven when Jeremy hurried Margot into the foyer of the apartment house where she lived.

"Can't I come up with you?"

"It's pretty late. The walls are so thin. If anyone should hear a man's voice in my room at this time of night they might criticize."

"It's none of their business," said Jeremy, with relief in making that statement at long last.

"I know. I just don't want to get put out or have anyone write letters about my character to my boss," she said lightly.

She wasn't shy. She was being sensible. He knew that. Jeremy, too, had made it a habit to avoid compromising situations. Long ago his uncle had warned him; it was almost instinct now. But this was different.

"There were so many things I wanted to talk about tonight," he told her, "and then we had to get involved with the Pidgeons."

"But they really did want us. And she was nice to have me there today. Were you a little proud of me, Jerry?"

"I am always proud of you," said Jeremy, looking down into her lovely face. But before he could take possession of it, a middle-aged man and woman came into the lobby and crossed it slowly, with side glances of interest at the young couple. They rang for the elevator but it seemed to be stuck somewhere.

"I'd better go along," said Jeremy.

"It's been a wonderful day." Margot's eyes were shining as she said it, and his disappointment lifted.

"Nothing to the days that are coming," he promised.

"I know. I'm so excited about going to the party you and your uncle are giving."

"Be excited about me."

"I am. You know, Jerry, all afternoon I've been thinking about things I know I could do—sort of dreaming about us—"

"Keep dreaming, won't you?"

"I will. Even if I can't sleep—"

The middle-aged woman was only pre-

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tending not to watch them. Jeremy didn't want a witness to the kind of kiss he longed for, so he went away without it. . . .

December was a busy month for Liberty Metals. For Jeremy, who was preparing a consolidated report on sales in the various divisions, work did not let up even on the morning before Christmas. He looked in at Harry Pidgeon's office when he came back from a quick lunch, for a double reason.

Harry Pidgeon was not there. He was difficult to reach during the past few days, and apparently was in constant conferences elsewhere. If Margot knew where they were, she did not tell. She was setting her own desk in order, and the stenographers had already gone.

"He's not here. Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes, but I'll tell you about that later," said Jeremy.

She smiled but did not blush. Margot never blushed in the office, no matter what anyone said to her.

"When are you through today?" asked Jeremy.

"Pretty soon. Mr. Pidgeon isn't coming back."

"Then let's do something."

"I can't, Jerry. I have a fitting 'way uptown. And later I have to get my hair done."

"When will you be through?"

"Not before seven. They can't take me until four. And afterward I have to go out to the Pidgeons' with a present I have for Lorna. Two Venetian-glass figures that hold cigarettes. They will be just right with those mirrors of hers. They practically bankrupted me, but I felt I had to give her something really good. Don't you want to come along?"

Jeremy frowned. "No thanks. I don't feel like Lorna on Christmas Eve."

"I'm sorry, Jerry. But I do have to—"

"I may have to work right through, anyway. I'm not cleaned up yet."

"And you'll come out tomorrow?"

"You can't keep me away."

"Tell me, Jerry, what kind of dress should I wear to your uncle's party?"

"Anything. You know a lot more about it than I do."

"Not a dinner dress?"

"I think I'd hold it down. You can dress up New Year's Eve."

"For what?"

"I want you to go to the Burrells' party with me."

"I haven't been asked."

"You will be. It'll be all right." He wanted her to share that party with him. He wanted to take the taste of the frustrating Pidgeon affair out of his mind. Jeremy would have liked to take Margot to the Angels' Dance tonight, but that couldn't be done. It was a subscription dance given by a group of local girls, and though he had been asked, he wouldn't be welcome with a girl who was not a hostess. He did not mention it to Margot.

Back at his own desk, he worked until three o'clock, when the lack of a stenographer stalled him completely. He gave up and went out into the unnaturally quiet building and was the only passenger in the elevator run by the one-legged operator, whom he had already tipped for Christmas. When he got off on the main floor he bumped into a girl almost hidden behind a large package, and then recognized Gail Burrell.

"Hello," he said in surprise.

"Merry Christmas."

"You certainly look like it."

"I'm out delivering presents," said Gail.

She turned to the elevator man and gave him the gay bundle.

"Well, bless your heart, Miss Gail. You've never forgotten me, not even the years you were over the water."

"I missed you, Pete. Have a good Christmas. There's something in that box for your wife, too."

"May God love you for that!"

Jerry had waited to swing the entrance door out for her. "You certainly made his Christmas for him."

"Pete's my friend. He used to give me rides when I came down to the office to see Father when I was small. And he let me feel his wooden leg. He's had such dreadful breaks. Losing his leg in the first war and his son in the second."

"I didn't know that."

"And his wife went queer. He had to put her in an institution. He goes to see her every Sunday and every holiday. He simply adores her."

She was walking across the sidewalk to her car and her talk carried him with her. Jeremy could see the back seat piled high with packages.

"You should have a couple of reindeer," he said, "with that load."

"Don't you want to come along and be a reindeer?"

"You don't mean that."

"Well, I didn't, but I could. If you'd like to. Father used to come with me, but today he seemed too tired. I didn't urge him." For a second her voice held concern, and then she asked, "But haven't you other things to do?"

"Not a thing. My girl's at the beauty parlor. By the way, would it be all right to bring her to your party on New Year's Eve?"

"Why, of course. That very lovely-looking girl who was with you the other day? I hope you will. Are you really coming with me?"

"On our way," he said, closing the door behind him. "Call me Blitzen."

"Then here's the list. This was my first stop. What's next?"

"The Magdalen Home?"

"Right. That's out toward the valley, and then we can curve back through the West Side."

"Is this an annual business?" he asked as they approached the home for delinquent girls.

"Mother sends them things every year. Song books and boxes of candy. And they love nylons, so I stick in a pair for each of the girls."

Jeremy felt rather embarrassed carrying in the big decorated box. But ridiculously satisfied with himself when he was back in the car with Gail. The gratitude in the sweet face of the nun who took the package, the sight of the clean, bare hall decorated with pine boughs, and the awareness of the girls who were paying for careless passions and too credulous love had touched his emotions. Even carrying in that package made him feel the pleasure of leaving happiness where it was badly needed, along with a shame that he had passed this building hundreds of times and never given its inmates a thought.

"I wish you could have seen the babies," said Gail; "they're mostly so beautiful!"

He thought, "If you like them so much, you ought to be having some of your own."

The next stop was at a cheerful little bungalow where several small children were trimming a tree. Before he left, Jeremy had hung a battered angel on the very tip, because he was tall enough to reach it. He found himself ringing doorbells on streets he had never seen before, in the next hour. Wreaths on doors and strings of lights on doors began to appear in the dusk, and decorated trees showed behind the windows of very small homes or in the upper windows of boardinghouses.

"It's so exciting," said Gail; "you can feel the waiting, the expectation. It's usually like that in a house when a baby is born, but all homes are waiting for this birth. It's so curiously synchronized."

"I like this girl," thought Jeremy. "I want Margot to know her."

They had stopped before a square white house, small and respectable. "This is where Minnie lives," Gail said. "You know Minnie, who goes around to parties."

"Sure; she's a pal of mine. What is this? A bomb?"

"It's a heat lamp. Her feet swell. It might help, after trotting around for hours with *canapés*."

He presented it to Minnie. "It's from Miss Burrell, who's out in the car. She wanted me to wish you a very Merry Christmas and to tell you that she'll see you New Year's Eve."

"Why, it's Mr. Troy!"

"Yes, I'm helping Santa Claus. Merry Christmas, Minnie."

"And the same to you."

He was showered with good wishes. He felt good will clinging to him as he fished out the presents from the diminishing pile on the car seat.

Gail Burrell said suddenly, "This is the kind of thing that makes me glad to be home."

"I wondered about that the other day. You spoke with so much enthusiasm about Paris."

"It was hard to come away. To leave people."

He thought, "There would always be people a girl like you would hate to leave. A man, I suppose, that you couldn't bring back with you."

"Why did you come home?" he said.

"Because of Mother. Well, because of both of them, though it's Mother who has a little something wrong with her.

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Nothing too serious, but it could be. At first I thought I wouldn't come—you know, the right-to-live-your-own-life theory—but I couldn't make it stick. It wasn't," Gail Burrell said with slow frankness, "as if I were necessary over there. Not to anyone. . . . Where do we go from here? Oak Boulevard? I'll have to go in there myself."

This stop was before a big house, iron-fenced for the stretch of a half-block, dark except for the dreary formality of two lights flanking the iron door. But Gail stayed there longer than she had at any other place where they had called.

When she finally came out and started the car, her face was preoccupied almost to sadness. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting so long," she told Jeremy, "but it was hard to get away. I went to school with that girl. I was one of her bridesmaids. She was desperate to talk to someone. Isn't divorce a horrid sight?"

The words reopened memory. "Yes," said Jeremy, "I know from experience."

"Then you can guess what this was like. She hates to let him go. She keeps blaming him, arguing, missing the point."

"What is the point?"

"It was never a good marriage. Her husband was ambitious and wanted someone to make a home for him, be a handsome hostess, do him credit. Now, of course, he's found someone who is handsomer and can do him still more credit! But it is her fault, too. She married him because she wanted to be married and have a home of her own."

"And you don't think those are good reasons?"

She turned her head in a quick gesture of astonishment. "Do you?"

"They're practical, at any rate," Jeremy said. "It seems to me that they make sense."

"But love doesn't make sense."

"It should, in marriage anyway."

"It doesn't," Gail said firmly. "It's the tenderest thing in the world and the most cruel. I've seen it both ways. It can't help what it does. I've seen women stay by men who seemed worse than no good to them, and men stay by women who don't pretend to be loyal. I knew a man in Paris whose career is almost certain to be handicapped by the way he feels about a selfish woman—"

Gail hesitated for a moment before going on. "But he's completely bound. Not so much by his marriage as by the way he loves her. He might leave her—he probably will—but he'll go back to her. Or want to. And how can anyone possibly interfere with a person who cares so much for someone else? What could anyone else give him that would be as important?"

"This is the man she cared for," thought Jeremy. "And she's been working it out, herself. It must have been hard."

Gail continued, "Look at old Pete hobbling out to see his wife every Sunday. I don't pity him as much as I pity that friend of mine, walking up and down the empty rooms in that house, counting up all the things she did for him and wondering why she can't make it add up to love."

"I saw that kind of bitterness," Jeremy said, "in my own family. For a long time I was afraid of marriage."

"But you aren't now?"

"I don't think so."

"She's beautiful," said Gail. "What I like about you is that you haven't let them make you marry anyone else. From what I hear, they tried pretty hard. I'm glad you waited to fall in love."

"Gail, tell me, how does a man know when he's in love? I mean, for sure?"

"You know better than I do. If it had been the real thing with me, I couldn't have come home," she said, and she sounded as if it still hurt. Then quickly, before he could find any comfort for her, "Haven't we one more present to deliver?"

He looked at the list. "It says, the Bunce girls. On Wendell Street.

"They're very old friends," she explained. "When I was an unpopular little girl and didn't get asked to parties I used to plan to be just like the Bunces, a wonderful old maid. They are confident and elegant and they have fun. You must meet them."

It was a shabby room into which Gail ushered Jeremy, but, as she had told him, there was a gleam of elegance about it and its occupants. They were three women, all beyond middle age, one still pretty. They looked like lean birds in their nest of old furniture, and he guessed that the pretty one, who spoke of her work, probably supported the others. A small table-tree was trimmed with old German ornaments which must have been bought forty years before. Gail delighted in it and hung their presents on its branches with bits of gold cord.

Jeremy entered the room self-consciously. He felt that these old maids would make romantic speculations about Gail and himself. But if they did, they did not embarrass him. The talk was witty and intelligent. When Gail said that they must go, Jeremy was almost regretful.

"Is it all right if I send them some roses for Christmas?" he asked Gail afterward.

"Do that. Great, big, lavish ones," she said, "the kind that men must have sent them when they were young."

"Didn't any of them marry?"

"The oldest is a widow. The pretty one had dozens of offers, my mother says, but evidently not the right one. I love the way they live. It may look old-fashioned but it feels modern. No hangdog attitude about being unmarried. It's a good example."

"Who for?"

"For me."

"Nonsense. You'll pick a man before long."

She shook her head. "Men have to do the picking or it's no good."

"Then put it that way. Some man will pick you."

"It isn't likely. Most men want girls who can do things that I'm no good at doing. Like keeping themselves beautiful, and helping men to get ahead in business by asking the right people to dinner."

"You'd want to do those things if you cared for a man. You'd soon learn."

"I wouldn't try," she said, her voice stubborn. "I might not like the people who would help my husband in business. I might not like his job or his ambitions. I'd hate to pretend or connive."

"Men have to earn a living. They need a little help from a woman."

"I could help with that if I had to."

"You're a funny girl, Gail."

"You're quoting," she said with a laugh. "Now, where do I take you? Have you a car parked somewhere?"

"In the Liberty Building lot. But don't drive me back if you're in a hurry."

"I'll be glad to. It delays the time when I have to go home and do battle."

"About what?"

"The Angels' Dance. Mother will want me to go. I'm supposed to be one of the hostesses."

"You don't like to dance?" he asked her.

"I love it," she said cheerfully. "But you have to have someone to dance with."

He said quickly, "I would like it very much if you would go with me, Gail."

She turned her eyes toward him to see if he were joking. "You have a girl at the beauty parlor."

"But I haven't a date with her tonight. She has something else to do."

"Listen," said Gail Burrell; "it was all right for you to be a reindeer. But I won't ask you to be a gigolo."

"Don't say that. It's been the best Christmas Eve I can remember. So far."

"You can't mean it."

"I do. It's been great fun knocking at doors and looking in windows with you. I'm full of Christmas spirit now. Can't we finish the day together with a dance or two?"

"It would make Mother so happy if I

"That'll be fine . . . It's just for a gift"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY JAM

went to the dance," said Gail frankly. "Are you really free tonight? Are you sure your girl won't mind?"

That was how it happened that, at the traditional Angels' Dance, Minnie Carroll saw something that delighted her. She was helping to set out the buffet supper in the dining room of the Valley Club, where the dance was always held, and had worked her way around to the door of the ballroom. It was a pretty sight, for the decorations were, as always, white and silver, and all the hostesses wore white. They seemed to be dancing in a snowfall. Minnie's eyes grew sentimental, and then widened to surprise. For she saw Jeremy Troy dancing with Gail Burrell.

"Gail has her beauty hours," thought Minnie, "and certainly she's light on her feet. And he came to my house this afternoon with her, just like one of the family. I hope he's not trying to fool her. Gail hurts so easy." . . .

Heath Troy had never been more meticulous about the arrangements for his holiday party. He had personally supervised every detail today. The copper chafing dishes which he had bought in Europe were ready for the cheese fondue which was always served on this occasion, in spite of the fact that Minnie Carroll said it was more trouble than making a dozen kinds of fancy *canapés*. The big, sophisticated rooms of the apartment were somewhat rearranged to accommodate Heath's guests, but their personality was carefully retained.

Minnie told Gibson, the houseman who had worked for Heath for many years, "He's never been so particular."

"No slapdash around here, Minnie, at any time."

"I always say that a man shows his age when he fusses. But maybe it's because Mrs. Montgomery will be coming and he wants to show her how nice he has everything. I always wondered why those two—"

"You have no time to be wondering now," said Gibson shortly.

In Heath Troy's apartment the wraps of guests were not tossed in heaps upon the furniture in the bedrooms. A maid ranged them on aluminum racks which had been bought for the purpose and were stored away between parties. The maid lifted Margot Tapley's nutria coat from her shoulders and hung it beside Nina Montgomery's pale mink jacket.

Margot touched her hair and memorized the furnishings of the powder room. She had always heard that this was the most beautiful apartment in the city. Now she had been here. Her standards went up another notch. This was much finer than Lorna Pidgeon's house, thought Margot, realizing the effectiveness of a Degas print hung by itself on a colorless wall. She made up her mind to have something like that in a house of her own. Some day. Jerry, she knew, couldn't afford anything like this place for a long while. But he had it in him to succeed. And he had the right connections. All Jerry needed was somebody to push him. She went to look for him.

He had been taken over in the long

IT'S THE LAW!

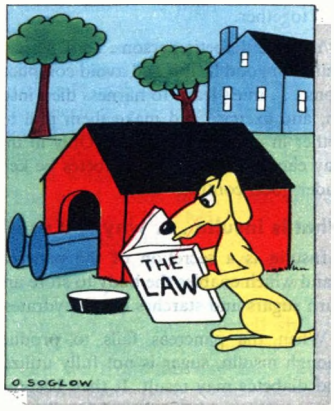
by Dick Hyman

ILLUSTRATED BY O. SOGLOW

Tennessee prohibits driving tacks in telephone poles

Serenading your girl-friend is illegal in Kalamazoo, Mich.

It is against the law to fish through ice in Kansas



In Wallace, Idaho, it is unlawful to sleep in a dog kennel

Has your state or town some curious law or ordinance? If so, send it to "It's the Law!" The American Magazine, 640 Fifth Ave., New York 19, N.Y. We will pay $5 for each acceptable contribution. None can be returned.

drawing room by Mrs. Burrell. She was doing the talking, and it was obvious that Jeremy could not interrupt nor leave her without rudeness at the moment. He did not see Margot come into the room, and she stood a little withdrawn from the intimate groupings of other guests, outwardly a serene and beautiful Cinderella, but with apprehension in her heart.

She knew, because Jeremy had told her, that he had taken Gail Burrell to the Angels' Dance. Because her mother wanted Gail to go and she didn't have anyone to take her, he had explained to Margot, with entire truth. Margot did not say much about it, except to ask if all the girls really did wear white dresses. But she had not forgotten it for a second since he told her.

The competition of beautiful girls did not frighten her. She knew that Jerry liked her all the better for not being a girl brought up in luxury. But how did a girl like herself compete with Mrs. Burrell, the wife of the president of the company, an old woman, who had the advantages of money and houses and parties and position to help her get what she wanted? Of course, Mrs. Burrell would want Jeremy if her daughter didn't have a man.

Harry Pidgeon, his effusiveness held in check today on Lorna's advice, but looking substantial and successful, came up to Margot.

"The best-looking girl in the room can't be standing here by herself," he said. "Where's that young man of yours?"

"Over there. But what makes you say he's mine?" she asked.

"You know I'm just waiting for the announcement. I thought you might come out with it on Christmas Eve at our house, but Jerry didn't turn up."

"No, he couldn't come," she said. "I found out next day that he had to take Gail Burrell to a dance that night."

"The Burrell girl? You're joking."

"I didn't think it was a joke. But it wasn't Jerry's idea. Her mother wanted him to do it. I suppose he didn't feel that he could refuse."

"Well!" said Harry explosively. "That's a surprise."

He followed the direction of her glance and saw that now Mr. Burrell had joined his wife and they were both talking cordially to Jeremy. Harry's face hardened. "Where's the girl?" he asked.

"Maybe she leaves it to her parents. Don't they do that in Europe?"

"I don't understand. What's the matter with Jerry?"

"He's just being polite to the president of the company." She looked at Harry then, and said quickly, "I shouldn't have said anything. I shouldn't have bothered you."

"Yes, you should. This could upset the whole applecart," said Harry grimly. "Keep smiling, and leave this to me." . . .

Heath Troy was occupied in keeping his party at the right tempo, not too fast, not too slow. He conducted it as if he were an orchestra leader. No one liked his own parties better than Heath Troy, and this one had a special orchestration because Nina Wales was here today, the only woman who had ever destroyed his defenses and broken through his guard. She had never told that, as other women would. Sometimes he almost believed it was the other way about, as it usually was with him—that he had been the one who wouldn't risk it.

He saw Nina coming toward him. "She's definitely getting older," he told himself. "She's very handsome but not the beauty she used to be."

"Is everything all right?" he asked.

"You know that better than anyone. You must be almost happy, Heath."

"Isn't that good enough?"

"You tried to make me believe so once. I'm still unconvinced. But tell me about Jeremy."

"He's a good lad. With some of his father's terrible reasonableness. He takes himself very seriously."

"Has he been in love?"

"Many times, I suppose. He's played around for years."

"Then he hasn't. There's no such thing as being in love many times."

"Out of considerable experience, I might differ with you."

"You might," she said, "but I would still be right."

He knew she was. She was the only woman who had ever had a chance to humiliate him by refusing to marry him. The one woman separate from the rest.

"The Tapley girl is very beautiful," said Nina, "but Jeremy troubles me. You brought him up badly, Heath. You must have frightened him."

"I haven't seen any special fear in him. He did very well in the war."

"I'm sure he would, born of his father. But he's afraid of his feelings, I think. Just as you were."

"Those things you always imagined—" he said impatiently.

"The things I knew," she said, "and felt." She laid a thin hand on his arm tenderly. "It's only once, Heath, believe me."

SHE moved away, leaving him, as she had always left him, helplessly torn between anger and yearning. But he tightened up quickly, for he saw Theodore Burrell approaching the corner where he had been talking with Nina.

"You're giving us a very pleasant afternoon, Heath."

"Thank you."

"Always delightful to be here. I've been wanting to have a word with you, Heath. About the annual meeting."

"Yes," said Heath Troy, wishing that Ted Burrell hadn't brought that up during the party. "Next week, isn't it?"

"On the second. To tell you the truth, there's an element in the corporation that I find disturbing. The plain fact is that our friend Harry Pidgeon is getting too big for his boots."

"He seems to be a valuable man," said Heath Troy uncomfortably. "At least, so they tell me. We're making money, and I understand he's put on the steam."

"He's all right where he is now," said Mr. Burrell. "Actually, it would be hard to replace him."

"I understood that Pidgeon thinks Jeremy might step in there."

"Your nephew?" The question was still with surprise. That was a rumor which Mr. Burrell had not heard. "I'm afraid he's too young, Heath."

"These boys catch up with us," said Heath. "All the big companies are putting in younger men. It's the modern idea, and maybe there's something to it. Excuse me, Ted, we'll talk about this again."

They might have been affably discussing the weather, from the composure with which they parted. But Mr. Burrell was not deceived. Heath Troy, on whose backing he had relied, was on the other side in the matter of reorganization. Harry Pidgeon had bribed him with the offer of a big job for his nephew, thought the president of the company. That fellow who took Gail out the other night. Young upstart!

But looking across the room at the tall dignity of his superior, Harry Pidgeon didn't feel adequate, in spite of knowing he had the majority of the directors back of him. And there was this funny business about Jeremy Troy.

The Month's AMERICAN Short Novel
begins on page 42

Jeremy wasn't thinking about his job, present or future. He was keeping an eye out for Gail Burrell. She hadn't come today and he was a little disappointed, for he had planned to show her, by perfect friendliness, that there was nothing else in his mind. While they were dancing the other night he might have given her the wrong idea. She was a beautiful dancer. People were affected by music, especially girls. What was it she had said? "Do you know it, too, Jeremy?" But it probably didn't mean anything. Strange that she wasn't here. Her parents were. . . . But here she was, after all!

NO HAT today, not even the beret. Her impudent brown hair was brushed up out of her way and she wore a simple gray wool dress.

"My very dear Gail," said his uncle, "but how chic you are today!"

"But I am never chic," she said, with that lift of the chin which went with her laughter. "I am sorry to be late at this very cream of parties but I've been finding me a job. I am going to start the smallest travel agency in the whole world!"

"Good girl," said Nina Montgomery;

NAME-O-GRAMS

By Boris Randolph

EACH given name below can be changed into another given name, male or female, by simply rearranging the letters. How many of them can you find? Answers appear on page 79.

1. ARNOLD _____
2. ELAINE _____
3. LENA _____
4. DOROTHEA _____
5. ELMER _____
6. CLARA _____
7. ALAN _____
8. ALICE _____
9. JASON _____
10. MARY _____
11. ANN _____
12. DOLLY _____
13. ELSIE _____
14. LEON _____
15. JANE _____
16. MARCEL _____
17. ABEL _____
18. CARLO _____
19. MAY _____
20. SHEILA _____

"you have one client already. I'm going next week."

Gail spoke to Jeremy as she passed him. What had he thought she was going to say except hello? That was all right. It was the casual way she said it that seemed almost rude and forgetful. Had the fun they had together gone completely out of her mind?

Gail stopped by Margot, as if she had been looking for her. "Thank you for lending me Jeremy the other night," she said.

"You needn't thank me," began Margot.

"I wanted to. And I'm so glad that Jeremy's bringing you to the house on New Year's Eve. He promised me that he would."

Mrs. Burrell had not intended that invitation. She looked annoyed as she heard Gail give it. . . .

THREE days later, on the Friday that was New Year's Eve, Lucy Burrell went into her husband's dressing room. It was nearly time for their guests to arrive. Mr. Burrell, almost dressed, was reading a news magazine.

He said, "All set for the deluge?"

"Yes," she said almost indifferently, "but, Ted, I want to talk to you before anyone comes. About Gail. I think she is in love."

He chuckled. "You women are always thinking that. Well, let her work it out. She will. Who is it?"

"It's Jeremy Troy."

"But she's only been home two weeks. How long has this been going on?"

"That doesn't matter. It wouldn't matter with Gail if it were one day. She's like that. She ran into him first at the Pidgeons' party—"

"A week ago!"

"That makes no difference. They happened to meet on Christmas Eve—and they went to the dance. Ted, I saw her face when she came home. I knew the child was in love."

"Well," he said, "we can't do anything about that. It's a whole lot better than that Frenchman she liked."

"It's perfect," declared Mrs. Burrell. "He's a good young man. Heath's nephew. She'd live right here in town."

"Then what's the matter?"

"The child needs help, Ted. If you don't help, she'll lose him."

"I don't understand."

"It's that Tapley girl. And Harry Pidgeon and his wife. I hated to ask them, Ted, but I thought I should."

"You had to," said Burrell shortly.

"I don't know what's back of it. But you can see from the way they played her up at their party—and the other day, in Heath's apartment—that they want Jeremy to marry the Tapley girl."

"I suppose they do," said Mr. Burrell. "They can tie up Heath's influence through his nephew. And the girl is Pidgeon's secretary. It will give Harry Pidgeon more backing, as well as loyalty he can count on." He got up and walked the length of the dressing room. "But there's nothing I can do about it," he decided. "It's up to young Troy. As far as Gail goes, I think you're imagining something that doesn't exist."

"No. Even she may not know yet how she feels. But I do."

He tried to laugh at her. "Even if she did like the fellow, I can't tell him to break off with the secretary and fall in love with Gail. Don't be silly, Lucy."

"You could talk to him," she said, "as my father talked to you."

He looked at her. He had never known how much she knew about that. He said, "That was quite different. I was working for your father. And in love with you."

"You liked that girl at your boarding-house, too. Not me so much at the time. That came later. Ted, think of all we might have missed if my father hadn't talked to you—whatever he said. I'm so glad he did. And I can't bear to have Gail miss what we've had. Even though she is in love with this man, she'll never make an effort to get him."

"But, my heavens, Lucy, what could I say if I did talk to him?"

"I don't see why you couldn't advise him a little, in a friendly way, and say that you think it's a good thing for a young man who's making progress to be married, that his employers like it—"

"That's true enough."

"But you must make it clear that he can't marry the Tapley girl."

"Lucy, that's going too far. I couldn't interfere—"

"You could make it impersonal. Somehow. But so he would understand. It's for his own good. Jeremy Troy's attracted by Gail. He followed her around all Christmas Eve. Maybe it's a little difficult for you, but think of her happiness. It's all I want in this world—before I die—and you know I might—"

"Lucy, please. Don't get worked up. You'll be ill again. You have a big party on your hands. I tell you what I'll do. I'll call Troy into the office next week and have a talk with him."

"That might be too late," she protested. "It would be so easy tonight, and so natural. He's a young man and your guest. A few words would do it. You will?"

"Well," he said reluctantly, "I may talk to him a little. All right, Lucy, I will. But I'm not promising what I'll say."

HE DELAYED as long as he could, drawing on his coat slowly, straightening his tie without seeing it. The whir of conversation began at length to penetrate even his closed door. Ted Burrell went down to meet his guests with the fine manners and control that made Harry Pidgeon feel inferior.

At the foot of the staircase he saw his daughter and stopped her for inspection. "Dressed up to kill, aren't you? Is that Paris?"

"Yes. A girl I know designed it. Do you like it?"

He nodded, only noticing that it was red and looked like a big hair ribbon. He thought, "What happens to her tears us to pieces because she's the only one. If anything happened to her mother and me, Gail would be quite alone. In other countries parents arrange these things. . . . So Lucy knew that her father talked to me about marrying her. Of course, he'd sized me up pretty well by that time. But Jeremy Troy is a fine boy."

The house filled up with people. Cars debouched their passengers at the door where carriages had left guests fifty years ago, long before Lucy's father had talked young Burrell into marrying his daughter. The accumulation of years of friendship was here. There was room for everyone in the spacious rooms, and nearly everyone who came had been here before. Except Margot Tapley.

She had paid more than she could well afford for the dress, but she told

herself it was an investment. Its stiffened gold lamé swung away from her hips and did not touch her shoulders. Her beauty startled Jeremy when he called for her.

"Let me look at you," he exclaimed.

"Just look," she said; "don't touch."

"Do you really want to go to the Burrell party?"

"Why not? Gail Burrell asked—"

"I know, but we don't have to go. It might be more fun to be by ourselves tonight. We could drive around and talk about all the things we never get to talk about."

"In this costume?" she asked.

He said ruefully, "I suppose not. But, Margot, it seems to me that ever since that night at the Pidgeons' big party I've been off the beam. I know it's my own fault. But give me a little help, give me a little time. We're going into a new year, and we want to face up to what it may mean to us."

"It's all right," she thought. "They won't get him away from me now. Not the way I look tonight." For just a second she imagined yielding to his fumbling request to stay by themselves. But it would be absurd after what the dress had cost, and when they were asked to the most exclusive New Year's Eve party in the city.

"Come along and let's face it. I do want you to be proud of me tonight," she said. . . .

Looking around the rooms several hours later, Theodore Burrell saw the young man he was seeking. It was the pause between the reception and the buffet supper, and the greatly diminished number of guests was no longer so demanding on a host's attention.

"Well, young man, how are you getting on?"

"I'm having a wonderful time, sir."

"Do you happen to have seen my daughter?"

"I've only been lucky enough to get a glimpse of her."

This was starting well. Mr. Burrell suggested, "Come along with me, Jeremy, and I'll find you a cigar."

Jeremy followed him and found himself in the quiet of an old-fashioned library. Except for himself and his host the room was empty. Mr. Burrell took a deep chair on one side of the coal fire burning in a basket grate and indicated the other for Jeremy.

"How's the work going?" he asked.

"I hope it's going all right. I finished my report for the annual meeting."

THE thought of the annual meeting stabbed Burrell. He wondered how much this young man knew. He said, "I've been wanting to talk things over with you, Jeremy, for some time. I like a young man's point of view."

"It's certainly a privilege for me."

"Have you settled into the city pretty well?"

"I think so."

"Of course, I always say a man isn't really settled until he's married."

"Probably you're right, sir."

"Yes, most companies prefer their executives to be married. It makes for stability, continuity. I hope Heath hasn't

passed on his bachelor notions to you."

"I think that I have outgrown them, sir."

"Yes," said Mr. Burrell thoughtfully, as if figuring it out as he went along, "a young businessman is better off with a wife. His prospects are better. He has more chance of promotion. That is, if he has the right kind of wife. But, frankly, I always advise a young man to choose a wife outside of the business world."

"He's talking about Margot," Jeremy suddenly realized. "He's telling me not to marry her."

"These business girls are remarkable young women, but they aren't homemakers. And what a young man wants is a homemaker. That's always been true, and it always will be. My Gail takes after her mother that way."

THERE was a rustle, and Gail, her red taffeta stiff as a calyx, stood between them. Jeremy saw, as he stood up, that her face was deathly pale.

"What about Gail?" she demanded.

"I was just saying you were quite a housekeeper."

"I'm a sloven!" declared Gail. "I have no interest in that sort of thing!"

Her pale face turned to her father, who was trying to preserve some dignity.

She said, "And you are tactless, Father, and I make your apologies to Jeremy. Advising him not to marry a business girl, when he's engaged to the most beautiful one in the city."

"Not exactly engaged," said Jeremy.

"Well, maybe you should be!" exclaimed Gail. "Then other people wouldn't make mistakes about you!" Her voice suddenly broke into pieces of anger and pain and she went in flight from the room.

Mr. Burrell said stiffly, "I'm afraid Gail misunderstood me."

"I hope so," said Jeremy, in a hard, unsubservient voice, "and I feel that a man's marriage is his own business, sir. If any promotion the company might be inclined to give me is dependent on the wife I might have, or might not have, I don't want it. I don't want to be connected with such a company. A man has to choose his own happiness—or his own unhappiness, if that's what he wants. Good night, sir."

In the next room he drew a long breath of control and looked around. She was nowhere to be seen. Everyone had gone to the dining room, which was noisy with laughter. Only Harry Pidgeon was watching from the hall door.

He came up to Jeremy. "Having a private conference with the old man?"

"What of it?"

"I was interested—that was all. Getting pretty friendly with the Burrells lately, aren't you?"

Jeremy stared at him. "I don't know what you're insinuating."

"Trying to buy you for the girl, are they?"

Jeremy's fist went out, and the other man dodged.

"Hang on to yourself, you young fool. I don't want trouble here. But I'm going to tell you something. You can't be on both sides of this thing. I've been building you up, but you don't get any job from me if you play fast and loose with Margot Tapley. When she's Mrs. Jeremy Troy we'll talk about a job for you, and not till then. Understand?"

"I understood long ago," said Jerry, "and now you understand me. I'll marry when I please and the girl that I want, and it's none of your business. I haven't asked for any job from you and I don't want any. Now or after the second of January, either."

"What's wrong?" asked Margot, at his elbow. "Jerry, you look so queer!"

Harry Pidgeon said, "You take over, Margot. I told him what's what. You know what I mean." He swaggered toward the dining room.

Jerry said, "I don't know how to say this, Margot. But I realized that we've been making a mistake. I suppose we were pushed into this thing."

"What do you mean?"

"We're not in love with each other. We don't want to be married."

"But I do," she said. "I am."

"It's not love, Margot."

"Of course, I love you, Jerry. You're all excited. But we'll straighten it out. We must. I'll fix it with Harry. You let me handle him."

"No," said Jerry. "No, Margot, I don't want you to fix anything. Just—have a good time."

"What are you going to do?"

"I have to find somebody."

"Who? Gail Burrell?"

Jeremy said, "Yes, Gail."

"But you can't—"

"I must," he said. "She's been terribly hurt."

"But how about me? You can't do this to me!"

Heath Troy heard her say that. He stood for a half-minute watching them. Recognizing every intonation of her voice, the anger in her face, which he had seen before on the faces of other women. So the boy was up against it now—the old situation of breaking off with a woman he didn't want.

HE CAME in quietly. He said, "Miss Margot, everyone is looking for you. You must have a favor to go with that beautiful gold dress—the new year is nearly here—you must have a crown, and there are some handsome ones out here."

The girl looked from the young man to the older one. Jeremy seemed almost unaware of her, but Heath offered his arm. She summed it up quickly and turned to him, even catching a smile from somewhere.

"You're quite a wonderful young woman," said Heath. "I think the new year is sure to bring you what you want."

Jeremy was going through the rooms, looking for Gail, seeing nobody else, oblivious of the hats and horns and fun. It was Minnie who told him, clutching his sleeve and whispering, "She took her coat and ran out of the house."

"Where?"

"As far as she can go on them heels, poor child. The way she did when her mother tried to get the boys to dance with her."

Jeremy banged the great front door behind him in blind rage. They had shamed her twice, his Gail—

He caught up with her at the end of the long driveway. She tripped, caught her balance, and turned to face him savagely. "Leave me alone!"

"I can't, Gail. I love you."

"You're crazy. You're in love with Margot Tapley."

"Never. Not for a minute. I know that because you kept explaining it to me. Telling me what love was. That you couldn't help it or get away from it and that nothing else mattered. Nothing does. I haven't got a job now but I don't care about that. Look at me, Gail. You were

"You might show a little more interest in something for Aunt Martha"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY CY OLSON

the one who was bragging about knowing love when you saw it. Gail—"

"You do," she said in wonder, a minute later. "I didn't think it could happen. But that night at the Angels' Dance I knew that it had to be you or no one."

"I remember the very minute. I've had no peace since. Till now, my love." . . .

The whistles blew and the New Year took over.

"Anyway, I'll be working with the president of the company," thought Margot. "And Heath Troy likes me. I'll meet new people. I think this year *will* bring me what I want."

"I shot off too fast," thought Harry Pidgeon. "I'll have to watch my step. It will go over all right. And I'll keep Margot in spite of Lorna. I need her."

Ted Burrell and his wife touched hands. "It wasn't your fault," each tried to make the other feel. Burrell thought, "I must take it standing. These things have to come. If Gail comes out all right, nothing else is very important."

"But I know she loves him," thought Gail's mother. "I saw her face."

They all saw Gail's face as she and Jeremy came in. They stood in the door of the dining room, pale, exalted, ready to fight if necessary. It was Nina Montgomery who went to them first. She said, "Now you know why you should marry, Jerry."

"Yes," he said, and picked up a glass.

"The reason a young man should marry," he said, "and the reason a girl should marry. The only reason. To love."

THE END ★★

You'll Be Sorry

(*Continued from page* 27).

and she wasn't letting anybody forget about it, especially Pop.

"How come you never go there?" Pop would ask.

"You know perfectly well why," Grandma would answer. "It's because of my condition, that's why."

None of us knew exactly what Grandma's condition was. All we knew was she was sixty-two years old and strong as a horse. Just the same, whenever Pop asked her that she always blamed it on her condition.

"George, must you be such a baby?" Mom would scold. "Do you think Mother likes being supported by us?"

"What's that got to do with it?"

"The least you could do is not begrudge her a few memories."

"Nuts!" he'd say, and retreat behind the evening paper.

It might have gone on that way forever if Mr. Bradford hadn't decided Pop would make a good member. I guess what he liked about Pop was his never putting on an act just to impress people. At Mr. Bradford's end of the business he didn't meet many like that.

"What do you say, George? Going to let me nominate you?" he'd say to Pop.

"Nothing doing," Pop would answer;

FUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET

OOPS: In Lake Worth, Fla., after listening to complaints of residents, the city commission decreed that a chlorophyll manufacturing plant would have to do a little sweetening of its own breath before it could go ahead with an expansion program.

NO MORE: In Muncie, Ind., City Court, a policeman admitted it was all too true —he *had* broken his club on the defendant, but it would never happen again: "I've got a bigger club now."

BUSINESS HAZARD: The Bureau of Internal Revenue got a complaint from a 12-year-old boy in Terre Haute, Ind.: "After seeing Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, I decided to put one on, myself, in my backyard. I did, and it drew 22 people who paid me 5 cents each. Am sending 20 per cent, which is 22 cents, for amusement tax. My dad said because of the law I had to pay this. . . . P. S. Was going to run three more days till all this came up."

STOPPER: A motorcycle traffic cop in Wichita, Kans., who kept right on chasing a speeding motorist after his policeman's cap blew off, the motorcycle's muffler fell off, and the siren went dead, finally had to give up when the motorcycle caught fire.

TIME TO RETIRE: Charged with marrying five women, getting only one divorce, and living with three others on a shift system, a man in New Orleans, La., declared he really would like to go back to his second wife if she'd have him, but— "First, I'd like to get some rest."

HOTHEAD: From his bed in an Oklahoma City hospital, a patient husband explained to police that, although his wife had run over him with the family automobile after a quarrel, he wouldn't prosecute. "I don't think she meant to hurt me; she loses her head when she gets mad."

ALL OUT: In Fort Worth, Texas, two motorists, after swerving to avoid hitting a pedestrian and smacking into each other, got out to discuss the accident, were promptly joined by the pedestrian, who blackened their eyes.

PRACTICAL: There was some hesitation at the Virginia State Penitentiary after inmates, offered the opportunity for courses in practical subjects, turned in numerous requests for lessons in key-making.

IMPRACTICAL: In Oshkosh, Nebr., a swimming class at a local pool had to skip the lesson on how to save a drowning person by grasping his hair when it turned out everyone in the class, including the swimming instructor, had a crew haircut.

NIX ON THE FIX: In New Kensington, Pa., the police department, after getting a notice to pick up a postage-due letter at the post office, hustled a man down, found inside 24 traffic tickets, along with a request that they be fixed. Naturally, they weren't.

NET GAIN: After fire caused $800 worth of damage in her kitchen, a philosophical woman in Santa Monica, Calif., reported that it had at least solved one domestic problem: Her dog, Duffy, which was trapped in the blaze for a few minutes, no longer has fleas.

GOLDEN SILENCE: There was some confusion in Grottoes, Va., when fire companies from nearby communities held a contest to determine the best firemen's band and first prize went to Waynesboro —which turned out not to have a band. The judges are investigating.

OBJECT LESSON: In Roanoke, Va., one week after he had clinched the sale of a liability insurance policy by arguing that the customer's big police dog might hurt somebody, an insurance man got bitten by the dog, filed the first claim under the policy.

WAR PAINT: The University of New Mexico's enterprising athletic department announced it was painting the home team's dressing room an "exciting" red, giving the visiting team's a coat of "pacifying pastels."

MUTUAL AID: An enterprising restaurant proprietor in Omaha, Nebr., hung out a sign: "Come in and eat before we both starve."

ARTHUR LANSING

"you don't catch me in top-hat society."

That always got a laugh out of Mr. Bradford. "Boy, you've sure got one crazy idea of club life!"

"Maybe I have," Pop would answer. "Just the same, it sounds like money."

"Oh, no. Not as much as you might think and, believe me, it's got a few advantages."

"Yeah? Name one."

Mr. Bradford would start to give him a sales talk, but then he'd stop and grin sheepishly. "Okay; I give up," he'd say. "Trouble with you is you're not a social climber."

Anyway, Pop wasn't kidding about not being interested, but then he started thinking about Grandma, and he got this bright idea that he could get back at her without really becoming a member. The way he figured, all he'd have to do was act as if he could join if he wanted to.

"Fred Bradford keeps nagging me to join his club," he said one night at dinner.

"Why don't you, dear?" Mom said. "We could both do with a little social life now that Jimmy's older."

"Don't worry about me," I said. "I can take care of myself."

Mom smiled and mussed my hair, the way she always does when she thinks I've said something funny.

"To tell the truth, Kate, I'm not sure I want to join that particular club."

Mom fell right into the trap. "Which club is it?" she asked.

Pop yawned as if he was bored. "The Valley Club."

Grandma stopped eating. "The Valley Club? You?"

"Yep!" He sat back and waited for her to say something nasty.

"Why, George, that's wonderful!" Grandma said. "I think it's very nice of Mr. Bradford."

"Er—thanks," Pop stammered. "Thanks a lot, Mother."

He didn't sound glad at all. He sounded disappointed.

"Of course, you mustn't count too much on getting in," Grandma added.

"Oh, no? And why not?"

"Well, George, we *can't* let *everybody* in!"

"We? Who's we?" Pop said.

"Why, our membership committee!"

"Oh. Of course you're on the committee."

"Oh, no. I'm not on the committee," Grandma admitted. "Not any more."

Pop stared at her. "Not any more! You mean you ever were?"

"Of course, George. I thought you knew." She said it without batting an eye.

Pop made a gurgling noise. "If that isn't the biggest—why, you only *belonged* for a year!" he sputtered.

"Who's ready for dessert?" Mom said. She started collecting empty plates and making a lot of noise about it.

"I am," I said.

"George Cowley, do you mean to sit there and call me a liar?" Grandma demanded.

"Call you a liar? Mrs. Bailey, after a story like that I'd have a perfect right to call you—"

"George!" Mom warned.

For a second Pop sat there sputtering like a wet spark plug. Then he jumped up from the table and threw his napkin on his chair. "That settles it!" he shouted. "I'm joining that goofy club just out of spite!" He turned and stamped out of the room.

"Well, son, I certainly wish you luck!" Grandma called after him. . . .

I DON'T know if Pop really set out to get himself a membership or if things just naturally drifted in that direction. Maybe it was a little of each. Anyway, Mr. Bradford kept talking up the Valley Club, only, for a change, Pop started acting at least a little bit interested. Then one day Mr. Bradford invited him to the club for lunch, and Pop surprised him by accepting. That was just the beginning; after that they had lunch there almost every week.

Of course, whenever Pop had lunch at the club he was sure to mention it at home. Grandma always said how wonderful, but then she'd explain how hard it was to get a membership. The way she explained it, you had to know someone who was a member, someone real close to you. She didn't mean Mr. Bradford, either, and Pop knew it. It sure didn't help his disposition any.

It was a pretty even battle for a while, but then something happened that gave Grandma the edge. What happened was that Pop started to like the idea of becoming a member. That was something he hadn't counted on. While he was just trying to get Grandma's goat it didn't matter, but now he had something to lose. From that point on he really had problems.

For instance, there was the problem of the Bradfords inviting Mom and Pop for dinner at the club. Sooner or later Mom and Pop would have to return the invitation, and that meant Grandma would finally get to meet the Bradfords. I guess Pop figured Grandma might not co-operate, or maybe he was afraid she would. With Grandma you could never tell which was worse.

The night the Bradfords were having dinner with us Pop decided to give me a lesson on how to act in front of company. He always did that before company arrived, but this time it sounded different, as if he was talking to me but really meaning it for somebody else. Like Grandma, for instance.

We were all standing around the kitchen, getting in Mom's way, when Pop started in.

"Now, remember," he said, "some things we can talk about when we're alone that we can't mention in front of company. Right?"

"Right!" I said.

"George, relax," Mom said. "Jimmy's been around company before."

"Hm-m!" Pop said.

"Now, George, you mustn't worry about a thing," Grandma said. "The Bradfords are going to be proud of you."

"Proud? What's that got to do with it?" Pop snapped. "You'd think I was going to perform for them or something."

"I wouldn't put it that way, exactly," Grandma said.

Pop studied her for a second. "Now, what's *that* supposed to mean?"

"Nothing, George," Grandma singsonged. "Just nothing at all."

"You can stop right there!" Pop roared. "If I didn't like the Bradfords for themselves they'd never set foot inside this house!"

"George, you are shouting," Mom said.

"I'm not shouting!" Pop shouted.

"Poor George is just upset," Grandma said sympathetically. "After all, this is no ordinary social engagement. Not for George."

"Oh, it isn't?" Pop bellowed. "Why not?"

"Now, you stop fretting, George," Grandma said. "When your friends get here I'll give you my personal recommendation."

FOR a second it was so quiet you could hear the stove clock ticking.

"You will in a pig's ear!" Pop roared.

"George!" Mom gasped. "George Cowley, you apologize this minute!"

"I'll do no such thing!" Pop shouted. "Nobody's going to embarrass me before company, not in my own house!"

Mom started to say something, but Grandma beat her to it. "George is right," she said. "He doesn't have to

apologize to anybody. Me least of all." She had her special old-and-unwanted look on her face.

"Now, Mother, don't *you* start," Mom sighed.

"Well, this is George's home," Grandma said. "I really don't belong here at all."

"Mother, please. Not tonight," Mom begged.

"Oh, don't worry," Grandma said. "I won't embarrass anybody. The Lord knows I've been enough of a burden already." She turned and trudged up the stairs. At times like this Grandma never just walked upstairs; she always trudged. It took her twice as long that way, but it was worth it. That way people knew she was old and feeble and unwanted.

Mom heaved a big, unhappy sigh. Then she turned and gave Pop one of her silent stares.

"Go ahead, say it!" Pop shouted. "Say I'm a heartless monster!"

Mom didn't say it. She just started setting the table. Pop threw up his hands and disappeared into the living room. In a little while Grandma came downstairs again. She was dressed in her best I'm-leaving-this-house-forever clothes.

"Now, Mother, really!" Mom said. "You know George doesn't mean half the things he says."

"Don't try to stop me," Grandma sniffed. "I know when I've worn out my welcome!" She looked around the room, as if to make sure she wasn't forgetting anything. She came over to me and gave me a hug that knocked the wind out of me. "Good-by, Jimmy," she sobbed.

Pop came into the kitchen. "Mother, listen," he said. "Nobody's kicking you out. It's just that—"

"Don't you try and make up to me, George Cowley!" Grandma cried. "You had your chance; now you'll never get your precious membership. I'll see to that!"

Before he could answer she had slammed the kitchen door behind her.

"Well, now Mother's left, I suppose you're glad," Mom said.

"Kate, that's a lie and you know it!" Pop defended himself.

"If it were your mother *I'd* certainly make the best of it!"

Pop sighed. "Kate, look. I don't see what you're so upset about. She'll just spend a few days with your sister Ruth and then she'll come back."

"No, it's Aunt Mary's turn," I said. "She went to Aunt Ruth's the last time."

They both looked at me, and then they looked at each other. Pop smiled. Mom tried not to, but she couldn't help it.

"You go and wash up," was all she said. . . .

DINNER was over and Mom and Pop were entertaining the Bradfords in the living room. That is, Pop and Mr. Bradford were talking business and Mom and Mrs. Bradford were talking curtains and drapes. They were letting me stay up later than usual, I don't know why. I had tried to turn on the television, but Mom had said, "Jimmy, don't be rude."

So I was sitting around like an ornament when I heard the kitchen door open. I looked at the folks, but they hadn't heard it. They were too busy talking. I got up and went into the kitchen. Grandma was just shutting the door.

I started to ask her what she was doing back so soon, but she put her finger to her lips and motioned for me to go back into the living room. Then she turned and tiptoed upstairs to her room.

Maybe I should have mentioned it to Mom and Pop, but it really wouldn't have made any difference. Besides, they were too busy talking. So I just sat there without saying anything, and then just when I was starting to forget about it I heard Grandma coming downstairs again. This time we all heard her, she made enough noise.

When she came in I had to look twice to make sure it was really Grandma. She had changed into an old house dress, and her hair was all scraggly and uncombed. Boy, she really looked old. I mean, a lot older than sixty-two.

SHE stood at the entrance to the living room, looking around at us. The way she did it, she shaded her eyes with her hand the way old people—I mean really old people—do when they can't see very well. She stood that way for a second and then suddenly she looked surprised.

"Oh, I'm awful sorry," she said. "I thought your company had left."

Another surprise was her voice. It was different. Sort of whining, and it had a crack in it.

"Why, Mother!" Mom exclaimed, staring at her. She tried to say something else, but her voice had suddenly left her. Pop was staring, too, as if he was seeing a ghost.

"I'm awful sorry, George," Grandma whined. "I'm afraid I came back too soon." She started to leave.

Just then Mom found her voice again. "Nonsense," she said. "Mother, you come right back here and meet our friends. Mr. and Mrs. Bradford, this is my mother."

"Pleased to meet you, ma'am," Mr. Bradford said, getting up.

"I'm very glad to know *you*," Grandma said. She shaded her eyes again, studying the Bradfords. "My, they look like such nice people! I don't get to meet many nice people any more." Her voice was all shaky and pathetic.

"Mother, please!" Mom said.

"All right, dear, I'm leaving," Grandma said, making it sound as if she was being chased away. "I'll go right up to bed." As she turned to go she threw a scared glance in Pop's direction. Boy, that was some performance! In fact, for a second even I felt sorry for her, but then I came back to earth. Because just as she went through the doorway she winked at me.

When she was gone it was really quiet. It seemed as if nobody dared say anything. Mom was the first to give it a try.

"Mother's a dear," she said. "She really is, only sometimes she can be—well, difficult."

"I guess they *do* get to be a problem," Mr. Bradford agreed.

"She's such a sweet old lady," Mrs. Bradford said. "Of course, at her age—"

"She's only sixty-two!" Pop cut in.

He hadn't meant to, but he practically shouted it.

"I guess some people age faster than others," Mr. Bradford said helpfully.

"You can say that again," Pop said, glaring at Mom. "Sometimes they seem to age overnight."

There was that awful silence again.

"Dear, about what time is it?" Mrs. Bradford asked.

"Nine-thirty."

"We really should be leaving."

"Guess we better. Had sort of a busy day." Mr. Bradford looked as uncomfortable as I'd ever seen him.

As soon as they'd left, Mom sent me up to bed in a hurry. I went upstairs, but not to bed. I stood in the dark at the top of the stairs so I could listen.

"Is the kitchen door locked?" Pop said.

"Yes, it is."

"I'm going to bed."

"George—"

Pop stopped and waited.

"Oh, George, it was awful!"

This is where Pop blows his top, I told myself. I held my breath and waited, but nothing happened, except I heard Pop's footsteps on the stairs on his way to bed. I was so surprised I almost got caught eavesdropping. . . .

At first I thought Pop was just saving his fireworks for morning, but it didn't turn out that way. In fact, he went right on acting as if nothing had happened. But that's not saying everything went along the same as before, because it didn't. In the first place, Pop never mentioned Mr. Bradford or the Valley Club any more, and he suddenly became very polite, especially to Grandma.

In the second place, Grandma stopped trying to work Pop up into a temper. In fact, she started going out of her way to be nice to him. I guess Mom had really told her a thing or two about what she had done, but it wasn't that so much. She was just plain sorry, and she was trying to let Pop know without coming right out and saying it.

"Do have another chop, George," Grandma would purr.

"No, thank you, Mother."

"Oh." Slight pause. "Well, try some more mashed potatoes."

"No, I guess not, thank you, Mother."

If he had only been rude, Grandma wouldn't have minded half so much. At least, she'd have had something to complain about. But Pop kept right on being a perfect gentleman. To someone like Grandma it was slow torture.

I suppose sooner or later somebody would have cracked under the strain of all that peace and quiet around our house, but two things happened that nobody had counted on: First, Mr. Bradford nominated Pop for membership in the Valley Club. Second, he was accepted.

Mom and Grandma had gone to the movies the night Mr. Bradford came over to tell us about it. I guess Pop wore his surprise on his face, because Mr. Bradford noticed it.

"Why so surprised?" he said. "You didn't think they'd turn you down?"

"No— I mean, that's not what I had in mind," Pop stammered. "To tell the truth, Fred, I thought you'd changed your mind about sponsoring me."

"Changed my mind! For Pete's sake, why?"

"Because of what happened last time you were here."

"Oh." You could tell he was embarrassed.

"Fred, listen—"

"Now, George, a man's home is his castle. How you treat your mother-in-law in the privacy of your own home is none of my business."

"Ye gods, that does it!" Pop said. "Fred, sit down." He practically pushed Mr. Bradford into a chair. "There's a few things you should know about my poor, persecuted mother-in-law."

POP told him everything. At first Mr. Bradford listened politely, but then a funny thing happened. Just when Pop's story really started getting sad, Mr. Bradford began to chuckle, and the sadder the story got, the louder he chuckled, until by the time Pop came to the part where Grandma sneaked into the house that night to change into her old clothes, Mr. Bradford was gasping and wheezing like a worn-out steam engine.

"George, please!" he shrieked. "Oh, ho-ho! Ha-ha-ha! George—pu-leeze!"

Pop stopped talking. He glared at Mr. Bradford. "Ha-ha!" he said without smiling. "Very funny."

Mr. Bradford kept right on laughing, only harder. Pop stood there scowling at him. Then, gradually, the scowl left his face, and pretty soon he was grinning, and there was nothing he could do about it. I guess nobody could stand around very long watching somebody laugh like that without joining in. . . .

Before Mr. Bradford left he called Grandma a grand old girl and one in a million. I don't think Pop would go that far, but just the same I could tell that seeing Grandma through Mr. Bradford's eyes had done something to him. It had made him realize he really thought a lot of her, in spite of all the arguments. And as soon as Mom and Grandma got home from the movies I knew my hunch was right.

"Well, well!" he boomed. "If it isn't the campfire girls back from the jamboree!"

"George, why isn't this child in bed?" Mom said.

"We had company," I explained.

"Fred Bradford stopped in for a while," Pop said. "He only just left."

NAME-O-GRAMS

Answers to quiz on page 72

1. RONALD	11. NAN
2. AILEEN	12. LLOYD
3. NEAL	13. ELISE
4. THEODORA	14. NOEL
5. MERLE	15. JEAN
6. CARLA	16. CARMEL
7. LANA	17. BELA
8. CELIA	18. CAROL
9. JONAS	19. AMY
10. MYRA	20. ELISHA

Mom and Grandma both looked at him.

"What did he want, dear?" Mom said. She looked worried.

Pop told them. He didn't show off about it, either. As I say, he wasn't out to get Grandma's goat this time. All that was a thing of the past.

"Isn't that wonderful?" Grandma gushed. "George, that's the best news I ever heard!"

"Thanks, Mother," Pop said. "Thanks a lot." He paused, and looked embarrassed. "I guess I haven't been very friendly lately—"

"George, you hush up!" Grandma broke in. "I'm a mean old lady and I know it!"

"Nuts," Pop said. "It takes two to make an argument."

"Well, George, suppose we let bygones be bygones."

"It's already forgotten," Pop said.

"Good," Grandma purred. "After all, the important thing is we got you your membership."

Pop looked at her. "We?" he said quietly. "Who's we?"

Grandma looked surprised. "Why, George, didn't you know?"

"Know? Know what?"

"Why, just last week I spoke to Mr. Corning, the club president, about you."

Pop stared at her, but he wasn't excited or anything like that. He was real calm. "Mother, look," he said. "Let's be reasonable. You don't even know Mr. Corning."

"I most certainly do!" Grandma said. "Why, Frank Corning and I are—"

"Old friends?"

"Well, we are," Grandma insisted.

"That does it!" Pop shouted. "Now I've heard everything!"

"George Cowley, do you mean to stand there and call me a liar?" Grandma demanded.

"Call you a liar? Mrs. Bailey, after a story like that I'd have a perfect right to call you—"

"George!" Mom warned.

Pop tried to say something, but the words wouldn't come. Instead, he threw up his hands and stamped into the kitchen. I couldn't see him from the living room, but it sounded as if he was pouring himself a drink. Either that or making gurgling noises.

THE END★★

Back to the Picture Show!

(*Continued from page* 34)

Indianapolis. From his headquarters there he runs 12 indoor theaters and two drive-ins in the Indiana towns of Franklin, Columbus, Elwood, Wabash, Batesville, and Oakland City.

Three years ago, when television began to grow into a real, big boy, worried exhibitors all over the country called on Rembusch, a leader in the industry, to help them find the answer. Rembusch responded by undertaking an exhaustive survey in 32 states to determine just what kind of pictures the great masses of hometown Americans like and dislike.

When the survey was completed, his findings were so startling that most of the exhibitors wouldn't believe them. Some of the exhibitors were horrified. Most of them thought they knew better. Undaunted, Rembusch applied what he'd learned to his own chain of theaters. The customers poured in. They are still pouring in to the tune of nearly $1,000,000 a year, and once-skeptical exhibitors, from Bangor, Maine, to Tacoma, Wash., are now rushing to get on the band wagon with the magic formula.

So that's the big news. But what did Rembusch find out in his nationwide survey? What, actually, are the pictures most of us like the best and the least?

When Rembusch showed me the results of the survey, I confess I was startled, especially when I discovered that among our best-loved screen stars are Francis the Talking Mule, and Ma and Pa Kettle! Many of you are going to be as surprised as I was. Some of you, especially the city folks, may hold up your hands and cry, "Have we become a nation of nitwits? It just can't be so!" But a big majority of you are going to say, "Ain't it the truth!" I'll bet on it, because I have all the evidence.

Well, anyway, here goes. These are the national findings. See how nearly you agree:

We don't care much for present-day Academy Award pictures. The "Oscar" films which Hollywood considers its very best, and holds up as models, often leave us cool. For example, most of us didn't think *An American in Paris*, although a financial success, was anything particular to cheer about. "Too much ballet dancing," we complained. We much preferred *The African Queen*, with Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn in a thrilling adventure-story. In short, we don't like films that are too high-brow.

Can you remember the last five Oscar winners? They were *An American in Paris*, *All about Eve*, with Bette Davis, *All the King's Men*, based on the life of Huey Long, *Hamlet*, and *Gentleman's Agreement*, a story of racial discrimination. How many of them did you see? Technically, all were superb productions, but Rembusch's nationwide survey showed that most of the folks who saw them found them comparatively dull.

MOST of us agreed they weren't half as good as the five previous awards, from 1946 back to 1942: *The Best Years of Our Lives*, *The Lost Week End*, *Going My Way*, *Casablanca*, and *Mrs. Miniver*. Remember those? To most of us they all were magnificent entertainment.

We like to laugh at homespun—yes, corny—pictures. As I said, we love Francis the mule, and Ma and Pa Kettle (Percy Kilbride and Marjorie Main). To us movie fans Pa and Ma are what Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne were to the patrons of the legitimate theater. The Bowery Boys, too, go big with the younger set. They are Leo Gorcey and Huntz Hall, formerly Dead End Kids in the theater and in the movies. Colorful characters from Brooklyn, they make down-to-earth pictures of comedy and adventure.

We aren't even slightly impressed any more by super-productions costing $10,000,000. Exhibitions of extravagance are no treat. All we ask is, "Is it a good show?"

We are losing our appetite for love! At one time, if the word "Love" was in the title of a picture, we stormed the doors to gaze enraptured upon torrid amour. Now that word is poison. For instance, there was *Two Weeks with Love*, starring Jane Powell, which was a comedy about a father who took his family to a summer resort back at the turn of the century, and the troubles he had in getting a corset for his daughter. It was a mighty good picture, but hordes of movie fans decided that two weeks of love was more than they could take, and stayed away.

"However," Rembusch told me, "it did all right in Minneapolis, I think it was. There, the exhibitor changed the title to *Papa Buys a Corset* and packed 'em in."

We want no "messages" in our entertainment. "Messages," the saying goes, "are for Western Union." In his national survey, Rembusch found that John Q. Public, in his search for relaxation and entertainment, is not serious-minded. He has done his thinking for the day and is in search of diversion and comfort. He does not want to burden his mind with great problems, nor to be depressed by sordidness, during his off hours.

We don't like to be preached to. Sometimes, we pass up first-class entertainment because we suspect a preachy picture. Take, for instance: *My Son John*, an exposure of communism, and *I Was a Communist for the FBI*. Both were great shows, but they drew relatively slim audiences. In many a community, clergymen, American Legion posts, and other influential organizations agreed that these were pictures every American should see, and they spread the word. That well-meaning support played right into the hands of the communists, who were exerting every effort to keep people from seeing them.

"When the folks were told 'this is a picture you *ought* to see,'" said Rembusch, "they guessed it was a message and propaganda instead of amusement, and they stayed away."

A SIMILAR instance was *The Next Voice You Hear*, an entertaining story of a typical American family, in which the voice of God spoke over the radio. In many communities that was "preaching," and folks like you and me stayed away. Rembusch gave a preview for clergymen and their families, who promptly agreed that people ought to see it and that they would be glad to say so from their pulpits.

"Just a minute, please," Rembusch said. "Don't tell them God is in it, or

that it's something that will do them good. Tell them it's a good show, that it made you laugh and cry."

The clergymen got the point, recommended the picture as one of the most entertaining they had ever seen, and in Rembusch's theaters it played to large and delighted audiences.

Most of us don't go for "arty" or "long-hair" pictures. But many of us are two-faced about this. We complain that theaters don't show more Shakespearean productions, and dramatizations of other classics. After we exert so much pressure on a manager that he books some of them, even the professors who write letters to the papers about the decadence of the movies don't show up.

As a rule, we don't like foreign productions, because "foreigners don't act like anybody we ever knew." Apparently, it's an echo of the newspaperman's axiom: "People are more interested in today's news about their druggist's wife who ran away with a toothpaste salesman, than in all the wars in Europe."

We usually don't give a hoot, either, for professional critics' opinions of a picture. Here are prevailing reactions of ordinary folks to the Ten Best Pictures of 1951 selected by a national poll of critics, as revealed by Rembusch's national survey:

A Place in the Sun. (Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, Shelley Winters): Too dreary.

A Streetcar Named Desire. (Marlon Brando, Vivien Leigh, Kim Hunter): We don't like heavy sex stuff and aren't interested in the morals and problems of characters like that.

An American in Paris (Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron): The long ballet at the end wore us out.

Detective Story (Kirk Douglas, Eleanor Parker): Too complicated and heavy.

Born Yesterday (Judy Holliday): That's better!

Cyrano de Bergerac (Jose Ferrer): Too arty.

Death of a Salesman (Fredric March, Mildred Dunnock): Swell picture, but the gloomy title scared us away.

Quo Vadis (Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr): Give us more like this!

Bright Victory (Arthur Kennedy, Peggy Dow): The blind hero was too depressing.

The Great Caruso (Mario Lanza): Not bad, but we can do with less opera.

Of "the ten best pictures" as picked by the critics, the typical movie fans approved as outstanding only *Born Yesterday* and *Quo Vadis.*

I ASKED Rembusch then to list for me the ten pictures people have liked best recently, and why. Here's the list, in order of popularity, with the average reaction. See whether you agree:

Show Boat (All-star cast): It had everything!

Ma and Pa Kettle at the Fair (Percy Kilbride and Marjorie Main): They're genuine human beings. We laughed and cried.

David and Bathsheba (Gregory Peck and Susan Hayward): It was a thrilling spectacle.

On Moonlight Bay (Doris Day and Gordon MacRae): Based on Booth Tar-

kington's *Penrod*. Give us more of these warm, human stories with beautiful music.

Bend of the River (James Stewart): Great western. Thrilling action, beautiful scenery.

Sailor Beware (Martin and Lewis): Comedy at its best. Packed with laughter.

The African Queen (Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn): Great acting, and a great story of adventure and love.

Belles on Their Toes (Jeanne Crain and Myrna Loy): Sequel to *Cheaper by the Dozen*. The whole family saw themselves in it, and loved it.

Skirts Ahoy (Esther Williams): We can't get too much of Esther's beautiful swimming.

Westward the Women (Robert Taylor and Denise Darcel): Another great western, with women!

Rembusch remarked, smiling, as he handed me the list, "We'll play *Francis Goes to West Point* soon, and the Talking Mule probably will get in there up near the top. Some day he may wear out his welcome, but not yet."

We've had enough run-of-the-mine westerns. Television has all but killed the ordinary giddy-up cowboy show. Even the kids won't go to see them unless the theater gives away balloons, toys, and games or a chance on a pony with every admission ticket. But the big Technicolor westerns, with big stars, like James Stewart in *Bend of the River*, are pleasing us more and more. We like to see crowds, action, and the gorgeous outdoors in color.

We are sharply divided on double bills. A lot of folks want quantity, instead of quality. Many young men who haven't much to spend like to take their girls to a double bill because it's a full evening's entertainment. They get out about 11 o'clock, and the girls usually are willing to go right home. If they're out of the theater at 10, girls these days want to finish the evening with eating and dancing. A lot of other folks, however, despise doubles. They say the result is always at least one very bad picture.

We average people pick our favorite actors usually because they have warm, lovable personalities. They're the kind of folks we'd like to know, and we have a hunch they'd like to know us. We feel that not enough of today's stars have that quality. We'd like to become star-worshipers, but we complain that today's young stars look alike and act alike and we can't tell one from another.

We don't object to cheesecake, and are entertained by Betty Grable and Jane Russell, but we wonder why producers spend so much time developing so many like that and don't try to produce another Shirley Temple.

I showed Rembusch a list of All American Favorite Stars of 1951, selected by a movie trade paper in a nationwide poll "of exhibitors, press, and public." In the order of their supremacy the stars chosen were:

June Allyson	Gary Cooper
Bing Crosby	Doris Day
Jane Wyman	Susan Hayward
Esther Williams	Betty Grable
Gregory Peck	Jeanne Crain
Cary Grant	John Wayne

I asked him, "How, according to your survey, would the average person agree with that?"

Rembusch studied it, smiled, and said, "A lot of people would *say* that they generally agree with this list. All these actors have been starred in fine pictures. But do you want to know the stars for whom most family people, old and young, have a real affection, like they used to have for Norma Shearer, Will Rogers, and Lassie, the dog?"

I said I did. Here is the list:

Percy Kilbride and Marjorie Main	Esther Williams June Allyson
John Wayne	James Stewart
Martin and Lewis	Doris Day
Abbott and Costello	The Bowery Boys
Francis the Talking Mule	Alan Ladd Susan Hayward

Again, do you agree? In your community are The Bowery Boys more beloved characters than Gregory Peck or Clark Gable? Do you love Ma Kettle more than Betty Grable or Jane Russell? Would you rather meet Abbott and Costello than Gary Cooper or Cary Grant?

Most of us like drive-in theaters. We want comfort, as well as a good show. In drive-ins we find a new kind of comfortable recreation, of which the picture is only one attraction. Our family sees the show from a "private room," there is no parking problem, no trouble about getting good seats, nobody crawls over us, we don't have to dress up. There is no need to hire a baby-sitter, there are no rules against smoking, we can bring along our dog or cat, and we always have a clear view of the enormous screen. Each car has its own loud-speaker and the volume of sound can be regulated.

Father and the kids buy hot dogs, popcorn, ice cream, and soft drinks, and return to their car, where Mother may be ready with a shoe box containing deviled eggs and sandwiches. There usually is a large playround with all sorts of swings and slides, and often a miniature train with free trips for the kids. There is a bottle warmer for babies, and some drive-ins have quarter-in-the-slot washing machines, grocery counters, and gas stations. In Cincinnati and Louisville, drive-in operators are experimenting with individual car heaters, and the time may come when drive-ins will remain open when cold weather comes.

Obviously, the drive-in is just one device to lure us back to the movies. The most important things are the pictures.

I WAS impressed recently by the comment of an exhibitor in Pond Creek, Okla., who had shown to capacity audiences *The Blue Veil*, a picture starring Jane Wyman and Charles Laughton. The story was about a woman whose husband was killed in battle, her baby died, and she devoted her life to caring for unfortunate children. It was a romantic tale and the audiences cried and cried before the story reached a happy ending. Said the exhibitor:

"This is the kind of picture Mr. and Mrs. Public want and the only kind they are going to buy mass tickets for in the near future. This is the kind of picture that will raise the estimation of the public for the movies back where it belongs. Cut out the gangsters and killings and rape and illegitimate children and men fooling with other men's wives, and give them *Blue Veils* by the dozen and get Mamma and Papa and the kids back into the movies once again."

THE END ★★

"... and the safety pins, Mrs. Jenter, do I change them, too?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY TOM ZIB

Gangway for the Mighty Midgets

(*Continued from page* 29)

Easton draw crowds of 10,000 to 20,000. And the football madness has now virtually infiltrated the nursery. As I drove past the front yards and vacant lots of Phillipsburg I saw 7- and 8-year-olds chasing footballs almost as big as they were. I stopped to watch a scrimmage, and one tot told me he was practicing so he could play in a year or two with "the big fellas on the midget team."

At Walters Park, a pleasant, tree-shaded green, I found hundreds of people lined three deep behind snow fences set up as boundaries on both sides of a 60-yard-long football field. Its goal-post crossbars were set lower than regulation, and the posts were only 6 yards from the goal line instead of the usual 10. An official with a whistle around his neck was carefully inspecting a ¾-size football. At that moment, trotting in toward opposite ends of the field in orderly formation, came the Police Athletic League squad in black-and-white striped jerseys and black-and-white helmets, and the opposing Parochial team in snappy green and white. The crowd gave a welcoming shout. It may have been only a kid game that was about to begin, but already it looked like honest-to-goodness football in sample-size packages.

THE players lined up for the kickoff and the substitutes took their places on the benches. I found it hard to believe that 50 kids in the rock-throwing, tree-climbing, cat-chasing stage could be transformed and organized into the disciplined little warriors I saw here. If it hadn't been for the contrast of the adult officials, coaches, and spectators towering over the ¾-size players, they might have been mistaken for big-league professionals or the polite athletes of the Ivy League.

Then came the kickoff, the clean catch by "Flash" Lawrence of PAL, and his romp through the entire Parochial team for the first touchdown on the first play of the game. While the crowd hollered I stood silent and astonished to see small boys running interference and blocking out defensive tacklers in a manner which it ordinarily takes years even for high-school or college players to learn, and which some of them never master.

That was only one of many surprises. In the second of the game's four 8-minute quarters, an adult spectator on the PAL side of the field booed what he considered an unfair penalty against his team. Immediately two PAL players rushed toward the side line and imploringly motioned the booer to pipe down. He did, looking shamefaced, and the game continued.

"Now I've seen everything," I ex-

claimed. "These kids are teaching the grownups manners."

"That's part of the rules," said a man standing next to me. "A team can be penalized fifteen yards if its rooters act up."

I investigated this unusual state of affairs later on, and found that at least part of the credit for the high standards of midget playing-field conduct goes to the Pop Warner Foundation, a national organization set up to encourage and supervise the sport, and named for the famous coach.

The Warner Foundation got its start in 1930, when a Philadelphia businessman named Joe Tomlin, a former Swarthmore halfback, had a bright idea for taking tough gangs off the street corners and putting them on the football field. He persuaded the Northeast Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce to finance four local teams, and a few years later interested Pop Warner in giving his name and support to a national midget-football movement.

THE idea took hold slowly until about five years ago, when it suddenly began to boom. Today the game has spread west to Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska, south to Texas and Louisiana. More than 50,000 youngsters are now playing midget football each year in teams sponsored by town recreation departments, boys' clubs, YMCA's, schools, service clubs like Lions, Elks, and Rotary.

Games played under Warner rules are scored twice—once according to who makes the most points, and again on a "character score." The latter indicates the referee's judgment of each team's respect for authority, will to win, mental poise and alertness, physical fitness and appearance, and fan conduct, all of which are marked down on a card under a point system of scoring. At the annual Santa Claus Bowl game two trophies are given, one to the winning team on the basis of the playing score, the other to the team with the highest character score. Time out is sometimes called during a game for a fatherly lecture to a junior hothead who has thrown his helmet on the ground in a fit of temper, while a single word of profanity means a swift walk to the bench.

There were no such interruptions during the PAL–Parochial match I witnessed. Except for the one quickly smothered boo, the only noise from the crowds on both sides of the field were cheers led by midget-sized girl cheerleaders in the colors of their teams. These young ladies were, in many cases, the kid sisters of players on the field. The PAL cheerleaders wore trim white sweaters with the letters PAL across the front, and white caps. The sweaters, I learned, had been knitted by mothers of midget members, and the mothers raised the money for the rest of the cheerleaders' costumes, and for their megaphones, by selling hot dogs at the games.

As in all midget-football leagues across the country, it was local community donations which provided the uniforms and equipment, and former high-school and college football stars who volunteered to do the coaching necessary to put the players on the field. The 6 teams in the Warren County Midget Football League, besides the PALs and Parochial, are Alpha Boys Club, Firthtown Boys Club, Stewartsville, and Riegel Ridge.

In the past two seasons the PAL team has walloped its way to the Warren County championship, and it was a demonstration of their red-hot, midget-style supremacy which I witnessed. The PAL cheering section hollered them on to victory with a chant composed especially for the occasion: "California orange juice, Texas cactus! We play Parochial just for practice!" The team proceeded to make it look that way. Using a basic T-formation and some simple but well-rehearsed cross bucks and reverses, lanky Dick Lawrence, a good-looking kid with a toothy grin, ran three touchdowns through the enemy lines. A husky 12-year-old fullback named Tom Kingfield, whose dad is Phillipsburg's city attorney, racked up two more touchdowns, and pudgy little Ray Seip added another. Final score: PAL 43, Parochial 0.

After the game was over I talked to some of the players and parents, and to Coach Clarence Rounsaville, sergeant of the Phillipsburg police force, whose duty hours are at night and whose afternoons are given to kid football.

I asked Dick Lawrence how his team was able to pile up such a one-sided score against seemingly evenly matched opposition. "I think our tackling dummy won the game for us," he said.

Coach Rounsaville obligingly explained. "The team developed by concentrating on the fundamentals of the game," he said. "Right at the start we had a midget-size tackling dummy made, because the boys are too small to use a standard one. So you probably noticed that our boys tackle low and hard, and the other team was trying a lot of neck tackling. That makes part of the difference between 42 and zero."

John Sabo, an amiable, pipe-smoking parent of last year's youngest team member, John Jr., who became a halfback at 9, told me that once the football season starts in Phillipsburg, the game takes precedence over all other interests. "The kids practice every afternoon after school," he said, "except that Monday's practice is called off if they win their game Sunday. The trouble is that instead of feeling rewarded, they raise a terrible howl when they can't work out."

Since the midgets are encouraged to keep their school marks up in order to qualify for the team, I was told that schoolwork seldom suffers because of football.

I ASKED how the mothers of the town felt about exposing their youngsters to the hazards of what is, after all, a pretty rough sport. "We never had any opposition," Coach Rounsaville said. "Maybe that was because this area is so football-conscious that they take the game for granted. In addition, we've convinced the mothers that, with proper protective uniforms and training, the boys run less risk of getting hurt than if they're playing by themselves in the streets." The fact is that there have never been any injuries beyond the bump and bruise stage in three seasons of midget football in Warren County.

The only thing that ever gives a mother cause to wonder and worry about football, I found out, is the strange spectacle of an 11- or 12-year-old boy who refuses to eat. This problem is caused by the weight limit, which, in the Warren County league, is 105 pounds at the beginning of the season. During the course

WHY IS IT?

By Roy L. Fox

That the barber, after years of this . . .

. . . and this

. . . and this—is always thought of . . .

. . . like this

of the season a boy's weight may go to 110, but no more. The result is a sudden reversal of appetite on the part of many of the huskier midget stars.

"I've had mothers tell me that their boys were refusing apple pie, candy, and second helpings of mashed potatoes," Coach Rounsaville told me. "It's enough to bring tears to a parent's eyes."

This strange state of affairs lasts for only a day or two before the official weighing-in, however, and there is no record of any Phillipsburg boy suffering from malnutrition as a result of football starvation.

In fact, I have never seen a healthier, huskier bunch of kids anywhere, and midget football has undoubtedly helped to make them that way. Along with some thousands of other budding Red Granges across the country, the Phillipsburg PALs, Parochials, Riegel Rams, and the rest are dreaming of the day—which may come this season, maybe next—when a Warren County all-star team hears the order: "All aboard for the Santa Claus Bowl and the midget championship of the U. S. A."

THE END ★★

Words to the Song

(*Continued from page* 25)

doing the rumba. In the privacy of the bathroom Mike held the towel as if it were his partner and tried to imitate the sensuous movement of Clayt's hips. After a few tries he gave up. He was about as graceful as one of those cinnamon bears at the zoo!

Then he remembered the dialogue between Clayt and Kitty as they were leaving the party last night. Kitty had said, "I'll be seeing you, Clayt." And Clayt had said, "That's a date."

That was a month away. In that time he'd make Kitty forget the big wolf. He went back to the bedroom, dialed The Silver Slipper, and made reservations for that night. Then he phoned the florist and ordered a corsage of orchids, to be delivered at eight o'clock.

"And what would you like written on the card, sir?" the florist asked.

MIKE stood on first one foot and then the other. He wanted to recite the poem he'd written so many years ago, but the thought of a stranger reading the words chilled him. "Just put 'Guess who?'" he said, and hung up, confidence oozing out of him.

The fragrant aroma of coffee and ham filled the sunny kitchen. Kitty was at the stove, a dreamy look on her face as she sang softly. Mike recognized the song as a rumba the orchestra had played, and he felt as if he had just dropped forty floors in an elevator.

He walked up and kissed the back of her neck. "Sorry I blew my top this morning, honey," he said.

She turned around, her cheeks very pink. She murmured, "It's okay." And after a pause, "What are we going to do to celebrate tonight?"

"Oh, stop in at Hamburger Joe's for a cheeseburger."

"Oh, Mike!" She looked terribly let down, and he said quickly, "Got a hunch I can scare up something a bit more exciting than that." He'd surprise her, and this afternoon he'd go to Hamilton's and buy sparkly earrings and a bracelet for her.

He sat down at the table. Susan came in, and he opened his mouth to say good morning, but she threw him such a haughty, angry look that he shut it again. Now, what was the matter with her?

In the last year Susan had changed from a pretty, cuddly, affectionate little girl to a tall, long-legged creature who was given to fits of temperament that would put a prima donna to shame.

Kitty said that was because fourteen was the most bewildering age of all. Susan was all mixed up because she was a nothing. Not a child any more, and not yet a woman. All Mike knew was that she was a distant, unpleasant stranger. This morning her hair was frizzed on top of her head, and the lipstick was thick on her mouth. He saw the striped sash tied in a bow at her neck, and remembered the model on the cover of the fashion magazine Susan had been reading last night, and all at once there was something pathetic about her, sitting there thinking she looked even remotely like the glamorous model, and tenderness for her welled up in his throat.

"Morning, honey," he said brightly. "Your hair looks nice."

She turned angrily to him: "You don't have to be nice to me now after the stinky way you acted this morning. Why did you have to yell at me as if I were a child?"

"But you are a child," Mike thought, "a child who can't even see that I'm trying to be nice!"

Kitty placed waffles before Susan, and she ate with the appetite of youth.

"A little less like a horse, honey," Mike laughed.

Susan threw her knife and fork down. She jumped up from the table and fled from the room.

"What's the matter with her?" Mike asked, bewildered. "That used to be a joke with us."

"At ten it's a joke. At fourteen an insult. Can't you be more tactful and patient with her, Mike?"

"What she needs is a good spanking. I'm through being patient!"

THEY ate breakfast in silence, and Mike remembered their first breakfast together. They had been riding all night trying to find a place to stay. Finally they'd stopped for coffee at a beanery. Kitty's corsage had been wilted and she had looked tired. But she'd smiled and made a joke of the whole thing.

He wanted to tell her now that she had been a good sport then and a wonderful companion ever since. He tried to make his voice deep and mellow like Clayt's. "Kitty," he began.

"Mike," she asked, "is your sinus bothering you again?"

"My sinus is okay." What was the use? He wasn't the romantic type.

In the sudden silence he heard the drip-drip of the kitchen tap. He drank the last of his coffee and fixed the tap. He put up a new clothesline in the backyard and fixed the drain hose on the washtub. He was finishing a shelf above the stove when Susan came in.

The curls and lipstick were gone. Her hair was plastered down with water, like a boy's. She looked so homely and gawky that his heart ached for her. She asked, "Daddy, would you please help me to earn my badge in basketry today?"

"Basketry?"

"Yes, for Girl Scouts."

"Baskets out of what?"

"Reeds. From down by the river."

He thought, "I will not. Drive my new car down by the river, go splashing around in the mud. And have Susan go into a fit if everything doesn't go just right." He saw Kitty's look of appeal. He took a deep breath. "Sure, honey; come on."

The car got stuck in the mud, and the mosquitoes bit him. But they got the reeds and took them home, where he sat in the garage with Susan and patiently showed her how to weave a basket.

"Thank you, Daddy!" She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him, and then when she smiled he caught a glimpse of the beauty that would some day be hers. He felt humble as he watched her walk away.

THEN he turned toward the house. He and Kitty were alone now. Maybe he could set a mood and maintain it. He picked a red rose. "Your lips are this shade," he'd say, "but they feel like warm velvet." But that wasn't true. Kissing Kitty wasn't like kissing a rose. It was like freezing to death and then crawling into bed with the electric blanket turned too high. It was like drinking from a long, cold glass when you were dying of thirst.

He went into the kitchen and called Kitty.

"Up here, making beds!" Her voice came from upstairs. He started up, but Kitty was coming down. "Mike, here comes Edith."

He looked out the window and saw Kitty's younger sister get out of the car. She'd lost weight since Barry's death, and the blue dress hung on her. She looked ready to cry. He said, "I'm ducking out."

"Mike, don't go!" Kitty begged. "She hasn't come to see me. She wants to talk to you."

"Talk. She wants to cry on my shoulder. And why? Barry was no good. You know that! Does she think that woman in the car with him when they were both killed was a casual friend?"

"She's never mentioned that woman, Mike. It must be awful to love someone as much as she loved Barry. It's just something we can't understand."

But all at once Mike understood. No matter what Kitty did Mike knew he would still love her.

"Okay," he said. "I'll stay."

Kitty greeted her sister warmly.

Mike said, "Hi, Edith. How's tricks?"

Edith began to cry in a helpless, silent way.

"Mike," Edith said, "Barry and I had a fight before he left on his trip. I don't even remember now what it was about. In the morning he just left—without a word. And now he's dead. Mike, I've got to know—" She was almost whispering. "That woman with Barry—"

Mike had been in Clareridge on business the day Barry was killed. He had seen Barry and the woman come out of the motel. He wanted to tell Edith the truth so she wouldn't grieve, so she would forget Barry. Then in that moment he knew that Edith was grieving mostly because there were no dreams to cling to. He said, "Why torture yourself, Edith? Why think of those things?"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY JACK MARKOW

"I can't help it," she sobbed. "I tried to make him happy. But I don't know—"

Mike thought fast. "I saw Barry the night before he was killed," he said. Kitty's face went white. She knew the truth. "He told me about your fight, and he told me he was going to quit traveling—so he could be with you. He'd even written a poem to you. Something about 'You are my life, my soul, my heart. Desolate are the hours when we're apart.' The darn' thing stuck in my head. A guy doesn't write poetry to his wife and then go chasing another woman. I think he just gave that girl a lift."

Edith sat silent for a moment. Then she got up. "Thank you for telling me, Mike." She was smiling for the first time since Barry's death. Her lips brushed his cheek, and then she was gone.

Mike had a feeling of helpless anger. He'd given Kitty's poem to Edith. Kitty could never have it now.

"You're a wonderful liar, Mike," Kitty said softly.

"Well, how do we know Barry didn't think things like that about Edith?" he said gruffly. "Even if he never told her. There are some guys who can't put into words exactly how they feel."

There was a moment of quiet in the kitchen, with Kitty very close and desirable to him. He knew it was the psychological moment that might never come again. He said, "Kitty, sweetheart—" and then the telephone shrilled.

He jumped to answer it.

"Mr. Mike Hurrel, please."

"Yes. This is Mike Hurrel."

"Elmsdale calling. One moment, please. You will deposit forty-five cents, in coins, sir."

"I only got thirty-five cents in change." Chuck's voice sounded weak. A cold wave washed over Mike. Chuck had been in a wreck. He heard a girl's voice say, "Here's two nickels, Chuck."

"It's Chuck," he told Kitty.

"Hello, Dad."

"Chuck, are you hurt?"

"No, I'm okay."

Mike's breath came back in his lungs. "He's okay; relax," he told Kitty.

"The car broke down." Chuck sounded surprised.

Mike could feel his jaw jut out. He wanted to say, "So your car broke down! Well, smart guy, what did I tell you?" But first he had to find out something. "Where did it break down?"

"On the North Pike Road."

"That's seventy-five miles from here!"

"Yeah!" There was pride in Chuck's voice. "Took the hills like a jet plane and then"—Mike could almost hear him swallow—"it just died. Could you please come and tow me, Dad?"

MIKE didn't answer. He looked at his shoes, he looked at a stain on the ceiling. "Start walking, kids," that's what he should say. Chuck had to learn about life the hard way. Then he remembered the North Pike Road. Hardly a tree or a blade of grass, nothing but sand, and the sun beating down on their heads!

"Yeah," he said into the phone; "sit tight. Your mother and I will be along."

"Oh, thanks, Dad. You're a pal."

Mike hung up with a bang. "I'm a

sap," he thought. And some day when he watched prison doors clang shut on his kid for some crime, he could blame himself for being so soft!

"Leave a note for Susan so we can go rescue Mr. Know-it-all!"

"Mike, if you're going to be resentful. I'm sure—"

"No time to argue. Come on." It would take some fast driving to get back in time for their reservation at The Silver Slipper.

THE day was hot, the highway was crowded, and by the time they reached Elmsdale his temper was at the boiling point. He'd shake the daylights out of Chuck!

But when Chuck and Peggy came out of the little general store Chuck didn't look like supreme, confident youth. He looked scared and heartsick.

Peggy was first to speak: "He drove real careful, Mr. Hurrel." Her eyes flashed a warning: "Don't you dare bawl him out! He's been through enough." She was a nice, clean-looking child in a striped jersey, with a white gob hat on the back of her shiny blond hair. Mike knew he couldn't bawl Chuck out in front of his girl, but just give them a moment alone!

"Get in, kids," Mike told them.

Peg and Chuck got into the car and Chuck kept saying, "Yeah, funny, you know? She was going swell, and then all of a sudden—*ph-ht!*—just gave out."

Finally Mike said, "Yeah, I get it, but not funny, see?"

They turned onto the mountain grade and up the steep hill, and came to The Heap. They all got out, and Mike slid behind the wheel of the car and tried to start it. It was dead. He wanted to say, "Push it down the hill and throw a funeral wreath after it."

Then he saw that Peg and Chuck were already linking the two cars together with a tow rope.

Mike got out of the car. "Your brakes good?"

"Swellest brakes I've ever seen," Chuck said brightly.

But they weren't. On the last bend the brakes gave way and The Heap came crashing into the back of the new car. Mike swore softly. Kitty said, "Oh, Mike!" And for the first time she sounded sorry for him, not Chuck.

Mike got out and sauntered around to the back of the car with a nonchalance he was far from feeling. He stood with arms folded and stared at the damage in the twilight. The new chrome bumper was dented, the handle on the luggage trunk was twisted. All this because a fool kid couldn't take a word of advice!

He looked up. Chuck and Peg stood beside him, their eyes wide with horror. He saw Peg slip her hand into Chuck's, and again that warning look which made Mike feel like a brute.

Chuck said, "Sorry, Dad. Guess the brakes are no good, either."

Mike had to speak carefully for fear he would explode: "This is the last of the grade. We'll take it very slow from here on. There's a garage at Clayton."

It was after dark when they reached Clayton. Mike towed The Heap to the garage, and across the street he saw The Combo, a brightly lit tavern. The mechanic looked the car over. "Looks like the fuel pump's shot and of course the brakes are gone." He quoted them a price on a repair job. Mike heard Chuck gasp.

"Trot out that surplus you were talking about," Mike told him.

"I'm afraid I haven't got quite that much, Dad."

"Just how much surplus do you have, son?"

Chuck said faintly, "Ten bucks."

Mike passed his hand wearily over his face. He wanted to sit down with Chuck and quietly explain the facts of finance, but Kitty said it for him. "Chuck Hurrel," she said angrily, "that's no surplus!"

The mechanic said, "If it has a good overhaul I think it will make a dandy little car."

Mike didn't answer. He was suddenly hungry and very tired.

"Let's go across the street and have something to eat before we do anything else," he suggested.

The Combo was crowded and dense with smoke and noisy with voices and laughter and the blare of the juke box. There was a soda counter and booths along the wall. At the end of the room was a dimly lit dance floor.

They sat in a booth, and the waitress took their order. Mike saw the time. No hope now of getting back to town in time for the celebration, and the florist would have come and gone, not leaving the corsage. He told himself that none of this was his fault. Neither had the confusion in hotel reservations been his fault eighteen years ago. But still the anniversary was ruined for Kitty.

Their order came and they ate in silence, and then Peg got up to put a nickel in the juke box.

"You were right, Dad," Chuck said. "I was nuts to sink my money in that old heap. I should have listened to you."

This was what Mike had been waiting for. The moment of privacy when he could tear into Chuck. But Chuck looked as if he was going to cry, and all at once Mike remembered how hard Chuck had worked, mixing cement and digging postholes for Oley Larson so he could earn enough to buy the car.

"It's not a bad car," he said, "for its age. Somehow, the whole deal reminds me of the night we brought you home from the hospital. We'd looked forward to having you for so long, but you came home with colic and you howled all night. I wanted to give you back." He grinned at his son. "But I'm glad I didn't now."

He saw Chuck's chin wobble. "You're honestly glad, Dad?"

"Sure. I got a pretty nice kid out of the deal. We can fix The Heap up so it will last you maybe a year. Now go dance with your girl."

He watched them dance away and he remembered how loyal Peg had been and what a sweet, decent kid she was. No

cheap girls for Chuck. No smoking or drinking or laziness. He had a moment of great thankfulness. Kitty was right. In the big things Chuck panned out all right. Maybe there were times when you had to just plain help your kids out and forget character development.

"Why don't we dance, too?" Kitty asked.

He saw that her hair was rumpled, her dress wilted-looking, and her lipstick had rubbed off, but she was smiling, and all at once she looked very much like the starry-eyed bride of eighteen years ago.

"Okay," he said. "Come on."

But they couldn't seem to get started, because the music was too fast and people bumped into them.

"Let's go to the outside dance floor," Kitty said.

They were the only ones out there. The music stopped, and when it started again it was a waltz.

Kitty rested her head on his shoulder. "What a day!" she sighed.

"I'm sorry it's been such an ordeal, honey."

"Ordeal? In its own way it's been rather wonderful." She snuggled up to him. "Do you know I love you very much, darling?" she whispered.

He said thickly, "Why should you? I'm a homely gorilla. I haven't got a smooth line like Clayt Hawthorn—"

"Oh—Clayt—" she said casually.

"You liked him, Kitty," Mike accused gently. "You liked the fancy things he said to you."

"Of course I did," Kitty admitted frankly. "The way I like oboe music and banana cream pie. But I'd hate to have either one of them for a steady diet."

For a moment Mike was silent, letting the words sink in and soothe his ego.

"Did you know Clayt had been divorced three times?" Kitty was looking up at him. "Margie Clements told me. For a while I couldn't understand it. I mean, why any woman would let a handsome hunk of man like him go. And then back there at the table when you were so sweet to Chuck I understood. Clayt is all talk, and no do!"

"But he did have a smooth way of saying things, Kitty. I try to tell you how much I love you, but the words get stuck in my throat."

"Why, you've been telling me you love me all day, Mike Hurrel." Her lips brushed his cheek. "You've been telling me with things like new clotheslines and spice shelves and helping a fourteen-year-old girl make a reed basket and telling a gallant lie to someone who needed courage, and being understanding with your son instead of roasting him alive. Things like that tell a woman you love her, Mike. You're the most eloquent man I've ever known."

The music came to them slow and sweet and there was no light but the moon.

"And you're thorough, Mike," Kitty whispered softly. "Anything you do, you do with your whole heart and soul."

In a dim corner of the dance floor he kissed her. He kissed her with great thoroughness.

THE END★★

They Escape Income Taxes— But You Can't!

(*Continued from page* 17)

whole voyage off as a business expense. A businessman in his town told a friend of mine recently that "Some of the things he pulls are so flagrant that I'm afraid he is going to ruin this expense racket for all of us."

The president of a group of companies arranged for them to buy a stable of show horses and two show dogs. When he exhibited them he did it under the companies' names, and they deducted the costs as a business expense. The Bureau of Internal Revenue took a dim view of this claim and held that the animals were acquired for his personal pleasure. But the Tax Court gave the companies the benefit of the doubt and allowed most of the deductions.

Most of us ordinary people have to use our own tax-withheld money to take vacations. One corporation, however, owns a luxurious dude ranch. The person who has spent more time relaxing there than anybody else, at no cost to himself, is the president of the company. And another company owns an island paradise, where its key personnel can take the kind of vacation they need to keep themselves at peak efficiency, free of charge.

If you and I want to belong to a country club it is a heavy personal expense. That is not the case, however, if you are a lawyer, an architect, a merchant, a realtor, a salesman, a broker, or an insurance man. You charge off all or part of the expense to "business." Since many of the other club members are potential customers it is not hard to find people you have entertained or cultivated for "good will" if you are challenged.

A recent survey of company policy on such "fringe" expenses revealed that 73 per cent of the companies pay all or part of the club expenses of their key officials. In many instances country-club dues are paid directly by the company.

When you and I feel the need for a complete physical checkup we must pay for it out of our already taxed income. But many companies now relieve their top-echelon people of this expense. And some companies throw in a week of fun.

A medical clinic, by some coincidence, has been opened at a famous resort. Several companies now send groups of their officials there for thorough physical checkups. The diagnosis lasts several days. While it is in progress the "patients" are privileged to golf, dance, and ride horseback, all at company expense.

Another device many companies now

use to give key people hidden raises is the liberalized expense account. If you and I were insiders in a business that has any occasion to entertain customers (and what business doesn't?) we might be handed thousands of dollars, over and above salary, to enable us to live on a lavish scale.

The vice-president of one firm is assigned a flat $20,000 each year to cover any entertaining he may decide to do. His contract specifies that he does not have to account for the money.

Another official entertains many friends and acquaintances at his home. Often one of these friends is also a man with whom he does business. Whenever he has such a guest he charges off the entire cost of food and liquor to "business." Also, he charges off part of the maid's salary—and even part of the depreciation on his furniture.

This may give you a new insight into some of the fancy living and night-clubbing you see in your own town. A good deal of it is on somebody's expense account.

Recently a Congressional tax expert remarked that the man who has an unlimited expense account today "has the opportunity for bloody murder." In principle, you must be able to justify your expenses in order to exclude them from your taxable income. However, the courts do not require you to keep records of your claimed expenses. And, further, some shrewd high-living officials avoid embarrassing questions from revenue agents by having bills for their extravagances paid directly by their company.

Unfortunately, until the last revenue act the Federal Government was not in a very good position to show indignation about the use of expense accounts to avoid taxes. Congress itself imitated the example when it voted a $50,000 tax-free expense allowance to the President and a $2,500 tax-free expense allowance to each member of Congress. Beginning next month corresponding expense allowances will be taxed unless they are offset by allowable deductions or credits.

Such practices may not only give the employee the equivalent of a tax-free raise, but cut the employer's taxes, too. These "business expenses" reduce the amount the employer has to pay in corporate taxes. Uncle Sam is the loser on both counts.

The deferred payment: Many big, responsible companies are reluctant to turn to such devices as the above for giving hidden tax-free raises. But even our most respected companies are now in many instances giving raises to key people by methods that spread their incomes over a period of time and keep them from piling up into the highest tax brackets. If you or I get a raise, up goes our income tax, but these lucky taxpayers get their additional money in ways that minimize their tax burden.

The classic case of deferred payment was worked out for a famous entertainer. He was in a position to demand $500,000 a year for 3 years. Instead, he arranged to take $50,000 a year for the next 30 years. No one seriously expects him to be active in show business when he is approaching 80, but by spreading out his income and keeping it in lower tax brackets he was able to cut the total income tax he will have to pay by nearly $600,000, according to one estimate.

Several major companies now give bonuses or shares in profits to officials on a deferred basis, spread out over future years. And many companies are liberalizing their pension arrangements for high-priced personnel. The president of one company recently had his promised pension raised from $18,000 to $59,000. Meanwhile, you and I have to take our raises—when we can get them—right now and pay present high taxes on the additional money.

Another form of deferred payment, the restricted stock option, is the device of permitting insiders of a company to buy company stock at a bargain rate. As a rule, these stock offers are not made to rank-and-file company employees. One airline, for example, has given 30 of its key officials options to buy its stock at 85 per cent of the current market price. The beneficiary pays no tax on such a gain until he sells the stock or otherwise realizes his profit. Then, if he has held the stock for six months or more, the profit does not count as ordinary income. It will be subject to the relatively mild 26 per cent capital gains tax. That is a real advantage if his income is in a high bracket where he must pay 50 or 60 per cent or more of his ordinary income in taxes.

The free-riding income: For most of us the biggest items in our budget are for food and shelter. But millions of taxpayers get a part of their income in the form of free food or shelter or both. Since few of them count these items as taxable income, they have a tax advantage, sometimes a big one, over the rest of us.

Who are they? I have mentioned the farmers. Then there are grocers, who feed their own families off their shelves and do not report the food as income (or report it in modest terms) . . . the seamen . . . the fishermen . . . the hotel managers who live in . . . the loggers . . . the building superintendents . . . the waiters . . . the servants.

Then take the case of domestic servants. A good maid today demands $40 a week, plus board and room, which, at the least, has an additional value of $25 or $30; and $30 worth of board and lodging can be, in effect, $1,560 worth of tax-free income a year.

The law covering board and lodging is hazy. Different Internal Revenue offices interpret it differently. The general principle is that if the person receives the free board and lodging "for the convenience of the employer" he doesn't have to count it as income. This principle can become ridiculous under interpretation, as is true not only of household servants, but also of waiters, chefs, and so on. If a waiter eats his meal after he has

finished work he is supposed to count it as taxable income. But if, after eating, he gets up and clears a couple of tables, it is not income.

The trimmed-down income: The annual income of most of us is a precise, undebatable figure on our employer's books. Our taxes are withheld on the basis of it. However, the millions of taxpayers who operate their own businesses or practice professions have no such clear-cut income. They arrive at their taxable income by subtracting from their gross income all "business expenses." The definition of expenses can be very flexible.

Many of these taxpayers, I want to emphasize, are scrupulous in their bookkeeping. But others, as the Bureau of Internal Revenue will tell you, are throwing in as "expenses" everything their busy minds can conceive. Revenue agents find that the deductions which people make for "business expenses" have skyrocketed in recent years.

THIS year you will see a great splurging on business Christmas parties and carefree scattering of Christmas gifts by people operating businesses. A manufacturer was upheld for deducting such costs. In most cases they will be deducted as expenses for "good will." This was done by a tavern keeper who gave a Christmas party for neighborhood children, all barred by law from his place of business.

The unreported income: Another group of taxpayers get most of their income in small cash payments. These are taxi drivers, storekeepers, doctors, dentists, and people who get the bulk of their income in tips, such as waiters, barbers, hairdressers, and porters.

The degree to which they pay their fair share of taxes depends largely on their memory and their honesty. Many in this group are conscientious. But a great many are guilty of gross carelessness, if not worse, in computing their income.

The sheltered income: Many income taxpayers take refuge in other provisions of the tax law that enable them to obtain preferential treatment. One method is to take your income from investments which are exempt from federal taxation, such as municipal bonds. These offer no help to you and me and other rank-and-file taxpayers, but help only people in high-income brackets who, in exchange for accepting a somewhat lower interest rate, pay no tax on that part of their incomes. Tax advisers have worked out other similar strategies, for example:

—The wealthy may give part of their property to members of their families. Gift taxes apply, but they are relatively light. One method is to organize formal family partnerships. A cattle rancher with a high-bracket income decided to take his four growing sons in as "partners," while reserving full control to himself until all four had reached 21. His object was to save thousands of dollars for his family by getting its income taxed in five pieces at lower-bracket rates. The Bureau of Internal Revenue objected and the case began a spectacular journey through the courts.

However, the Revenue Act of 1951 gave such taxpayers a clear loophole. As the law now stands, a man can take even his week-old baby in as a partner. At the cost of paying a gift tax, he can divide into shares that part of the income attributable to capital. He must draw reasonable compensation for his services. Despite that limitation, the Treasury thinks this provision permits $100,000,000 in taxes to escape.

—High-income taxpayers sometimes find shelter by putting their money into oil wells. In Hollywood you are not in fashion unless you have an oil well. Many famed stars have substantial interests in oil. The stakes are big. The tax law allows them 27½ per cent "depletion allowance" each year on gross income from such ventures up to 50 per cent of the net income.

If the star taps a gusher, he can skim off 27½ per cent of his gross tax free. If he hits a dry hole, drilling expenses pull his income down into lower tax brackets.

Many high-income people besides movie stars are rushing to get into oil and gas and other ventures which can benefit from depletion allowances. A business publication recently described such ventures as "immensely inviting" for people in high tax brackets. The Secretary of the Treasury has announced grimly that "too many people are being spoiled in oil."

The various devices outlined above cost the Government in potential revenue considerably over $4,000,000,000, according to one estimate.

What can we do about it? A basic cure, I should say frankly, will be difficult until we can get at the root cause of all this relentless searching for loopholes. That root cause is our very high tax rates. They cannot be cut drastically until our defense requirements are eased. And our high taxes are the price we are paying to defend civilization against the enemy of all we cherish.

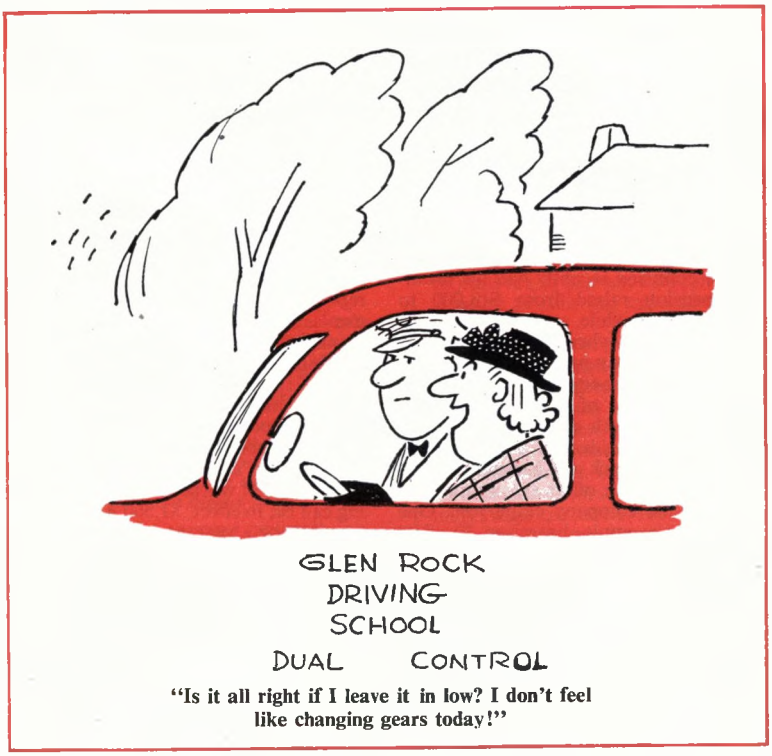
But as soon as we can safely cut back defense spending, and no longer have to fear inflation, tax revision should be the first order of business.

In the meantime, we can do a great deal to make sure that the burden of taxes rests more fairly on us all.

WE CAN insist, first of all, upon more rigorous enforcement of our present tax law. Recently the Bureau of Internal Revenue rechecked 160,000 returns picked at random. One in four was wrong by at least $2. Almost always the error was in the taxpayer's favor. The worst offenders, it was found, are farmers, professional men, and proprietors of small businesses. The sources of error were incorrect statements of income, excessive personal deductions, and exemptions for dependents, such as pets.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue needs a larger staff to cope with over 50 million tax returns. Congress should authorize the Bureau to increase its enforcement staff. Money spent to strengthen enforcement actually brings a saving to the conscientious taxpayer. The Bureau of Internal Revenue estimates that it could get back $20 in additional revenue for every added dollar allowed it for enforcement.

Bureau officials, incidentally, have found that if an Internal Revenue agent



"Is it all right if I leave it in low? I don't feel like changing gears today!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY GEORGE WOLFE

calls at one house to audit the taxpayer's returns, his neighbors for blocks around are more careful with theirs. If you agree that there is a need for greater enforcement you should express your conviction to your Congressman.

More rigorous enforcement should include collection of delinquent taxes. By bad management or design some taxpayers fail to pay their taxes, sometimes year after year, then obtain a compromise settlement with the Government. It can hurt taxpayer morale to see a tax claim for the years 1921-1929 of over $98,000 settled in 1937 for $7,500. In another case the taxpayer owed $15,500 for the years 1943-1945; the claim had to be settled in 1952 for $2,600.

MORE important, we should strengthen our tax laws to make tax avoidance more difficult. One of the most urgent changes needed in the law is to require all taxpayers who claim business expenses to keep detailed records of them. This would control exorbitant, unsubstantiated deductions. Really adequate records are not now compulsory.

Representative Cecil R. King, Chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Administration of Internal Revenue laws, with the assistance of the Treasury, has drawn up a thoroughgoing bill to require such records (H.R. 7893).

The King bill, among other provisions, would disallow all unverifiable claims for deductions. Under the present law, if a taxpayer makes claims for expenses that are unproved and seem too high, the Bureau of Internal Revenue must try to determine a reasonable allowance.

Perhaps more important, this bill would require an employer who grants hidden, tax-free raises to report their value to the Bureau. At present, its agents have no adequate method for finding such non-salary rewards. Some fringe benefits would clearly be subject to taxation even under present laws if the Bureau knew of them.

Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois has introduced another bill aimed at flagrantly unreasonable deductions. His bill sets limits on allowable deductions for business expenses. For example, he would fix a daily limit on allowable traveling expenses.

These proposed changes in the law would make many of the present dubious practices impossible. Our congressmen should be urged to give them serious consideration.

Furthermore, just as soon as it is feasible, Congress should move to plug the loopholes that now legally permit people to receive hidden income. Deferred payments and stock options are examples. These moves should, in justice, be co-ordinated with moves to give taxpayers some tax relief.

Relief should be granted not only in the lower brackets, but up and down the scale. Congress should face the fact that when, over the years (not just during national emergencies), you tax away 80 to 90 per cent of a man's income, you virtually drive him into searching for loopholes by which he can retain a fair share of his earnings. Further, you tamper dangerously with the incentives that power a system of free enterprise when you tax the ablest businessmen so ruthlessly.

We taxpayers in the lower brackets will find that many of the injustices I point to will automatically be reduced by lower rates and adjustments of deductions.

In fairness to Congress we should note that a few such moves have already been made. The standard deduction for contributions, medical expenses, interest, and so on helps many taxpayers (and relieves them of much disagreeable paper work). The double exemption for the aged or the blind also helps many, as does full deductibility of medical expenses for the aged. However, several other big steps are needed if fairness is to be approximated. Of special interest to the average tax-withheld taxpayer are these lines of change:

Congress should revise personal exemptions. These now discriminate against single persons and young people. Now only $600 a person as a rule, they should be raised selectively. Thus, allowance might well be made for the fact that it costs a taxpayer more to maintain a teenager for a year than to support a baby. Taxpayers who contribute a substantial part but less than 51 per cent of a dependent's support might be allowed a proportionate exemption.

Single persons are still discriminated against in several ways. It costs most single persons more than half as much to live as it does couples. Still, the single person gets only half the exemption. He is restricted in claiming exemption for dependents. He cannot split his income. Isn't Congress putting unreasonable pressure on the single to marry?

Congress should also restore the 10 per cent earned income credit or its equivalent. For many years before World War II, the law allowed you this credit if you received your money in salary or wages. The mailman who earns $3,500 a year by pounding a route deserves a 10 per cent reduction in his tax, compared with the man who collects the same amount in dividends. At present the law makes no distinction as to the sources of their incomes.

IN PLACE of an earned income credit, Congress may prefer to liberalize deductions. To take only one illustration, the working mother might well be allowed to deduct the expense of a nurse or day-nursery care for her children while she is at work. Two million employed women have children under 6.

A wise judge once said that in taxation perfect justice is an "iridescent dream." Any student of taxation must agree with him. But Congress should seek, at the first possible moment, to improve the fairness of the tax laws. Then, when a taxpayer hears of a possible dodge to avoid paying his fair tax, his question will not so often be, "Is it legal?"

It will be, "Is it right?"

THE END★★

AN AMERICAN STORIETTE

DOUBLE TAKE

Big Ken wasn't worried—he loved them both

IT HAD all started on that day, seventeen years before, when they brought Kenny to her in the hospital. Of course, he was just a few hours old, and yelling his head off, which did nothing to add to his charm, but even then Norma was sure that her son was the most beautiful baby in the world.

When Norma's friends came bearing blue-ribboned gifts, they were evasive. Even her mother had remarked, "It's a good thing he's a boy. Looks are so much more important to a girl." Then she had blushed at her tactlessness and added, "He's certainly healthy!"

"Maybe he'll change," Norma told herself when Kenny was five . . . and then ten and thirteen and finally seventeen. But by that time she was reconciled to the fact that he was never going to change.

His sandy hair sternly resisted every effort of brush and barber. His pale-blue eyes gave him the expression of an absent-minded owl. His teeth were prominent and his nose too long. At school, though he was popular with his classmates, he'd earned the appalling nickname, "Old Horse Face."

Years of living with Kenny had not immunized Norma to his looks. He was her darling and her pride, but she never overlooked a chance to improve his social accomplishments. Once, when she had packed Kenny off for piano lessons and later to dancing school, Big Ken remonstrated.

"Just what are you trying to prove?" he'd asked. "The kid isn't a freak, you know. He just happens to be a little on the homely side."

"Don't you want your son to be well adjusted?" Norma asked heatedly. Secretly, she wondered why Kenny couldn't have inherited some of her husband's good looks.

"I'm not worried. He has your charm." Ken dropped the discussion and retired behind his newspaper. . . .

She knew the day she had been subconsciously dreading was at hand when Kenny fell in love for the first time.

"Her name's Marilee Courtright," he told his mother dreamily. "She sits right across the aisle from me in Ancient History. Gosh, she's beautiful!"

Norma noted with a pang of pity how Kenny polished his shoes, scrubbed his teeth, and battled with his stubborn hair. He was Norma's and she loved him dearly, but it was difficult to see how the glamorous creature whom Kenny had described could take "Old Horse Face" seriously.

"He couldn't fall for some ordinary-looking girl who'd be nice to him and good for his morale," she exploded to Ken one evening. "Oh, no—he has to fall in love with a glamour job who'll slap his ears down and ruin his self-confidence."

Ken stared at her. "Have you met her?"

"No, but I'm going to," Norma retorted grimly. "There's a PTA meeting Thursday and we're going. Marilee is going to sing with the Glee Club." . . .

AT THE meeting they sat side by side in the crowded auditorium and watched the girls file onto the stage. Kenny was at the piano; he accompanied the Glee Club.

Norma's eyes passed over the first row of girls—the second. Her fingers tightened on Ken's arm. "Look—there she is. Just as Kenny described her. The blonde in blue."

Norma felt her heart plunge. She *was* beautiful. And probably getting a big kick out of Kenny's wide-eyed adoration. . . . No, not wide-eyed; Kenny squinted.

Wallowing in her own misery, Norma was only half aware that the program was over when she felt a hand on her arm.

"Pardon me—you're Mrs. Norton, aren't you?"

Norma turned and looked at a pale, homely little blonde in a red dress. Her hair was curled into unnatural ringlets and her lipstick was uneven. She looked like a plain child dressed in her mother's clothing.

"Will you come with me, please? Kenny thought you might like to see the exhibits." The girl blushed scarlet, forgetting the rest of her well-rehearsed speech. "I—that is, Kenny— I told him I'd watch for you. I'm a friend of Kenny's—Marilee Courtright."

Norma stared at her. This, then, was the vision Kenny had described. "The eyes of love!" she thought. . . . "But how did you know I was Kenny's mother?" she asked. "Did Kenny point us out?"

"Oh, no—he didn't have to." The girl gave a shy smile. "He just told me to look for a woman who looked exactly like him, so of course I knew you immediately."

by Zoa Sherburne

Texas Has Everything

(*Continued from page* 41)

make like a tumbling tumbleweed, drifting whither the spirit moveth.

Unless you are figuring on colliding with an immovable object, you need no special equipment. No water jugs, emergency fuel tanks, bowie knives, or shootin' irons. All you need is fortitude. A filling station, a feed bag, or a place to sleep will always bob up when you want it. If you break down, just wait; don't walk. A car will come along, it will stop if you're in distress, and there is nothing a Texan can't fix with a piece of baling wire and a judicious helping of thoughtful profanity. But you will never escape a sneaking suspicion that something wild and woolly is about to happen, and this suspenseful excitement is one of Texas' great charms.

You'll have to hunt like a beagle to find a bad road. Texas has 198,273 miles of mapped roads, 43,500 among the world's finest. They're so good that most accidents happen when drivers fall asleep on straightaways. To avoid this sad fate, carry a hammer and tap yourself on the noggin. I often drove 200 miles in 200 minutes without denting the speed limits (60 daytime, 55 nights) too much.

OUTSIDE the clippy joints in big cities, you can get the biggest, tenderest beefsteaks on earth at bargain prices. One you can eat without busting your binnacle may cost $1.25, including all the trimmings. In a cowboys' hotel at Fort Worth I got a T-bone so big it had to be served on a turkey platter. In a pioneer hotel at Hamilton I sat down to a family-style dinner where they kept bringing bowls and platters of home-cooked stuff until I couldn't reach the table. Chicken-fried steaks, which are the cowpokes' delight, seldom cost $1 and are, roughly, the dimensions of a bridge table. One reason for this, of course, is that Texas has 1,000,000 more cattle and sheep than it has people, and there are 7,711,194 people.

Motels and tourist lodges, like steaks, are big and economical. Texas and California argue about which of them invented the motel, but Texas certainly has elaborated enormously on the original idea. Even in such small towns as Marshall and Fredericksburg I found ultra-modern accommodations at such motels as The Henderson and The Ranch, and along South Main Street in Houston there are spacious places with swimming pools, tennis courts, and even putting greens. On the outskirts of Fort Worth is the new Western Hills, where you may swim in a heated pool, loll in a *cabaña*, or have dinner in your suite before a crackling wood fire. At many Texas motels you may have coffee brought to your room in the morning merely for the asking. It's free.

Don't be offended if Texans fail to thank you for compliments about their possessions or their state; they are weaned on a sublime conviction that everything in Texas is the biggest or best or both. Even billboards; there's one north of Austin 67 by 107 feet, the world's largest. Once when I told a Texan his wife and daughter must surely be the loveliest women on earth, he looked mildly surprised and drawled forthrightly: "Why, hell, yes!" It never occurred to him that they might not be.

Anything in Texas that isn't the biggest or best is bound to be the smallest or worst; there is no mediocrity. The smiling Negro who washed my car at Abilene said his wife was after him for delinquent alimony. "I don't know how she's gonna get it," he grinned. "I'm the poorest boy in the whole state of Texas!" Beside a San Antonio department store which calls itself "The Biggest Store in the Biggest State," stands a one-chair shoeshine stand with the proud banner: "The Smallest Store in the Biggest State."

At the other end of the gamut are fabulous Texans who are themselves among the state's wonders—such men as Jesse Jones, who thinks nothing of entertaining 200 luncheon guests at his little ol' ranch; Amon Carter, the Fort Worth publisher who gives $100 cowboy hats to people he likes; Honest John Nance Garner, dean of Uvalde's sidewalk whittlers; Ben Hogan, big drive of the golfing business; "Skinny" Wainwright, hero of Bataan; and countless others. Some of the most famous military men of modern times now live in retirement at San Antonio. And Texas even claims to be the birthplace of General Eisenhower.

If your time is limited you'd be smart to decide in advance what kind of stuff you'd prefer to revel in. You should understand that all Texas is divided into two parts, East Texas and West Texas. They are two different countries. East Texas is lush with farms, forests, and lakes. West Texas is strictly from Hopalong—boundless plains studded with gaunt mesas, buttes, and escarpments. Each Texan takes it for granted that his part of the state is best, can tell you exactly why, and don't argue with him. More durn' trouble starts thataway.

APRIL to December is the best all-round season for exploring, although the Brownsville region is tropical and the Gulf Coast is always pleasant. Whatever you do, make no bets on the weather. The only sure thing about Texas weather is that there always is some occasionally, but don't depend on it, because it is more apt to be than not. If you don't like the weather, Texans will advise you to wait just a minute. One day during my junket they had blizzards in the north, sandstorms in the west, a heat wave in the south, flooding rains in the east, and an earthquake down the middle. That's about normal.

Up in the Panhandle it gets so cold they brag of using medium-sized frozen rattlesnakes for railroad ties. The big ones they save for trestles. I was proudly assured that their dust storms are the biggest, blackest, scariest dust storms the world has ever seen. Folks said they were so thick the prairie dogs dug burrows in the sky. They said it was a won-

derful sight, after one of these storms had passed, to watch it rain prairie dogs for a couple of days. That was also where I heard of the tourist who stopped to ask directions of a bandy-legged old rancher and his middle-aged son. "Looks like rain," the tourist remarked. "Be right gracious if it did," the old man agreed sociably. "Not that I care, but it'd be a real treat for my boy, here. Me, I've seen rain." . . .

If it's variety you're seekin', Texas is your cookie. For one thing, there are 7 cities of more than 100,000 population, 9 more above 50,000. One of the magical sights of Texas is to watch shining skyscrapers rise slowly from the distant plains like something out of Aladdin's lamp. Each city is a character.

In Houston, the industrial behemoth, millionaires come 19 to the dozen, but you may dine at a drive-in attended by a dreamboat in theatrical scanties. You may also get even money that Houston will be America's largest city by 2000 A.D.; it's now 14th.

Dallas, next largest, brags that it's about the only Texas town where nobody ever fought a battle about anything, but it is mostly famous for the largest state fair in America, and for a department store, Neiman–Marcus, which creates and sets styles, not only for the Southwest, but for all the fashion world. It's so flossy that New York dowagers often fly to Dallas to select bridal trousseaux for their offspring, to be sure they're the last word, and it has luxurious private rooms where oil magnates are entertained while trying to decide what dainties to buy as surprises for their dreamboats. Single sales of $25,000 are commonplace, and it is probably the only store in the world which could—and did—advertise 100 fur coats at $15,000 each and sell every one before noon.

San Antonio, as cosmopolitan as New Orleans or San Francisco, was laid out along the trails of meandering longhorns; old-timers said it was like a skillet of snakes. The Fiesta San Jacinto each April compares with the Mardi Gras and celebrates Texas independence from Mexico. Fort Worth brags of being "Where the West Begins" and likes to tell about two Comanche war chiefs who came to town, put up at a hotel, and at bedtime blew out the gas lights. The one who recovered became a good Indian; he said any people who could survive a night in Fort Worth were indestructible. Visiting firemen often feel that way.

AUSTIN, the state capital, spreads on green hills and has a statehouse which didn't cost a dime: Texas paid the builders 3,050,000 acres of land which became the legendary XIT ranch. It set aside another 1,000,000 acres to maintain the state university, so they struck oil, and now it is called the world's richest school. El Paso, nestled in a mountain bowl beside the Rio Grande, has been a gateway to Mexico and California 400 years and seen more shootin' than a penny arcade. VIP's are still hustled from trains by two-gun possemen who show them the sights from a stagecoach.

Corpus Christi, beside a blue half-moon bay, has been having fun ever since federal troops in '62 accidentally bombarded it with hollowed-out cannon balls filled with whisky. Galveston has never needed any more firewater than it had; pirates and French adventurers set a roisterous pace which has never slackened. Beaumont, on the contrary, was drowsing 'mongst its cabbages when fabulous Spindletop oil field blew in, to launch a zillion-dollar Texas industry and transform Beaumont into such a helldorado that police warned good citizens to walk in the middle of the street after dark with a gun in each hand. Nearby Port Arthur was founded by a Kansas City visionary who swore he was guided by spirit Brownies.

Amarillo, where most of the world's helium comes from, and neighboring Lubbock, in the Panhandle, still retain the flavor of cowtowns, although both

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY AL KAUFMAN

are highly industrialized. They fight like wildcats for supremacy. When the 1950 census showed Amarillo slightly larger, Lubbock vociferously demanded a recount. At Waco, I wanted to cry, because progress has wiped out all traces of the brave days when settlers gunned it out with redskins on the banks of the *Rio de los Brazos de Dios*, the River of the Arms of God. I found the same story at historic Wichita Falls, where half-wild local youngsters used to kill wildcats with their bare hands.

At San Angelo, the nation's largest inland wool market, I attended a modest little get-together where 110 legs of lamb were barbecued at one time. Incidentally, I learned there how to tell a sheep from a goat: a sheep's tail hangs down, a goat's tail stands up and wiggles. Ain't that edifying? Near Laredo, where rancher Charlie Alexander trains dogs to guard sheep by letting puppies get their groceries from a mother ewe, I was introduced to an elegant eatment called *cabrito*, the meat of an unweaned kid roasted over mesquite coals. Laredo is the border city where the old ballad mourns for the young cowboy who was shot in the breast and knew he must die. You hear it from every juke box when the town cuts loose with an international fiesta each Washington's Birthday.

Cities are fine, but me, I'm a country boy. So a lot of Texas' little ol' rustic wonders pleased me plumb to pieces. Fishin', for instance; I was amazed to find 3,695 square miles of lakes. My favorite is 40,000-acre Caddo near Marshall, where lunker bass leer from the splayed feet of giant cypresses, but the biggest is Texoma on the northern frontier—1,250 miles of shore line, attracting more visitors annually than the Grand Canyon or Yellowstone Park. That's where those big waves did me no good when a norther blew down. When dams now in work are completed, Texas will have 31,500,000 acre-feet of impounded water; enough to make a 5,000-square-mile inland sea; enough to dunk all of Rhode Island 30 feet down.

Or you take the deep woods. In Texas? Yep! There are 76,000,000 acres of forest, the greatest woodlot of any state. What sent me were the flowering trees —dogwood, redbud, mountain laurel, Grancy graybeard; fragrant magnolia and sweet bay; holly, possum yaw and yaupon, which flame with berries in the fall. Even the mesquite of the western plains is graceful. It saved many a pioneer from death. Old-timers used to boil the roots and leaves for medicine, grind the beans for flour, and use the bush as a weather forecaster. It never frosts after the buds appear, and a cold winter always follows a heavy bean crop. An Indian told me, so it must be true.

Or you take flowers. I'm a pushover for a posy. I got a terrific charge out of driving endlessly between pastures riotous with bluebonnet, red Indian paintbrush, mauve wine-cup, purple coneflower, the pastels of wild verbena and petunia, and the varicolors of lantana, prickly poppy, fire wheel, and niggerhead. The state highway boys, bless their aesthetic little hearts, plant them along the roads. Near Navasota one sunset we passed a pond where cattle stood knee-deep in water lilies, while the opening petals of evening primrose reflected the blue haze of distant hills. I durned near hit a telephone pole gawking.

In West Texas, cacti were flowering and cows were munching like crazy on exotic nosegays. The maguey—century plant to youse Eastern dudes—was throwing up stalks which would shortly burst into towers of bloom. Mexicans use maguey sap to make a fermented refreshment called *pulque*, and distill it into fiery *mescal*, but a gallon of it couldn't exaggerate the majesty of those lofty white desert candles marching across the infinite *Llano Estacado*, the Staked Plains, where the highways follow lonely trails once marked by sun-bleached buffalo skulls on mesquite posts.

At Tyler, I found flowers a $25,000,000 business. From this Rose Capital of America are shipped some 20,000,000 field-grown bushes annually, two thirds of the nation's production. I bought two dozen long-stemmed beauties for 50 cents, but most of the buds are snipped and thrown away to strengthen the plants. Tyler's October Rose Festival has parades, 35 bands, 500,000 blossoms on display, and a luscious Rose Queen.

Speaking of capitals, you can hardly think of anything that Texas hasn't a capital of. Kilgore, the Oil Capital, is so pincushioned with derricks that they had to pass a law prohibiting firing a pistol downtown for fear of hurting an oil well. At Crystal City I found a statue of Popeye dominating Popeye Park; that's because Popeye is a spinach hound and Crystal City is the Spinach Capital of the Universe. Cuero is the Turkey Capital; the festive Turkey Trot each fall attracts hordes who keep hoping for a high wind while the Sultana is parading in her turkey-feather costume. The Nut Capital of America—but, nuts, this could go on forever. However, don't overlook Gainesville, the Circus Capital; it has a really professional circus in which every performer is a local amateur.

For the most entertainment in a commutable range, my vote goes to the Kerrville neighborhood. There, much more than in any other locality I found, tourists are made welcome. Most Texans are too busy to bother with 'em. Within sight-seeing distance are San Marcos, with a jungly river, glass-bottomed boats, and a "kissing oak," where old Sam Houston reputedly kissed every gal in town before marching off to hassle with the Mexicans; Fredericksburg, a German town with an Old World beer garden and a church built to resemble a coffee grinder; Enchanted Mountain, the easiest peak on earth to climb, where the Texas Rangers whomped the Comanches; New Braunfels, beside a big spring—one of 14,000 Texas springs—which flows 200,000,000 gallons a day and makes the world's shortest river, two miles long; Old Camp Verde, headquarters for an army camel brigade, until it was disbanded because the camels couldn't take the beating, proving that Texas is tougher than the Sahara Desert. After the camels were turned loose, they

scared many a buckaroo into signing a pledge. The last camel wandered to Arizona, where it died.

A few miles south of Kerrville in the Hill Country I came one day to a sign marking the frontier of The Free State of Bandera. Above the sign rippled the national flag—a pair of cowboy jeans 10 feet long. This turned out to be Texas' Dude Capital and one of the state's brightest spots.

SEEMS that these hill folks were suspicious of furriners until, 20 years ago, Eb Buck weakened and permitted a few of them to pay him $9 a week for bed and board. To his amazement, he liked 'em. Next year, the John Bruces and the Dee Crowells took in a few. Now there are 10 dude ranches, ranging from little ones where you can help with the dishes to big ones like the Flying L, which has an airport. There are also good hotels and a flock of excellent tourist courts.

They all pull together to show dudes a big time. Their Stompede each May is a hoot-and-holler jubilee with a Cow Belle queen. But the thing I admire is their independent spirit. A few years ago they petitioned President Truman to declare a National Cowboy Week to honor the pioneers. Mr. Truman didn't answer —one of the few opportunities he has passed up to write a letter. The folks held an indignation meeting, seceded from the Union, proclaimed The Free State of Bandera, passed laws forever outlawing railroads, smokestacks, carbon monoxide, and ulcers, and elected a character named Zeke as commander-in-chief of their army, navy, and horse marines. This year, just to spite Mr. Truman, they are running Zeke for President. Looks like a landslide. . . .

Characters are what you never get away from in Texas—characters, independence, and history. Any Texan can tell you all about the founding fathers: Moses Austin, the St. Louis banker who started this first American colony on Mexican soil; Stephen Austin, his peace-loving son, who carried on the colonization in times when "Texas was a heaven for men and dogs, but hell for women and oxen"; Sam Houston, that strange, austere man who came from Tennessee, formed a volunteer army, told his men to "Trust in God and fear not!"—and won Texas independence from Mexico.

In the state capitol and the splendid state museum at Austin you may find, as I found, the records of many other characters who laid the groundwork for Texas' greatness, among them the men who guided it during its 10 years as an independent republic on American soil. There is great drama in these faded documents.

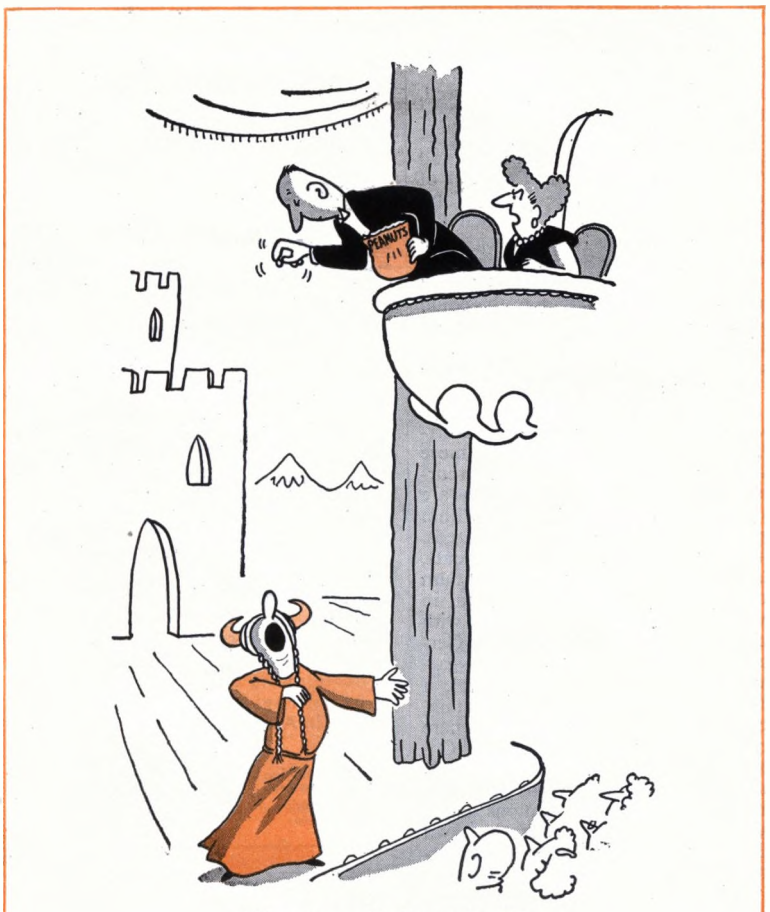
In the biggest and bestest department, West Texas takes the marbles. The deepest hole in the ground is Palo Duro Canyon in the Panhandle, rivaling the Grand Canyon in majesty. From a comfortable lodge on the rim I motored down to the bottom—yep, there's a road—to consider how Charles Goodnight must have felt when he drove cattle into that fearsome place in the Indian days, founded the first ranch, and remained to become rich and famous. He can have it; it's too spooky for me.

The wildest pioneer town was Tascosa, 100 miles northwest, rendezvous for highwaymen, rustlers, and renegades. The only laws it ever had were knife and gun. Every man in the cemetery died with his boots on. The population was eventually whittled down to one old woman. When she died, citizens of Amarillo adopted the old town, and today it is riotous again with the shouts of healthy, happy kids. It is headquarters of Boys' Ranch, an Amarillo project to help underprivileged youngsters. One of the boys showed me the oldest trail in Texas—a ford across the quicksandy Canadian River used by prehistoric men and beasts during the Ice Age and still used by wandering cowhands.

The richest modern boom town, Snyder, is 250 miles south—just a step in Texas. I got there by wedging the hearse into a 49-mile-long parade of oil trucks. Snyder was too poor to pay a preacher when a gusher roared in at the edge of town four years ago, opening a tremendous field. Now every citizen who owned a foot of land is rolling lettuce, and the church, smack over the field, is probably one of the world's richest. I wanted to stay at Snyder overnight, but there wasn't a pallet to be had; population has quadrupled. So I got out of there by grinding 49 miles back to Big Spring between the oil trucks. Even then I had to drive 60 miles to find an empty bed.

Texas' most beautiful cave, one of a dozen, is Longhorn Caverns near Burnet. It is in one of the 44 state parks. It has spectacular indirect lighting, no ups or downs, but it's six miles long. That's too long for guys like me who are allergic to calisthenics, so I went over and ogled the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River, which I could enjoy sitting down. It isn't the biggest or best of anything, but it's real purty.

AMERICA'S biggest farm, the King Ranch, south of Corpus Christi, is a century-old, 1,000,000-acre feudal empire swallowing parts of three counties and several good-sized towns. Until quite recently it administered its own justice, but lately has made some concessions to the sovereignty of Texas. Armed guards still patrol its hundreds of miles of fences, but today they don't shoot first and ask questions afterward; they just arrest you for trespassing and give you a fair trial before a judge. Both the judge and the cowboy guards, of course, are employees of the ranch. This is the last stand of baronial grandeur in America.



"George . . . don't you dare!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY CLYDE LAMB

A good highway (U. S. 77) slices through the ranch, and it takes hours to pass the fences. You can't see the main house from the highway, and that's a pity, because it is quite a shanty—a stone palace with 18 rooms and an elevator. The handful of people who live there must have an awful time deciding where to sleep. From the highway, however, you can see the massive hump-necked zebu—Brahman—cattle imported from India; they revolutionized the beef business in our Southern states. Grazing in green pastures also are herds of heavy-bodied Santa Gertrudis cattle, the only breed developed in the United States; they originated on the King. The biggest agricultural machines make huff and puff on distant horizons, and if you're lucky you may catch glimpses of thoroughbred horses grazing in miles-wide fields, for this is the home of Assault and many other champions of the turf.

The biggest winter vegetable garden in America—with apologies to Florida and California—lies 100 miles south in the Brownsville neighborhood called the Rio Grande Valley, and here I bumped smack into another monument to a Texan's gumption. Today, the valley is a tropical oasis burbling with palm-lined canals and fields fringed with flowers. Thousands of Northerners winter there, picking sweet grapefruit with ruby-colored pulp, papayas which are supposed to make you feel like a colt, mangoes, dates, bananas, and munching vegetables of enormous size. From this tiny region come trainloads of fresh fruit and vegetables for which stay-at-home Yankees pay premium prices in the dead of winter. Just across the Rio Grande is Matamoros, a lively Mexican border town, and southward excellent highways stretch into the heart of Mexico.

I FOUND the oldest town in America a good day's drive westward—Presidio, on the border, where human beings have lived for 10,000 years. I was even more intrigued by Ojinaga, just across the Rio Grande, a Mexican town almost unspoiled by tourists. The first Texans, by the way, were cave men who drew pictures on cliffs. Half a mile of ancient pictographs are visible near Paint Rock, south of Ballinger, and there is almost an acre of prehistoric carvings in stone near Shumla, not too far from Del Rio. It is amazing that no effort is made to preserve most of these relics. Unless you can cuddle up to the ranchers who own the land, you can't even get near most of them.

The oldest hole in the ground was made by a giant meteor which fell near Odessa; anthropologists think it may be the origin of the Indian legend of the Thunderbird. Some of the finest Indian mounds, filled with artifacts, were at Nacogdoches. When I tried to find them I learned they had been leveled off to build the high school. The oldest living animals, however, can be seen and petted at the Kurt Apelt ranch near Comfort; they're armadillos, armored anteaters unchanged since prehistoric times, and cute as kittens. A baby armadillo costs $5. All I need in my overloaded jalopy is a baby armadillo.

The biggest ghosts in Texas are the scary Chisos Mountains in 700,000-acre Big Bend National Park. Chisos means ghosts. Enormous rock formations look like hooded spooks about to pounce, and I got to them by skirting the Devil's Backbone and Hell's Half Acre. Wow! This park is loaded with wild bears, ferocious wild boars called peccaries, and mountain lions, among other playful fauna. Rangers killed 10 lions east of there during my visit. They were probably looking for me.

THE tallest mountain east of the Rockies is 8,751-foot Guadalupe Peak on the New Mexico line 112 miles east of El Paso and 55 miles from Carlsbad Caverns. Guadalupe and its neighbor, El Capitan, only 750 feet shorter, are among 83 Texas mountains more than a mile high. In a canyon at their base is the marked grave of a guide killed by Indians in 1855. There's a place on the highway where you can park and see those infinite spaces where men fought to tame the wilderness, and it really does things to you.

But, of all Texas' high country, I found nothing to compare with the Davis Mountains southeast of Guadalupe. At Balmorhea, I swam in the world's largest walled pool, fed by a spring flowing 26,000,000 gallons a day. At the foot of Mount Bloys, I stood in a natural amphitheater where an old-style cowboys' camp meeting is held each year. And along the highway from Pecos to Balmorhea one midnight I saw the most theatrical sight of my life—an electrical storm southward over Mexico, continuous streamers of lightning like neon serpentine lashing the sky to the limit of vision and slicing through soaring billows of cloud. But it never rained a drop. . . .

The hardest thing about writing a report on the wonders of Texas is finding a place to stop. This thing could go on indefinitely. I haven't told you about the dinosaur tracks in the Paluxy River bed near Glen Rose; or the prehistoric 33-room pueblo on Saddleback Mountain south of Old Tascosa; or the rootin' tootin' rodeo put on annually by prisoners in the penitentiary at Huntsville; or the old-time cowboy reunions at Stamford and Anson.

I haven't told you about Jefferson, the town called "The Mother of Texas," which all but died because it refused to let the railroad come in, and is now welcoming tourists to explore its venerable mansions; or about towns I found named Point Blank, Circle Back, Gunsight, Loco, Pancake, and Grand Saline, which is built on top of a mountain of salt a mile wide. I haven't even told you about the Onion Fiesta at Raymondville—which, natch, is the Onion Capital of Creation and the weepingest place under the sun.

All I can say is, if you want it, Texas has got it. And next time you hear a Texan making big talk about his native state, don't be too quick to snicker. He is probably a danged liar. But also, dogone it, he's probably right.

THE END★★

Things Happen in PARIS

JACK LONG

SIDEWALK SNACK: Vacationers stop for a refreshing sherbet on a stick from a sidewalk vendor

DER-UJINSKI

CANCAN GIRLS in a night club . . . one of the many reasons why Americans, young and old, go to Paris

ROBINEAU

FAVORITE STATUE: When Americans see this figure of Joan of Arc, they often exclaim, "There's a statue of Ingrid Bergman!"

FORBERT

"HUB OF THE UNIVERSE": From the top of the Arc de Triomphe visitors view the beautiful tree-lined boulevards of Paris

Lovers find each other . . . passports disappear . . . a Wyoming sheepherder eats his vacation . . . and many other exciting adventures occur when Americans visit the glamour city of Europe

by Harry Hill

THE AUTHOR is general manager of American Express Co., Paris

AMERICAN tourists in Paris always seem to have an adventure of some sort. Here at American Express we hear their stories. Besides cashing their cheques and serving their travel needs, we have helped them find lost sweethearts, rushed them across France by private car when they have missed their boat trains, located mislaid passports, searched for missing jewels, and even supplied escorts for visiting beauty-contest winners.

At least once we played cupid. It sounds like a scene from a movie but it is true. A mother and daughter who had just arrived in Paris from Rome came in for their mail, then asked if there was any way the mail department could help them find a young man named Jack.

"Jack who?" the mail clerk asked.

Well, that was the trouble. The girl had met Jack on the train. They had talked for hours but had exchanged only first names. Then in the hurly-burly of arrival at the station, Gare de Lyon, in Paris, they had become separated without giving each other an address.

The clerk said she was very sorry but there were so many Jacks that without a last name it was rather hopeless. They agreed and went away. But two hours later the mother came back alone. Jack was an exceptionally fine boy, she said, and her daughter had really fallen in love with him. Couldn't something be done?

This time the clerk summoned Suzie. Suzanne Combaud, now in charge of our mail department, has been with us for 29 years and is probably better known and liked by American tourists than any other French man or woman in Paris. Suzie said she would try to find Jack.

She told each of the mail clerks at the seven windows to call for her every time anyone by the name of Jack asked for mail. During the next four days there were dozens of Jacks. Suzie looked them over and asked each promising young man if he had recently come from Rome. None had. But at last one said, "Why, yes—how did you know?"

Suzie asked him to wait, and made a telephone call to the nearby

OUTDOOR CAFÉS abound in the "gem of cities" and are particularly popular with Americans. This one is located in Montmartre

STATEMENT required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) showing the ownership, management, and circulation of The American Magazine, published monthly at Springfield, Ohio, for October 1, 1952. 1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, John W. McPherrin, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Editor, Sumner Blossom, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Managing editor, Albert R. Perkins, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; Business manager, None. 2. The owner is: The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company, 640 Fifth Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.; the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one percent or more of total amount of stock are: Claire Knapp Dixon, New York, N. Y.; Claire Knapp Dixon and C. E. Stouch, New York, N. Y.; Gardner Hasen, Easton, Maryland; Joseph F. Knapp, New York, N. Y.; Margaret R. Knapp, New York, N. Y.; Knapp Securities Corporation, Wilmington, Del.; Louis Ettlinger McFadden, Peekskill, N. Y.; Publication Corporation, New York, N. Y.; Shaw and Company, New York, N. Y.; Flora E. Whiting, New York, N. Y. 3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. (Signed) John W. McPherrin, Publisher. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 23rd day of September, 1952. (Seal) Michael J. Ducey. (My commission expires March 30, 1954.)

Grande Hotel. A few minutes later she asked Jack if he knew the girl coming in the door.

"Do I know her!" said Jack. "I've been looking all over Paris for her."

Weeks later Suzie received a post card from New York. It was from Jack. He and the girl he had met and lost on the train from Rome were engaged to be married. The card was addressed to "Suzie," American Express, Paris. Jack didn't know Suzie's last name.

One of the happiest pairs of travelers I have ever seen was a young couple on their honeymoon. Neither had ever been to Paris before, so we helped them plan a 10-day tour of the high spots in and near Paris. They visited the Louvre, rode along the Champs Elysées in a carriage, and took a boat ride on the Seine. They saw the palace of Louis XIV at Versailles and visited the château country. They had lunch on the Eiffel Tower and spent an evening in the red-plush rooms of the Monseigneur Night Club, where two dozen violins played their requests. They dined at the famous rooftop restaurant, the Tour D'Argent, and were thrilled when the lights were turned out so they could see Notre Dame Cathedral below cast in lovely relief by floodlights.

At the end of their ten days they came in to buy their train tickets, told us what a wonderful time they had had, and left for their hotel and the boat train to Cherbourg and the Queen Mary. Two hours later they rushed into the office looking drawn and pale.

"We've missed our boat train," said the young man. "What can we do?"

The summer season was at its height and booking another passage would be next to impossible.

Summer and winter we see that the garage which supplies cars for us always keeps a special car gassed up and ready outside the office for just such emergencies. We explained the possibilities.

It was 215 miles from Paris to Cherbourg. The train took 5 hours. With luck a private car could make it in 4 hours. The train had been gone 30 minutes, so there was a reasonable chance they could still catch their ship, though nothing could be guaranteed. Also, a private car and chauffeur to Cherbourg and return was expensive—$150.

The groom had spent more than he had expected to and he had only $75 left. Would we take a personal check as part payment? For honeymooners in a jam we would, we said, and rushed them to the car.

The chauffeur reported later that they said hardly a word until they were flying up and down the hills outside Cherbourg. Then they began to laugh and joke and said this was the best part of their trip.

When the car reached the dock and the bow of the Queen Mary loomed reassuringly overhead, the driver apologized for asking but said he was curious to know just how it was that they had missed their boat train.

"We were *on* the boat train," replied the young man. "Then we discovered we had an extra $5 in French money and my wife said she would run out to a perfume counter just outside the station while I stayed with the baggage. She found a bottle of perfume, all right, but then in the hodgepodge of tracks and cars she couldn't find the train. At the last moment I took the baggage off. I almost didn't make it."

"That perfume was rather expensive," said the chauffeur.

"No, we think it will be worth much more than the $155 it cost. We expect to be married a long time, and we are always going to keep that bottle, unopened, to remind us of the time—for the sake of a few dollars—we almost lost each other at the Gare St. Lazare in Paris."

Probably the fastest tour ever made of Paris was accomplished in a rather odd way. A New York stockbroker said he and his family would have only one day in Paris but that they "had to see everything." We explained that this was quite impossible. He thought for a moment, then brightened with inspiration.

"No, we can do it," he said. "My wife and daughter can see the churches and my son and I will go to the museums."

Another vacationer traveling by train had eight days between ships and insisted that he see eight capitals of Europe. We arranged a tour which took him overnight from Paris to London, thence to Amsterdam and Brussels the following day, overnight to Berlin, on to Vienna the fourth night, to Rome the following afternoon and night, overnight from Rome to Berne, and back to Paris the seventh night. No hotel reservations were necessary, since he slept each night on the train.

By contrast, a retired architect, traveling third class, asked us to help him plan a year's trip for the purpose of studying the architecture of France. He spent three months in Normandy alone.

Two elderly ladies from Boston who asked for a private car and chauffeur also knew exactly what they wanted. Cathedrals were their specialty. For 22 days they drove all over France, not only visiting churches, but attending 6-o'clock Mass every morning and going to bed at 9. The driver, not accustomed to such Spartan hours, was pretty haggard after those 22 days.

This same chauffeur once drove for the manufacturer of a widely known brand of cash register. The first day he left his charge at a Paris restaurant where luncheon is served for about 1,500 francs, or a little over $4. The next day he dropped his client at a similar place.

As the manufacturer stepped out of the car he spotted something near the window of a very modest restaurant next door to the big one. It was a cash register of his own make.

"What's the matter with eating in that place?" he asked.

Demanding that the driver come in with him to interpret, he examined the cash register carefully and asked what kind of service it was giving. He offered a few pointers on its care and after lunch asked to keep the check, rung up in francs on the register, as a souvenir. The meal had cost only 300 francs, but it was much tastier, he told the driver, than the 1,500-franc lunch of the day before.

Another chauffeur drove for an American tourist whose sole interest seemed to be spending all day long in various cemeteries. He was a maker of tombstones.

The American who attracted more attention in Paris than any other I remember was a middle-aged man from Wyoming who arrived by plane one October dressed in a ten-gallon Stetson, a silk neckerchief, a gabardine shirt with pearl buttons, and cowboy pants. Inconsistently, he wore an ordinary pair of walking shoes instead of high-heeled boots.

He told our uniformed interpreter who met him that he wanted to go immediately to the Café de la Paix. He had read about it in a magazine. The Café de la Paix is one of the grand old sidewalk cafés of Paris. It is on a corner of the big square, Place de L'Opéra, where perhaps more people, cars, and busses pass than at any other intersection in Paris. There are sometimes as many as 200 tables on the sidewalk, where Parisians and tourists watch the world pass by.

Our man from Wyoming in the cowboy hat couldn't have chosen any spot in Paris where he would be more conspicuous. But he paid no attention and seemed always occupied with a delicate French pastry or an ice cream. At lunchtime he would move inside, where his favorite dish was an enormous mixed green salad. Except for brief taxi rides to Notre Dame, the Eiffel Tower, and the Arch of Triumph he spent almost all of his time there at the Café de la Paix.

When his eight-day stay in Paris was up, an interpreter, a Frenchman who had never been to the States, took him back to the airport, remarking on the way, "I am a great admirer of the American West, which I have known, until now, only through the films. It has been a great pleasure to meet a real cowboy."

"Cowboy?" said the Westerner, slightly ruffled. "I'm not a cowboy. I'm a sheepherder. We're traditional enemies. But never mind. I've had a wonderful time in Paris—saved for this trip for years. You see, each fall after roundup time we sheepherders come down out of the hills, and the first thing we do is put on our best clothes, go to the best restaurant in town, and eat all the things we've missed all summer."

He had taken his usual holiday. On this occasion he had merely extended it to Paris.

AMERICANS are becoming more educated about the world in general, I am sure, though some of their questions still rather amaze our French guides and tour advisers. The French can smile indulgently when movie-educated youngsters, passing the figure of Joan of Arc, exclaim, "Oh, look! There's a statue of Ingrid Bergman!"

But they shake their heads when, as sometimes happens in the palace of Louis XIV at Versailles, someone asks politely, "I beg your pardon, but just who is the king of France now?"

The best sport I ever heard of was a 75-year-old woman from Oregon who was anxious to go on our night-club tour. This lone elderly tourist arrived at the office all dressed up in an evening gown and a hat covered with blue-and-white feathers just as the well-loaded busses were ready to leave. She had not bought a ticket in advance and was told there was no place for her.

"But I see a place there in that last bus," she said.

The last bus was filled, except for one seat, with a group of U. S. Navy boys.

"You surely wouldn't wish to go with a party of sailors," said the tour conductor.

"And why wouldn't I?" she asked mischievously.

The sailors, out for a good time, whistled at her, and as she got in the bus one leaned over and plucked a feather from her hat.

"I've just got to have one of these for good luck," he said.

The guide said she was wonderful. At the Lido cabaret she bought the boys champagne and danced with each one. Her hat, however, had become only a bare framework. Each sailor wore a blue-and-white feather stuck through the knot of his tie.

THE French have a joke which goes: "Where is the American section of Paris?"

"In the first ten rows of the Folies-Bergère."

This has its shade of truth. Most Americans feel their first trip to Paris is not complete without a visit to this world-famous burlesque show. We have a desk in the office where tickets are sold for the ballet, music concerts, plays, and the follies. The girl in charge says 90 per cent of the requests for tickets are for the follies.

Americans are often amazed at the education and culture of French workmen. A Minneapolis realtor and amateur painter was anxious to gather a small collection of inexpensive but tasteful paintings while he was in Paris. He hired a car and went to several galleries and auctions, but he was at a loss about values. When he recalled that the elevator man in his hotel was reading Schopenhauer, he decided to ask his chauffeur what he knew about paintings.

It turned out that the chauffeur was fond of paintings and had a small collection of his own. After that the two visited auctions and galleries in tiny byways that only a Parisian who knows paintings could find, and the Minnesotan found exactly what he wanted.

Once a fashion magazine wrote us that the editors were sending the winner of their "best-dressed and most beautiful young businesswoman" contest to Europe and would we please supply her with an escort while she was in Paris. This was quite out of our line, but we asked one of our young American trainees if he would oblige.

He did, and a rather belated report came in the mail from the magazine the following year. Could they use that engaging Mr. Thompson again for another contest winner? We had to report that the engaging Mr. Thompson had married a pretty French girl.

Then there was the "case of the $5,000 in jewels." Two girls making a two-day

trip to the Riviera from Paris kept the interpreter waiting at their hotel until there was barely time to reach the station. The taxi driver threw the bags quickly into the luggage rack in the back of the car, and somewhere along the way one fell off.

When the loss was discovered one girl said, "Oh, that is the bag with the $5,000 in jewels."

The girls went on to Nice, and we put ads in the Paris papers, just as we would for any lost bag, regardless of value. Two French soldiers brought it in and swore under oath at the police station that they had not opened it. Then, with appropriate witnesses, the bag was opened. There were no jewels inside.

THE girl admitted sheepishly when she returned that she had invented the story of the jewels, hoping we would work harder locating the bag. It had never occurred to her that the police would open it.

One young lady traveling with a group of pilgrims on the morning train from Paris to London telephoned us frantically from the first train stop and said she had lost her passport. Where had she been the day before? In her frenzy she could hardly remember. Had she done any shopping? Yes, at the department store, Aux Galeries Lafayette, and she had cashed a traveler's cheque there.

We told her to go ahead with her group and to wait at Calais with our interpreter at the station there. Fortunately, we found the passport at the store, where she had shown it when cashing the cheque and we sent a man on with it to Calais. Her group had gone on to London without her and she was waiting forlornly at the station. When she saw the passport she kissed it and said, "Every hour this got more important, and now it's like finding my guardian angel."

And that's just about what a passport is to a traveler in Europe. One must show it even when registering at a hotel. Not many are lost, though more than once passports have been brought into the office from the floor of a café or from under the seat of a taxi.

In July and August we always have an avalanche of young people—cyclists and hikers looking as if they had just come out of the North Woods, the girls in slacks and shirts and the boys in shorts, T-shirts, and whiskers. They clamor for their mail, shave, and wash their clothes —and often their feet—in the washbasins. They clog the sidewalks outside selling and trading bicycles. Sometimes they put up notices in the mailroom such as: "To Sadie Peters: Come see us. We're at the Hotel Malherbe on the Left Bank. Sally and Dorothy."

We held a meeting once to decide what to do about these uninhibited guests. I think our decision was a wise one. We decided to do nothing at all. After all, these young people are the future executives and future wives of executives of America. Instead we enlarged the washrooms and now everyone has more room.

I guess it's part of U. S. tradition that when a company gets big it's obligated to give service for which it is not paid. Our biggest free service is our mail department. Any American tourist who wants to can have mail sent "In care of American Express." In the summer it takes 23 people to handle it. Last July we handed out well over 100,000 letters.

The French mail girls claim Americans are much more expressive of their emotions than the French. When old friends spy each other they let out a whoop and dash across the room with open arms. "And you say *we* are emotional," the French remark, throwing up their hands.

I was surprised once when one of our interpreters told me he could tell Americans by the way they walk.

"Yes, they have a freer stride," he said. "Perhaps it's because they wear fuller-cut clothes than Europeans. You can tell Americans by the way they laugh, too."

He went on to relate that once he was with a group of rather boisterous American soldiers waiting in line at the Gare St. Lazare to buy their tickets to Le Havre.

A French woman turned to the interpreter and said, "You hear those fellows? How they joke, how loud they laugh? You can tell they come from a big, free country like America."

But the French appreciate this. Like Americans, they have a wonderful sense of humor and tolerance. They love to see their American visitors let themselves go and have a good time. It's a happy combination, because there's no place like Paris for doing just that.

THE END★★

America's Greatest Manhunt

(*Continued from page* 21)

criminal has been matched again and again by private individuals, young and old, during the last three years—ever since the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in March, 1950, enlisted the co-operation of civilians in America's greatest manhunt. This is the continuing manhunt conducted by the FBI for the "Ten Most-Wanted Fugitives" in the United States.

You've probably heard of the big dragnet. It was set in motion by J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI, who decided many ruthless outlaws might be brought to justice if they were exposed to pitiless public limelight. A list was compiled of the ten fugitives whom the FBI considered the most dangerous public enemies. These ten were widely publicized, and thousands of "Wanted" posters bearing their pictures were posted in public buildings.

The results were sensational. Within hours after their names were made public, two men were under arrest, and most of the others were rounded up before long. Quick to use any new weapon in its

relentless war on crime, the FBI made the "Most Wanted" program a permanent one, and it has been in operation ever since.

As fugitives are captured, they are removed from the list and others added to it to replace them. There are thus always ten top rogues on the highly advertised roster.

But once criminals attain the sinister distinction of being "Most Wanted," few of them hold the honor for long. Of the original ten on the list, only one—a 57-year-old bandit named Henry Mitchell—is still at large. Of the other 38 who have been Most Wanted, 29 have been caught. And, of these 29, 11 have been tracked down through information supplied by civilians!

The captured criminals include some of the most celebrated desperadoes of modern times—such men as dapper Willie (the Actor) Sutton, master bank robber and jailbreaker; gunman George Heroux, a ruthless and savage criminal; and Gerard Puff, who is accused of shooting an FBI agent to death in the gory gun battle in which he was captured. No matter how foxy or tough they may be, they just can't survive the kind of limelight which makes them known to millions of their fellow citizens.

This was impressed upon me recently when I visited the headquarters of the FBI in Washington, D. C., to find out how the "Most Wanted" manhunt was progressing. Mr. Hoover and his associates didn't boast about its success. FBI men don't boast. But I learned at firsthand how the "Most Wanted" operation is making life harder for notorious bad men than ever before.

A fugitive from the law has always had the odds against him, of course, but these odds become overwhelming when publicity makes him so well known that a high percentage of honest people are likely to recognize him at any moment.

Take, for example, the capture of Ernest Tait, one of the most vicious robbers whose names have appeared on the "Most Wanted" list. One summer night in 1951 this desperado and his partner were surprised by police in the act of robbing a night club in New Castle, Ind.

With a .45 automatic blazing from each hand, Tait blasted his way through the ring of police, while other officers closed in on his partner. Rather than run the risk that his pal would talk after being arrested, Tait shot him down in cold blood, then leaped into a car and roared away in the darkness.

Apparently the gunman thought he was safe when he reached Coral Gables, Fla. On the night of July 11, 1951, he entered a restaurant and ordered fried chicken. But when he crossed the state line Tait's name had been placed on the "Most Wanted" list, and that very day the restaurant proprietor, Lewis Hillsberg, had seen a picture of him in a local newspaper. Hillsberg telephoned FBI agents and told them his customer closely resembled the wanted criminal. Tait left the restaurant before officers arrived, but the FBI spread a net for him in the Miami area.

They tightened the net the next day, when another businessman, Paul Campbell, proprietor of a haberdashery, also recognized Tait from the newspaper picture. He reported the fugitive had bought $200 worth of flashy clothes in his shop, paid for them with small bills, and had driven away in a brand-new car of expensive make.

FBI agents immediately issued a description of the car to Miami garage owners. As a result, Garageman Jesse Marrs recognized Tait at once when he drove into his establishment a few hours later and asked for a servicing job. Marrs had the outlaw's car placed on a grease rack and hoisted into the air, then called the FBI.

Two agents arrived on the scene in a matter of minutes and, with guns drawn, took Tait into custody. But it was a lucky thing his car was on the grease rack. In the car, out of reach, were the two .45 automatics, fully loaded, with which the desperado had blasted his way to freedom in Indiana!

Two young women brought about the capture of another "Most-Wanted" fugitive, Leonard J. (Bad Eye) Zalutsky, a murderous convict, who bombed his way out of the State Prison at Raiford, Florida, where he was serving a life sentence for killing a detective. Hurling homemade gasoline bombs, Zalutsky set fire to a large section of the prison. In the excitement, he kidnapped the wife of a prison dentist at the point of a knife and, using her as a shield against bullets, made his escape.

The two girls, whose identity has been kept secret for fear of criminal reprisals, had no idea that they were about to play the roles of feminine Sherlocks when they entered a Pennsylvania post office last September. But on the wall of the post office was an FBI poster with a picture of Zalutsky, a pouty-faced, bullet-scarred convict.

After buying some stamps, the girls paused to glance at the picture, and were startled to see that the criminal closely resembled a one-eyed man they had seen working in a nearby hospital. The descriptive matter under the picture said Zalutsky had tattoos of an eagle, a coiled snake, and the word "Mother" on his left forearm. One of the girls remembered noticing the "Mother" tattoo on the arm of the hospital employee. They hurried to a police station with their information.

When police went to the hospital, they found Bad Eye Zalutsky was no longer employed there, but they received another tip which put them on his track. Not long afterward an officer walked into a boardinghouse at Beaver Falls, Pa., just as the desperado was sitting down to dinner. "Bad Eye" had boasted he would never be taken alive, but the cop covered him with a gun before he could make a move. He later tried to commit suicide in his cell but was prevented from doing so and is now back in the Raiford prison.

Ordinarily, civilians who put the finger on "Most-Wanted Fugitives" do not collect large rewards. Contrary to general opinion, the FBI does not offer cash

for the capture of fugitives, and I was surprised to learn that large rewards are generally becoming a thing of the past. I was told this is because there has often been much ugly wrangling, sometimes involving lawsuits and even criminal connivance, among the claimants of large rewards.

The biggest rewards customarily posted today are offered by professional bondsmen seeking to locate clients who have skipped bail. The wardens of many prisons also offer rewards for the return of escapees, but the sums they pay ordinarily do not exceed $100, and in some instances are as low as $10.

When police seized Willie Sutton in Brooklyn, N. Y., early in 1952, it was widely reported that Arnold Schuster, the young man who informed them of Sutton's whereabouts, would receive reward money totaling between $25,000 and $100,000.

But those reports were wildly exaggerated. Had Schuster lived, he would have collected only a few hundred dollars instead of many thousands. As it turned out, all he received was a fatal bullet—a bullet which probably was fired by one of Sutton's underworld cronies or admirers.

Now, ironically, there actually is a very large reward offered for the unknown person who murdered Schuster. The City of New York has put up $25,000 for the apprehension of the killer, and the New York Patrolmen's Benevolent Association has added $1,000 to the sum. But that is probably the largest amount of bona fide reward money now posted for any criminal in America.

Persons who turn in "Most-Wanted Fugitives" ordinarily are not rewarded in glory, either. Their names are never revealed by the FBI unless they request it or their identity is disclosed through other sources. Most of them prefer to remain anonymous.

But this lack of material rewards has not kept the FBI's great manhunt from receiving magnificent co-operation from the public. Most law-observing citizens feel it their duty to help rid their communities of dangerous outlaws, and for this reason the "Most-Wanted Fugitives" face potential captors on every hand.

Most of them are extremely dangerous men, but I discovered they are not listed for viciousness alone. The FBI is at all times hunting thousands of evil characters who have become federal law violators by fleeing across state borders or for other reasons.

Last September 1, for example, the Bureau was seeking a total of 6,009 fugitives, and that was not an unusually high number. In picking the "Most Wanted" criminals from this great host of lawbreakers, grim experts in the FBI's offices in Washington, D. C., consider three main points:

1. The seriousness of the offense for which the criminal is wanted.
2. His menace to society.
3. Any unusual circumstances which may make it difficult for state or local authorities to capture him.

In addition, certain criminals are known to be more vulnerable than others to nationwide publicity.

Once the FBI's crime specialists have picked a man to add to the sinister list, and their decision has been approved by Director J. Edgar Hoover, the Bureau broadcasts the wanted man's description all over the country.

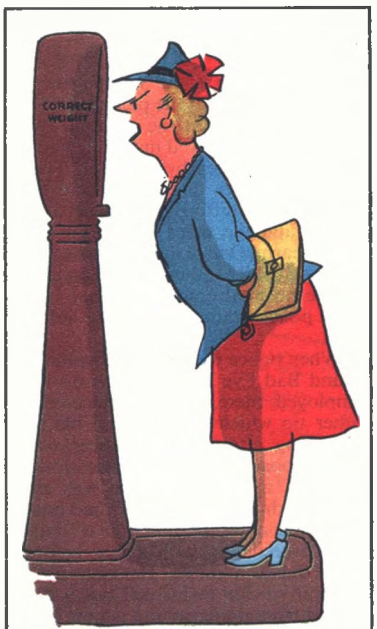
Pictures and stories describing the fugitive are sent to wire services, newspapers, magazines, and radio networks. Bales of descriptive posters and leaflets are mailed to post offices and police stations all over the nation. Then, on a specified release date, headlines concerning the wanted man appear from coast to coast, radio and TV sets blare his description to millions, and his picture appears as if by magic in thousands of public places.

Very few fugitives, as I have said, can survive that kind of spotlighting for long. On the average, they are recognized by somebody within a few weeks after the first blast of publicity. All that then remains is for officers to take them into custody.

But that is not always a simple matter. Since they are usually desperate, depraved characters, those trapped in the FBI's dragnet often fight savagely to avoid arrest. Not infrequently, guns spit fire, and blood is spilled before they submit to the law.

When killer George Heroux was caught a few months ago in Miami, Fla., for example, he temporarily turned the tables on the two local police officers who captured him.

A sulky, handsome young man who had achieved "Most Wanted" eminence after holding up several banks single-handed, Heroux was just moving out of a ranch-style house where he had been living in Miami when the two local police officers called on him after receiving a tip from one of Heroux's neighbors who suspected he might be a criminal. Heroux did not argue with the policemen and shrugged nonchalantly when they said they were taking him to a police station. He only asked leave to get his coat, a white sports jacket.



"You lie!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY STAN HUNT

The cops did not bother to search the coat, but wished later they had. When the three men reached the police sedan, parked at the curb, Heroux whipped a snub-nosed revolver out of the coat, covered both officers, disarmed them, and shackled one cop with his own handcuffs. He forced this cop to crouch in the back of the car, climbed in beside him, and ordered the other cop to drive.

"Get me out of town the quickest way," he snarled, "and make up your minds you're both going to die. I'm George Heroux—one of the ten most-wanted guys in America!"

"I never heard of you," the officer in the back of the car lied, hoping to injure the thug's vanity, but both he and the cop driving were powerless to do anything else. Keeping both cops covered, Heroux forced the driver to speed toward the outskirts of town.

Without the knowledge of the men in the car, however, neighbors had witnessed the kidnapping and had called police headquarters, which had sent out a general radio alarm. In a few minutes a patrol car containing three detectives picked up the trail of the speeding sedan, started gaining on it. Commanding the cop to drive faster, Heroux smashed the rear window of the sedan and opened fire on the pursuers.

The detectives returned his shots and, racing alongside, traded bullets with him at close range as both cars careened along the road at 80 miles an hour. Heroux emptied his own gun and started shooting one of the cop's service revolvers.

At that moment the cop in back saw his chance, and took it. Handcuffed though he was, he doubled up his knees and plunged both feet at Heroux's body. The killer fired at him but missed. One of the cop's feet pinioned his gun arm against the back of the seat.

At the same instant, the driver stepped on the brake and cut the steering wheel. The car smashed into a tree, and Heroux was knocked senseless by the impact.

When the detectives from the police car unscrambled the men in the wrecked sedan, they immediately handcuffed Heroux, and he caused no more trouble. But it was only by a miracle that both the captive cops were not slain.

FBI men who closed in the very next night on Gerhard Puff, another "Most-Wanted Fugitive," were not so lucky.

A clean-cut, well-dressed man of 22 who looked like a go-getting young salesman, Puff had been Heroux's partner in several bank stick-ups. He and his 17-year-old wife, an ex-strip-tease artist, had lived with Heroux and his wife in the Florida ranch house for several weeks.

Shortly before (*Continued on page* 107)

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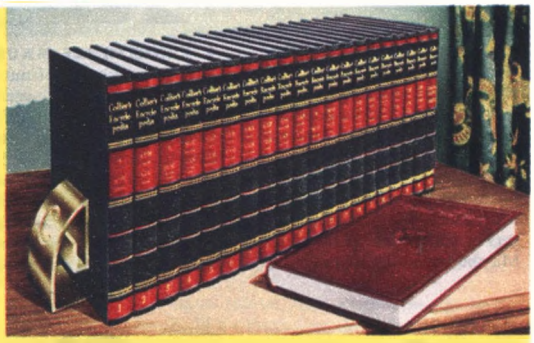

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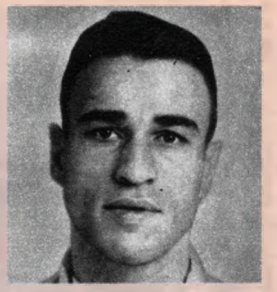
10 MOST WANTED FUGITIVES

Pictured on this page are the top hunted men listed by the FBI. If you see any of them, don't try to capture them yourself, but notify your local police or the FBI at once

1. HENRY RANDOLP MITCHELL: Armed robber, forger, narcotics peddler; wanted for $10,000 bank holdup in Florida. Age 57; 5 feet 5 inches tall; stocky; graying brown hair, brown eyes, ruddy complexion. Scars on left eyebrow and left wrist, and stiff, crooked left little finger. Avid gambler. Has spent 25 years in prisons



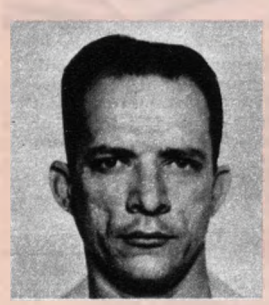
2. FREDERICK J. (the Angel) TENUTO: Most hunted criminal of all. Ruthless slayer, master jailbreaker, bank robber, and pal of Willie (the Actor) Sutton, in two prison breaks. Suspect in murder of Arnold Schuster. Age 37; 5 feet 5 inches tall; pimply faced; weak brown eyes; imperfect S. J. tatooed on left forearm

3. SIDNEY GORDON MARTIN: Wanted for brutal assault and robbery of Massachusetts farmer. Army deserter and jailbreaker. Age 29; 5 feet 7 inches tall; brown hair, blue eyes. Known as a "ladies' man." A burn scar on left cheek. Has nervous habit of running fingers through his curly hair. May be armed to resist capture

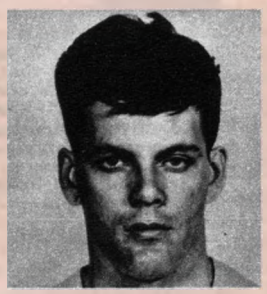
4. KENNETH LEE MAURER: Wanted on charge of murdering mother and 11-year-old sister with ax and knife in Detroit. Shy and retiring; tendency to stammer; age 19; 5 feet 10; 150 pounds; large hands and feet, walks with shuffle. Fond of outdoors and farming. May be in a remote rural area. Considered dangerous

5. ISAIE A. (Frenchy) BEAUSOLEIL: Robber and sex criminal, wanted for hammer murder of young woman in Michigan. Age 49; 5 feet 10; 170 pounds; swarthy; brown eyes and deep dimple in chin. Fond of roller skating, Chinese checkers, small kittens. French-Canadian, neat-dresser, does not smoke or drink

6. JAMES EDDIE DIGGS: Wanted on charge of shooting to death his wife and two sons, and wounding police officer. Good family man until he suddenly went berserk in Norfolk, Va. Age 38; 6 feet 1; slender. Black hair combed straight back. Wears glasses, has gold upper front tooth. Fond of hunting. Extremely dangerous



7. NICK GEORGE (Little Nick) MONTOS: Safe cracker, clever and vicious; wanted for savage robbery and beating of 74-year-old man and his elderly sister in Georgia. Has escaped jail 4 times. Age 35; 5 feet 5; weighs 170 pounds; black hair, blue eyes, scars on right temple and left little finger. Loves Italian food and bulldogs



8. THEODORE R. (Sonny) BYRD JR.: Forger, ex-convict. Smoothest rascal on the list. Wanted for passing bad checks ($40,000 worth) in New Mexico and Arizona. Age 26; 6 feet tall; weighs 170 pounds; has brown hair and blue-gray eyes. Scar on left side of neck. Talks glibly and is thought to be narcotics addict

9. HARDEN COLLINS KEMPER: Forger, white slaver, ringleader in stolen-car racket in New Mexico. If you encounter talkative cowboy traveling with 11-year-old son, he may be this 50-year-old jailbird, wanted for jumping bond. Slender, 5 feet 6½; graying brown hair, blue eyes, false teeth, heart tattooed on left arm

10. JOHN J. BRENNAN: Tough bandit wanted for a $40,000 daylight bank robbery in Illinois. Age 33; 5 feet 9; slim; has blue-gray eyes; 4-inch scar on right jaw, and piece of his right ear lobe missing. Heavy drinker, quick-tempered, and boasts he will never be taken alive. Usually armed, and considered extremely dangerous

(*Continued from page* 104) Heroux was captured, however, the Puffs and Mrs. Heroux flew to New York, where they took rooms in a midtown hotel. FBI agents trailed them there and set an elaborate trap for Puff's capture.

FBI men were stationed outside the front and rear entrances of the hotel, in the lobby, and upstairs on the ninth floor, where the Puffs' room was located. One veteran agent, Joseph J. Brock, was placed in a rear hallway off the lobby, where, by peering through a panel in a frosted-glass door, he could command a view of everyone getting on or off the elevators.

The Puffs and Mrs. Heroux were absent from the hotel when this trap was set, but about 12:30 P. M. Mrs. Puff and Mrs. Heroux returned and went up to the ninth floor. A few minutes later Puff also strolled into the lobby, appearing very nonchalant and carefree, and likewise took the elevator to the ninth floor. FBI men inside the hotel flashed this news to the agents waiting on the outside. They thought that Puff couldn't possibly escape them now.

But while Puff was upstairs with the two women something happened to arouse his suspicions. FBI men told me they still don't know what it was, but they suspect that Mrs. Heroux had received word of the capture of her husband in Florida the previous day, and that she communicated the news to Puff. In any event, something happened within a few minutes which transformed him from a carefree individual into a desperate one who felt he must flee the hotel at once.

Instead of taking the elevator, however, he crept stealthily down the back stairs. When he reached the ground floor he saw Agent Brock, with his back turned to the stairs, peering through the panel in the glass door.

Brock never had a chance. Five bullets from Puff's revolver tore into his body, wounding him fatally.

As Puff darted through the glass door past him, however, the wounded agent fired his gun at him, and when Puff raced through the lobby he was met by a hail of bullets fired by the FBI men stationed there and at the hotel entrance. He managed to get outside, but collapsed on the sidewalk. His thigh bone had been fractured by a bullet.

Even after agents had snapped handcuffs on Puff, he remained defiant. "I was alone," he snarled. "I don't remember nothing!"

That was one of the grimmest battles FBI men have had to fight in capturing a "Most-Wanted Fugitive," but last September New York City police engaged in an even bloodier one when they cornered three escaped convicts in an apartment in uptown Manhattan. Had the desperadoes remained at liberty long, they certainly would have been added to the "Most Wanted" list.

These convicts were two brothers, Joseph and Ballard Nolen, aged 26 and 22, and Elmer Schuer, 21. They escaped from the Federal Penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pa., by sawing through the bars of a cell, climbing down a rope made of towels tied together, and scaling the prison wall with a makeshift ladder. The trio headed for New York, where they staged a wild spree of crime. They stole cars, robbed a gun store to get firearms, staged stick-ups, and eventually held up a bank, where they seized $12,600.

Just 11 days after escaping from prison, and before the FBI stepped in, they were located by New York police in a Manhattan apartment where they had been given shelter by three young women. Police surrounded the building and broke into the apartment by jimmying a door.

The Nolen brothers and Schuer had locked themselves in a tiny bedroom, only 10 by 12 feet, and refused to come out. Detectives Philip LaMonica and Nicholas Cotter smashed the door down and, followed by Patrolman Vincent Grant, who was carrying a sub-machine gun, crashed into the room.

Joseph Nolen was sitting on the bed with one hand raised. "I surrender," he said meekly.

But the next instant he jerked a pistol from behind his back with the other hand and started shooting. At the same moment the other Nolen, who was crouching behind a chest of drawers, and Schuer, who had hidden under the bed, opened fire on the officers. Both detectives were mowed down by the frightful fusillade—LaMonica mortally injured and Cotter with critical wounds in his chest.

A split second later, Patrolman Grant avenged them. He opened up with the machine gun—raked the bedroom with a terrible hail of metal. Both of the Nolens dropped dead with more than 50 bullets in their bodies. Because of his position on the floor, Schuer was not injured. He crept out from under the bed whining for mercy with his hands in the air.

I have related this grim episode because, like others I've described, it gives an idea of the kind of desperate outlaws who are constantly being sought—and snared month after month—in the nation's greatest criminal dragnet. No man, woman, or child is quite safe when such vicious characters are at large.

As this is written, the ten fugitives on the FBI's "Most Wanted" list are just as dangerous as any who have been on it in the past. Pictures and brief descriptions of them appear elsewhere with this article. By the time you read this, very probably one or more of these evil men will already be under arrest or slain by officers of the law, but others will no doubt be still on the loose.

Should you recognize one of them as a person you've seen recently, you'll know what to do—notify the FBI or your local police department. It is through such co-operation by honest people that our biggest manhunt has been immensely successful.

THE END ★★

THE GOLDBERGS, beloved by millions, as they appear on TV (l to r): Rosie, David, Molly, Jake, Sammy

by Jack Long

Her family is her FORTUNE

Every time you've seen or listened to "The Goldbergs" haven't you wondered about Molly's actual family? Well, here at last is your chance to know them. We think you'll find them even more wholesome, wise, and lovable in real life than in the world of make-believe

"YOU have been bringing us stories lately about people who have made outstanding contributions to family and community life," a reader wrote this magazine recently. "I'd like to suggest that you investigate a family which has for more than 20 years brought joy and inspiration, not just to a single community, but to millions of people all over the country. I'm talking about *The Goldbergs*, who, through radio, television, and movies, have probably become one of the most famous families in the country. Of course, I don't really mean you should write about the Goldbergs, but about the actual family on which they are modeled—the family of their star and creator, Mrs. Gertrude Berg. I believe the story of this wonderful woman and her husband and children would contain lessons for all of us. They must certainly have discovered the secret of successful living."

This was perhaps the first time anyone ever suggested an article about a family behind a family—in other words, about a fictional family and its real-life counterpart. Was it true that the warm and wonderful faith of *The Goldbergs* —their certainty that life was beautiful and run-of-the-mill humanity noble—could be lived and practiced by normal mortals? If generous and helpful folks like this were around somewhere, it seemed time to find out about them. I decided to investigate. . . .

The famous Goldbergs I knew well as a member of their vast and devoted radio, TV, movie, and stage audience. I felt like a friend of Molly and Jake Goldberg, their two teen-age children, Rosie and Sammy, and their philosophical old Uncle David. I knew their neighbors and relatives, all stirred up from the melting pot of the Bronx-Jewish community in New York City. The Goldberg program has always given me a fragrant whiff of everyday living, with its problems of growing up, making good, saving and spending, getting in and out of family troubles. And the greatest untangler of trouble has always been Molly Goldberg, as played by Gertrude Berg. As she once said on a show: "When everybody's business stops being my business, then I will consider myself a very useless human being."

So I looked up a friend who was a friend of the family, and got myself invited, on a clear and tingling autumn Sunday afternoon, to visit the Lewis Berg family at their country home in Bedford Hills, N. Y. What I found there, and what I learned after careful detective work among friends and neighbors who know them well, convinced THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE that the reader who nominated this group of people for its Family of the Month had scored a bull's-eye.

I've never met any family quite like the Bergs. If anything, they're even more wonderful than their theatrical counterparts. From the moment you meet them until it's time to leave, they give you the feeling that you're not only welcome, but that you're one of them. And being one of them somehow makes you feel pretty fine. I'm a fairly hard-boiled reporter, but I have to admit that the Bergs

THE BERGS in real life at a window of their Bedford Hills, N. Y., home (l to r): Cherney (son), Dorothy (his wife, behind him), Gertrude (mother), Harriet (daughter), and Lewis (father)

PHOTO BY GEORGE KARGER

"got" me. As a real-life family, they're almost too good to be true.

I was greeted by Gertrude Berg at the door of a 150-year-old white clapboard colonial house, as American as Bunker Hill and as pretty as a Christmas card. Inside, I found antique furniture whose hand-rubbed pine and maple surfaces glowed in the light of a big log fire. There were quaint hand-worked samplers on the wall, pewter on the mantel, a grandfather's clock in a corner, hooked rugs on the floor. The only visible concession to modernity was the large television set, which stood, not in the fire-lit living room, but in the large and more formal drawing room. I discovered later that Mrs. Berg's passion for antiques has been carried into the kitchen, where a huge and majestic coal stove glows beside the modern gas range.

The coal stove is used both for atmosphere, and for simmering some of Mrs. Berg's favorite old-fashioned Jewish recipes, such as Palestine soup, made with artichokes, onions, turnips, celery, and egg yolks, or her homemade chicken noodle soup. While she leaves most of the cooking to Louise, Gertrude Berg is occasionally inspired to turn out a gefüllte fish feast for the whole family. She especially likes to cook when she has a family problem on her mind, or is trying to solve a knotty Goldberg plot.

I was stunned by the contrast between the kind of life mirrored in this house and the simplicity of the Bronx apartment seen on the Goldberg programs. Mrs. Berg quickly straightened me out. "Molly Goldberg's family are not the Lewis Bergs," she said. I was struck by her emphasis on her husband's name. In the Goldberg ménage it is pretty well accepted that Molly is running the show. This is not so in the Berg family—at least, not according to Gertrude Berg.

It occurred to me that I might be on a false trail. Maybe there was no real-life counterpart to the Goldbergs of fiction. Maybe their philosophy of loving-kindness was nothing but a smart script-writer's concoction—the writer, of course, being Mrs. Berg, who composes every word of her scripts, as well as playing the leading role.

WHAT I found when I went looking for the family in the flesh was something quite different—and something even more inspiring. The Bergs, like the Goldbergs, have a son and daughter, Cherney, 30, and Harriet, 24. These youngsters grew up during the years when *The Goldbergs* became established on radio as the most successful family serial on the air. But Cherney and Harriet are not Sammy and Rosie Goldberg, and Lewis Berg is not Molly's husband, Jake. For *The Goldbergs*, after all, has always been a kind of soap opera, even though it doesn't deserve to be classified with most of the unconvincing weepers and thrillers which go by that name. No real family, after all, could endure a crisis or solve a problem every day of its life. No husband could be quite so whimsical, hot-headed, unpredictable, and yet so lovable as Jake Goldberg. No kids could create quite so much confusion as Sammy and Rosie. And I was about to say that no

woman could be so perfect an image of everyone's ideal mother—so devoted, so warm, so understanding—as Molly Goldberg. But about that I'm not so sure since I became a friend of Gertrude Berg's.

Because there is a connection between the living Bergs and the make-believe Goldbergs. Mrs. Berg doesn't speak with Molly Goldberg's Jewish accent, nor does she make the same beguiling hash of the English language (*If anybody wants me I'm upstairs, and if it's nonconsequential and if it's nobody, don't call me*). But Molly's philosophy of living comes from Gertrude Berg's heart, and Molly's understanding of family problems comes from Mrs. Berg's success in her marriage, in bringing up her children, and in running her own home. The Lewis Bergs have achieved the kind of life which the Jake Goldbergs and most of the rest of us can only dream about. They are healthy, wealthy, and wonderfully happy.

MEETING the Bergs reminded me of something my Uncle Ed once said after he'd retired to a farm. I remarked that it would be great to have a lot of money and not worry about my credit with the grocer, the haberdasher, and the loan company that owned half my car. Uncle Ed reared back and snorted. "I've known two dozen millionaires in my time," he orated, "and every one of 'em was miserable. Their wives left 'em, their kids disgraced 'em, their partners swindled 'em—and none of 'em knew what to do with their money after they'd made it. They'd all tell you, young fellow, that they were a lot better off and a lot happier when they were poor."

I quoted Uncle Ed's opinion on the evils of wealth to Gertrude Berg. "Were you happier," I asked, "when you were young and poor, and are you disillusioned with success?"

She laughed, shook her head, and gave me back one of Molly Goldberg's lines from a show: "'Jake wants the children to have everything money can buy, and I want them to have everything money can't buy.' But *I've* found out," she went on in the voice of the real Gertrude Berg, "that it's perfectly possible to have both, and I don't see why everyone shouldn't be well off as well as happy. It isn't money—or the lack of it, either—that makes people miserable. It's something wrong inside them."

Mrs. Berg should know what she's talking about, because since she married Lewis Berg 34 years ago they have traveled the entire road from near-rags to great riches. In Depression-year I, 1929, her husband was working as a chemist in a sugar factory which went up in flames and out of business, leaving him with no job and with two children. Fortunately, he also had a resourceful wife, Gertrude had been writing, mostly as a hobby, since the days when her parents owned a small summer hotel in the Catskill Mountains, and she composed dramatic sketches and monologues to entertain the guests. She decided to try her hand at radio comedy, hoping to make bread-and-butter money.

The Goldbergs were born from this background of dire necessity. Since the Bronx version of this all-American family first captured a local and then a national audience, they have earned about $1,000,000, after taxes, for their creator. They have been transformed into a television serial, a successful Broadway play called *Me and Molly*, and a motion picture titled *Molly*—all written and acted by Gertrude Berg. The fortune which the trials and triumphs of the Goldbergs have brought her, Mrs. Berg has used simply to help make a lot of people happy. These people include her own immediate family, distant relatives, and total strangers.

After meeting Mrs. Berg I know what was wrong with those miserable millionaires my Uncle Ed used to talk about. They wanted money for its own sake. Gertrude Berg wanted it because it was nice to be able to send her children to college, ride in a chauffeur-driven limousine, and buy her clothes at Hattie Carnegie's. But she has also given it away to hungry out-of-work actors, bought a home for a couple of old folks who were about to be evicted, rented and furnished a 3-room apartment—down to and including a chicken in the refrigerator—as a present for a newlywed niece and nephew.

She has never used her money to spoil or control others. Some of the most awful brats I've known had rich parents, and many of the most strife-ridden, unhappy families have been dominated by a successful career woman. But the family I met in the old house at Bedford Hills—and saw again in their duplex apartment on Park Avenue—behaved in the midst of luxury just like folks.

First, I shook hands with Cherney, a quiet young man who introduced me to his wife, Dorothy, with such pride and affection that I thought they must be newlyweds. I learned that they have been married for five years. Harriet, a merry, round-faced girl, took me over to her father, put her arms around him, and kissed him on the forehead. "Now, don't muss your dad's curly red hair," Mr. Berg protested. His bald head glistened in the firelight, and everyone roared with laughter.

At the long pine table a dinner of roast chicken, string beans, and fresh corn from the garden was served by Louise, the colored maid who has been with the Bergs for ten years and who used to braid Harriet's hair when it was long. I noticed that both Louise and the chauffeur were seldom addressed by name, but nearly always as "Dear" or "Darling." In fact, I soon noticed that I had also become "Dear" to Mrs. Berg, and it sounded perfectly natural.

WE WALKED off our huge meal on the 25 acres of woodland surrounding the house. We inspected the flower gardens, now withered, which are Gertrude's special pride, the greenhouse where flowers were still blooming, the vegetable gardens, the pool, and the big barn where the Bergs once kept cows, chickens, ducks, and geese.

Back indoors we gathered around the fire and talked. I confirmed my first impression that the Berg family deals in values which the Goldbergs of the Bronx

TODAY'S FABULOUS FIGURES

TEMPERATURES AS HIGH AS 90,000,000 degrees Fahrenheit are reached when an atomic bomb is detonated. But the highest temperature achieved thus far in a controlled flame in laboratory tests is only 8,000 degrees F.—when fluorine gas is burned in hydrogen.

LATEST FIGURES on treatment of wounded in Korea show that 977 of every 1,000 wounded men survive. In World War II, it was 955; in the first World War, 915.

ABOUT 6,500,000 AMERICANS now own stocks. Contrary to popular opinion, a recent survey shows that more men than women are stockholders.

THE NUMBER OF SALESMEN in this country has increased only 18 per cent since 1942, while the volume of goods sold has increased 80 per cent.

ONE OF THE HEAVIEST CLOUDBURSTS ever thoroughly studied occurred on July 8, 1951, over north central Illinois. Within 6 hours, as much as 13 inches of rain fell. In the 576-square-mile center of the storm, 335,000,000 tons of water—80,000,000,000 gallons—came down. This was an energy release equal to 9,100 atomic bombs.

NEARLY 89,000 AIRCRAFT are now registered in the U. S., but only 1,253 are owned by scheduled airlines. Private fliers use the great majority, and more than 50,000 of these planes are one-engine types. Only 540 are 4-engine craft.

THE AVERAGE MAN today can expect 6 years of retirement before he dies, compared with 3 years in 1900. By 1975 the average is expected to reach 9 years.

MORE THAN 85 PER CENT of the medical care in the U. S. today is furnished by family doctors or general practitioners.

THE AVERAGE PRICE OF AN ACRE OF FARMLAND is now $81.64—a 25 per cent increase in the last 2 years and an all-time high.

THE U. S. GOVERNMENT subsidized a record 1,500,000,000 lunches for school children during the 1951-'52 school year. Some 56,000 grade and high schools participated, and served 200,000,000 pounds of food to 9,400,000 children.

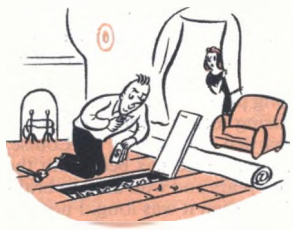
THE 2,000,000TH PATENT, issued 17 years ago by the U. S. Patent Office, recently expired, and has now joined the 1,999,999 other inventions which have become public property.

SINCE 1890, the number of high-school graduates in the United States has increased about 13 times as fast as the total population, and the number of college graduates 6 times as fast.

U. S. WEATHER REPORTS are accurate 88 per cent of the time, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce.

IN THE LAST 10 YEARS the Empire State Building in New York City, world's tallest structure, has been struck by lightning 226 times. A record stroke in 1937 lasted fully 1.5 seconds.

TIMES HAVE, INDEED, CHANGED. The U. S., which produced 15 per cent more raw materials than it needed 50 years ago, now produces 9 per cent less than it consumes.



WHILE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN PUTTING more money into savings accounts in recent years, they've been personally hoarding more cash, too. If you're an "average" working citizen, you have around $400 in your pocket or hidden somewhere in your home, as against $115 in 1939 and $100 in the 1920's.

THE LARGEST SPECIES OF WHALES is the blue whale. One caught not long ago weighed 122 tons. Its head weighed 56 tons, its heart 1.2 tons, and its blood 12 tons. The tongue alone weighed as much as a full-grown elephant.

LAWRENCE GALTON

would find incomprehensible. The conversation was on books and the theater and politics and music. I learned that Harriet is studying for a Ph.D. in literature at Columbia University, and that Cherney works in television production. His real interest, however, is music. He used to score his mother's radio show, but prefers to write dissonant modern compositions which will never make any money, and, he modestly states, will probably never even be played. He has just completed the Berg First Symphony.

Just as I was beginning to get lightheaded in this rarified intellectual stratosphere, the party suddenly turned into a game of charades, parlor tricks, and imitations. Mrs. Berg pranced into the room with her hair filled with suds and did a little dance. Dorothy guessed immediately, and correctly, that she was Mary Martin singing *I'm Gonna Wash that Man Right Outa My Hair*. Drinks were served in trick glasses which looked as if they had melted out of shape and would spill their contents in your lap. The room filled with laughter.

HERE was the answer to the question I had come with: the secret of successful living. It was to be found, not in the Bergs' material possessions, but in their attitude toward one another. A friend who has known them for 23 years put it this way: "No one in the family ever thinks of himself first. It's everything for the others. If any one of the Bergs has a problem, it's all the Bergs' problem."

This is an example of the kind of thoughtfulness and consideration which makes life beautiful among the Bergs. Although Lewis Berg is now a successful tax consultant for business firms in New York and Connecticut, he has never made as much money as his wife, and there was a time when Mrs. Berg was the sole bread-winner. This situation has destroyed many men's pride and authority, but it never upset Mr. Berg's position as head of his family. From the beginning it was Father who passed out the allowances to the children, Father who had to be consulted about a new dress or coat, and Father who signed the tuition checks at college.

"Didn't the children know where the money was really coming from?" I asked Mrs. Berg.

"Well, they were pretty smart, even when they were little," she said. "But at least they never let on."

Mr. Berg's devotion to his wife is evident. He went to the hospital for a serious operation, shortly before Gertrude's birthday two years ago. He had planned a very special diamond ring as a present, and it occurred to him that if his operation were unsuccessful, he might not be around to give it to her. He called a jeweler to his bedside, ordered the ring, and arranged for its delivery in case of his unavoidable absence on the all-important day.

"That turned out to be the happiest day of my life," Mrs. Berg told me.

"You mean because it was such a beautiful ring?" I asked.

"Because Lew was out of danger," she said.

Mr. and Mrs. Berg have spent their

married life protecting each other's feelings from unnecessary shocks and jars. For example, when Harriet was a child, she awoke very early one morning with an earache. Without disturbing her husband's sleep, Mrs. Berg called a doctor, who made an examination and advised summoning an ear specialist. The specialist arrived, lanced the ear, both doctors departed, and Mr. Berg got up at his usual hour and went to work, not knowing that anything had happened. His wife didn't want to worry him.

LAST year Harriet was ill again and spent some time in the hospital. Mrs. Berg was appearing on television three days a week, so Mr. Berg spent all his free time at Harriet's bedside, and never let her mother know that she had been through a crisis and a series of transfusions. He didn't want to worry his wife.

Everything which the family has achieved, according to Gertrude Berg, has been due to the spirit of one for all and all for one. Even the success of Molly Goldberg in four different entertainment mediums over the past 23 years —a success which everyone else credits to her own writing and acting genius—she lays to family co-operation. During all the years of writing a daily 15-minute radio script, for example, Gertrude and Lew used to rise together at 6:30, and while she wrote a fresh Jake-and-Molly adventure in a pencil scrawl that was undecipherable to everyone but her husband, he was busy at the typewriter putting yesterday's composition into legible shape. Then he was off to business.

Family co-operation widened when Cherney grew up and became his mother's musical director on the radio Goldbergs, and then assistant producer on the TV Goldbergs. Harriet was a constant listener, watcher, and supplier of story ideas and suggestions.

Many adventures of the Goldberg family came directly from adventures of the Berg family. Brother-and-sister quarrels between Harriet and Cherney would be reproduced, word for word, by Rosie and Sammy, with some slight comic twist introduced by Mrs. Berg. This made their childish fights sound so silly that Harriet and Cherney soon gave them up and became models of mutual understanding. There was still plenty of material, however. The question of cutting Harriet's long braids, when she should be allowed to wear make-up, her homesickness at camp, all provided hilarious Goldberg family scenes.

Many of Molly Goldberg's perplexities over child rearing reflect, in simplified form, Gertrude Berg's own efforts to be a conscientious mother. Harriet told me that her mother was a diligent reader of books on child psychology, and always believed in reason and persuasion rather than force. "When I first started smoking," Harriet told me (she has since given it up), "Father would begin to deliver a lecture on the subject, and Mother would make faces telling him to be quiet and let me do as I liked. Of course, I always knew what was going on."

Mrs. Berg allowed self-expression in her children to go only so far, however. When their rooms and closets became too expressively messy, firm discipline would replace psychology and there would be a whirlwind cleanup.

I asked Mrs. Berg how she had avoided spoiling her children, since she was in a position to give them the best of everything, and obviously had. "I think they're not spoiled in spite of me," she said.

That's not the whole story, of course. The Berg children were limited to small allowances as youngsters, and impressed with the fact that money was something which had to be earned. When they grew older they realized that their mother's and father's incomes were the result of incessant hard labor. When he was a small boy, Mrs. Berg always took Cherney to an expensive Fifth Avenue store for his suits. At 17 he announced that he was going to pick out his own clothes, and hunted up an inexpensive chain clothing store. Harriet has no interest in the Hattie Carnegie fashions which beguile her mother, and her closet is full of unworn dresses which Mrs. Berg has given her.

Gertrude Berg's success as a mother is reflected in her characterization of Molly Goldberg. Since she first appeared on television and her face became familiar to a vast new audience, Molly and Mrs. Berg have merged into one person and become a symbol of family love and devotion to people all over America. In Philadelphia a few months ago a woman recognized Mrs. Berg and rushed up to her with tears in her eyes. "You don't know it," she declared shakily, "but you have been a mother to me for most of my life. My own mother died when I was a baby, and ever since I was old enough to understand anything, I've thought of Molly Goldberg as my mother."

Just recently Mrs. Berg was browsing along New York's Third Avenue looking for antiques, when a little girl recognized her. "Gee, you're Molly Goldberg," the child said breathlessly. "I wish I lived in your house."

Every day people write letters to Molly asking for advice on family problems and telling her their troubles. Because Mrs. Berg is such a soft touch for hard-luck stories, real or phony, her business manager has put her on a strict allowance and she is not allowed to disburse her own funds.

I SAID good-by the other day to Gertrude Berg as she got on a train for Hollywood. She was on her way to appear in a movie which will be called *From Main Street to Broadway*. Soon after her return she expects to be back on television with *The Goldbergs*, who were temporarily off the air at the time of my visit. She told me excitedly that the Theater Guild has just asked her to write a Broadway play, an honor which evidently made her feel as awed as if she were a young girl who had never written a line.

"It looks as though fortune is smiling brighter than ever," I said as we parted.

"Dear," said Gertrude Berg, "about going to Hollywood I am happy, and yet not so happy. My real good fortune is not out there. My fortune is my family, and they're here."

THE END ★★


Dear Mr.

Oppenzoomer

This was a letter that had to be written to a boss who would never understand the advantage of having a troublesome father-in-law

BY PHYLLIS LEE PETERSON

JOE HANLEY stroked his three-day beard and leaned back on the pillows. Gingerly his fingers explored the solid sheath of adhesive that held three broken ribs together under his pajama coat. Everything seemed to be in place and he looked down at Mr. Oppenzoomer's letter on the long mound of his legs.

"*My dear Mr. Hanley:*" he read.

"We are in receipt of Mr. Alexander Salmon's application for $100,000 insurance on our pension-at-age-65 plan, together with Mr. Salmon's check covering first annual premium.

"Frankly, we are amazed at the magnitude of this deal, coming as it does from a new and untried agent. We are interested in learning how you sold this case. What approach did you use? What presentation? What was the psychological motivation?

"This information will be of the greatest value to our sales training department and should prove an inspiration to other agents in the field.

"Trusting that we will hear from you shortly and with heartiest personal congratulations, I am

"*Very truly yours,*
"Ogden P. Oppenzoomer
"Superintendent of Agencies
"Acmezenith Life Insurance Company"

How did you explain why Mr. Salmon bought a hundred-thousand-dollar policy? he wondered miserably. How did you explain Pop and Willie Sullivan, who were your in-laws, to Mr. Oppenzoomer or anyone else? You had to live with them in this sagging house on Lantern Row to understand, and even then it took years.

Dusk stole into the small bedroom under the sloping eaves of the Sullivan roof, bringing cool purple shadows. The shadows lengthened, drawing a merciful veil over carved walnut and plush, hiding the china accessories on the washstand that dated back to outside plumbing. Down in the yard the heat bugs droned in a high minor key, and Pop Sullivan whistled as he prepared to hose down the straggling vines on the back fence.

Joe leaned back on the pillows, and his son's shrill childish treble rose from the yard below: "Look, Gran'pa! There's beans here under the leaves."

"Yep, Jodie! Scarlet runner beans." Pop's dry chuckle floated up on the twilit air. "You pick 'em and take 'em in to your Ma."

Joe smiled, picturing a small boy hovering about an old man unwinding a length of hose. It would be cool and fresh now at the back of the Sullivan house. The night wind stirring in the ailanthus tree, whispering secrets in the rustling leaves. The shy, pearly moon rising over Lantern Row. Joe moved restlessly under the covers and the smile faded from his face. He didn't want to live on Lantern Row with the Sullivans, he thought bitterly; he wanted a home of his own.

Someone knocked on the door, and Joe looked up as Willie Sullivan came into the small, shadowed room. He wore the green eyeshade that meant he'd been painting and he carried a canvas carefully extended between his finger tips.

"See, Joe? I got it all fixed up!" Willie's round,

Slowly, inexorably, the boxes descended on Mr. Salmon's head

1st Lieutenant Lloyd L. Burke
U.S. Army
Medal of Honor

THE RED KOREAN strongpoint had stalled our attack; Lieutenant Burke saw that a breakthrough must be made. Rallying 35 men, he crept close to the enemy bunkers. He laid down a grenade barrage. Then he ran forward to an

exposed knoll and opened a one-man pitched battle. He turned a light machine gun into the Red position. He caught live enemy grenades in mid-air and threw them back. Once he killed three men with his pistol. Before sunset Lieutenant Burke and 35 men had defeated 300. The lieutenant says:

"Every day, men who fought in Korea are coming home. They're finding jobs—partly because they and you and I own nearly 50 billion dollars' worth of Defense Bonds. For Bond savings—which protect our own families—are also building a great backlog of *national* prosperity. Reason enough for investing in Bonds—don't you agree?"

★ ★ ★

Now E Bonds earn more! 1) All Series E Bonds bought after May 1, 1952 average 3% interest, compounded semiannually! Interest now starts after 6 months and is higher in the early years. 2) *All maturing E Bonds* automatically go on earning *after maturity*—and at the new higher interest! Today, start investing in better-paying Series E Bonds through the Payroll Savings Plan.

Peace is for the strong! For peace and prosperity save with U.S. Defense Bonds!

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childlike face glowed with pride. "Nobody'd ever know Mr. Salmon sat on it!"

Joe shuddered and looked at the mad riot of color in his brother-in-law's hands. "What are you going to call this one?"

"I think—tentatively, of course—" Willie's voice sank to a sepulchral whisper: "*Washing on a Line!*"

"That's a nice name."

Willie murmured in confused pleasure and faded away into the darkness of the hall. Joe sighed and lay back, thinking of the Sullivans. Of Katie, whom he'd married. Of Willie, her brother, and his painting. Of Pop, her father, and his astrology. Of this old house on Lantern Row, wedged in between the train yards and warehouses, where Pop had lived for forty years.

Katie suddenly materialized above his head carrying a tray, and Joe's face brightened. There was a tall, frosted glass of beer on the tray, and the fragrance of mellow cheese wafted out on the room.

"I brought you a snack."

"Thanks, baby!"

Katie looked down at him and smiled. She had blue eyes like Pop and red hair like Willie, and after that any resemblance to the Sullivans, living or dead, was purely coincidental. Katie was little and sweet, and when she looked down at Joe like that his heart turned over.

"Feeling better?"

"I can take nourishment!"

Joe looked at the frosted glass and Katie set the tray down. He drew her into his arms, ignoring the pain in his ribs. Katie's lips were warm and soft, and Joe closed his eyes, dreaming of tropical isles and water splashing over cool rocks in the shadows. The water stopped as Pop turned the hose off.

"I'll be back as soon as I clean up the dishes and put Jodie to bed!" Katie rose abruptly and smoothed down her rebellious curls.

"Promise?"

"Promise!"

Joe let his wife go and looked up at her with undisguised admiration. "You're a million-dollar producer, Mrs. Hanley!"

He said it without thinking, and then wished he hadn't. It made him remember life insurance and Mr. Oppenzoomer's letter. Katie laughed and her quick footsteps faded down the stairs. The letter was still there, a gray rectangle in the shadows beside him. Joe sighed.

THE adhesive tape itched and sweat gathered on his forehead. He switched on the china lamp with the pink roses and propped up the writing pad on his knees. Outside, Pop was still whistling *Mother Machree*, with Jodie helping on the melody. The heat bugs sang and the fragrance of moist green leaves filled the cool evening air. Joe took a sip of beer, and a pensive look stole into his eyes. He began to write:

"*Dear Mr. Oppenzoomer:*

"*Yours of the 7th to hand. Please excuse my reply being in pencil, but I am temporarily laid up due to a minor accident.*

"*About Mr. Salmon, I found this prospect had a definite insurance need. Mr. Salmon's background—*"

Mr. Salmon's background was fruit. Crimson mountains of berries, yellow islands of bananas, orange forests of citrus produce. He sold it by the barrel, by the truckload, by the ton. Around him surged the sound and the fury of those who bought wholesale, while trains thundered in and trucks rumbled out carrying fruit picked yesterday from trees a thousand miles away. Even Mr. Salmon's sports shirt proclaimed his calling. Plums and cherries ran riot over it, and Joe brightened catching sight of the short, bull-like figure in the terminal shed. Mr. Salmon's shirt looked like the jackpot in a slot machine.

Mr. Salmon was no jackpot. He pulled his derby hat down more firmly on his head and looked around for a means of retreat. Joe bore down on him relentlessly through the maze of the terminal shed. Joe knew that shed like the back of his hand. For two weeks he had stalked Mr. Salmon through it, hurling facts at him, pinning him down with statistics. Now Mr. Salmon backed away until he came in contact with a stack of empty crates. He stopped and chewed on the sodden cigar butt in his mouth, eying Joe warily.

"Insurance? I need it like a hole in the head!"

"That's the way you're going to get it. Quick, final, and all at once!"

JOE unloosed his arsenal and went into action:

"Mr Salmon, you should be ashamed of yourself! You're forty-five years old. You've got a good business and a lovely family. You've got everything except life insurance, and you haven't got enough of that to bury you!"

Mr. Salmon was hemmed in against the leaning tower of crates. He was trapped by facts and beaten with figures while Joe alternately threatened, pleaded, and cajoled. Joe painted bright pictures of Mr. Salmon lolling in Florida at age 65 while his children all got college degrees. He painted dark pictures of Mr. Salmon poor and ailing, of his widow scrubbing floors, of his children selling papers in the snow. When he stopped for breath, Mr. Salmon shifted his cigar and looked away to the distant spaces of the terminal shed.

"Continue!" he said graciously.

"You're making good money now. How much will you leave behind you?"

"All this talk of dying!" Mr. Salmon shuddered. "It ain't nice. Hospitals, funeral expenses, estate taxes—"

"Face the facts, Mr. Salmon. Accidents and illness come to us all. You could die tomorrow."

"Heaven forbid!"

A spasm of agitation flickered over Mr. Salmon's shrewd features. He took the cigar out of his mouth and looked at it as if he'd never seen one before. "Better *you* should drop dead! This week is ten carloads peaches coming from California. Also talk of a rail strike!"

"What are the peaches worth?"

"Roughly—approximate, you understand"—Mr. Salmon gulped and closed his eyes—"fifteen thousand dollars."

"Ha! So if anything happened to you and that strike went through—"

"Stop!"

Mr. Salmon waved the cigar in horror at this dual catastrophe. Joe leaned back wearily, causing the tower of crates above him to totter and lean far into space. His glance swept up and rested, fascinated, on the flimsy structure, swaying indecisively in the air. Then slowly, in inexorable decision, it settled down over Mr. Salmon's head, and he disappeared in a welter of cascading crates and splintering wood.

JOE HANLEY froze into immobility, thinking of the total disability clause Mr. Salmon didn't have in the life insurance Joe didn't write. The pile of wood stirred and Mr. Salmon's hat came up out of it. It was wedged firmly down over his ears and Joe could see his lips moving under the brim. Mr. Salmon rocked back and forth among the shattered crates, crooning and tugging at the derby hat.

"You have shortened my years! May yours be shortened likewise!"

He glared up at Joe balefully, and the hat gave way. A glazed expression crept over Mr. Salmon's face looking down at it. One finger gently poked at the triangular flap of stiff black felt hanging from the crown, and Mr. Salmon returned to a muttered soliloquy:

"A skull fracture, maybe. At least. Undertakers, funeral expenses. M-m-m, they come high. Also peaches from California and fifteen thousand dollars . . . m-m-m . . ."

Every line of his massive body stiffened with resolution, and Mr. Salmon rose, kicking a wooden frame off his ankle. "So all right; we'll talk business. But not here. At your house!"

The sunlight dimmed and Joe closed his eyes, while he thought of the Sullivans and the sagging house on Lantern Row with the horseshoe hanging over the front door and the dried palms from St. Michael's in the parlor.

"*Your* house would be better!" he said weakly.

"My wife don't like I should bring home business!" Mr. Salmon's pudgy finger blurred before him, and he heard himself saying from a great distance away, "So all right. At my house. Tonight at eight!"

"*Mr. Salmon's background is the wholesale fruit business and I had no difficulty in showing him that his present life-insurance coverage was inadequate. I used no particular approach or presentation . . .*"

JOE planned an approach and drew up a presentation, but he never finished either. He went to work on them as soon as he got home that night, and he was still working on them at a quarter to eight. The trouble was that the Sullivan parlor seethed with activity around him, and he couldn't concentrate on the neat rows of figures and the graphs he was making on squared paper to show Mr. Salmon. There were boxes at the top of the squared paper and Joe looked at the last one prayerfully.

"Salmon at age sixty-five!" he murmured. "Salmon at age sixty-five!"

"You can't do it, son. Ain't no fish gonna keep that long!"

Pop's dry chuckle trickled away and Joe continued to look at him. The wizened figure on the sofa hastily returned to reading the comics aloud to Jodie beside him: "And then Knobby says to Palooka, he says . . ."

Joe unclenched his fist and looked around at Willie painting under the beaded fringe of the bridge lamp. Willie leaned forward and with infinite pains transferred a small daub of paint to the canvas before him. Joe shuddered. Mrs. Murphy next door could sue Willie for this one. Her husband's red underwear dangled on a clothesline across the canvas beside the more intimate items of her own wardrobe.

WITH a tremendous effort Joe wrenched his mind back to the graph that would show Mr. Salmon he could die any time without worrying about rail strikes. Snatches of conversation intruded:

"That Palooka, he's some fighter! I betcha he could lick anyone, Gran'pa!"

"He's okay!" Pop assented grudgingly. "But you shoulda seen the Strong Boy, Jodie. You shoulda seen John L. in his prime, and me right beside him no bigger than you are."

A great weariness surged over Joe Hanley. He gathered up the figures and graphs and jammed them into the rate book. "What are you trying to do?" he asked. "Make a fight bum outta my son?"

Pop's stained mustache quivered, and the vision of another Sullivan rose behind him, a ghost who lowered at Joe and folded brawny arms across a bare chest.

Joe fled to the kitchen.

"How'd I get into this?" he asked Katie, washing up supper dishes. "How'd I get in with all these Sullivans?"

"You married one of them. Don't you remember?" Katie looked up at him and smiled. "What's wrong now?"

"I got a prospect coming here at eight. He's good for twenty-five thousand, maybe even fifty, and I can't even talk to him. Willie and Pop are in the parlor."

"I'll get them out."

Katie's arms stole up around his neck and he kissed her, slowly at first and then with a hunger that surprised them both. The dishmop dripped down Joe's neck and he remembered Mr. Salmon.

"What time is it now?"

A discreet cough made Joe wheel. Pop stood in the kitchen door, looking even smaller in his shirtsleeves and blue serge vest. Sometimes Joe thought Pop hadn't bought a new suit since the railway pensioned him off, but kept removing the gold braid and buttons from his old conductor uniforms. Now he reeled in a gleaming length of chain from his pocket, like a ship pulling up anchor, until the presentation watch emerged in its glory.

"The time," he announced, "is exactly 7:51!"

"*I used no particular approach or presentation, although family connections undoubtedly played a part. It was not superior salesmanship . . .*"

At precisely 8:05 Mr. Salmon was ushered into the Sullivan parlor. Joe looked around incredulously as his guest sank into the green plush chair Pop bought at the railway auction. Katie had accomplished a miracle; the room was empty of Sullivans. Mr. Salmon perched on the edge of the plush chair, an incongruous figure in a pearl-gray full drape suit that transformed him from a mere huckster of fruit to a full-fledged executive. He lit a cigar and his shrewd features grew wary with suspicion.

"About insurance," he said. "Show me!"

At 8:35 the gray suit hung in wrinkled pleats, Mr. Salmon's tie was loose over his open shirt, and sweat glistened on his forehead under the bridge lamp. Blue cigar smoke drifted in pungent layers around him, and an application for fifty thousand dollars' insurance lay spread open on the marble-topped table. Mr. Salmon was licked and he knew it.

In a last desperate effort to escape educational funds, mortgage funds, and retirement income, his eyes traveled about the cluttered room. They passed over the stuffed birds and dried palms and came to rest on the wax fruit in the bowl on the mantel. A shudder passed through his frame.

"Peaches! Fifteen thousand dollars peaches rolling. A rail strike maybe—"

"And at age 65, five hundred dollars every month! Golden sands, Florida sunshine, bathing beauties—"

"At age 65?" Mr. Salmon stroked his chin dubiously, and Joe hurried on:

"Freedom from worry. Relaxation; time to enjoy life. Think of it!"

"I'm thinking!"

Mr. Salmon lowered the fountain pen over the application and Joe held his breath. Fifty thousand dollars! More than he'd ever hoped for, more than he'd dreamed. It meant a down payment on that Dutch colonial house in the suburbs; it meant getting away from the Sullivans . . .

STRANGE hissing sounds emanated from the doorway, and Joe looked up, startled. Willie was there, hovering anxiously in the shadows. His round face brightened under the eyeshade when he caught Joe's glance. The noises rose to the intensity of escaping steam, and Willie went into an elaborate pantomime of painting pictures in the air. Joe looked at him blankly and Mr. Salmon shifted in his chair. Willie disappeared.

"What's that?" Suspicion returned to Mr. Salmon.

"Nothing, absolutely nothing. Now, if you'll just sign on that dotted line at the bottom—"

"I don't know. Maybe I'm rushing."

The hissing sounds began again, and Willie painted frantically in the murky shadows. Mr. Salmon's eyes wavered. Suddenly he shifted his massive bulk, and the phantom faded from the doorway. Mr. Salmon drew out a violent silk handkerchief and wiped his forehead.

"On three hundred a month I could live in Florida . . ."

Joe sighed and patiently retraced the ground he'd covered. He explained options, he went into dividend accumulations, he dwelt on the rising cost of living, especially in Florida. The hissing sounds issued sporadically from the doorway, where Willie alternated between painting imaginary pictures and disappearing when Mr. Salmon looked around. Joe dwelt lovingly on how he would kill Willie with his bare hands.

Mr. Salmon stopped twirling the fountain pen and let it come down on the dotted line at the bottom of the application. Joe hunched forward, his body tense with concentration. Something moved across the room, and he looked over at Pop, settling himself down on the sagging sofa. Pop smiled brightly and drew out a tattered copy of *Stars and Planets* from his pocket. He immersed himself in the mysteries of space and his lips moved, studying round charts like pies cut in slices.

Joe looked at his father-in-law and opened his mouth to say something. Then he put his hand in it and bit down hard. The white application form shimmered before him and Joe took his hand out of his mouth.

"She's just being introduced to him now. She plans a quick wedding, a Paris honeymoon, and a house on Elm Street"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY JOHN NORMENT

"Mr. Salmon, on April 28th in 1972 you'll be sixty-five years old! A tired businessman, worn out with pressure and strain—"

"April 28th, eh?" Pop looked up speculatively and his blue eyes took on the glazed look of a mystic. "That's Taurus, the bull. It says here . . ."

His index finger traveled down the dog-eared page and stopped. Gloom descended over his pink face. He shook his head. "It says . . ."

"We don't want to hear it!" For an insane moment Joe considered scooping the small figure up off the sofa and hurling him bodily across the room.

"Who don't want to hear it?" Mr. Salmon glared at Joe. He shifted his weight and fixed Pop belligerently with the tip of a sodden cigar. "What's it say?" Mr. Salmon demanded.

"Maybe I shouldn't of mentioned it!" Pop said.

Mr. Salmon's cigar waved away the suggestion. "What's it say about business?" Mr. Salmon asked.

Pop's mustache drooped, and he assumed the air of a professional pallbearer. Joe pressed his hands to his throbbing temples.

"Avoid signing any papers or documents!" Pop's voice was a bell tolling out the death of Joe's hopes. "Conditions are unfavorable. You are in a period of crisis, and transportation difficulties are involved—"

"Stop!" Joe staggered to his feet and tore at his tie in a vain struggle for air. "It's all boloney. I keep on telling you—"

"Maybe!" Mr. Salmon clamped down on the cigar in his mouth. "Also, transportation difficulties could be a rail strike. I got ten cars peaches on the track!"

"You got a strike clause in your contract?" asked Pop.

"No!" Mr. Salmon looked at him with dawning respect. "Who could tell such a thing?"

"You could divert," said Pop thoughtfully. "At St. Louis, maybe."

Joe groaned and buried his face in his hands. He was forgotten, and the Dutch colonial house faded into the limbo of forgotten dreams. Mr. Salmon rose and paced restlessly between the marble-topped table and the mantelpiece. Joe looked up, and his jaw sagged. Across the pearl-gray full drape of Mr. Salmon's trouser's writhed a flowing mass of color. Glistening globules of oil paint merged into a reasonable facsimile of Mr. Murphy's red underwear on a clothesline strung across Mr. Salmon's rear. Joe's horrified gaze traveled slowly to the green plush chair. Willie's canvas was still there. Joe closed his eyes, remembering the hissing sounds from the hall.

Mr. Salmon moved to the front door. Pop stared at his back and opened his mouth. The application form slipped from Joe's nerveless grasp, but he beat Pop into the hall and elbowed him out of the way. "But, Mr. Salmon, your insurance. The pension-at-age-65 plan . . ."

"Not now!" Mr. Salmon waved him aside and opened the door. "By me now," he said, "is only peaches!"

His feet beat a hasty tattoo down the wooden steps, and Mr. Murphy's underwear blended into the shadows. Joe closed the door and clutched at the lace curtains for support. Mr. Salmon was gone. Behind him rose a babble of voices as the Sullivans gathered in the hall.

"I tried to tell you. I kept on showing you," Willie moaned.

"Taurus, the bull. He should divert—" Pop muttered.

Joe turned and looked at them. He closed his eyes, and the dark abyss of the future yawned before him. A future of years in this house, of life with the Sullivans. A vision of a pearl-gray suit, with underwear painted on it, rose and pointed a cigar at him. Mr. Salmon's voice echoed in his memory:

"Better," it said, "you should drop dead!"

"*It was not superior salesmanship that made Mr. Salmon buy this policy. You might almost say it was an act of God.*"

The late afternoon sunshine lingered on the peeling green paint of the Sullivan house when Joe turned dispiritedly up the walk the next day. His shoulders sagged, his feet ached, and he carried a hang-over of despair. It welled up in him in a fresh surge of bitterness as he caught sight of the birdlike figure in shirt sleeves perched on a rickety ladder and banging at the scrollwork over the stained-glass transom. Pop was nailing up the horseshoe again.

"It fell down," he announced unnecessarily. "Just missed the mailman this time!"

"It's going to kill someone. Why don't you throw the darned thing away?"

"Can't. It'd be temptin' fate. Besides" —Pop squinted up at the horseshoe reminiscently—"it's hung there ever since Gilhooley's livery stable burned down. Back in 1910, that was."

Joe grunted indifferently and climbed the sagging steps. A loose board shifted under his feet, and he clung to the precarious railing in a desperate effort to retain his balance. "Why don't you do something about these steps? Someone's going to get hurt."

Pop waved away the suggestion with the hammer and clambered down. His blue eyes came to the level of Joe's on the third rung from the bottom. They gleamed with suppressed excitement. "Heard the news?"

"No, what?"

"Rail strike's on. Shorter hours, better pay. About time, too!"

Joe's body drooped with utter dejection. Somewhere on a siding fifteen thousand dollars' worth of peaches rotted away. "Well, there goes Mr. Salmon!"

"He's in there!"

"Where?" Pop's pink face blurred before Joe as realization came.

"In the parlor. Been waitin' for you since 5:37!"

"With his lawyer, I presume!"

Joe laughed hollowly and went into the house doing quick mental arithmetic on the cost of a pearl-gray full drape. Mr. Salmon looked even more incongruous in the Sullivan parlor than he had the night before. He stood with his back

to the door, rapt in contemplation before the dried palms from St. Michael's. His derby hat hung on the back of his head, and scarlet apples romped across a pale-blue sports shirt. He turned and stared at Joe, the inevitable cigar clutched in his hand.

"You heard about the rail strike?"

"Yes." Joe hesitated. "I'm sorry, Mr. Salmon."

Mr. Salmon put the cigar in his mouth and chewed on it. Then, before Joe's astonished eyes, his rosy face dissolved into laughter. It melted into chuckles and broke into hoarse guffaws. Mr. Salmon rocked back and forth, slapping his knees in an excess of mirth. He leaned weakly against the mantel and Joe edged over to the door. Mr. Salmon's mind had obviously collapsed under the strain.

"Fifteen thousand dollars! Ten carloads peaches. By Tony Serafino is lost eighteen thousand. By Sol Graub, twenty. In the fruit shed today is only trouble. And by me . . . by me . . ."

Mr. Salmon wiped his eyes and beamed at Joe. "By me is three thousand dollars' profit!"

Joe sank down in a chair and the Sullivan parlor swam around him. "How?"

"I diverted. At St. Louis. Like it said with Taurus, the bull. Also, your father-in-law!"

Mr. Salmon took off his derby hat and studied it reverently. His voice sank to an awed whisper. "The stars!" he murmured. "Stars and planets!"

SILENCE hung on the room. Mr. Salmon straightened decisively and leveled the cigar at Joe. "In my business is always risks. Win, lose, it's a gamble. So later on Florida looks good. I'll take the insurance!"

Joe heard himself babbling incoherently and fumbled for his brief case. Mr. Salmon lowered himself into the green plush chair. Halfway down, his body froze. He rose abruptly and looked behind him. A baffled look stole over his face.

"That'll be fifty thousand dollars on our pension-at-age-65 plan, Mr. Salmon." Joe laid down the application form. "If you'll just sign here—"

"Fifty? Who said fifty?" Mr. Salmon's lips curved into a scornful smile. "With a profit today I'll take a hundred."

"You said—" Joe's eyes glazed and he clung to the marble-topped table. "You mean a hundred thousand?"

"That's right!" Mr. Salmon beamed expansively. "So a thousand a month I'll have in Florida. Maybe not Florida. Maybe some place where there's no fruit!"

The next few moments were never clear in Joe's memory. A series of pictures blended together in a kaleidoscopic blur. Mr. Salmon's signature lengthening out at the bottom of an application form, Mr. Salmon writing a check, Mr. Salmon clapping him affably on the back and handing him cigars. It was only when Joe stood in the front doorway watching Mr. Salmon drive away that the fog lifted from his mind.

He turned and drew a deep sigh of contentment in the still evening air. The Sullivan house loomed up before him in the shadows and Joe's eyes lingered on the horseshoe over the door. Pop was right, he thought suddenly. It had brought him luck. There was nothing wrong with this house, nothing wrong with Willie and Pop. They just needed a little understanding.

Joe smiled and pulled on the front door. It stuck, and the smile faded from his face. He pulled again.

The Sullivan house crouched above and then bore down with all its innate malignancy. There was a clink of iron on Joe's head and he staggered back blindly, clutching at nothing. The loose board in the steps rose and hit him under the chin. Joe rose into space, clearing the stairs. There was a dull thud and a knifelike pain in his chest. Joe Hanley knew no more. . . .

"Trusting this information will be useful to your sales training department and thanking you for your kind consideration, I remain,

"Very truly yours,
"JOSEPH P. HANLEY."

Joe Hanley looked down at the letter he'd written and grinned. Mr. Oppenzoomer would be surprised. He leaned over and gingerly switched off the lamp with the pink roses, then leaned back on the pillows. Outside, only the heat bugs sang, and water no longer sprayed against the back fence. The fragrance of moist green things growing drifted in on the cool evening air. A look of ineffable peace stole over Joe's freckled face.

He gazed dreamily at the china accessories on the washstand and they faded away. A Dutch colonial house rose up before him. He saw its low, rambling lines and blue shutters against white-painted brick. He stood on the flagstone terrace and admired the velvety lawn. He went into the spacious living-room and found Jodie reading the comics to himself. His son looked up at him with reproach, and Joe fled to the planned kitchen. Katie was there, silent and strangely subdued against gleaming tile and chrome. Joe Hanley knew a vague loneliness, living in the Dutch colonial house. There was only one thing wrong with it. There were no Sullivans.

A DRY cough echoed in the narrow doorway, and Joe came back to the small room under the sloping eaves. Pop tiptoed in, a copy of *Stars and Planets* under his arm. "You all right, son?"

"Sure, I'm fine!"

"That's good!" Pop blinked apologetically. "I brought you the new copy of *Stars and Planets*. It's got your sign in it. Pisces, the fish!"

The stained mustache quivered and Pop turned away. He stopped in the doorway and looked back at Joe uncertainly. "That Salmon deal go through all right?"

"Yep! I got a letter from Head Office."

Pop cleared his throat. "That stuff I told him about the rail strike. It wasn't in *Stars and Planets*. I got it from Dan McDonagh, who's secretary of the union."

The small, shirt-sleeved figure straightened, and Joe saw the thin shoulders brace themselves against the encroaching shadows. He saw Pop and all the Sullivans. Inexplicable, indomitable, living in an old house bright with laughter and warm with love.

"You're sure there's nothin' you want?" Pop's blue eyes were wistful, and Joe leaned over and switched on the lamp, banishing the Dutch colonial house forever.

"Just one thing." Joe smiled, and all the things he felt welled up in the simple request. "Tell me," he said, "tell me about Pisces, the fish!"

Pop brightened. He sat down and told him. Joe leaned back on the pillows, listening to the heat bugs sing, drifting into dreamless sleep.

THE END★★

"The title of my composition is 'More Pay for Teachers'!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY JOE CAMPBELL

It's Easy to Stay Healthy

(*Continued from page* 31)

heart—to pretty well take care of themselves.

As a matter of course, babies and most young children are given regular examinations; and older people are often conscientious about periodic checkups. But middle-age groups—from 20 to 45 or so—take health for granted. I checked this fact with many doctors. One summarized the situation: "The younger age groups take physical examinations only when they *have* to—when it is required by a school, an insurance company, a draft board, or as a preliminary to getting a job. But not one in a hundred will take such examinations *voluntarily*."

Why, I asked? Too expensive?

"I don't think cost is a factor," he replied. "A good examination isn't expensive. Some people—not many, I suspect—are afraid that something will be wrong and they'd rather not know about it. But the great majority, I believe, fail to take examinations because of pure laziness." He looked at me. "Have *you* had one recently?"

I replied that I hadn't.

"Why?" he asked.

I said, somewhat shamefacedly, that I had always *meant* to see a physician for a checkup. But somehow I had never reached for the telephone to make an appointment. Laziness and apathy were probably the best reasons.

THE time had come, I decided, for action. But, first, I wanted some pre-information. I inquired among a number of medical friends. What should one expect in a physical examination? How much should it cost? How can you tell whether you are getting a good one?

I discovered that, quality-wise, physical examinations vary enormously. This is partly because some doctors are bored with the whole idea. They are taught to treat sick people, and a few of these tend to resent it when a healthy patient intrudes on a busy practice. Result: Doctors of this type try to get rid of the patient as quickly as possible.

An examination in the office of such a doctor usually follows a pattern, I learned. There is a hurried question period: Feel all right? Any complaints? Appetite good? Things like that. Then the doc listens to your heart and takes a blood-pressure reading. He may ask for a urine sample. Then, chances are, he slaps you on the back, tells you you're fit as a fiddle, and sends a bill for $5 or $10. The whole thing may take no more than 10 or 15 minutes. In such a short time, my medical friends informed me, it is impossible to make an examination thorough enough to detect any hidden troubles.

Doctors of this type, I learned, are in the minority. Most of them are willing and able to do a thoroughgoing job.

The type of equipment a doctor owns also has a bearing on the *quality* of an examination, I discovered. If the doctor doesn't have an X-ray machine in his office, or access to one, he can't do a thorough examination of the chest for tuberculosis or lung cancer. Along the same line, laboratory facilities either on the premises or, more often, outside, are essential for examination of blood and urine.

Point No. 1, then, if you want a complete physical checkup, is to select a competent physician who is personally convinced of its value. He should have available, either in his office or at a local hospital or laboratory, all the equipment necessary for such an examination. If you have difficulty in evaluating these things, ask advice of your local hospital or county medical association.

IN THIS connection, passing an insurance examination cannot be regarded as a clean bill of health. In most cases these examinations are merely rough screening tests—meant to catch only the most obvious ills. As a rule, they consist of checking height, age, urinalysis, and weight, blood-pressure reading, listening to the heart, and possibly a question or two. The whole thing may take no more than a few minutes.

One insurance doctor told me: "What we are chiefly interested in is to be sure that the applicant is apparently in good health. We deal in masses of people and play the averages."

Thorough physical examinations are available in many places. Your own family doctor can usually give them. Or, if you prefer, you may go to a diagnostic clinic; virtually every large city and many small and medium-sized cities now have these. They prescribe no pills, perform no surgery. Their one job is to give the best possible examinations for a fee. If they find something wrong, they give the patient a report on the findings which he may, if he wishes, take to his own physician for advice and treatment.

The Pratt Diagnostic Clinic in Boston, Mass., is one example of this type of enterprise. Others: The McLester Clinic, in Birmingham, Ala.; University Hospital, San Francisco, Calif.; Ochsner Clinic, New Orleans, La.; Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md.; Harper Hospital, Detroit, Mich.; Falk Medical Clinic, St. Louis, Mo.; Pittsburgh Diagnostic Clinic, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Ledbetter Clinic, Houston, Texas; Mason Clinic, Seattle, Wash.; Vincent Astor Diagnostic Clinic, New York, N. Y. (part of New York Hospital); Coogan Clinic, Chicago, Ill.; Scripps Metabolic Clinic, San Diego, Calif.

Similar type service is offered by organizations such as the Lahey Clinic in Boston, Cleveland Clinic, and others. An organization called Life Extension Examiners is national in scope, with representatives in virtually every city of any size. Altogether, it has some 3,000 cooperating physicians who follow standard procedures in examinations. Results of their tests are sent to headquarters in New York for evaluation and comment.

A new twist on the more elaborate examination is to combine it with a vacation, as my friends were doing at the Mayos' in Rochester. This idea has ob-

vious attractions, and a "package" plan is provided by the new Greenbrier Clinic, at White Sulphur Springs, W. Va. Here, the examination—which has a base cost of $100—is spread over a three-day period. The patient spends the morning with physicians, has the afternoon off for golf or other recreation. Dozens of large corporations are using this service.

Cost of examinations varies tremendously—and cost isn't necessarily a guide to excellence. A person may get, from his own physician, an examination for $10 that compares favorably with a $300 examination that necessitates a three-day stay in the hospital. In general, examinations in clinics average in the $15 to $50 cost range.

ARMED with all this information, I set out to get myself that long-deferred physical checkup. Without identifying myself as a writer, I went to one of the better-known diagnostic clinics. A crisp and pretty young receptionist told me the fee would be $35 and that the examination would take two hours. She gave me an elaborate questionnaire to fill out. It inquired about the health of my parents, my personal habits, past diseases, present health status, etc.

Then the examination started. An experienced nurse drew a sample of blood from my arm. I asked what tests she would give the sample. It would, she said, be checked for red cells—to see that no anemia was present. And it would get a hemoglobin test—to be sure of the ability of red cells to transport oxygen to body tissues.

There would also be a sedimentation test, and, of course, a standard test for syphilis. In the sedimentation test, red cells are permitted to settle from the blood, and the rapidity with which they settle is checked. For reasons unknown, red cells settle more rapidly when disease is present.

After this test I moved along to an examining physician, a pleasant man who appeared to be in his early 30's. He measured my height and weight, and checked my posture. Then there was a question period. He was following up the information I had put down on the questionnaire. Next, he peered into my eyes with the ophthalmoscope—a highly important procedure. In the retina of the eye tiny arteries are exposed to view. This, he told me, is one of the best places to estimate the condition of the blood vessels and to observe telltale signs of artery hardening or pending heart trouble.

Next, he looked into my nostrils, throat, and ears—to see if any nasal obstruction was present, whether I had enlarged tonsils, or any other spots of infection that might lead to trouble. Then he listened to my heart and took my blood pressure. Next, I was asked to lie down on an examining table. The physician felt the outlines of my heart, liver, spleen, thyroid, and other organs to see that they were of proper size and in proper place. Next, my reflexes were checked (with a rubber hammer) and a urine sample taken. This would be tested for sugar, a harbinger of diabetes; and for albumin—too much albumin indicates kidney trouble.

A rectal examination followed—highly important and often overlooked. Eighty per cent of cancers in this area are located within finger length. Yet one survey has indicated that frequently this investigation is omitted in checkups by private physicians!

At the conclusion of the examination by the physician, which took just under an hour, I moved along to another room for chest X ray. This would check my heart size, detect any TB spots, and uncover any cancerous condition. Next came the electrocardiogram—to check heart function.

The entire examination lasted 2 hours and 15 minutes. Three days were required to complete all the chemical tests and to assemble the data. Then I had an appointment with a "counseling" physician, who went over the report with me point by point, ready to make recommendations about any conditions needing attention.

Had anything been seriously wrong, additional tests might have been required, at extra expense. Like most other clinics, the one I visited puts a ceiling price on these. No matter what may be required, the top price is $125.

For example, if there had been evidence of thyroid trouble—enlargement of the gland, sleeplessness, tendency to be sleepy all the time, or any recent sharp gain or loss in weight—the physician would have called for a basal metabolism test. In this test the *rate* at which the body turns food into energy is measured. This is done by collecting carbon dioxide expired by the lungs. The test is a check on how the thyroid gland is working.

Had there been evidence of cancer, the physician might have called for any of a large number of tests. Cancer along the urinary tract often sheds cells which can be identified by microscopic study. These cells are present in urinary sediments. As a check, the entire urinary tract would have received extensive X-ray study.

Suspected cancer along the digestive tract also calls for special testing. A clue that such cancer may exist is often given by discovery of blood in intestinal discharges. Chemical analysis will detect such blood. Then a whole series of tests gets under way. The patient is asked to drink a milk shake containing radio opaque material—which will outline the intestines on X-ray plates. There are special tests for each of any suspected organs, including the stomach.

If routine X rays reveal any suspicious areas along the respiratory tract, areas that may be cancerous, additional studies are called for. A well-staffed and well-equipped clinic will almost certainly want sputum studies, here, again, for cancer cells, which are often shed in sputum. If such cells are present bronchoscopic studies may be in order.

YOU can be sure about one thing: Elaborate testing of this kind is not a routine procedure, so don't think your doctor is remiss if he fails to give you such tests. They are indicated *only* when earlier clues suggest that trouble spots may exist.

A woman getting a physical checkup, I learned, should insist on a pelvic examination, which is sometimes omitted. And she should require an examination of breasts. These two areas are the commonest sites of cancer in women. As is well known, breast cancer usually signals itself by a lump; but this does not mean that all lumps are cancers. A generally reliable test for cancer of the pelvic region is given by microscopic studies of fluids from this area.

As to the one question that is on nearly everyone's mind: Do physical examinations do any *good?* My answer is yes—with no reservations. It is tremendously comforting to find everything in good working order, as I can personally attest. But suppose everything *isn't* all right? What then?

A survey conducted not long ago gives the answer. Records of 1,000 businessmen who had annual examinations were checked with results of examinations a year later. The survey disclosed that 38 per cent of those with blood pressures above 150 had reduced it to normal. Of those overweight, 23 per cent had reduced to normal, and most of the rest had reduced to some extent. Eighty-two per cent of those with sugar in the urine were found normal on re-examination.

Probably the most striking fact I discovered came from Dr. Louis I. Dublin, of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. He assured me that physical examinations are apt to be lifesaving, even over a short span of time! To arrive at this conclusion, Dr. Dublin followed records of 6,000 people over a 5-year period.

Each member of the group took an

annual physical. In the group, during the 5-year period, there were 217 deaths, whereas standard life tables indicated there should have been 303. Classified by age groups, the study showed a 17 per cent saving of life under 30 years of age; 15 per cent in the 30-40 group; 22 per cent in the 40-50 group; and 53 per cent in the 50-60 group!

How explain these findings? There is only one explanation, Dr. Dublin said. The man who discovers he has a shadowy spot on his lungs is going to do something about it, before he has a full-blown case of TB. The woman with sugar in her urine is going to watch her diet and try to avoid diabetes. And the man with a budding cancer is going to have it removed, while there is still time for a possible cure.

There is, of course, only one way to *know* these conditions exist, while they are in their earliest and most curable stages. That is by means of the physical checkup conducted at regular intervals. One physician told me, "If we would give ourselves only half the care that we give our automobiles or our lawn mowers, the health gain would be enormous."

A number of efforts are now under way to make physical examinations more widely available at lower cost. Some of this work is being sponsored by insurance companies and some by state health departments. Mainly, the work is developing along lines of having most of the examining done by non-medical personnel.

Well-trained young women fill out detailed questionnaires for patients, take blood and urine samples for testing, measure blood pressure, and take chest X rays. Then doctors review the facts gathered. If anything suspicious shows up, the patient is called in for a more complete examination by a doctor.

Industry is pushing the idea of physical examinations at regular intervals; many companies require them for top executive personnel. Today, upward of 300 large corporations provide regular free physical examinations for their executives. Some of them offer free examinations to any employee who will take them.

How often should physical examinations be taken? There is no solid agreement on this score, I found. Some physicians think at least once a year. Others say frequency should be governed by age. A sample recommendation: examinations every 3 years in the 20 to 30 age group; every 2 years in the 30 to 40 group; annually for those who are 40 to 60; and twice a year above 60.

By itself, of course, the annual physical exam is no hard-and-fast guarantee of longevity. I knew a man who went to his doctor for his annual checkup, was pronounced in perfect health, and then collapsed with a heart attack as he was putting on his clothes. But this is the exception, not the rule. By and large, the regular physical examination (combined with sensible living) has proved its value in anyone's health program, regardless of age.

THE END★★

Coldriver's Medicine Man

(*Continued from page* 36)

good man, a fust-class man. But no fust-class young man 'll come 'n' bury himself here. I been tryin' to find a feller, but I got to take what nobuddy else wants."

Scattergood rubbed his nose. "Funny thing," he said, "but ye can't allus tell by the looks of a young frog haow far he'll be able to jump when he matures."

"Well," Old Doc said, "I got me one."

"When's he a-comin'?"

"Expect him this week," Old Doc said slowly. "I hain't never seen him and I hain't filled with joyful anticipations."

"Doc," Scattergood said, "he'll have to be teetotal poor stuff if ye hain't able to make suthin' of him in jig time." . . .

Scattergood made it a point to be on the station platform on Thursday when the train pulled in. Through the years, by shrewdness and industry, he had branched out from a simple hardware store to ownership of the little railroad that reached from Coldriver to the Junction. He also owned the bank down on the Square, and it was said that he was a millionaire at least.

Old Doc was there, too, but not hopeful. The pair of them stood before the depot and stared at the engine as it pulled in, dragging after it the baggage car and one passenger coach. Old Pliny Pickett, the conductor, was the first one on the platform when the train stopped. The last to emerge was a tall young man with shoulders already stooped. He was angular and his clothes had not been tailored to fit his lanky frame. In one hand he carried a huge, scuffed suitcase and in the other a black physician's bag.

Old Doc stepped forward. He extended his hand. "Dr. Wood?" he asked.

"Yes, Doctor," responded the young man. He dropped his bag, and his huge hand closed over Old Doc's fingers.

"Meet Scattergood Baines," Old Doc said.

"Haow be ye, young feller?" Scattergood greeted. "Ye don't git the most sightly view of Coldriver from the depot, but then ye can't look forrud to nothin' but improvement."

"It's a place to be," the young man said quietly, but in a way that spoke of hopelessness and resignation.

"I got a real nice place fur ye," Old Doc said, "up at the Widow Haines'. She'll board ye, 'n' she's a fust-class cook."

"You're very kind, Doctor," said the young man.

"When ye git settled," Old Doc told him, "I'll drive ye around. Interduce ye to folks."

"I hope," Dr. Wood said, "I'll not be a disappointment."

"Young Doc," said Scattergood, giving him the title by which he would be

known, "this here hain't an offish taown, but it's a waitin' taown. If a newcomer is a kind of a pushin' feller, we hain't apt to look with favor. Nope. If he draws into himself, we jest let him draw 'n' stay there. But if he jest goes along normal, tendin' to his own business 'n' bein' willin' to be friendly 'n' hain't in no hurry, why, the fust thing ye know, he's one of us 'n' he fits in."

"No use standin' here jawin'," Old Doc said hurriedly. "We'll go eat at the inn and then I'll take ye to the Widow Haines'."

THEY stopped in front of the inn and went in through the lobby to the dining-room, Young Doc conscious of covertly appraising eyes. They found a table at a window and gave their orders. If Scattergood and Old Doc were waiting for the young man to talk about himself, they were disappointed. To their attempts at conversation he responded halfheartedly.

Finally Scattergood said, "Young Doc, a body figgerin' to practice medicine here needs an automobile more'n he does a bag of bottles. Be ye fixed to buy one?"

"If," said Dr. Wood, "I could make a down payment—"

"When you're ready," Scattergood cut in, "go to the bank. Anythin' reasonable will be fixed up."

Young Doc stared at Scattergood a moment, then color mounted to his cheeks. "Thank you, sir," he said softly.

The clerk came from the desk and told Old Doc he was wanted on the telephone.

"Hain't even let to eat a meal in peace," the old man grumbled, but he pushed back his chair and went to the office. Presently he came back. "Old Toot Mason," he said. "He's got him a carbuncle on the back of his darn' neck. Been tryin' to cure it with linseed poultices, dang ol' fool. Finish your pie, Doctor, 'n' we'll go see how much of a mess he's in."

They left Scattergood on the piazza of the inn and drove out westward on the road that meandered beside the rippling river. "Hain't a purtier country on earth," Old Doc said. "Kind of restores a feller to drive through it. Be perfect if 'twa'n't inhabited by humans."

If this attitude toward the human race shocked Young Doc, he did not say so. He did not say anything, but only sat very still and tense. Old Doc stole a glance at him and squinted ruefully. "Drat it all," he said to himself inaudibly, "if the young spriggins hain't scairt. Now, what of?"

They drove into a farmyard and stopped beside a small, unpainted house. Old Doc entered without knocking, lifting his voice testily in the hall: "Where's the ol' coot? Upstairs?"

A young woman appeared at the top of the dimly lit stairway. Halfway up the flight Old Doc recognized her. "What you doin' here, Ann?"

"They needed help," the girl said.

"Did, eh? What good'll you be to 'em?" It sounded ungracious, but the girl smiled at him almost gaily, saying nothing.

"This here is Young Doc," the old man said. "He's moved in to take my practice away from me."

"How do you do?" Ann Staton said primly.

They entered a bedroom where a man lay moaning.

Old Doc bent over the bed and removed a poultice from the nape of the man's neck, exposing an enormous, angry, inflamed area. Old Doc snorted. "Never see a purtier one!" he exclaimed. "Hain't it a jim-dandy, Doctor?"

Young Doc drew a deep breath as he stared at the monstrous thing.

"Wa-al," said the older man, "here's a place fur ye to start. Git some b'ilin' water, Ann. This here's a prunin' job."

"You— Do you mean you want me to operate?"

"If ye call it an operation," Old Doc snapped. "Didn't ye never see a carbuncle before?"

"Yes," Young Doc said.

"Then fly at it!"

"It's not my patient," the young man said. "It's not my responsibility. I—"

Old Doc stared up at him. Young Doc was conscious that the girl was staring at him, too. He was very conscious of her, of her eyes, of her expression. But the thing he was conscious of most was the old fear, the old terror of responsibility. He knew what must be done and he knew how to do it, but he lacked courage to put his skill to the test.

"I would prefer," he said, through his teeth, "that you operated, Doctor."

Old Doc snorted once. He opened his bag, took from it what was required, and did what was possible, with the limited facilities, to deaden the coming agony. His antiseptic precautions shocked Young Doc. Old Doc shrugged and selected a scalpel; there was no indecision or hesitation here. To Young Doc, even in his humiliation, it seemed slapdash. The old man barked orders, not to Young Doc, but to Ann, and she obeyed promptly and efficiently. In fifteen minutes the thing was done and Old Doc straightened his aching back.

"Ye hain't as useless as ye might be," he said to Ann. "Goin' to stick around?"

"As long as I'm needed," she said.

HE GAVE her directions, closed his bag, and marched out of the room. Young Doc, head bent, followed at his heels. As he passed Ann, her hand, as though automatically, moved out to touch his arm.

"It must," she said gently, "be awful to have to do things like that. You—you have to get hardened to it." She smiled shyly. "You are so alone—you, and the patient—and God."

He raised his eyes to hers miserably. "I flunked it," he said dully.

She shook her head. "It'll be all right, Doctor."

Old Doc did not speak as they drove back to the village, and Young Doc sat in an agony of despair. As they neared the edge of the village he did speak.

"Doctor," he said, "I'll clear out. When is the next train?"

Old Doc barked at him. "No sich thing," he said harshly. He allowed the car to come almost to a stop, half turned, and rested his hand on the young man's knee. "I was so dratted scairt the first time I was called on to cut," he said, "that I all but fainted. By dad, I'll make a doctor of ye or kill ye tryin'." . . .

Days went by in the leisurely fashion of Coldriver. Young Doc was becoming a familiar figure as he drove about with Old Doc or went about alone. When he walked it was with slightly drooping shoulders, as if he carried a weight of discouragement. His manner was shyly courteous, and his smile wistful.

"Nice young feller," Elder Hooper was heard to say, "but he hain't got much git-up-'n'-git."

Old Doc stopped one day at the hardware store, where Scattergood sat in his specially reinforced chair. It was his throne—the vantage point from which he could see the goings and comings of the village. He eyed Old Doc and waited.

"I dunno," Old Doc said. "A nicer boy ye never see. But he don't trust himself. Naow, take doctorin': About two thirds of it is makin' your patients think you're a combination of the Almighty 'n' General Ulysses S. Grant. Wa-al, this here boy jest hain't got it."

"Know his business, Doc?"

"He knows more about medicine 'n' what I'll ever learn. He kin make a diagnosis 'n' he knows what's the treatment. But he jest hain't got the confidence to apply it. Allus he comes a-runnin' to me, and the wust of it is, folks is catchin' on."

"What 'ud happen," Scattergood asked, "if he run into an emergency 'n' ye wa'n't around to give him a boost?"

"I dunno, Scattergood. I jest plumb don't know."

SCATTERGOOD puffed out his cheeks and whistled silently. He was looking down the street, across the bridge toward the post office. He saw Ann Staton come out of the door with letters in her hand just as Young Doc came out of the drugstore across the street. The two came face to face on the sidewalk. Ann spoke and Young Doc lifted his hat clumsily and shied. "As if," Scattergood thought, "he was ashamed to look into her face." But he noticed Young Doc turned to look after Ann as she went on into Wade Lumley's store.

"What ye rubberin' at?" Old Doc asked.

"Ann Staton. She—"

"Naow, *there*," said Old Doc, "is a gal! If she was a man she'd be a whackin' doctor. Anyhow, she ought to be a nurse. Come to think of it, she's kind of perty, too. Did I tell ye haow she come up to scratch the day I whittled Toot Mason's carbuncle? Jest plumb, teetotal efficient 'n' cool as ice."

"The time Young Doc was afraid to cut?" Scattergood asked.

"Yeah."

"That," Scattergood said, more to himself than to Old Doc, "accounts fur why he acted like he jest done."

Old Doc shook his head lugubriously. "Haow he'll make out when I'm gone is a thing I hate to think about."

"But all the same, says you, he's able. He knows doctorin'."

"It hain't no good to know haow to chop wood if you're afraid to swing an ax," Old Doc said, and turned to go.

"G'-by, Doc," Scattergood said.

"G'-by, Scattergood." . . .

Ann Staton came out of Wade Lum-

ley's store and crossed the road to Scattergood's place of business.

"Haow be ye, Ann?" he asked. "Haow's things with you?"

"Tolerable, Mr. Baines," she said, with a smile. "I want to buy an egg beater."

"Right-hand counter, about halfway back," Scattergood said. "Three kinds. Take your pick."

Scattergood never kept a clerk; he depended upon his customers to do his clerking for him. His till was his pants pocket.

Ann came back with the implement, paid for it, and was descending the steps when Scattergood halted her.

"I jest seen ye speak to Young Doc," he said conversationally. "Looked to me like he shied 'n' run like a scared rabbit."

"I am probably the one girl in Coldriver he is most anxious to avoid, Mr. Baines."

"Ye know what folks is sayin' about him?" he asked.

"Yes," she admitted.

"That he's scairt to treat folks."

"Yes," she said reluctantly.

"You had some experience of it, didn't ye? What conclusion did ye reach?" Scattergood asked.

HER face was grave; her fine eyes were dark and troubled.

"He knew what to do," she said at last, "but he shrank from doing it." Ann hesitated. "He is gentle and kind." She was struggling to make Scattergood see what she had seen and understand it as she understood it. "I do not think it was the ordinary kind of fear—the fear of inflicting pain. I do not think it was doubt of his own ability. I think something inside of him made him draw back from—from being responsible for whether a man lived or died. It's like playing God. The old man might have died, you know."

"Then ye don't despise him, Ann?" Scattergood said.

"No," she said. "Some men are calloused. I suppose doctors have to be that way. They see an operation as just a job which they must do well to earn a fee—some of them. I do not think the Young Doctor ever could be that way." She interlaced her fingers and wrung her hands. "It would not be good," she said, "if he became hard. But it would be very good if he could realize that—that God is pleased when a good man dares to assume some of His responsibilities."

Scattergood stared at the girl for a time and then nodded his head again and again. "Ye hain't lived long enough to know so much," he said. "I calc'late it hain't years nor book-learnin' that gives wisdom. Could be that real wisdom is hitchin' the heart 'n' the brain together in a team so's they drive without stumblin'. . . . Huh. G'-by, Ann," he finished, with his usual abrupt dismissal.

When she was gone Scattergood sat with half-closed eyes and nodded. One hand moved down from his lap to unlace his right shoe. He kicked it off. The other hand loosened the left shoe, and it dropped to the floor. He sighed, and in the warm sunshine wriggled his toes ecstatically. Anyone in Coldriver who saw him so knew that he was tackling a knotty problem. His theory had always been that the brain and the feet were closely related; when the feet were confined, the brain could not function freely.

A half-hour later the old hardware merchant pushed himself to his feet after replacing his shoes. He crossed the bridge and cut diagonally to the post office to get his noontime mail. Young Doc was there waiting for the letters to be sorted, and Scattergood leaned against the wall at his side.

"Haow be ye, Young Doc?" he asked.

"Well, thank you, sir," Young Doc answered courteously.

"Kind of settlin' daown to business?" the old man asked. "Gittin' to feel to home, eh?"

Young Doc took a considerable time to answer. He had been in Coldriver now long enough to have learned much about Scattergood Baines—his wisdom and his shrewdness, and those other qualities which had given him his unique position in the community and the state.

"No, Mr. Baines," he said, "I'm not getting to feel at home."

"Dew tell!" Scattergood exclaimed.

"I've come to feel, sir," said the young man miserably, "that I'm not cut out to be a doctor."

"Wa-al, naow! Don't ye like to be a doctor?"

"There's nothing in the world I want to be so much, but I find, sir, that studying and learning are not enough."

"What's lackin'?" Scattergood asked.

Young Doc flushed painfully. "Courage and self-trust. A doctor," he said, "isn't handling dry goods, or weighing out coffee. He's dealing with human beings who are suffering. Whether they live or die may so often depend upon what a doctor does to them. I haven't that kind of courage, sir."

"Able to diagnose what's wrong, hain't ye? Know what's the right remedy or where to cut with your knife?" Scattergood queried.

"I know, I know. But I might make a mistake."

"Don't all good doctors feel like that? Huh?"

"Other men may feel so, Mr. Baines, but they have the courage to go ahead anyhow. . . . No, sir. I—I think I'll have to give it up."

"This here the fust place ye ever tried doctorin'?" Scattergood asked.

THE young man hesitated. For a space Scattergood thought he was not going to answer the question. Young Doc's face set rigidly. "I practiced five months in Valley Stream. Assistant to a Dr. Newman."

"Wa-al," Scattergood said, "every day of experience is suthin' to the good. . . . G'-by, Doc."

The young man turned away slowly and walked laggingly up the street. Scattergood stood staring after him. He muttered to himself, as he sometimes did when there was no other to talk to:

"Valley Stream, eh? Naow, why was the boy so set ag'in' mentionin' Valley Stream? What could 'a' happened to git him all upset like that?"

Valley Stream was some forty-five miles away, just across the state line. Scattergood never had been there, nor had he any acquaintances in that village. But suddenly he wanted to know about Valley Stream and Dr. Newman. He trudged down the street and mounted the

"Your buttons came back, Mrs. Beeman, but we can't seem to locate the dress"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY MARTIN LOWENSTEIN

stairs to Johnny Bones's law office. He stood in the door and looked in at the son of his old friend, the Senator.

"Business brisk, Johnny? Eh? Clients a-swarmin' in?"

"No complaints, Uncle Scattergood."

"Um. . . . Couldn't take a day off, could ye?" Scattergood inquired.

"I could," Johnny said, his eyes twinkling.

"If a man had him one of these here automobiles, he could drive it forty-five miles there 'n' forty-five miles back in a day, couldn't he? Barrin' accidents."

"It could be done. What forty-five miles have you in mind?"

"Would tomorrer be a good day fur it, Johnny? Say we started about eight?"

"I'll be at your house." Johnny did not ask again for their destination. He knew the old man liked small mysteries. . . .

AT EIGHT o'clock Johnnie stopped his car before Scattergood's gate, and the old merchant lumbered down the steps and hoisted himself to the seat beside the young lawyer.

"Head south," Scattergood told him. "Ever been to Valley Stream?"

"Never. But I can find it."

"That hain't the p'int," Scattergood said. "When we git back kin ye forgit it?"

"Tomorrow," Johnny said, with a straight face, "it will be as if I had never been there."

An hour later they were in Valley Stream. A little boy directed them to Dr. Newman's house.

"Not sick, are you, Uncle Scattergood?" Johnny asked anxiously.

"Nothin' ails me a mite of snoopin' won't cure," the old man answered.

He mounted the steps and rang the doctor's bell. The physician himself answered the door.

"I hain't a patient," Scattergood announced. "All the same, I'm willin' to pay fur an office call. My name's Scattergood Baines. I'm a-searchin' fur what ails a feller."

"Come in," Dr. Newman invited in friendly manner. "What are your friend's symptoms?"

"He's scairt, Doc. He don't dast make decisions. He's plumb afeard to lance a bile."

"Are you speaking of a doctor, Mr. Baines?"

"Calc'late I be."

"Where are you from?" the doctor asked.

"Coldriver."

"Would you be speaking of my former assistant, young Dr. Wood?"

"I be," Scattergood said. "I got a suspicion suthin' happened here to make him that there way, and ye can't cure suthin' till ye git to the root of it 'n' find what set it to whizzin'."

"You want to help the young man?"

"I'd admire to," Scattergood answered.

"Dr. Wood lost confidence in himself," Dr. Newman said.

"What fur?"

Dr. Newman hesitated, debating with himself whether it would be right to tell the story. His eyes studied Scattergood's broad face, and he made up his mind.

"It was his best friend," he said. "I was absent at a medical convention and the responsibility of the practice was on Dr. Wood. There was a motor accident and Wood's friend was badly smashed up. Unconscious. To save his life Dr. Wood considered it necessary to amputate his right leg. It was a forlorn hope. It is not easy for a doctor to make such a decision, especially when a loved friend is involved. There was no time for consultations. Dr. Wood did what he thought his duty demanded. The friend lingered a day or two, regained consciousness, but perhaps not sanity. He cursed Dr. Wood bitterly for taking off his leg, called him a butcher and a blunderer—and died."

"Did he operate good?" Scattergood asked.

"Excellently."

"Was it necessary?" Scattergood said softly.

"I made a post-mortem examination. He did what a competent surgeon should have done," Dr. Newman declared. "There was unpleasant talk. I could not convince him that he might not have been wrong. The doubt burned into him and he lost confidence. It was tragic, Mr. Baines. I could not help him. I had hoped that new surroundings would restore him. Apparently it hasn't. He would have made a splendid doctor."

"You got any advice? Eh?"

The doctor shook his head. "I am competent to take care of broken bodies. Broken souls are in another realm. A shock caused Dr. Wood's condition. Another shock might cure it."

"Obleeged to ye," Scattergood said gravely. "G'-by, Doctor." . . .

NEXT day, just after noon, Scattergood walked over to the Coldriver post office. He opened his box and took out the mail. As he turned away he saw Ann Staton come through the door and walk toward the window. Young Doc was standing listlessly, his back against the wall, reading a letter.

"Mornin', Ann," Scattergood called.

She turned and smiled at him; then her eyes found Young Doc, and the smile vanished. Young Doc would not look at her but stared grimly at the floor.

"Ann," Scattergood persisted, "ye know Young Doc, don't ye?" She walked across to them resolutely and extended her hand. "Of course I know the doctor."

At that moment a broad-shouldered man with jutting, granite jaw stepped through the door. It was Boss Staton, woods boss for the lumber company. He blinked his eyes as he came in out of the bright sunshine, and then scowled as he saw his daughter talking to Young Doc. He strode toward them.

"If ye got the mail, Ann," he said harshly, "clear out of here. I don't want folks to see a daughter of mine touchin' a white-livered spriggins like him with a ten-foot pole."

"Why, Father!" Ann exclaimed.

"He come out to Camp Six yestiddy, him 'n' Ol' Doc. One of my men was squealin' with a pain in his belly. This here coot felt around 'n' so did Ol' Doc. Ol' Doc says we waited too long. He says they have to cut right there or the feller'd die. Ol' Doc says as haow he was up all night before bringin' in a baby 'n' his hands wa'n't stiddy. He says fur this mis'able excuse fur a sawbones to go ahead 'n' operate."

Staton's face was distorted by a sneer. He shrugged. "This critter was scairt out of his pants 'n' got all wobbly, so Ol' Doc had to step in 'n' do the job. Mister, if I ever find ye so much as walkin' on the same side of the street with my daughter again I'll take ye to pieces 'n' tie ye into bowknots."

Young Doc's bent shoulders straightened, and for an instant there was a compression of his lips and a glint in his eyes that did not promise a turning of the other cheek. Then his shoulders sagged and he walked out of the post office.

"Father!" Ann exclaimed.

"Ye heard what I said," Staton said.

Scattergood ignored the unpleasantness. He glanced at Ann and blinked.

"Hain't ye lookin' a bit peeked, Ann?" he asked.

"I'm all right, Mr. Baines," she said through stiff lips.

"G'-by, both of ye," the old man said, and ambled away to the street.

IN FRONT of the drugstore he encountered Old Doc. "We got to take measures," he said.

"Sich as?" asked Old Doc.

"This here boy's come to the bustin' p'int, Doc," he answered. "Ye never kin tell haow good steel ye got in a knife till ye make it whittle."

"Jest haow d' ye calc'late to do it?" Old Doc asked.

"Haow's your rheumatics?"

"Hain't got none."

"Could have, couldn't ye?" Scattergood persisted. "So's to be confined into bed? So's ye couldn't stir?"

"Scattergood," Old Doc said "I got a kind of a duty to folks that git sick. I don't dare trust 'em to the boy."

"The kind of rheumatics you got," Scattergood said, "'ud let ye git out of bed in a hurry if it become necessary. Doc, it's wuth a try. It's allus wuth a try to manufacture a man." . . .

For a couple of days after Old Doc removed himself from sight there was serenity in Coldriver. Young Doc was called only for minor ailments. Not until Saturday did an emergency arise.

Young Doc was walking past Scattergood's store when a car, at great speed, came down the road. It was driven by an excited boy, who, at sight of Young Doc, came to a sudden, skidding stop.

"Where's Ol' Doc?" he shouted. "I got to git him quick."

The old hardware merchant heaved himself out of his chair and walked toward the car.

"Old Doc is sick," he heard Young Doc say. "What is it?"

"Ann Staton's dyin'!" said the boy. "Her pa sent me for Ol' Doc."

"Ol' Doc," said Scattergood, "can't come. He can't git out of bed." He was standing now beside Young Doc, who was pale and tense. "I calc'late ye better git goin', Young Doc," he said. "The's a sick gal. I'll ride out with ye."

Moving stiffly like an automaton,

Young Doc walked to his car and got behind the wheel. Scattergood hesitated an instant and spoke in a low voice to the boy. "Bub," he said, "you hyper out to Ol' Doc's haouse. Jest tell him what's a-goin' on."

Then Scattergood hoisted himself into the young doctor's car.

Silently they sped toward the Staton farm. They turned in at the gate and brought the car to a stop beside the house. Scattergood was on the ground first. Young Doc moved slowly, reluctantly. The pair of them went to the front door. Scattergood thrust the door open. It was he who led the way up the stairs to the room where Ann lay. Her father was pacing up and down, but turned as they entered. His eyes blazed.

"What *you* doin' here?" he demanded. "Where's Ol' Doc?"

"Sick," Scattergood said. "Can't come."

"*He* don't lay a hand on my daughter!"

"There's no one else," Young Doc said in a whisper, speaking not to Staton but to himself. "There's nobody else."

He went with dragging steps to the bed and commenced his examination of the moaning girl. He stood up presently. "She—she ought to be in a hospital. I—I think it's a ruptured appendix."

"Got to operate quick?" Scattergood said.

"Right now," Young Doc said. "I left my instrument bag in the car. I'll get it."

When he returned Staton stood in the bedroom doorway, and in the crook of his arm was a shotgun. "If you kill Ann I calc'late to blow a hole through ye a hoss can drive through."

Young Doc stopped. His eyes rested a moment on Scattergood's face, frightened. Then a change came over him. He pushed Staton aside and entered the room. "Get out of here," he said in a voice that was cold and vibrant. "Boil water. Lots of it. Get out, and stay out."

"Better go," Scattergood said softly.

Young Doc, moving mechanically, made preparations.

Ann stirred. Her lips moved. "Don't—be—afraid," she said almost inaudibly.

Scattergood watched every move. It was not a timid young man he watched, but a man whose movements were deft and sure. He made ready the cone and placed it over Ann's face.

"Slowly—steadily," he said to Scattergood.

SURE fingers guided the knife. It was grim business, but there was no hesitation, no wasted movement. Young Doc snapped orders at Scattergood. Neither of them saw Staton standing in the door watching grimly.

At last the incision was closed; the operation was ended. Young Doc stood straight and pale, hands clenched at his sides. He bent over Ann and gentle fingers touched her forehead. He straightened again, his back to the room.

Old Doc stepped through the door. His face was radiant. "Young Doc," he said, "the finest surgeon in the land couldn't have done a slicker job."

Young Doc whirled. His eyes blazed. "You're darn' right he couldn't," he said sharply. Then his mouth opened. "You were here! You stood by—and watched!"

"Ready," said Old Doc, "if I was needed."

Young Doc said, "If I'd known you were there—"

"Ye wouldn't," said Scattergood, "have got to be a real doctor."

Staton spoke from the door. "Will my daughter live?" he asked.

Young Doc turned on him. He did not speak, but strode across the room. He picked up the shotgun from where it lay and thrust it into Staton's hands.

"Yes," he said, "she'll live." He paused. "You're going to need this," he said, tapping the gun, "to keep me away from this house. I'll be here often."

The grim, hard face of Boss Staton worked, softened. "Young feller," he said, "ye saved her. So it's only fair she should be yourn—if ye kin git her."

"I'll get her," Young Doc said.

"I calc'late," Scattergood said gravely, "from now on it won't be necessary fur ye to send fur anybuddy or lean on anybuddy."

"No," said Young Doc.

Scattergood paused an instant in the doorway. "Young Doc," he said, "it hain't the knockin' of opportunity on a feller's door that makes or breaks. Nope. It's the sledge-hammer poundin' of necessity. Anybuddy kin grab an opportunity. But rasslin' with necessity 'n' throwin' it onto its back—that's what tells if a man's a man."

But Young Doc was too busy looking at Ann to answer.

THE END ★★

The Pink Tree

(*Continued from page* 32)

fashions at Greenough's Department Store.

I came to this momentous decision in spite of the fact I was in love with Bob Summers, who also had attended Bolton Junior College. Bob's father owned the hardware store and several farms which the corn worms missed. Bob's father thought "a boy ought to know where his money came from" and had already put Bob to work in the hardware store.

BOB begged me to stay in Bolton and marry him, but I refused. I didn't think it wise to jump into marriage when I hadn't *been* anywhere and had never even earned my own living.

Kansas City was chosen because it *was* a city, and because it was only two hundred miles from Bolton, and all the relatives and friends who came down to go shopping could look in on me.

Cousin Jane Conrad wrote to her cousin, Mindy Conrad, who lived alone in a big apartment, and asked her to take me in until I got settled. The cousin of a cousin wrote back that she would take me in and keep an eye on me.

Mindy Conrad, so they said, was nine years older than I was. Twenty-eight—practically ancient. She would wear a hair net and felt house shoes. I considered throwing her address away and hunting up a place of my own, but I knew Mamma would call that first evening to check my arrival—and if I weren't at Mindy Conrad's the Kansas City police department would have a rough time.

Mindy Conrad's apartment house proved to be a beehive of a building with an impressive front. The clerk at the elegant desk sized me up and said she would see if Miss Conrad were in to Miss Susan Lee. After what seemed a lengthy phone conversation the clerk said, "You're to go right up. She's in 518."

I looked at the gold braid on the elevator operator's uniform and thought it might not be so bad to live here, after all. I rang the bell of 518 and waited for the old-maid cousin to appear.

The door opened a crack and a dark, attractive man regarded me with a roguish eye. "Hello!" he said.

"I beg your pardon," I said coldly, "I'm looking for Miss Conrad."

"Mindy!" he called back in the direction of the living-room. "The cousin cometh!"

"Oh, Rolly," said a throaty voice, "ask the girl in."

The man called Rolly opened the door and I stepped into a stark black-and-white room. I saw a graceful girl lounging on a davenport painting her nails. She had hair the color of corn silk with the sun on it and eyes that were wide and as green as marbles. She wore a pair of beautifully tailored slacks.

"You must be Susan Lee." She regarded me frankly. "I'm Mindy Conrad."

I was stunned. Any resemblance between Cousin Jane Conrad and this beautiful creature was coincidental.

"It's awfully nice of you to let me stay here until I get a place of my own," I said. "I hope to do that right away." I wanted her to know that she wasn't going to be stuck with me indefinitely.

She laughed a rather musical laugh. "Oh, I have plenty of room and if you can put up with me, I can put up with you. . . . Rolly, take Susan's bags and show her where to put her things. My polish is still wet."

ROLLY picked up my luggage and led the way into the bedroom. He opened a door and I saw a deep closet with dresses crammed to one side. A space had been cleared for me. She *was* expecting me. I felt a rush of gratitude.

Back in the living room, Rolly was leaving. "I have reservations for dinner," he explained.

"Don't mind me," I bubbled inanely.

Mindy waved him away. "Run along, darling. Susan and I want to have some little-girl talk."

After he was gone, Mindy turned her wide green eyes on me. "What brings you to the big city, if I may ask?"

I resented her city-cousin-to-country-

cousin tone, but I ignored it. "I'm going into merchandising, I hope to become a buyer at Greenough's."

"Wow!" she said. "In the Emerald Room, I suppose?"

"I have no illusions," I told her. "I know I'll have to start at the bottom, but their personnel department wrote me an encouraging letter."

I DUG into my purse and produced the letter the personnel manager of Greenough's had sent in reply to my query. "I had two years of merchandising at Bolton Junior College. That ought to be a help."

Mindy stretched back out on the davenport. "So much for Greenough's," she said. "Tell me about Bolton. Jane said your father owned a drugstore."

She appeared genuinely interested, so I plunged into a description of our house and Bolton Junior College, making it sound as picturesque as I could and inventing a few white steeples for the churches.

When I finished, she asked, "How about the boy-friend?"

By this time I was annoyed by her prying, but I decided if she was taking me in she had a right to know about me. So I told her about Bob.

"Why didn't you marry him?" Mindy asked, lifting a quizzical eyebrow.

"Because I wanted to see some place besides Bolton. Bob is the only man I ever dated seriously, and for all I know there might be someone else."

"I see." She swung her long legs to the floor, got up, and stretched. "I bet you're starved. How about some dinner?"

I followed her out to the kitchen. "How about your parents?" I asked. "Do they live near here?"

"Five blocks away." Mindy took down a copper-bottomed skillet. "My mother—and my stepfather."

"Just five blocks?" I asked, curious because she lived alone in this big apartment while her parents lived so close by.

"Do you like your eggs hard or soft?" asked Mindy. And that was as much as Mindy Conrad told me about herself. . . .

The next morning I dressed carefully in a tailored suit for my interview with the personnel manager. Mindy caught me looking at her big hat and her jewelry and she said, "I work for Black and Black—today I take clients to lunch."

"That sounds like fun," I said.

Mindy smoothed out the fingers of a pair of long black gloves. "I'll give you a lift to Greenough's in my car. I'm going right by there."

The personnel manager was very kind. I was the type of employee they were looking for—one with college work and a desire to learn merchandising. I could start that very day in the basement—in underwear. Everybody, including future buyers, started in the basement. My salary was twenty-seven dollars a week—everyone started at twenty-seven a week.

A girl named Lily with hair like patent leather was assigned to show me the ropes. She brought out some tags with two vicious prongs and told me to stick them in the elastic and be careful not to catch the silk. I was annoyed at being delegated such a bird-brained task.

I stuck my thumb and got blood spots on two garments. Lily said to hide those under the counter. I made holes and runs in two more—those were deductible from my salary.

That night I stumbled up to Apartment 518 more dead than alive. Mindy opened the door, dressed to go out. "I've got a date with Rolly. There's plenty in the icebox," she said as she left.

I fell across my bed and cried myself to sleep. I awakened about eleven and crept to the kitchen and munched cheese and crackers. Twenty-seven dollars a week wasn't going to go very far, but whatever happened I wasn't going to write the folks for money. . . .

THE next morning, I was businesslike with Mindy: "I want to pay my share until I get a place of my own."

"How much do you make?" asked Mindy, buttering her toast.

"Twenty-seven a week. . . . Of course, that's just to start."

"You can't live on that!" Mindy frowned at her plate.

"I will," I said bravely. "Other people have. I can too."

"Look, Chick," she said; "why don't you stay here and pay—say, twenty-five a month on the rent. I'm never here for dinner, so we'll split on breakfast and the extras."

There was a lump in my throat. "You're awfully generous to just a cousin of a cousin."

She laughed then, showing her even white teeth. " 'A cousin of a cousin'—how quaint!"

I had a feeling she didn't really like me, and it was a mystery why she was offering to let me stay.

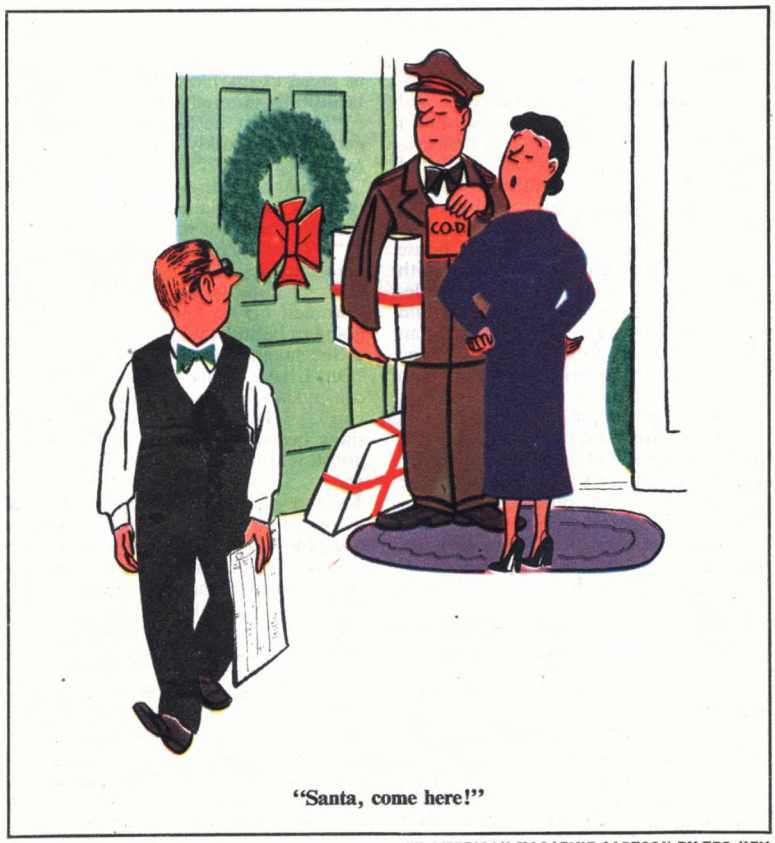
I made up my mind to move as soon as possible and to be scrupulous about the extras.

It was a funny arrangement any way you looked at it. I discovered the apartment rented for a hundred and fifty—unfurnished—and I was paying only twenty-five of it. I loved everything about the apartment except Mindy's friends, who continually cluttered it up. Most of them were terribly sophisticated, and though Mindy often asked me to join the crowd, I could never bring myself to go along. The women all seemed vaguely patronizing, and I didn't like the men, either—except Rolly, and I did feel sort of sorry for him, the way he hung around like Old Dog Tray.

I resolved to find a room and escape Mindy's apartment, but the cheapest I could find was thirty-five dollars a month. Also, I had made the error of writing home in glowing terms about the apartment and my job.

It wasn't long before friends and relatives began dropping in, and I must say they seemed impressed with my mode of living and took enthusiastic accounts of my apartment and my roommate back to Bolton.

That was another odd thing about Mindy. Whenever I had company from home she would insist on cooking a su-



"Santa, come here!"

AN AMERICAN MAGAZINE CARTOON BY TED KEY

perb dinner and entertaining them to the hilt. She acted as if they were her guests and not mine.

If they stayed overnight, she would insist they have her bed, and she would cheerfully sleep on the divan. I burned with resentment, but what could you say to someone who let you live in her hundred-and-fifty-dollar-a-month apartment for twenty-five and asked nothing in return? At least, nothing you could *define*.

Fall at Greenough's fled in a haze of aching feet and pink underwear. I was desperately lonely, my only social life being the Bolton Junior College Girls' Club of Kansas City, made up of girls like myself who were breaking into business via the bottom of the ladder. A girl named Sally Harnes, who came from a little town not far from Bolton, was my only friend. She worked at Greenough's in neckties.

Bob continually wrote beseeching letters, and I wrote letters back that intimated I was an assistant in underwear. I was so homesick and lonesome that I counted the days until Thanksgiving. I would be docked at Greenough's if I went home, but Thanksgiving was also my birthday.

The day that I went home Mindy announced she was taking me to lunch. I protested she had already done too much for me, but the prospect of lunch at the Flamingo Room was too attractive to turn down.

Lunch was perfection. I looked across the table at Mindy finishing her dessert, and I felt a rush of gratitude for all that this exotic creature had done for me.

Suddenly Mindy stiffened in her chair and her spoon paused in mid-air. I glanced up to see what caused the change in her, and I saw a tall young man and an attractive older woman passing our table.

"Hello, darling," said the older woman to Mindy.

"Hello, Mother," Mindy said with no expression at all.

The young man's face was pink. "Hello, Mindy. You're looking well."

"Thank you, Jack," she said. "So are you."

I was all agog after they passed on. "Your mother is very attractive. Is Jack your brother?"

"No," Mindy seemed absorbed with her sherbet. "My stepfather."

"Your stepfather! Why, he doesn't look any older than you!"

"A year," said Mindy. "I brought him home from college—once." She glanced at her watch. "It's ten minutes past your lunch hour; you'd better run." She took a small package from her purse. "Here, Pet, here's a little birthday present. Open it when you get home."

I'd had two years of psychology at Bolton Junior College, and I spent the afternoon applying it to Mindy: Mindy brings home college sweetheart. Sweetheart is fortune hunter, who marries mother, who is a wealthy widow. Mindy, brokenhearted, seeks revenge on men in general. By the time the five-thirty bell rang, Mindy was an open book to me.

I sprinted for the five-forty-five bus. I was going home for Thanksgiving, and I would escape Greenough's basement for two whole days. Sally Harnes was going home on the same train, so she stopped by the apartment with me while I threw things in a bag.

Mindy was already there, relaxing in slacks. I felt a rush of kindness toward her now that I understood her.

Mindy looked at me over the top of her cigarette. "Have fun, Chick. Are you going to see the local boy-friend?"

"I have a date, if that is what you mean."

"Well, darling, chew on a drumstick for me and go to church—the white-steepled one. Have a nice birthday. By the way, which one is it?"

"I'm twenty," I said. "What are you going to do Thanksgiving?"

"Twenty . . ." Mindy looked out of the window a moment, then she turned and cat-stretched. "Rolly has something planned—dinner, I think."

"Oh, yes," I said lamely. "Well, have fun." Sally and I dashed for the train. I could see Sally was impressed with the apartment.

Sally told me she had to live in a small flat with four other girls, so I felt impelled to tell her the truth about my apartment. I told her that Mindy had taken me into that lovely apartment and would only let me pay twenty-five a month. Otherwise, it cost me nothing.

Sally looked at me oddly and pulled her mouth in tight. "Susan," she said, "you just think you're getting that apartment for twenty-five dollars. But I'm your friend and I'm very *perceptive*. You're paying a *price*."

"What do you mean, price?" I asked.

"It's obvious she keeps you around for laughs. Maybe you don't mind that country-cousin stuff, but me, I'd rather sleep on a bunk bed!"

I was furious at such a suggestion and told Sally so, but I began to remember how Mindy was always getting me to talk about Bolton in front of people, and the way she called me Chick. She and Rolly laughed out loud the time I brought home a geranium for the kitchen window. Maybe Mindy *was* laughing at me. I didn't want to believe it. . . .

Bob met me at the train and I shed a few tears against his sports jacket. Mother and Dad looked so much older than I remembered, and they seemed so glad to see me. I wanted to lie down and kiss our living-room rug, but I wouldn't have let anyone know it for a million dollars.

My letters had convinced the family that I lived in the *loveliest* place with Mindy, the most charming roommate, and I had a marvelous position with Greenough's. Mother and Dad beamed, and even Bob seemed proud. My big brother who taught school in Bolton seemed wistful.

The clan gathered for a combination Thanksgiving-and-birthday dinner for me.

"I guess this is mighty tame after your big city parties," said Dad.

I thought of my lonely dinners—and smiled and said nothing.

"I might come down to do a little Christmas shopping, since you've got such a nice apartment," Mother said.

I mumbled what I hoped was an invitation and bit into my burnt-sugar birthday cake. I did not remember Mindy's gift until I had finished opening the presents the family had piled by my plate.

The family watched curiously as I untied the elegantly wrapped package. "Why, how nice!" I said in a flat voice. "A jeweled cigarette holder—just what I need."

Determinedly, I fitted a cigarette into the absurdly long holder.

"Well, *la-de-da*," said my twelve-year-old cousin, who was still muching on a turkey wing. The family roared with laughter.

"Sorry," said my brother, choking with mirth, "you look so funny with that ridiculous cigarette holder—coming from a long line of popcorn-eaters and apple-chompers, the way you do."

"Don't be so rustic," I said, determined to carry it off. "They keep your fingers—" My defense was drowned in a roar of laughter.

I felt my face flame. Rustic— I had said *rustic*—and I had fallen neatly into Mindy's trap. I could hear her telling Rolly, "Darling, this will *kill* you. Guess what I gave Susan for her birthday?" . . .

It took all the will power I had to go back to Kansas City. I wanted to stay home, but the family took it for granted that I couldn't wait to return to my wonderful new life. Even Bob didn't ask me to stay. I cried all the way back.

Greenough's started Christmas the Monday after Thanksgiving. It was a nightmare. I was shoved, pushed, stepped on, and complained to. My feet hurt, and I was homesick. I was homesick for the crepe-paper twists in the drugstore and the choir practicing the *Messiah*. I was homesick for Bob's old car and his arms about me.

Christmas became a faraway Mecca toward which I traveled with aching feet. I would go home, reluctantly renounce my marvelous position, marry Bob, and escape Mindy and her apartment.

I was onto Mindy now. Every week someone from home came down to do Christmas shopping, and remained to admire my apartment and my roommate. I watched her carefully as she plied my friends with food and questions. They responded with small-town talk which I was sure Mindy would use later to amuse her crowd. Mother wanted to come, but I stalled her off. I wasn't going to have Mindy laughing at my "quaint" mother.

As Christmas neared, Mindy began receiving stacks of presents. "Look!" She would hold up a square box. "Two to one it's perfume. Wouldn't you like to be here when I open them?"

"Sorry to forego that pleasure," I said tartly. "I'm the old-fashioned type. I'm going *home* for Christmas." Immediately I wished the words back. I had forgotten Mindy couldn't go home—because of her stepfather.

She shrugged, "*Touche*," she said. Mindy was always saying things like "*touche*" and "Happy Yuletide." "If you're going home for Christmas, why don't you have a party for your little club—here at the apartment?"

Mindy always referred to the Bolton Junior College club as my "little club."

"Because," I said stiffly, "I pay almost nothing here. It wouldn't be fair." I looked at the stark walls. "We plan to exchange gifts, and we talked about having a tree."

She looked amused. "But, Chick, I always have a tree. I'll get one tonight, and you can have your club tomorrow night if you like!"

"Well . . ." I weakened. She was being awfully nice, and, besides, no one else in the club had half so nice an apartment. "All right," I said finally, "if you'll let me pay for half of the tree and the decorations."

"Half it is," she agreed.

Mindy tossed a mink stole over her shoulders and went off to entertain a customer of Black & Black's—and I put on my flats and went to Greenough's basement. At noon I called the girls in the club and invited them to the apartment the next evening.

I WENT up to Ornaments and loaded up on old-fashioned trinkets and yards of tinsel. It was snowing when I trudged out of Greenough's. The city looked beautiful to me for the first time, and the familiar carols that came over the loudspeaker sounded fresh and new. I was full of peace and good will when I came into Apartment 518 with my load of ornaments. The first thing I saw was Rolly, the next was Mindy—and the next was the Pink Tree.

The tree was dyed a brilliant, nauseating, this-side-of-red pink, and it was already loaded with pink ornaments. It was an unbelievable Christmas tree—it was ghastly!

"Well, Chick," asked Mindy, "how do you like our tree?"

My arms ached from carrying bundles. I was homesick, and I was tired of being laughed at. "I think it's horrible!" I said. "How much did it cost?"

There was a silence; then Mindy said, "Twenty-five dollars."

My brain reeled, but I opened my purse and grimly counted out twelve dollars and fifty cents.

"I take it you have an aversion to shocking pink?"

"I hate it!" I said.

"You were leaving, weren't you, Rolly?" Mindy shoved Rolly's hat at him, and didn't bother to get up from the couch to let him out. "Now," she said, when the door had clicked behind him, "tell me what you really think."

I told her. I got started and I couldn't stop. I told her what I thought of people who thought Christmas meant nothing but presents—and pink trees put up for show.

She lifted an eyebrow. "I suppose you're hankering for a Bolton Christmas?"

"Yes," I said, "I'm hankering for a Bolton Christmas. I want the kind of Christmas where neighbors drop in to say hello, and you take boxes of cookies to old ladies and baskets to poor people. I want my presents wrapped in holly paper and I want a boy-friend who thinks I look wonderful in red taffeta. I like people who put up honest-to-gosh green Christmas trees and hang them with terrible paper chains their kids made at school." I was so mad the tears came.

"So *that's* a Bolton Christmas."

"*That's* a Bolton Christmas, and you can laugh at me the way you've always laughed. I'm going back there. You will not be burdened with the country cousin any more. You and your pink tree!"

Mindy *did* laugh. "So you *are* going to marry the hometown lad."

"Yes, I'm going to marry the hometown lad!"

"How quaint!" Mindy turned, walked into the bedroom, and began brushing her hair. I could have slapped her.

I would have canceled the party, but I couldn't think of any good way to un-invite people; besides, I had already ordered chocolate cake and ice cream from the delicatessen. . . .

The next noon I was hurrying back from lunch, when I felt a man's hand on my arm. I turned, and looked into Rolly's handsome, sardonic face.

"Well, if it isn't Chick!" he said.

"Hi, Rolly," I said, drawing away, "I'm in a terrible rush."

He grinned good-naturedly, and I noticed his hat was on the back of his head. "Me too; I'm catching the five o'clock for St. Louis."

"St. Louis?"

"Sure." He pointed to the bundles under his arm. "I've got two kids in St. Louis. I'm going home for Christmas. Got two little boys—"

"But your wife—?" I stammered, thinking of Mindy.

"Divorced," he said shortly. Then he brightened and wished me a merry Christmas.

After I got back to the basement I found myself thinking about Rolly. He wasn't the sort of person you thought of as babbling on about his kids. Rolly going home for Christmas seemed a little sad.

I left the underwear to fold itself that evening, as I rushed home to get things ready for my party. As I entered the living room the offensive pink tree hit me between the eyes again, and I heard dishes clinking in the kitchen. I found Mindy in a hostess gown putting the last touches to a tray of hors d'oeuvres.

"Hello, Pet," she said, expertly impaling a shrimp on a toothpick. "I just thought I'd help you with your party."

I WAS furious, but there was nothing I could do. I prayed that she would have a date or get sick, but she had dedicated the evening to entertaining my guests.

Under her expert direction the party rolled along—right up to the end. We had finished exchanging gifts when Sally mentioned the stack of expensively wrapped gifts remaining under the tree.

"Someone really made a haul," she said.

"That's Mindy's," I said.

"Aren't you dying to know what's in them?" someone asked her.

Suddenly Mindy laughed that high laugh of hers, only a little off key. "Of course! Why don't I open them now?"

There was a silence, and some of the girls looked at each other. I was appalled at Mindy's bad taste.

"Of course, Mindy," I said.

Mindy snatched up the scissors and tore open a silver box. "From David!" she cried, holding up an expensive purse.

Next came a gold bracelet. "From Wally!" She dangled it in the air.

The girls fell silent as each present proved more costly than the last.

Mindy opened a box and held aloft an elegant black bottle. "My favorite French perfume," she crooned. "Isn't it beautiful?"

"Where are you going to spend Christmas, Mindy?" Sally Harnes asked finally.

"Oh, I'll go to a round of open houses." She balanced the bottle on the palm of her hand. "Rolly has something planned—"

"But—" I almost blurted out that Rolly was in St. Louis, and just caught myself in time. Then I thought, "Mindy knows he's in St. Louis. She knows he won't be here. Mindy will be alone Christmas, with the terrible, blazing tree." She couldn't face opening the packages by herself.

SOMEONE giggled, and I didn't like me and my smug little Bolton Christmas very much. I knew now what Mindy wanted from me. All Mindy had wanted from me was a peep into my father's drugstore and an imaginary place at the dinner table in our square white house.

"Don't!" I said, so sharply that everyone stared. "Don't open any more now. Wait, and open them at our house."

"At your house?" Mindy looked down at the perfume bottle.

"Of course!" I cried gaily. "You're going home with me. You can see Rolly any time. You'll get a kick out of our hick town!"

"Maybe your mother won't like my barging in . . ." Her fingers twisted the stopper on the bottle.

I took the bottle away from her. "Anybody I bring home is fine with Mother."

"All right, Chick; I'll buy that," said Mindy, and she began piling her packages into a neat stack.

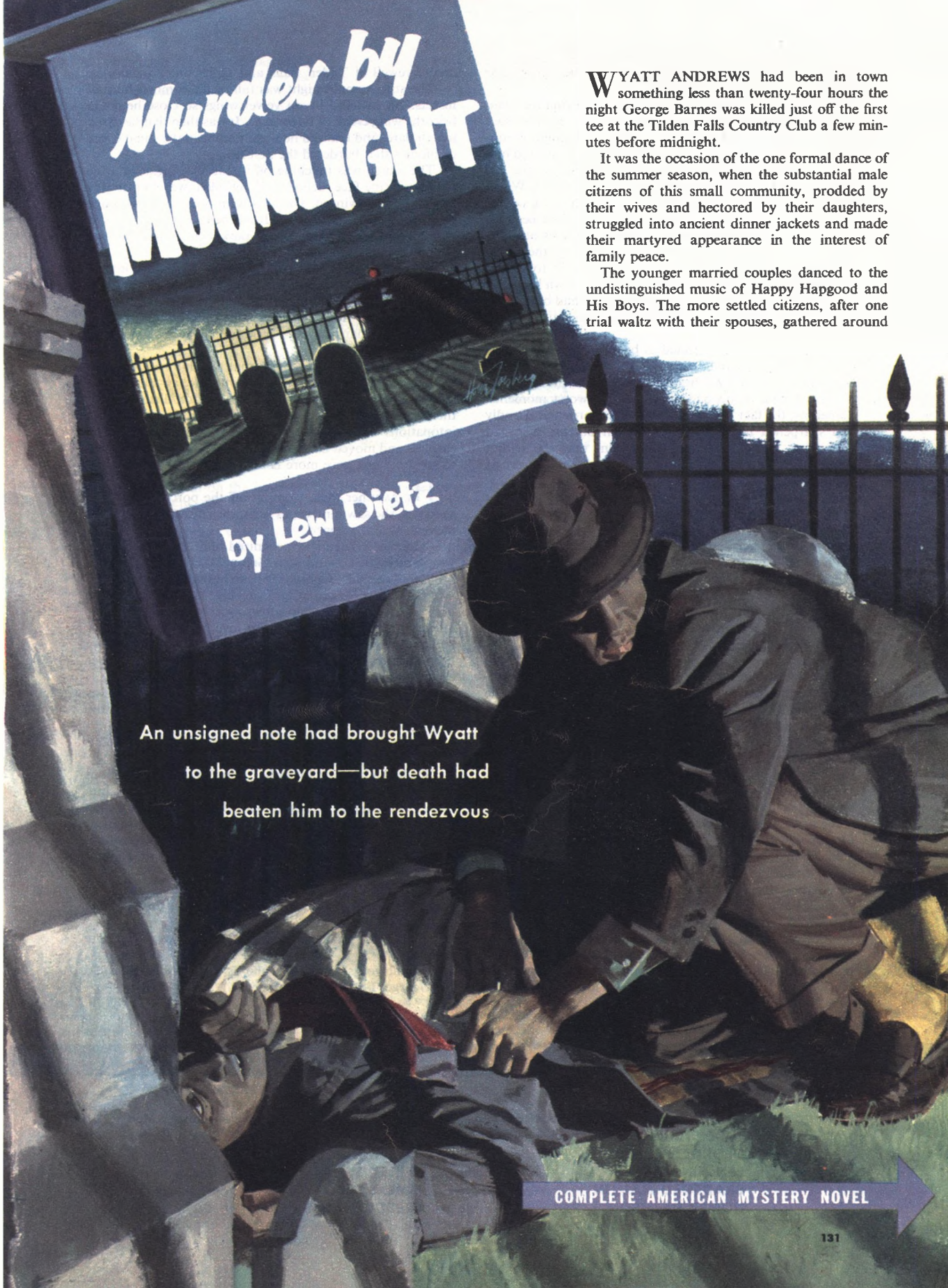
Sally said I was crazy to take Mindy home with me. She said you never could tell what would happen. . . .

Sally was right—you could never tell what would happen! I hadn't the faintest idea that Bob's uncle from Montana would be there, or that he would be a handsome man who hated women because his wife left him. I could never make Bob understand that since Mindy hated men and his uncle hated women it was *inevitable* they should fall in love. In fact, they were married that spring before Bob and I were.

But Sally was wrong about Mindy; she hadn't been using me for laughs. I knew something no one else knew. When I had taken the perfume bottle from Mindy I had seen a tear—an old-fashioned tear, round and bright as any Christmas ball—on top of the perfume bottle.

That's what I think of when I find myself making Christmas my own personal package and start pulling the strings too tight. I remember Mindy Conrad and her poor, brave, pink tree.

THE END ★★



WYATT ANDREWS had been in town something less than twenty-four hours the night George Barnes was killed just off the first tee at the Tilden Falls Country Club a few minutes before midnight.

It was the occasion of the one formal dance of the summer season, when the substantial male citizens of this small community, prodded by their wives and hectored by their daughters, struggled into ancient dinner jackets and made their martyred appearance in the interest of family peace.

The younger married couples danced to the undistinguished music of Happy Hapgood and His Boys. The more settled citizens, after one trial waltz with their spouses, gathered around

An unsigned note had brought Wyatt to the graveyard—but death had beaten him to the rendezvous

COMPLETE AMERICAN MYSTERY NOVEL

the bar, leaving their wives to gossip in the dance-floor corners.

Wyatt Andrews was quite aware of supplying the main topic of conversation that night. He was sensible of the fact that his sudden advent after nine years had brought no unrestrained joy to these people who had once considered him one of their own. He had left town a few days after his father, Merritt Andrews, had shot himself with a World War I Luger. This was shocking enough; but, for a boy of eighteen, the motive for this self-destruction had been almost as shattering: The Public Utilities auditors had discovered a shortage of $33,456 in the books of the newly formed water company. Practically everyone in town had purchased stock up to his means. The whole town had been buncoed; and the fact that Merritt Andrews had been loved and trusted made the crime, in the eyes of the citizens, even more unforgivable.

No, Wyatt hadn't expected to be welcomed home with open arms. He had made it clear to those who inquired that he would be in town but briefly, to dispose of the old farm.

Seeing Julie again had given him his worst moments. Somehow, the fact that she had been so warm and friendly had sharpened his feeling of being an outcast. She had seemed so pointedly to be telling him that she hadn't changed; that so far as she was concerned, things were as they always had been between them. It was the partly nostalgic remembrance of his youthful romance with Julie Hinkley that had brought him back. He had been prepared to find her married, but the last thing he had been prepared for was to find her married to George Barnes.

Between George and himself there had always been bad blood. Brad Hamlin had warned him when he arrived at the dance that George was itching to prove something. "If that square shows up, I'll throw him out personally," was George's reported threat. In Wyatt's emotional state this served as a challenge.

He was dancing with Julie when George's big, handsome slab of a face had hove between them. George and he were the only two in sports clothes, so it must have looked like the main event when George pushed Julie aside, and he and Wyatt faced off on the floor. It would have happened then and there but Julie had interceded. Giving Wyatt a beseeching look, she had led George off the floor.

Wyatt had walked away, out into the darkness, talk churning in his wake. He thought he had been a fool to have come back. He hated George Barnes. He was in love with George's wife, Julie. He suspected that what he was actually in love with was the idea of being in love with Julie; the idea of being very young again and very sure and very happy. He had spent that part of the last nine years when he hadn't been in the Army at a series of unrewarding jobs which included working as advance man for a cheap, run-down carnival, selling paint on the road, and doing the police beat for a small city newspaper. The harsh truth was that he was nearly twenty-eight, rubbed clean of youthful illusions, and almost broke. And he was ready to take his final farewell of Tilden Falls and of its bitter memories.

The still, moonlit night was full of the summer hum of insects. An owl slid by on velvet wings so close he could hear the wing creak of its passage. It was then that he saw a match flare, and realized he wasn't alone in the small copse of birches that bordered the first tee.

The match was touching off a stub of a cigar, and the pallid, porcine face, deliberately revealed, was so ineffably evil that Wyatt winced. The light went out, and at the same time the figure detached itself from the tree, and Wyatt saw a small, round little man in a dark belted raincoat and narrow-brimmed fedora.

A gravelly voice said, "You shouldn't be surprised to see me, George. Has thirty-three paid off? What kind of a feeblo do you think I am?"

Wyatt said, "I'll buy. What's the caper?"

The little man started. "You ain't Georgie! Who are *you*, geek?"

Wyatt was about to remark that the club had let down the bars since he was last in town, when he saw that he was alone. He stared at the emptiness an instant, disturbed, for there had been something curiously familiar about the intonations of that voice. Then he shrugged off the uneasiness and moved back toward the clubhouse. He wanted to see Julie just once more before he left.

He saw her then. Coming off the porch toward the shadows, she saw him, or, at least, she caught an untoward movement and stopped.

"George?" Then she recognized him. "Wyatt. Oh, it's you. You—you haven't seen George?"

"No," he said. "George seems to be in demand tonight."

"Oh?" She looked at him vaguely, as though she were only half listening. She had a low, sweet voice full of curious inflections. If she hadn't been so lovely, so appealing, her habit of leaving sentences dangling in the air might have been exasperating. She seemed forever to be saying with her eyes, "Please understand."

She said, "Wyatt, first I want you to know that it was really nice to see you again. I mean, don't feel badly. People—you know people?"

"Let's just say I've met a lot of them. Now what about you? How long has George been acting like this?"

She laid a hand on his arm. "I don't want to talk about it tonight, Wyatt. Please. I've got to find him, get him home. Something's wrong tonight. He's been saying such awful things. Dad—he's—" She made a vague movement with her hand as though reaching for some invisible noun. "I don't know why I'm telling you all this, Wyatt. I'm not usually the—the confiding kind."

He said with grim compulsion, "With George there was always something wrong for my money. Your father agrees with me. Is that it, Julie?"

"Please, Wy. You *will* go home? I don't want any more trouble."

"What you should say, Julie, is that you're afraid if I hit George, I'd half kill the beggar."

Cast of Characters

WYATT ANDREWS	*A visitor in town*	**AMOS LIVERMORE**	*Newspaper editor*
JULIE BARNES	*His boyhood sweetheart*	**JOE BARNES**	*Bank president*
GEORGE BARNES	*Her husband*	**SAM WINKLER**	*County sheriff*
BEN HINKLEY	*Her father*	**PERLEY SWEAT**	*Deputy sheriff*
BRADFORD HAMLIN	*Wyatt's lawyer*	**MME. SARRO**	*A mentalist*
HOMER PATTISON	*Real-estate operator*	**FREDDIE HAHN**	*Carny hustler*

"But you will go, Wy? For your reasons, if you like. I can't explain now, but it's important to me."

"Sure," he said harshly. "So long, Julie, I'm listing the farm with Homer Pattison and getting out as soon as I can."

He turned and walked down the gravel driveway to where his coupé was parked. He was reaching for the door handle when he saw George Barnes. (This was about 11:15, he decided later, when this point was important.) George, his face livid, was moving toward him unsteadily. Wyatt remembered wondering how George could have got himself clobbered so fast. George, although in a foul mood, had been reasonably sober ten minutes earlier.

"Looking for you," George said thickly. "No cheap ten-penny louse is going to nuzzle my wife."

Wyatt said, "Still blowing your top, aren't you, George?"

He said it coolly enough. There would be little satisfaction in hitting a guy who was so far beyond feeling any pain. But George came on. He staggered and half fell on his face, but a wild swing had started and he let it come. George's fist grazed Wyatt's jaw, and the ring on his hand lacerated Wyatt's face.

That was all that was needed to touch Wyatt off that night. He swung. It wasn't a solid blow. The short jab just barely reached George's head. George was already reeling backwards. His face working, his hands flapping awkwardly at his sides, he crashed back into the shrubbery. Nothing stirred in the shrubs. George was out.

Afterwards, when everything he did or saw or heard was important, Wyatt tried to piece the next half-hour together. He'd left George where he was and stepped back on the gravel drive beside his car. He'd had an impression of someone on the darkened veranda, but he couldn't quite recall how he got that impression; a movement or a glow of cigarette, perhaps. He'd dabbed the scratch on his face with his handkerchief, and walked back into the clubhouse to see how badly his face might have been cut.

THE men were still there at the bar when he stepped from the darkness. They were nursing highballs. It was the custom at these dances for the members to bring their own liquor, each bottle cannily marked with the owner's initials.

Bradford Hamlin was there, a thin, dehydrated man, dry as only a lawyer can be. Brad had been one of Merritt Andrews' favorite cronies. One of Wyatt's most poignant memories was of those two bent over a chessboard in his father's study, their gray heads wreathed in smoke from their pipes.

Unnoted for a moment, Wyatt observed and listened with a wry objectivity. It didn't take more than a few drinks, he thought, to lay bare the bitterness, the rivalries of these civic leaders.

In the group was Homer Pattison, the local real-estate operator, a big and booming man with a professional heartiness, and Amos Livermore, the editor of the local newspaper, plump and petulant, with a thin, whining voice. They were discussing George, deploring his conduct and insisting that something should be done about him. But it was a hushed and furtive cabal. They were all taking pains that their opinions didn't carry beyond the tight circle. This was a prudent precaution, for just beyond them on the dance floor was George's uncle, Joe Barnes. He was at that particular moment dancing rather exuberantly with a pretty, matronly woman whom Wyatt recognized as Amos' sister, Grace. Wyatt remembered Joe Barnes. There were those who said Joe Barnes ran Tilden Falls. Joe, for whom modesty held no virtue, had always been inclined to agree.

WYATT was thinking that there was something less than festive in the atmosphere when he saw Julie's father, Ben Hinkley, approaching. Ben's dark eyes held a surface sheen that betrayed consuming anger. A small, slight man with a sensitive face, Ben had a natural reserve that gave him an unwarranted reputation for coldness. Ben, Wyatt had reason to know, was a man of passion, particularly where his daughter and his woolen mill, which had been in the Hinkley family for generations, were concerned.

Ben walked up to Brad, ignoring Amos and Homer. He said very carefully and distinctly, "Perhaps I should make my position clear here and now, Brad. George Barnes is

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD FORSBERG

"My act's clean. Try and prove it ain't," Madame Sarro said menacingly

rotten to the core. Whether or not you decide to handle her case, my daughter is leaving George as of tonight. It has been suggested delicately by Joe Barnes that if I persist in sponsoring her action, my note at the bank will not be renewed. Joe Barnes can succeed in such flagrant blackmail only with the co-operation of certain other members of the bank's board, two of whom are at hand. George Barnes approached both Amos Livermore and Homer Pattison tonight, and I can only guess at what threats or blandishments he employed; but let me say here that if it transpires that he has enlisted their support, I consider them both beneath contempt. I trust I have made myself clear."

With this pronouncement delivered, Ben Hinkley walked away. There was a stir at the bar. Homer, his face livid, recovered from the onslaught with a burst of stuttered indignation:

"The man—the man's unbalanced! George approached me on another matter entirely!"

Brad merely grunted. Imperturbable, cool, there was a twinkle lurking deep in his eyes as he turned to Wyatt. "George went out looking for you, Wyatt. The boys might be pleased with a report. Did you do something about George?"

Both Homer and Amos turned sharply. Wyatt took what satisfaction he could from their delayed acknowledgment of his presence. He said, "Not enough to earn a medal as a public benefactor. George was too far along to feel any pain. He swung and missed. I swung and he went down with the breeze."

It was then that the lights went dim. The orchestra was embarking on the good-night waltz. Homer, still fuming, banged down his glass and, mentioning something about his wife, departed. Amos Livermore carefully re-capped the bottle of lifeless ginger ale in front of him. His bottle in tow, he strutted off toward the dance floor.

Brad said, "He's afraid I might steal his ginger ale. He's also afraid his sister Grace will marry Joe Barnes and he'll be forced to pay a housekeeper to take her place. . . . Well, the boys were pleased with your report. They didn't dare show how pleased they were."

Wyatt fingered the tender cut on his cheek. "It seems to me George and I are running neck and neck for the bottom sport in the Tilden Falls popularity contest. Are you handling Julie's divorce, Brad?"

Brad shrugged. "If I take it, I lose Joe's legal business; if I don't, I lose Ben's. How far are you willing to go in helping Julie? Are you in love with her?"

Wyatt mulled that over charily. "I was in love with her once, but ten years is a long time. Anyway, I'm dusting out."

It was then that Wyatt saw Julie. She came out of the cloakroom and rushed by, a light coat over her shoulders. There was something so anguished in her face that he started impulsively toward her.

And as abruptly he changed his mind. He glanced at his wrist watch, noting it was just after midnight, and nodded good-by to Brad.

Just as he stepped out into the summer night he heard the bells. It was the notes from the belfry of the old Revolutionary church that stood on the bare knoll just across the moonlit field. The last time Wyatt had heard those bells toll was on that afternoon he had buried his father in the family plot on that bleak hill. The memory shook him. The church bells rang three times—and three times again; and then there was silence.

Standing there alone, Wyatt's anger returned. They had none of them turned out for those last rites. When his father, with Brad, Homer Pattison, and Joe Barnes, had formed the water company, the whole town had bought in, with the prospect of a rich harvest. Brad's office, given over to the stock sales, had done a land-office business. As treasurer, Merritt Andrews had naturally had access to the safe. And, inveterate speculator, he had had a weak moment. He had taken the company funds, certain that the "borrowed" money could be replaced.

No, Wyatt wasn't excusing his father; no more had his father excused himself. The note he had left for Brad had been direct and honest. "I am sorry," Merritt Andrews had written, "I must do what I must do. I see no other way out."

As Wyatt started down the graveled driveway to his car he glanced at the neighboring shrubbery. He was never quite sure what had prompted him to investigate further. Perhaps it was the thought that he had admitted his encounter with George to the gathering at the bar. If George was hurt there could be trouble.

He stepped into the bushes. George was still there. He lay face up, his mouth open, and there was an ugly, lopsided look about his head just over the right eye. Someone had done something about George Barnes. Sometime within the last forty-five minutes he had been bludgeoned as he lay in a semiconscious stupor. There was no doubt about it at all: George Barnes was dead.

Wyatt's first impulse was to run. He had backed away some fifty feet across the fairway before he realized his panic. Someone had seen him knock George Barnes down, and that someone, for a good and sound reason, had finished George off. Anger spread and prickled under Wyatt's scalp. He knew right then that Wyatt Andrews was not going to be the guy to find the body of George Barnes.

"Wyatt!"

He spun sharply. There had been no sound on the green turf to warn him of her approach. Julie was a few yards off, running toward him.

He went forward and caught at her arm. She shook her head. "I—I'm all right, Wy. I saw you out here from the veranda. There are things I must tell you, Wy—things you ought to know."

"I think you're right, Julie," he said. "First, what are you running from now? You're frightened."

"No, not frightened. I am worried, Wy. I'm leaving George. That's one of the things I had to tell you. Don't you see, right now I can't feel and act like myself? If I'm ever going to have a decent future for myself and little Donny, I've got to be prudent. Don't you understand what I'm trying to say, Wy?"

"You mean that George is not above using me and your child to counter your legal action," he answered harshly. "You're trying to tell me to leave."

"I have no right to ask this of you—to go away until this is over—or have I, Wyatt?"

She was peddling half-truths, keeping him at bay with dangling promises. George Barnes was dead not fifty yards from where she stood. He wanted to shout out this fact, face her with it. But now her question, tender and charged with her simplicity, disarmed him. She couldn't know, he told himself. Julie was incapable of dissembling.

She seemed to sense his irresolution. "I guess that's what I want to know, Wy. I haven't that right, and I know it. But I'm asking, anyway. I've got to!"

He said, "And there's something I've got to ask you, Julie. I want to know about George. All about him. What's he been up to? What's he done since I've been away?"

She said bitterly, "George hasn't changed. You always knew he was rotten. I had to find it out. He might have amounted to something if it hadn't been for his Uncle Joe. He's made George weak and dependent. He's encouraged his extravagances, and then seems to take particular delight in refusing to pay for his wild oats."

"Then what *is* George doing for a living, Julie?" he pressed her.

"He worked for a while on the paper for Amos, and he's sold real estate and insurance for Homer Pattison. George is supposed to have a bad heart and he has to be careful. He still gets a little work from them both, off and on. Please, I can't talk about it now."

"You're holding something back, Julie. Is it Joe Barnes you're afraid of? He's the one who wants to block your divorce proceedings, isn't he? Why?"

"You wouldn't understand. You've been away too long. He considers Dad a snob, but he likes the idea of being tied to the Hinkleys by marriage, I guess. It gives him tone."

She said this with a counterfeit fling at lightness. But he saw suddenly that her shoulders were shaking. He put his arm around her and drew her to him.

"Listen," he whispered; "listen to me, Julie! We've got to talk. We're in something 'way over our heads. I should take your advice and get out of here. But this time I'm staying. Start talking sense, Julie, and put periods on your sentences."

She raised her head slowly. "I can't," she said, and the edge of hysteria was gone from her voice. "I'm going now, Wyatt. Don't say any more. And don't, whatever you do, make love to me. Not now, Wy; maybe not ever!"

She slipped from his arms. There was just a flash of her white coat as she went through the stand of poplars that bordered the road. He was alone in the moonlight.

He walked back to the clubhouse. He climbed into his car and drove home to the farm on the Blackington road. He parked his coupé in the weed-choked

yard and opened the rear luggage compartment of the car just enough to snag out his bag.

Then he went wearily up the front steps of the house and opened the door with his key and walked into the darkness, into the smell of mold and dust and nine years of emptiness, and the memories he had run away from for so long. He didn't bother to open his bag or light the lamp on the table.

He sat down heavily on the old couch and lit a cigarette. He had to face it now. A man had been murdered. But a strange association plagued him: his father's death and the church bells tolling. The mind had a weird faculty for reaching back into the dark pool of memory with a rapier thrust of light. The remembrance of those tolling bells haunted him.

Then, suddenly, remembering that little man with the putty face, Wyatt stood erect. The bells had rung as he stood on the driveway tonight; they had rung three and three. Thirty-three. "Has thirty-three paid off, George?" the little man had asked.

What was the answer to that question? Beyond the window the moon was riding high, inscrutable as death itself. . . .

News travels fast in a small town. By nine that next morning Bertha Brunner, the waitress at Al's restaurant, had been treated to any number of versions by any number of people of the fight between Wyatt Andrews and George Barnes.

Of course, everyone knew that Julie Barnes was filing for a divorce. No one blamed Julie in the slightest. Julie was generally liked; George was universally deplored. There was some talk about the tolling of the church bells just after midnight, too; but no one thought much about that. The Reverend Mr. Littlefield called it the prank of small boys, and he had asked Amos Livermore to publish a warning in the paper that such sacrilege would not be tolerated.

Bertha, of course, took in these little gambits from one customer and passed them right on to the next. In general, that summer morning, she shaded things in Wyatt Andrews' favor. He had always been regular, she said.

The restaurant was empty when Wyatt stepped into it from the sunlight. Bertha didn't recognize him for a brief instant. Then she noted the healing cut on his cheek, and it clicked:

"Well, look who's here! Hey, I been hearing about you, Wyatt."

"Nothing good, I'll wager. How are you, Bertha?"

Bertha slapped down silver and a paper napkin on the counter. "That George has had a good poke coming to him for a long, long time. Never was any good. Because of his uncle he's always got away with murder around here. Absolute murder! . . . Coffee, Wy?"

"Black," said Wyatt. "And a pair of eggs, fried." *Absolute murder*, he thought, with a wince; wisdom from the mouth of an innocent. "Have you heard what George has to say about it?"

The eggs hissed on the griddle. "Nobody's seen hide or hair of George. But it's no news when George don't come home nights. It's his uncle Joe that seems to be doing all the yapping. What can Joe Blow Barnes do about it? You didn't damage him bad, did you, Wy?"

"What about Joe Barnes, Bertha?"

"You know Joe. Joe seems to think he owns this town. He controls the bank, the biggest construction outfit in the county, and he sure has the county sheriff in his back pocket. Sam Winkler calls Joe every time he wants to get a haircut."

The eggs were in front of him when he saw the black sedan swerve up to the curb behind his coupé. There were two men in the front seat. They got out, came into the restaurant, and Wyatt recognized them both. The short, square-jawed, black-browed man in the lead, with a frayed cigar in his mouth, was Sam Winkler. The younger man behind him was Perley Sweat.

Sam walked up to Wyatt. He rolled his cigar to the far corner of his thick mouth. "Come on, Andrews. Joe Barnes wants to see you."

Wyatt looked beyond to where Perley was slumped against the door, looking apologetic and unhappy. Perley wore a deputy sheriff badge pinned to his belt. He had grown soft around the stomach and jowls since those days when he had made holes in the Waterford line with gleeful abandon.

Wyatt took a poke at his eggs. "Fine. You can tell Joe I'll be here for another fifteen minutes if he wants to see me."

Sam reddened. "You aren't any fancy pants around here any more, Andrews. You'll get treated like any other weisenheimer who hits this town spoiling for trouble."

Wyatt took a drag from his coffee cup. Spoiling for trouble. Then this wasn't it. It wasn't murder—not yet. George's body hadn't been found. And it *should* have been found.

Bertha ripped the check from her pad and jabbed the pencil into her red hair. "Look who's talkin'," Bertha snapped. "Don't let this 'burrhead push you around, Wy."

"Shut up," Sam said. "Okay, Andrews. You know where Joe's office is. Stroll over." Sam turned and went out hard-footed, and Perley followed him out to the car.

Bertha said indignantly, "What I don't know about *that* bird! You're not going?"

"Maybe I will, at that, Bertha. It would interest me to know just why Joe wants to see me." Wyatt pushed his unfinished eggs back, tossed a bill on the counter, and got up. . . .

The office of the Barnes Construction Company was on the second floor of the brick block over the Pattison Realty Co. Making his way up the dark stairs, Wyatt tried to fit Joe Barnes into the over-all picture. Joe had never been one of his father's close friends. Joe had always shown a preference for toadies and hirelings. After twenty years he was still considered a newcomer. A robust widower, he had come from Boston (or so he said) to settle down and give his nephew and ward, George, the advantages of a small-town upbringing.

The sign on the door of the Barnes Construction Company said: WALK IN. Wyatt walked in.

"You took your own sweet time, Andrews. Sit down."

Joe Barnes was sitting behind a monumental desk directly in line with the door. He looked impressive behind that desk, with his fine head of silvery hair, his furrowed face toned by exposure to the color of saddle leather. The hands that fiddled with a slender pencil were betraying; they were thick and meaty and twitchy.

Wyatt said, "Is coming to see you some kind of a new track event, Mr. Barnes?"

Sam Winkler emerged from the back room. "Like I told you, Joe, he's a wise guy. No reason why we should treat him with kid gloves. He made an unprovoked attack upon the person of a substantial and peace-loving citizen of our community."

"Fair community," Wyatt revised. "Are you through with your Fourth of July speech?"

"All right, boys," Joe said. Now he looked up, with a paper-thin smile that was obviously supposed to be ingratiating. "I'm sure Andrews and I can work this thing out man to man. Julie and George have had a little misunderstanding, Andrews. Julie's young and headstrong. George—well, George, he's no angel. Kind of easygoing, George is, but not a bad fella."

"There seems to be some difference of opinion on that point," Wyatt said. "If you're taking a poll, I'll give you mine."

Joe's face twitched. "I'm trying hard to be fair, Andrews. I'm willing to forget that you paid objectionable attention to Mrs. Barnes at the dance, and that you made an unprovoked attack upon my nephew. I want to give the kids a break. I want you to stay out of the picture and give Julie a chance to come to her senses, that's all. Julie's been good for George, and they got a kid and all that. No sense in you mixin' into this family squabble, eh?"

Wyatt said, "Let me get this straight. Are you married to Julie or is George?"

Sam stepped up. "One more wisecrack out of you, you'll get lumps! From me, personally. Now beat it, and start packing."

"Any time you want to try it, Sam, wear a pair of tin pants over that sagbelly of yours," Wyatt said, and he went out and down the stairs.

This was the second invitation he had to leave town. And it was specific and unmincing. He remembered that Brad Hamlin used to have a sign in his office that read: DO NOT ASK FOR FREE ADVICE: ADVICE IS A LAWYER'S STOCK IN TRADE. No one had ever paid much attention to that sign. There was no reason, Wyatt thought, why he should start now.

Old Vinnie Halsy was still there, and she looked up, with her characteristic suspicion, as he walked in. "He's in conference. You've gained weight, Wyatt. It seems to me you used to be rather skinny."

"I used to be a lot of things, Vinnie. Remember, I used to be popular. Ever hear of Typhoid Mary?"

Below him on the road a police siren mewled

Vinnie humphed. The door to the inner office fell back. Julie, head down, swept by him like an animal in flight. Her hand was on the knob of the door when she saw him.

"What are you doing here, Wy? You shouldn't be here— I told you—"

"All kinds of people are telling me what I ought to do, Julie," Wyatt said. He hooked his arm under hers and guided her on out into the dim corridor, shutting the door behind him.

She whipped her arm from under his crooked elbow, but he caught her and drew her up sharply. "I'm going to talk to you, Julie. First, do you know where George is?"

"No. I didn't go home after the dance; I went to Dad's. Dad's housekeeper packed Donny's and my things while I was at the dance."

"It was prearranged?"

"Yes. There was no telling what they might try to do to stop us."

"They?"

"George and his uncle. They had threatened—" She stopped abruptly.

He shook her. "Go on. They threatened? What?"

"Please, Wy, I've got to get back. Dad's not well. He's staying in bed. This is all *my* affair. I've asked you to stay out of it!"

"But it seems I'm in it! Joe has some hooks into your father. That's it, isn't it? Joe controls the bank. Your father has a loan there that's not going to be renewed when it's due. Go on from there."

"That's all there is. Dad had to buy new looms last year to meet southern competition. He has a large note at the bank. If I break up with George, Joe threatens to break Dad. He'll force the mill into bankruptcy and buy it up cheap. Dad thinks Homer Pattison and Amos Livermore plan to back Joe. They're both bank directors, too. I was willing to stay on with George if it meant that to Dad. But Dad won't let me. He said he'd—"

"He'd what, Julie? Does your father know where George is? Let me put it that way."

"Stop bullying me, Wyatt! Ask Joe Barnes where George is. He ought to know if anyone does!"

"And there's a little fat man with a putty face and a belted raincoat who might know, Julie. What about him?"

She stiffened, and her lips shaped to speak, but no sound came. Now fear was very real in her eyes.

"You know him, Julie? You've seen him?"

"Two days ago—in the garden. And then, the other night, he passed in a car. He—he's so *awful!* He must be someone hired by George or Joe to—to watch me. Don't you see, Wy, that's the reason you have to stay out of this. It's foolish to take a chance of having our names linked at a time like this. So won't you just go now? There can only be trouble if you stay."

She moved to go, but he held her fast. "You're in trouble, and so am I. And I've got news for you, Julie. I'm staying. I've just made up my mind."

And he let her go. He watched her flight down the dark stairs. . . .

"You *are* still in love with her."

Brad was standing in the open door of his office. It was a statement rather than a question. At least, he didn't seem to expect an answer. He motioned Wyatt in and went on ahead into his cubicle. He was sitting on the edge of the window ledge, looking out bleakly and feeling his thin nose when Wyatt stepped in.

"I've been talking to Joe Barnes on the phone. Are you leaving town?"

"What do you think? I'm not being flagged out of this town, Brad."

"All right. You stay. I'm taking Julie's case. Do you want to help Julie?"

"Go on," Wyatt said.

"Find George Barnes."

"You can still go on, Brad. Is George missing?"

"George is missing, all right. George has to be served with papers by tomorrow noon if Julie's divorce is to make the November term of court. A sixty-day waiting period is required in this state. If George isn't serviced by noon tomorrow, the case will have to wait until next May. Does that suggest a good reason to you why George is missing?"

"You'll see that I stay out of the clink?" Wyatt said carefully.

Brad removed the last cigarette from his pack. He crumpled the paper hard in his fist and tossed it into the wastebasket. "Barnes has no case against you unless he can produce George in court with a lump on his head. He won't. Now get out of here. I've got work to do."

"So have I," Wyatt said, and he moved toward the door, and there he turned. "Just where do Amos Livermore and Homer Pattison stand in this? George once worked for both of them. It's been suggested that George can still count on them for some of the green. Play that back and how does it sound?"

Smoke plumed out from Brad's nostrils. "Are you suggesting blackmail?"

"Now that you mention it," Wyatt said, "maybe I am."

As he went down the stairs, he felt a crazy impulse to laugh out loud. He was the guy to find George Barnes with a lump on his head!

He walked down the street, for a moment, undirected. He noted that the eleven-o'clock train was in, panting asthmatically at the old frame station while the freight was being jettisoned under the critical eyes of the town loafers.

Yes, that little fat man *could* be a dick, a private detective hired by the Barneses to monitor Julie's behavior. Why was he so sure that this wasn't the case? From the first strange meeting something vaguely familiar about that man had bothered him. The man had come to the club to see George. Had he seen George that night? Or had someone else managed to see George first?

Wyatt was getting into his car when he saw Homer Pattison come bustling out

of his real-estate office, golf bag slung over his shoulder. He was backing his shiny new station wagon out as Wyatt moved over to waylay him. He would ask Homer about listing the farm; and there were a few other things he wanted very much to ask him. Homer Pattison had left the bar the night before as the lights had been dimmed. And right now he seemed to have an urgent date to play golf.

He never got to Homer. A car had been held up to let the suburban wagon out. It was a battered old heap with one fender adrift. Wyatt's eyes wandered to the man at the wheel. It was a casual glance; then all at once it wasn't so casual. Wyatt started forward, but now the old car was moving ahead in the wake of Homer's new station wagon. The man at the wheel had a white, putty-like face.

Two long strides took Wyatt back to his car. A truck had intervened in the lazy flow of traffic before he could get straightened away. By the time he'd swung by the truck, the battered car was out of sight.

Wyatt headed north on the Blackington road and he kept right on going, the car wide open. He was in the middle of a tangle, but he just couldn't seem to find a loose end to latch onto. He drove the eight miles to Blackington with nothing much more in mind than to relieve the tensions within him with the drug of motion.

Just outside the town Wyatt swung off the road in front of a small roadside restaurant called The Snack. It was a singularly uninviting establishment externally. A paint-peeled beer sign swung over the entrance; fly-specked movie cards and posters cluttered the big window.

Poised at the doorway, Wyatt's eye caught the poster advertising the carnival in Blackington that week, and he merely recalled that possibly the lowest ebb of his career to date had been acting as an advance man for one of those shabby rural shows. He went into the cellar dimness of the place, and there he stopped quite suddenly.

He might not have known that little fat man, but he knew what had been tickling his memory! The little man was carny! His talk had been carny talk! Wyatt's mind reached back into the past. He didn't know what it meant, how it tied in; but he had dredged up something that figured. George Barnes, years back, had hung around that carnival when it had come to Tilden Falls. It was the same carnival—King Bros. Biggest Little Show on Earth: Mme. Sarro, the Mentalist, Knows All, Sees All, Tells All. The same flesh act: The Black Gardenia—refurbished with a fresh flower, no doubt; but the same salacious fare for the gullible, the ignorant, and the lascivious.

Wyatt reached for the wall phone. Julie had been with him that night at the carnival nine years ago. Maybe this thing didn't go back that far, but it was a place to start. Murder always had a past. George Barnes' past was the trail to unravel.

Julie herself came to the phone. She said, "Yes? Who is it?"

He said, "Listen to me carefully, Julie. This is Wyatt. I'm at a joint called The Snack on the Blackington road. I've got to see you. I'll wait here for half an hour, and if you don't come I'll go to your house and find you. Don't think about it. Just come." He dropped the receiver back on the hook.

The man at the counter looked up. "What do you mean, *joint?* You don't find a better burger in the county, bub."

Wyatt said, "I'll have a ham and cheese sandwich."

The man made the sandwich without grace. Wyatt tore at it mechanically. He dug back into the past, but the pay ore seemed to peter out. The radio mewled on the shelf behind the bar, intruding with its irritating irrelevancies. He didn't feel he was on good enough terms with the counterman to ask him to turn it off. So he went out into the afternoon to wait in his car.

It was 2:50 by his watch when Julie's green sedan appeared around the bend. He slid off the seat and to the road's edge. The car came on and started to slow down; then, with an acceleration of speed, whipped on past and down the road. He had a glimpse of Julie gripping the wheel and looking straight ahead.

The slubbery cry of braked wheels brought him around. A black sedan had come off the road onto the apron, spitting gravel from its tires. It stopped ten yards off.

Sam Winkler was out of the car and coming at him. "Okay, Andrews! Sorry to spoil your date. Let's go."

Wyatt asked, "Now what?" But he needed only one guess: George had been found. Now it was murder. Nothing else could explain the gleam of malevolent pleasure reflected in Sam Winkler's Neanderthal face.

Sam jerked his head at his car, and Perley Sweat came tumbling out. "I'll go ahead, Perl. You follow me in with Andrews."

Sam slid back into his car, gunned it around, and started back down the road. Perley's hound-dog eyes appealed to Wyatt. "I sure do hate to do this, Wy. An old pal is an old pal. Ain't that the truth, Wy?"

Wyatt said, "Did Julie tip Sam off?"

"No. After Sam found your jacket he got together with the county attorney, and they decided to pick you up for questioning. We saw Julie larrupin' out of town and Sam figured—"

"What jacket?"

Perley looked unhappy. "The one you wore the night of the dance. Joe Barnes was supposed to hear from George at noon today. He didn't hear from George, and now all at once Joe starts shouting bloody murder."

"The jacket?" snapped Wyatt.

"We went to the farm and searched the place. That jacket you wore that night had a stain on it."

"Okay. A stain was on it. I'm sloppy."

Big Perley looked uneasily out of the corner of his eye. He gulped a couple of times. "This was a big stain. Sam says it's—blood." . . .

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The sheriff's office was a bare little cubicle on the first floor of the red-brick courthouse. Sam sat slumped behind a desk. On the edge of the desk, sitting gingerly as though protecting the sharp crease in his trousers, perched an immaculate and plump little man, tapping his white teeth with a book match folder.

Sam dismissed Perley with a jerk of his head. "Okay, Clyde. He's all yours."

The plump man frowned and nodded abstractedly at a chair. "Sit down, Andrews. My name's Naylor. I'm the county attorney. Do you mind answering a few questions? I understand you had a little encounter with George Barnes at the Tilden Falls Country Club around midnight last night. Is that correct?"

"I understand," Wyatt countered, "you searched my place without a warrant and appropriated an article of clothing, to wit, one jacket. I understand this mental giant identified a stain on it as blood. Okay. I bleed just like people. And do you mind if I mind being yanked all over the county like something on a string?"

The county attorney was resolved to be patient. He checked Sam's uprising with an admonishing shake of his head. "We have not asked you here to badger you, Andrews. We merely ask your cooperation. Mr. Barnes reports his nephew as missing. You were, so far as we can ascertain, the last person to see George Barnes. You *did* see George Barnes outside the clubhouse last night between eleven o'clock and midnight, and you *did* have an encounter with him?"

"Sure. Call it an encounter. He swung at me and grazed my face with his ring. I swung and didn't find much to hit. George Barnes was plastered. He went down. I left him and went about my business."

"I see," the county attorney said. "In other words, Andrews, except for one—er—superficial blow, you state that you were never actually in contact with the person of George Barnes."

"That's right. What are you trying to prove?"

"Let me ask you this, Andrews: If it turns out that the blood on your jacket is not *your* blood, you could offer no reasonable explanation for the stain?"

"That's right. Now, how about giving *me* some reasonable explanations. This morning Joe Barnes wasn't worried about George. Now this afternoon, all at once, he is. And did someone say he saw me hit George Barnes?"

Sam came out of his chair. "You're gettin' nowhere playing footsie with this wise guy. I say he slapped George, and hard. I say that, with George's bad ticker, one good sock could finish him. Like he says, he couldn't have got that blood on his jacket if all he did was sock him and go about his business. But he coulda got that blood on the front of his jacket if he got scared when he saw what

he'd done, and dragged that body off and hid it. I say book him for assault, and then let *me* interrogate him."

The county attorney waggled the polished tips of his fingers. "Sit down, Sam." He went to the window and looked out. "You are, let us say, interested in Mrs. Barnes, Andrews, if you don't mind my putting it that way?"

"I do mind your putting it that way," Wyatt said flatly. "You haven't got a case and you know it. You haven't even got a body. And there's something else I'd like to know: There's a carnival in Blackington, running wide open, flesh acts, gambling and sucker rackets. Ask your sheriff what his fix is on *that* operation."

With that he had turned to the door. He had a feeling he wasn't going to make it, and he was right about that. Sam Winkler moved fast for a heavy man. Wyatt, sensing the blow, shied his head over. Sam's fist struck, glancing across his shoulder, and sent him stumbling backwards. His back met the wall solidly. His knees buckled.

Sam, his beefy face turgid, was moving in for the follow-up, when the door fell back. Brad Hamlin's low, dry voice rasped: "This isn't very smart, Clyde. Are you responsible for this little performance?"

The county attorney was on his feet. "Come in, Brad. I'm afraid the sheriff *is* a little overzealous."

BRAD slapped his brief case on the desk and slapped his hat down on top of it. "You have uttered the understatement of the month, Clyde. Congratulations." To Wyatt he said, "I had a call from a client of mine. Are you being held?"

The county attorney's composure was ruffled now. "If you are representing Andrews, I can give you the present status of the case, Brad. The facts are simply that George Barnes was to have left on a trip last night. It seems now that he did not reach his destination. According to our information, Andrews was the last person to have seen him. Andrews was invited here to give us any information that might help us in our investigation. I must say he has not been very co-operative."

"I gather," Brad snapped, "that you would like him to co-operate to the extent of incriminating himself. You have also taken pains to prejudice the case by broadcasting the fact of finding at his home a jacket which you allege is stained with blood. Are you a serologist, Clyde?"

The county attorney flushed angrily. "The jacket found at the Andrews farm will undergo the standard tests. It is now at the State Police Lab. Any action my office might take will await the proper report. In the meantime, as you are now doubtless aware, the State Police and the Fish and Game wardens have been called in to assist in a thorough search of the woods in the vicinity of the country club. We are not detaining Andrews at this time. We ask, however, that he keep himself available."

Brad grunted. "You are not holding him for the good and simple reason that you haven't evidence that a crime has been committed. If and when you have such evidence, we will be pleased to be advised."

"If and when we get that evidence," Sam Winkler said ominously, "this client of yours is going to need a lawyer—a good one."

But Brad Hamlin had picked up his hat and brief case and departed. Wyatt followed at the lawyer's heels.

Brad answered Wyatt's first question before it was uttered: "That's right; Julie phoned me. She's in a disturbed state. You realize, of course, that it's going to look bad for both you and Julie if George is seriously injured. And it's going to look worse if that blood on your jacket turns out to be George's. It would be too late then to change your story and state that you had been in contact with George during the fight as explanation for that blood." Then his eyes turned on Wyatt with a hard scrutiny. "You're telling me the truth—all of it?"

Wyatt said warmly, "When I start lying, I'll tell you."

He drove the eight miles to Tilden Falls in the summer dusk. He'd work back nine years, he thought, and somewhere along the trail he had to find the spore of murder. Somewhere along George Barnes' back trail was a little fat man with a putty face, a carny hustler. And there was a number the church bells tolled. And there was his old man slumped in his chair with a bullet in his head.

He knew where he had to look first. It was dark when he parked his car in a blind wood opposite the Country Club. There was no moon as yet, but he didn't need a moon to show him that George Barnes' body wasn't there in the shrubbery. . . .

IT WAS issue day at the *Tilden Falls Courier* office, and Amos Livermore was completing his proofreading of the front page when Wyatt Andrews stepped in just after nine that next morning. Amos looked up, with his professional smile of benignity, which was promptly transformed into a frown as he recognized his visitor.

He said brusquely, "What can I do for you, Wyatt?"

Wyatt stepped through the wicket to the desk and glanced down upon the open paper. ONE-TIME RESIDENT QUESTIONED IN BARNES' DISAPPEARANCE, the headline read. FOUL PLAY SUSPECTED. . . . Wyatt didn't bother to read the story. He said, "If you'd asked, I'd have given you a picture, Amos. They haven't found George?"

"So far as I know, they have not," Amos replied coolly. "This is an extremely busy morning for me, Wyatt."

"It seems to be for me, too," Wyatt said. "Let's not waste each other's time with amenities. George worked for you once some years back. I understand he still works for you on occasional assignments. I understand Homer Pattison also makes small contributions to his livelihood."

Amos sniffed. "I can't see, young man, why this—"

"Is any business of mine?" Wyatt finished. "It isn't, really. I just thought it curious, in view of your expressed distaste for George. Let it go. I've just been to the library, going through some back files of the paper. There was a carnival in town nine years ago this summer. I came across a notice of it. It reminded me that George Barnes spent a lot of time hanging around that carnival. It also reminded me that there was a series of house robberies reported at the time. It struck me as interesting. You see, I'm trying to figure out what George Barnes was mixed up in."

AMOS' face flushed angrily. "I am sure I don't follow you. And, what's more, I am not interested. Now, if you'll excuse me—"

Wyatt said quietly, "I thought you might be interested, Amos. You see, it occurred to me that George might possibly have been playing around with blackmail. Just an idea."

Wyatt moved for the door. Behind him Amos rose from his desk. "Just what are you suggesting, young man?" Amos demanded explosively.

Wyatt turned. "Was I suggesting something? Well, maybe I was, at that. When your father died, in 1937, he left a considerable fund in trust for your sister Grace, and you and Homer Pattison were named as trustees. I read that in your paper, too. Well, I'll be seeing you."

"Young man," Amos sputtered, "I ask you to explain yourself here and now!"

"I'll be back," Wyatt said. "Right now I need some breakfast, and then I'm going to see a fortuneteller. For ten bucks Mme. Sarro will prophesy a bright future. I can't think of a better way to spend ten bucks." . . .

Bertha was bursting. She flipped the eggs on the griddle, and emitted another expressive whistle.

"The whole town's on its ear, Wy. State Police, game wardens, everyone. It's like that time Elly Hansen got herself lost picking berries. Maybe it's that amnesia."

Wyatt wasn't listening. In the mirror he could see a segment of the street. Just behind his own car at the curb was a black sedan. Slumped in the front seat was Perley Sweat.

Wyatt said, "Make it two coffees, Bertha." He went to the door and jerked his head at Perley and went back to his stool.

Perley came slouching in, looking crestfallen. "You spotted me, huh?"

"The car," Wyatt explained. "You ought to put a false mustache on it. Am I under surveillance?"

"I guess that's what you'd call it, Wy. I'm supposed to tail you, see that you don't blow town. I hate to do this to a pal, Wy."

"Forget it. I'm just trying to make this easy for you. Have a cup of coffee."

"Do you think that would look right?" Perley said dubiously. "I'm supposed to be tailing you."

"Then," Wyatt said, "as soon as I finish my eggs, you're going to Blackington to the carnival. I'll make it even easier. I'll go in your car."

"Why, sure," Perley agreed, brightening. "I get eight cents a mile when I use

my car on duty. We'll take a gander at the cooch dancer, huh? It's a part of my job to see them dames don't go too far." Then Perley frowned. "Only, I'm supposed to keep an eye on Julie Barnes, too."

"That's fine," Wyatt said, "because my idea is to take Julie with us." . . .

Wyatt had Perley park the car just inside the Hinkley gate, where it was screened from the low white house by a high thicket of laurel. He got out of the car and stood peering beyond the shrubbery for a moment.

The old glider was still there on the porch. At the age of fifteen he had kissed Julie for the first time on that glider. Now, as he watched, he saw her emerge onto the porch. Ben Hinkley was behind her.

Ben, in a dressing gown, his patrician face drawn, appeared to be pleading earnestly. Julie was shaking her head, desolation in her face. Suddenly she kissed her father, and ran down the stairs toward her car in the driveway.

Wyatt stepped out into the drive as the car came hurtling toward the road exit. Julie braked the car to a stop. "Wyatt!"

He took hold of her arm as she opened the car door and drew her out, bundling her into the back seat of Perley's car before she could find words of protest.

"Wyatt, I can't go with you! I have an appointment—please!"

"You have an appointment with me first, Julie. You didn't keep the one you had yesterday."

"You know about that. I was being followed. Where *is* George, Wyatt? Do you know? Is that why you wanted to see me?"

His hand still gripped her arm, holding her firmly in the seat, for she was straining to rise. He said, "Did I ever have to give a reason for wanting to see you, Julie?"

"Please, Wy, not here, not now. There's no time for us now. I tried to make you understand."

Perley, at the wheel, tossed a broad wink over his shoulder and swung the car into the Blackington road. "Don't mind old cousin Perl, kids. I'll tool the old crate down slow. We got plenty of time before the afternoon show."

Julie's eyes widened with questioning, and Wyatt said, "We're starting back where we left off, Julie. The last date I had with you was nine years ago. I took you to a carnival. That was the night I got home and found my father dead in his study chair. It's the same carnival, Julie. It's the same kind of summer day. We had an evening picnic first out at the lake—"

"Wy," she whispered thinly, "why are you doing this? You're torturing yourself. Please take me back, Wy. I've got to see Brad. Dad wants to see him."

"You're coming with me. We're going to talk, and I want the truth, Julie. What's wrong with your father? You might start by telling me that. Why does your father want to see Brad, and why can't he talk to him over the phone?"

"His will, Wy. Dad wants to go over his will." She blurted out the words and then suddenly she buried her head in her hands. "Stop bullying me, Wyatt! Stop, *stop*, STOP!" . . .

The show had settled on the Fair Ground. The concessions were just opening up and the spielers were warming up their pitches along the midway.

". . . Step right this way, ladies and gents. You are about to witness one of the most mystifying demonstrations . . ."

Wyatt ducked into the tent. It was dark and hot as a summer garret.

"Looking for something, Buster?"

His eyes adjusted, and Mme. Sarro took shape in the murk, a mountainous woman, shapeless as a meal sack. She was relaxing precariously on a camp chair, smoking.

"That's right," Wyatt admitted. "I'm looking for a guy, a hustler who used to work in your act ten years ago. He's short and kind of fat and he's got a face like an underdone biscuit. I hear he's back. He's a friend of mine."

Hostility, watchful, wary, froze on her face. "Freddie never had a friend, if you

Smothering the flashlight lens with his hand, he looked at the little black book

mean Freddie Hahn. That cheap, sidecarding—"

"Maybe," Wyatt revised, "he's not a friend of mine. Maybe it's just that he owes me a cut. Where is he?"

Her sharp black eyes prospected for an instant and then shut down. "I don't know you. Anyway, he ain't here. On your way, Buster. I go on in five minutes."

Wyatt hooked a chair under him with his foot and sat down. "You're billed as a mind reader. Let's have a cold reading. I'll prime the pump a little. Freddie was with your act nine years ago in Tilden Falls. Freddie handled the plants, the fixes. He acted as your feeder. In Tilden Falls he tied up with a townie named George Barnes. There were a series of house robberies at the time the carny was in. Did Freddie cut you in on his private caper?"

She came forward in her chair. "What are you trying to pull? Are you carny?"

"Once. A spook worker with Hoople's Monster Shows. That's why I'm giving you a break. I used to be a little convincer. I used to get the marks' eyeballs right out in the palm of my hand. But I want to know about *your* act. I know it's gaffed just like everything else in carny. I can make it rough. Outside, there's a John Law, a pal of mine. I'm not looking for a fix. I'm looking for info. I want to know about Freddie Hahn."

Her eyes measured and weighed a minute longer. "What do you want to know about Freddie?"

"Whatever there is."

"There was nothing about Freddie that didn't smell. He never *was* any good. When I found him, he was geeking. I took the little crumb in and trained him. I don't know what he pulled in Tilden Falls, but I wouldn't be surprised at anything. A few weeks later, at Littleton, they got him dead to rights. They found five thousand dollars' worth of stolen jewelry on him. He was sent up for ten years. It was his second go. He got out a few months back for good behavior. He came back to me with a ten-dollar sob act and, like a sucker, I took him in again. Two days ago he jumped the act, leaving me high and dry. That's it."

"Go on. Why did he jump?"

"How should I know! Fishing, he said. The only thing that rat ever fished for was a dirty buck. I told you, that's it."

"You haven't told me about the act. Does it go like this? The marks in the audience are asked to write their questions on slips of paper and sign their names. You explain that's just to impress it on their own minds, so the message can be transmitted mentally. You have a plant collect them and hand them up to you, to burn in a bowl right in front of the crowd. But what the plant does is switch the stack on the way up, and what you burn is a dummy stack of blanks.

"Then you blindfold your eyes, and the plant either holds the real slips up under the platform or taps coded numbers to you. Practically all the questions the suckers ask can be coded into fifty numbers: 'Is my wife faithful? Am I going to take that trip? Who poisoned our dog?' In your trance you say, 'Let me see—there's someone named Harry, and he wants to know about his dog. Well, Harry, you are right about your suspicion.' Well, how do I sound?"

"Okay, Buster, on your way!" Mme. Sarro was on her feet, her black eyes menacing. "My act's clean. Try and prove it ain't! What Freddie rigged I don't know, but don't think you can hang any of his dirty capers on me!"

"Not even," said Wyatt, on his feet now, too, "not even number thirty-three?"

She had been coming at him, but now she stopped and rocked back a little, her arms rigid at her side. "What are you trying to pull? We didn't use that number. I told you my act was clean. You're not getting any more out of me. Get out of here! Beat it! John Law or no John Law, I'll 'hey-rube' you out of here fast!"

Her voice had gone shrill. There was a stir beyond the flap. A well-muscled little bantam with a tattoo of a Man-of-War on his chest ducked in, and, behind him, something that might have been a man, swinging a pair of simian arms.

Mme. Sarro said, "He's going. Just a sorehead sucker who wants his ten bucks back. Give him a head start, boys."

"Thanks," Wyatt said. "If I see Freddie I'll say hello to him for you."

"Thanks. Spit in his face for me. Now I'm going to start counting." . . .

The trip back to Tilden Falls was swift. Perley Sweat stepped the car down to the

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floor boards at Wyatt's prompting, but Perley was bitter.

"That babe wasn't even gettin' down to bare facts when you yanked me out of that tent," Perley complained. "What's all the rush?"

Wyatt said, "There's a geek at large in Tilden Falls, Perley. A geek is the lowest form of carny life. He's the beast man who bites the heads off snakes or tears a live chicken to bits and drinks the blood. This geek is hungry, and that's why we're in a rush."

Julie had maintained a rigid silence, her hands clenched in her lap. Now a tremor shook her body. "Why did you bring me here? What is it you want?"

"You know what I want, Julie," he told her roughly. "I want the truth. I want to know what you're holding back. We're in this together. There's no good in denying that. We've both been telling ourselves that it's a memory we're in love with, but we can't push the truth back any more. Look at me, Julie. Maybe I'm in love with you for the first time, or maybe I'm in love with you all over again. I want to help you. You've got to trust me. Are you afraid your father's involved in this? Is it your father you're protecting?"

Her head was hard against his shoulder, her eyes buried. She shook her head slowly and then violently. "I—I can't tell you, Wy. It's something I have to work out myself. Maybe it's all just a nightmare. George will turn up, and when he does—"

"Are you so sure he will turn up, Julie? This thing goes deeper than your trouble with George. Let me tell you something, Julie, and maybe this isn't news to you: George is mixed up in some dirty business. He's mixed up in blackmail."

She lifted her head. "No," she whispered; "you *must* be wrong! George was weak and spoiled, but he wasn't a blackmailer." Her voice had a shattered edge to it, and suddenly she fell back into his arms, trembling.

Holding her, he saw the hills and meadowland skimming by, cool green in the light of the declining sun. There was a moment of peace in his mind, and then, as the car hit the outskirts of the town, he heard an echo of her words, and all the peace was gone.

Perley had brought the car to a halt in front of the Hinkley gate, and he was glancing back questioningly. Wyatt's eyes were on Julie.

"Didn't you say George *was* weak and spoiled, that he *wasn't* a blackmailer? Why did you say *was*, Julie? So far as we know, George is just *missing*."

She started. "I don't know what you mean! Let me out, Wyatt!"

He said, "Your father might know what I mean, Julie. Wait for me. I'll be back."

She wrenched open the car door and, leaving it swinging, ran up the drive and was gone behind the screening of shrubbery. . . .

Wyatt knew something had broken before they were halfway into the village. There was a crowd in front of the garage, talking, and small congregations of townspeople knotted here and there along the main street. A pair of grim-looking State cops stood by a prowl car parked in front of the drugstore.

Wyatt was out of the car and ducking for the restaurant before the car came to a full stop. As he went for the phone booth, Bertha yelled, "Hey, where you been? They're looking for you! 'Wyatt Andrews, he's no killer,' I told them."

"A ham on rye, Bertha. To go. I'll pick up the character references later."

There was no answer at Brad's office. Wyatt dialed his house, and in a minute Brad came on. "I haven't much time, Brad," he told him. "I'm down at Al's. Have they found George?"

Brad's voice was harsh: "You've got less time than you think, Wyatt. The serologist's report came in. They haven't found George, but that was George's blood on your coat. They checked it with blood on some shaving tissue found in George's bathroom. You can say they haven't got a case without a body, but that blood strongly suggests that you were in close contact with George Barnes after you struck him. There's a warrant out for your arrest."

"Sam's not getting his hands on me right yet," Wyatt said. "I'm onto something, but I don't know quite what. A carny hustler by the name of Freddie Hahn is the man I have to find. He knows some answers, and I think he knows what they're worth. I'm playing a hunch that he'll try and peddle information that can clear me. I'm ducking for cover, Brad."

He slammed the receiver down and swerved out of the booth.

Perley was waiting as he stepped out. He looked worried. "Gosh all hang, Wy, they got a warrant out for you, Bertha says. Maybe I better give Sam a ring and say I got you under— What's that thing I got you under?"

"Ask Sam when he gets here, Perl."

He took the wrapped sandwich from Bertha's hand and paid for it. Then he walked toward the washroom. Inside, he hooked the door. The window that gave out into the alley was five feet from the floor. It gave with a small squeal of complaint, and he eeled out, head first, into an alley ash can. In a matter of seconds he was at the wheel of his car. He didn't open up until he was out in the evening dusk on the Blackington road.

He didn't have a plan. All he had was a hunch, a hunch he had to play by ear. There was just a pale, outside chance that Freddie would show. Thirty-three was worth a play.

Thirty-three was the blackmail code number; Wyatt was virtually certain of that now. Cheap carny was ridden with rottenness. No sucker was given an even break. There was always a chance in a mentalist racket to pick up a little dirty money on the side by traffic in blackmail. Wyatt had seen it work, and that was when he'd moved on.

The townie helper picks a mark in the audience. Number thirty-three was Freddie Hahn's code number. That was the number he tapped up to Mme. Sarro when they had a mark in the audience, and Mme. Sarro would go to work and soften him up for the touch: "Ah, there's a man in the audience with a guilty secret." She'd go on from there, playing on his guilt and fear of discovery. A man with a guilty secret is susceptible to being convinced of a mentalist's power to tear the veils away. The mark could usually be counted on to appear after the act. He usually paid for silence, and a good worker could gauge what the traffic would bear.

And Freddie Hahn had had another side racket, one that had landed him finally in jail. This racket was too risky to involve a townie in. Freddie had used the townie to finger the substantial citizens in the crowd, and Freddie would go on from there. If the substantial citizens were enjoying themselves with their respective families at the carnival grounds, it was a pretty good bet that their homes were unprotected. Freddie, it would seem, was a second-story man. There had been a series of robberies at the time the carnival was in town nine years back. It added up.

Wyatt knew he was guessing. But also he was making two add up to four. Everything pointed to blackmail. Too many people had feared George Barnes. Had George, with his genius for ferreting, collected a whole file of dark information? Amos Livermore and Homer Pattison certainly were acting like men on uneasy seats. Ben Hinkley had a real and clear motive for eliminating George. And Julie's emotional state suggested that she had some knowledge or suspicion of his involvement.

Somehow, Wyatt decided, he had to clear his mind of all this rubble and find rock bottom. He'd called it blackmail. Okay, the thing was to find out whom the big squeeze was on. Freddie Hahn knew. Freddie, of course, could have finished George off. But if Freddie had killed George Barnes, would he still be hanging around? That left in the net those few substantial citizens who had been standing at the bar that night with Brad and himself just before the lights went dim for the good-night waltz.

If Freddie showed, he wouldn't need to make a blind choice. He didn't have money to pay for Freddie's knowledge. What he had in the glove compartment of the car was a .32 revolver. That would have to do.

A few hundred yards this side of the farm Wyatt swung the car onto a blind, alder-choked wood road. His plan had been to climb to the granite knoll that overlooked the farm, and wait out there for a stranger at his door. It was when he reached his flashlight out of the glove compartment that he saw the ragged slip of paper on the car floor.

The yellow beam of the flash illumed the scrawled words: YOU HAVE ONE LAST CHANCE CHUMP THE CHURCHYARD ALONE AT EIGHT AND BRING A FAT BUNDLE.

The note wasn't signed. It didn't need to be signed. The little fat man had had

all day to plant that note in his car while it was parked in the main street. Wyatt reached in for his .32. He checked it and glanced at his wrist watch. He took the sandwich out of his pocket and slumped down to wait in the darkness.

His wrist watch said eight as he slid past the old church and backed his car just inside the cemetery gate. He cut the engine and the lights quickly.

A lopsided moon peered over the treetops. The ancient slabs of limestone and granite seemed to glow dimly with an immanent light of their own.

He eased out of the car and felt the gun through the cloth of his jacket. Flashlight in hand, he stepped forward. He went forward a dozen measured steps. Right there he stopped.

First, it was merely a shape. He flicked the flash switch and it was a man, a little fat man in a belted raincoat, sprawled, face to the stars, across a grave hummock. His coat had fallen open, revealing a soiled white shirt front. It looked like the soft under-belly of a gaffed fish. Death had not signally improved the countenance of Freddie Hahn. He had been bludgeoned.

It was moments before Wyatt stooped down to reach into the exposed breast pocket. There was a wallet of imitation leather and a little black notebook. He had them in his hand—the residual estate of Freddie Hahn—when he heard the car on the road. It was coming fast from the direction of the village.

He was running for the protection of his own car at the gate when he saw twin beams of light piercing the darkness. Crouched low behind the rear of his car, he saw now that there were two cars and they weren't going on by. With a cry of rubber, they swung in through the gate and came to a halt in the entrance.

Had there been an alternative to weigh, he never would have moved in time. A high anchor-post fence encompassed the graveyard. There was no escape that way. Right then three State cops and Sam Winkler were blocking the only exit. Wyatt eased up the back of the car and rolled into the darkness of the deep luggage compartment.

He crouched there, jackknifed, head on his knees. He heard Sam Winkler shout, "Keep the lights on, Jack, and spread out. He's right here some place." Someone opened the door of his coupé and slammed it shut again. There was a sharp cry up ahead and the tramp of running feet. The body of Freddie Hahn had been discovered. Now it was officially and incontrovertibly murder.

And now, Wyatt knew, time was running out for him. He was tangled up like a luckless fly in a web of circumstantial evidence, in a fly-trap that had been prepared and baited. Freddie Hahn couldn't help him any more.

The raw, electric voice of a State trooper was barking into the prowl-car radio: ". . . right, right, Les. We can road-block Route 38 and 16 with what we've got. You bottle up eleven, and we're tight."

Wyatt arched his back, forcing up the compartment lid. His legs were numbing fast, and the air in the confined space was fetid and suffocating. It was time to move. He was running out of people with answers. But there was one left. There was Julie. There could be one good reason why Julie was holding back a crucial truth—and meanwhile breaking up under it.

He had swung his head toward the commodious depth of the compartment to work his legs out into the clear. His hand found something cold and rubbery. It gave under his finger tips like a semi-inflated inner tube. His hand coursed downward and found what seemed to be the shape of a depending shoe. He was merely startled at first; then a chill raked his back with steel fingers.

The compartment went five feet back under the front seat of the car, a space designed for a salesman's sample cases. It hadn't been designed for a body. Wyatt didn't reach for his flashlight, for there was no question in his mind about whose body had been shoved into the back of his car during the time he had been engaged with Julie on the golf club fairway the night of the dance.

And that would explain the blood on his jacket. When he'd arrived home from the dance, he'd snagged his bag out of the luggage compartment. In the darkness he hadn't noticed the blood on the bag. It had rubbed off on his jacket as he'd carried the bag into the house.

It was time to leave. The car back made a small, metallic *chomp* as he rolled free onto the grass and sliced past the parked police car that choked the entrance. What he met at the gate was Sam Winkler, trying to get his cigar lighted.

Committed to his action, it was too late to change his plans. Wyatt hurled his body in a low block aimed at the sheriff's knees. Sam Winkler was carried backward five yards, rolling with a series of animal-like grunts into the weedy road ditch.

Wyatt was across the road and into the thicket before he heard the alarm go up. He shouldered his way through the brush another fifty yards, and there slid back across the road toward the ridge and the blueberry lands.

He was halfway up the fringe of the blueberry clearing before he dropped to the ground. Below, on the road, a police siren mewled. He lay face down on the pine spills, his breath sucking painfully through his teeth.

Now he rolled half over and propped himself on his elbow. The first panic subsided. The thought intruded that this land was his; this had been a part of his father's extensive blueberry holdings. It had gone by, he thought, but it could be burned over and brought back into production. The irrelevant thought calmed him, revitalized his punished body.

Now again he felt that nagging, persistent intimation of discovery. He was missing something. He was making the classical mistake of not seeing the trees for the forest. Smothering the lens of the flashlight with his hand, he snapped it on and brought out the little black book he had taken from Freddie Hahn's person. He opened it, and the crack of light through the interstices of his fingers lighted the pages.

The coded numbers were there. Number one was the old favorite: "Is my wife faithful?" And the numbers went on down the line, expressing the fears and hopes of bleak, insecure lives. There was no thirty-three in the list. In the back of the book, on pages of cabalistic notations, he came upon it.

Here was the private history of Freddie's nefarious, pre-prison career. *Eddington, O. K. Check N. B. at gas station.* Under that: 33—$125. *Good for another touch maybe.* Thirty-three appeared here and there through the back pages. There was no doubt about it: Thirty-three was the blackmail number.

Thirty-three was the code number Freddie tapped up to Mme. Sarro when there was a prospective blackmail victim in the audience to soften up. And in that racket George Barnes had been the local information feeder.

Under Tilden Falls was the notation: *Check G. B. Needs money. Uncle a Mr. Big. Hold estate steer on H. P. and A. L. Mme. won't touch; law jitters.*

His mind translated quickly: Freddie had a dossier on George. Clearly, George had worked for him before. George always needed money, and Joe Barnes, his uncle, was politically powerful. That made the contact safe in case something went wrong. And George had delivered some dope on Homer and Amos. Mme. Sarro had refused to handle it.

Had George and Freddie worked that angle on their own? There was no answer to that. There was but one more page of notations. And there was a suggestion of excitement in the sprawled handwriting. It didn't make sense. Not at first:

It's murder. Watch papers. See G. B. Play careful. Another line was appended at the bottom of the page: 33,000. *Blue chips.*

Now it did make sense. It could be that one night, on a prowl, Freddie had seen murder done in a lighted window. It was Freddie, not George, who had accidentally acquired this valuable blackmail property! The newspapers had given him his angle. Merritt Andrews had been pronounced a suicide. A $33,000 shortage had been found on the water-company books. It looked pretty. Freddie had had a property right enough, but he hadn't dared peddle it for fear of incriminating himself as a night prowler. He had cut George in on it to front for the squeeze on the man who had murdered Merritt Andrews.

The same man who had killed George! The same man who had murdered Freddie Hahn! Wyatt riffled the pages of the little black book. There was nothing else. He noted that a page at the back had been ripped out. In his pocket was the note which had brought him to the cemetery. He dug it out and held it under the flashlight beam. It fitted the tear.

His mind had been running wild. All at once it seemed to fetch up on some-

thing as solid as a stone wall. Had that note he had found in his car been originally written to him? He had been so counting on Freddie's contacting him that he hadn't considered this other possibility. THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE CHUMP. That sounded more like an ultimatum. That note had been written to Freddie's blackmail victim! That note had been received and then planted in his car. It had been planted in the hope that it would bring him to the cemetery alone in time to take full credit for the murder of Freddie Hahn. It *had* to be that way. Someone *knew* he'd be there at the cemetery tonight to contact Freddie Hahn!

The plot had a pattern, a pattern printed in blood! And it echoed back nine years!

Wyatt was on his feet and running. There was no panic in him now. He knew where he was going. Ben Hinkley was putting his affairs in order. Ben was preparing for death. He had to get there in time. . . .

THERE was a dim light burning in the rear of the second floor of the Hinkley house, and a glow of light tinged a curtain on the lower floor. The back door was on a hook. Wyatt gripped the handle and hurled his weight against the door. The hook came free and he plunged on into the darkened kitchen.

Ben Hinkley, his face waxen, jumped up from his desk as Wyatt stepped into the study. He had been writing, and several sheets of paper lay on the desk.

Wyatt said softly, "Neither of us has much time, Mr. Hinkley. Half the police in the state are headed this way. Have you written a letter?"

Ben Hinkley nodded. "It's there. You came too soon. But I'm glad you're here. I have enough blood on my hands."

The desk drawer was half open. Wyatt stepped across the deep-piled carpet. An automatic lay exposed. Closing the drawer, he said, "For you it might be an easy way out, but not for Julie."

They turned in unison at the flurry of steps on the stairs. Julie, in a dark tailored dressing gown, appeared at the threshold. She sought them both with stricken eyes. "Dad—!"

With a rush she went to him, and his arms took her in. "You knew, Julie, child. Yes, you guessed. I saw it in your eyes. It seemed right at the time. I can't and won't try to excuse myself. It's done. Wyatt, you'll call the sheriff?"

Wyatt said, "You were on the club veranda and you saw me knock down George?"

"Yes. I saw the encounter. My first thought was merely to appeal to him. He was unconscious, and there was a rock, and it seemed—well, it seemed so simple, so utterly simple. I waited for the body to be found. But let's not go over that now. I've written my deposition—my confession. Will you call the authorities, please? Let's not drag this out in front of my daughter. . . . Julie, child, go to your room now."

She shook her head, fighting back the tears. "I'm staying here with you, Dad. I can't believe it's like this—I can't!"

Wyatt's hands found her shoulders, and gently he turned her toward him. "You stand by your father, Julie. I'm calling Brad. We can use him now. And I'm having him call Homer Pattison and Joe Barnes and Amos Livermore." . . .

A police car whined up the drive. There was a stir in the room. Eyes turned toward the door. Brad Hamlin, in the chair behind the desk, pinched his nose gravely. Homer Pattison, sitting with Amos Livermore on the stiff-backed settee, started to rise. Brad waved him down with a peremptory gesture. Ben Hinkley, slumped in a chair, neither stirred nor moved his eyes.

It was Julie who rose from her father's side. "I'll go," she said, and her voice was empty, preternaturally controlled. "You go on, Wyatt. You've got a good audience. I suppose you *did* need an audience for your moment of triumph."

Julie got only as far as the study threshold. The front door burst open. There was the tread of booted feet in the hall, and Joe Barnes came shouldering in, two State troopers behind him.

"We'll settle this fast," Joe Barnes pronounced. "The authorities are taking over now. You called me, Hamlin. You've got the man who murdered my nephew. I want him."

"Sit down, Joe," Brad snapped. "You'll listen with the rest. If you had had your way, the wrong man would have been shot down by your hoodlum sheriff. I'm taking down a deposition that might interest you. Go on, Wyatt."

Wyatt rubbed out his cigarette in the copper ash tray. "I was saying, Mr. Barnes, that nine years ago your nephew George got tied up with a carnival, specifically with a mentalist act. I'm fairly sure he didn't know about one little side angle practiced by Mme. Sarro's assistant, an unsavory character named Freddie Hahn. Freddie had a private racket. He made a business of housebreaking homes of wealthy citizens while they were at the carnival grounds."

JOE BARNES, his face working, came forward threateningly. "You lie! Leave George's past out of this. George is dead!"

Wyatt said evenly, "So is my father dead. What I'm coming to is this: One night, nine years ago, Freddie Hahn, on a prowl, came accidentally upon a choice blackmail property. I'm saying that Freddie Hahn witnessed the murder of my father!"

There was a sharp creak of chairs. Ben Hinkley's head jerked up.

Wyatt pushed on: "Yes, I say my father was murdered, and there was a witness to the murder. Hahn was this witness, but he didn't dare use this knowledge himself. He called George in on his deal. They would put the squeeze on the killer and split fifty-fifty on the take. Freddie stayed out of it, and George went to work. This victim produced, but by that time Freddie was in prison. George, being George, blew the blackmail money on himself.

"A few months ago Freddie got out of prison, and quite naturally he came back for his cut. He was ugly and threatening, and he gave George a deadline to come across. It was Freddie who rang thirty-three on the church bells, to remind George of that deadline and to keep the pressure on him.

"So George needed money fast. For George the obvious way out of his dilemma was to put another bite on his victims. I say *victims* because I suggest that George, in an amateur way, had been playing around with blackmail some time before this main chance came his way, a matter that partly explains George's unpopularity in his hometown. So George put the squeeze on his big fish as well as on his little ones—and he'd given them a deadline, too: the night of the country club dance."

Ben Hinkley was out of his chair, protesting. "This is fantastic! I've told you what I've done—*all* I've done! Merritt Andrews was my friend!"

Wyatt said, "It was a 'friend' who killed my father. I'm coming to that. Right now I'm at the country club. For some days the blackmail victim had realized that he wouldn't be safe until George was eliminated. He wasn't aware at that time that George was not alone in the deal. George was killed according to plan. And what favored the success of the plan was my timely return to town and my trouble with George at the dance.

"It wasn't until the next morning that the killer discovered that his troubles had just begun. Freddie Hahn contacted him. It was Hahn who found George's body and had jammed it into the first place at hand—the back of my car. Hahn knew he had been seen on the premises near the time of the murder. As soon as the body was discovered there would be a hue and cry set up to find that mysterious stranger. Hahn needed time, if only a few hours, to milk his victim and get away.

"So the killer now knew he must eliminate Hahn. When he got the ultimatum from Hahn to deliver the money at the graveyard, it was promptly planted in *my* car. It got me there just in time to get another murder in my lap. The killer had planted a fake bundle in the graveyard, bludgeoned Hahn when he'd appeared, and tipped off the police anonymously to my presence there. Am I going too fast for you, Brad?"

BRAD had straightened up, pen poised. "Are you suggesting, Wyatt, that Ben *didn't* kill this—this Hahn?"

"That's right, Brad. He didn't kill Freddie Hahn. And he didn't kill George Barnes. Both were murdered by the man who was responsible for the death of my father and the misappropriation of the water-company funds. Let's examine that, Brad. Who besides my father had access to the safe in your office where the cash was kept? Perhaps I'd never have questioned the evidence that my father died by his own hand if I hadn't found that note which was planted in my car today, a note that appeared to be a message for me—but wasn't.

"The note my father left could have been a confession. Also, it could just as well have been that it was my father who discovered the shortage and that was the message he had posted to the man who he knew must be responsible for the theft. It expressed his final decision to expose this man. 'I am sorry,' it said, 'but I see no other way out.'

"My father, like the good friend he was, had, I'm sure, listened to a plea for time; but he had finally come to the decision he felt honor-bound to make. That note was his final word. I'm suggesting, Brad, that this 'friend' came to my father's study that night nine years ago with that note in his pocket. He planned to make one final plea and, if it failed, he planned to use that note to save himself from disgrace and prison. I'm suggesting that this 'friend' knew where my father kept his gun in his desk. I suggest he used it."

Bradford Hamlin's agate eyes betrayed no emotion, but now there was a small nerve pulsating under the skin just behind his right ear. "I should be amused," he said. "Am I to gather from this dissertation that you are accusing your own lawyer of triple murder? This fanciful case you've presented seems to be based on nebulous evidence. Freddie Hahn? Am I supposed to know a man named Freddie Hahn? This is incredible!"

WYATT's voice was corrosive: "It was when you knew there was a man named Freddie Hahn in the picture that you became my lawyer, Brad. You decided you *had* to take my case the moment you knew there had to be another murder. You needed to work closely with me and keep in contact with me, so that you could somehow eliminate Freddie and direct my head neatly into the noose. There was sooner or later going to be a cry of murder, and you had to have a murderer to satisfy the authorities. I was your boy. You say you didn't get this note from Freddie Hahn. Then perhaps you can explain the curious fact that your name appears on it."

Wyatt had the note in his hand. He placed it on the desk, spreading it flat with the palm of his hand. "That note was sent to you originally in an envelope. Freddie must have addressed it to you, using a hard pencil. If you want to take the trouble of holding that paper up to the light, you will see that a name was scored through onto the note. Your name is there. You killed Freddie, didn't you? I don't need to prove more than that. You can be hanged for *one* murder in this state."

Brad Hamlin came stiffly erect. His spidery hands gripped hard on the desk's edge. "You fool! I refuse to listen any longer to this opium dream. Ben Hinkley admits he killed George Barnes. Are you accusing me also of having murdered George? I was standing with you at the country club bar when George Barnes was killed."

Wyatt said softly, "And *you* were at the bar when George stopped for some Dutch courage *before* he went out to find me. At the time I couldn't understand why George was staggering- and babbling-drunk when he had been reasonably sober ten minutes earlier. I say George *wasn't* drunk. I say his bottle had been spiked! I don't know what you spiked his bottle with. I *do* know that it wouldn't take much of a dose of knockout drops to stop George's bad heart. I say, Brad, that when I met George the poison was just taking hold. I'm saying, and a toxicological examination will back me up, that George Barnes was *already* dead when Ben Hinkley struck him with that rock."

It was a thin, whimpering cry from Julie's lips that broke the tension which had been building. But he couldn't go to her then. Brad had moved suddenly. The troopers moved, too. It was Wyatt who got there first. His foot caught the desk drawer that Brad Hamlin's fingers had been covertly opening. Brad never got to Ben Hinkley's gun in that drawer.

Wyatt turned now to seek Julie, but she was gone. He stepped out in the dark hallway. He wanted to be alone for a while. If he walked fast down the road to the old Andrews farm, he might outstrip the ghosts that were pursuing him. No one moved to stop him as he left by the front door.

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He walked swiftly, head up, taking the long way home across the meadow and up over the granite ledges that rose above the rolling blueberry lands. It was late when he reached the farm. He stepped into the house. And at the threshold he stopped.

A lamp was lit and Julie was there. She rose from the chair and came toward him. Three paces off she halted uncertainly. "I had to come. You're not running away again? I want to talk to you—make you understand—"

He said, "About the last few days? You don't need to explain, Julie. You loved your father. You were so sure he was guilty. It's all right now. He'll save his mill. You can be quite sure now that Amos and Homer will support him. At least, I can assure you of that. I'm virtually certain that Grace Livermore's trust fund could bear a little scrutiny. Somehow, George found that out. George, being George, probably didn't even think of it as blackmail when he suggested to Amos and Homer they give him employment now and again. I have an idea that Amos and Homer will waste no time in trying to make it right. They both know what I suspect."

SHE came to him a step closer, her eyes warm, all her heart and helplessness exposed. "That's over, Wy. I don't mean that. Brad confessed after you left. First, he tried to burn that note. Then, when they were about to take him out to view the bodies of George and that other little man, he broke down." She looked at him quizzically. "His name wasn't on that note, Wy. At least, afterwards no one else could see it."

He could afford a smile now, but it was tired and thin and untriumphant. "No, it wasn't there, Julie. But the point was I knew he knew that it *could* have been there. I didn't have a case, merely a conviction. Only Brad could confirm it, and he did. You're right. That's over, Julie. Now I've got my own messy life to straighten out. You know, I should hate this town, but I don't, really. I wonder if you know how it's been these years to feel you can never go home?"

She said, "You're home now, Wy. And you won't start running again—ever. I won't let you run. I want you here. During these last few days I was so sure I could never see a moon again without horror. That will go too, Wy. Some day soon we both can look at a moon and . . ."

"Go on," he said softly. But already she had come in a rush into his arms, leaving an unfinished sentence dangling in the air.

THE END ★★

A GIFT OF FAITH

MOST of the year we are all so busy that we sometimes forget how often and how much we rely upon the integrity of our fellow men. It is well that we are reminded of this at least once a year by the yuletide custom of expressing our good faith in one another.

Faith means belief or trust. It has been known for many years as "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." In that sense, faith is an important part of every business transaction.

Every day—not just on Christmas—the greatest gift any businessman can give his customers is his good faith. And, in return, they give him their confidence and good will. No business activity, large or small, can be successful without exchanging such gifts.

For example, no business enterprise can hope to succeed without creating many regular customers, and it can't get them or hold them unless it demonstrates its good faith in every transaction, and thus gains their good will. In the language of business, "good will" is the tendency of the customers to return to the place where they have been well treated.

Like your successful and respected local merchants, nationally known advertisers have gained the good will and confidence of countless regular users of their products by demonstrating their trustworthiness.

It is good to do business with those who have faith in themselves and in what they sell. They give their good faith every day in the year.

John W. McGarrah

PUBLISHER

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