

mind what she has said, so that when he rises in the morning, and goes tardy to his pad and pencil, there is not a syllable left of what she came so far to tell. And she never comes again with that particular message. When he finds that blank in his mind, he wonders what she and her followers would have told him—perhaps the very best news of all.

If she signals him in the street, it is a sign instantly withdrawn, for she permits no mortals to be present to spy on her when she brings tidings. He knows then that he must search hastily for shelter, wherever he is—sometimes the deserted corner of a railway waiting-room or a quiet table at a restaurant. If she sees him obedient and doing his best to find cover and privacy, she will delay. A few times she has made her visit in the bright day and out of doors, but only when it was a lonely street or a country road, where he could seize an envelope and lay it on his knee as he sat on fence or doorstep. He must let her see that he is humbly ready, and that plainly there is no indoor retreat to be had. After he has done his best and begun to copy out her words, sometimes a worldling comes. She vanishes. But she may return, if he has been short with the intruder and turned him away at once. For she understands just the measure of his welcome to her.

She and her companions leave him to work out what they have said, once they have seen him take it down. They are plainly sure of its importance, but careless of whether he is wise enough to make use of it. Sometimes it is aerial, like their own insubstantial presence. Then, long after they are gone, he must supply ballast and underpinning. Sometimes it lacks sagacity, as if it had become mingled with shreds of mist on the way. Once it was altogether nonsense, though they had been peculiarly earnest in the delivery. He wondered if they had come a long distance that evening, and grown weary in flight, and so had spoiled their tidings. Or was it just possible they had planned the jest at his expense? He did not believe it. Their high seriousness forbade it.

He learned to love them. But not for that did he gain one inch on their impersonal demeanor, their impatience to be off. Were they only messengers? And did they carry their story from some yet lovelier being, and lose a little in the bringing, and alter a little in the telling? Or was the news their own news? Would they ever come and stay with him? And if they came to stay, could they always talk at ease, or did they, too, have their silences?

In early days, they came only a few times in the dreary year. While he could not, even yet,

win from them signs of friendliness, one gain he did make. He turned his life from foolish hustle in the outer world, and devoted himself more heartily to making ready for them, knowing not in what hour they would come, and so holding all times prepared. And for doing this thing, they rewarded him by coming more often, and staying a little longer.

ARTHUR GLEASON.

## Tante Barbara Goes Back

**T**ANTE BARBARA has spent a summer in the land of her childhood, the land she left thirty years ago, a round-eyed girl of seventeen, to come to golden America. Once that land was "Home," but now the word is reserved for her happy, busy apartment in the Bronx, with her children and her man. Sometimes she refers to the village near Worms, in Hessen-Darmstadt as "The old home" but it is an empty phrase of respect. She will never go back again. She doesn't regret her summer, even though it took her three years to save the money which is now all gone—whoo!—in steamer fares and train fares and presents for the nieces and nephews in Germany and presents brought back to the sons in New York. But once is enough. It is too sad to see those comrades of your youth, whom you had treasured in your heart as stripling lads and tender lasses, now old, withered, ugly men and women.

It was all a surprise for her sisters and her brothers, who knew nothing of her coming. The family had stopped writing back and forth when the war made communication first difficult and then impossible. Asking no favors of anyone, Tante Barbara crossed the ocean and took train from Hamburg, and another train from Worms, and got down at her own village. Outside the station she met a woman and a little girl and asked for her sister by name. "It's the next village," said the woman. "I don't know her myself, but I've heard of her often and often." The little girl spoke up with "I know the house," and described it. So Tante Barbara thanked them and walked the mile to the next village. She didn't ask her way again, for she feared a crowd would follow her. She found the place easily enough. The door stood open and she could see the family at dinner. "Now don't get excited, here's Barbara back from America," she said as she walked in. (She was awkward at first in her use of the old speech, for thirty years is thirty years. But it soon came back to her.) After a

few broken explanations, and some tears, they were pretty calm. There was her sister and her brother and the brother's wife whom she had never met, though she had been a member of the family for twenty-five years and had borne eight children, six living. "And that's all there was to it," says Tante Barbara, back in New York, sitting in the best rocker, resplendent in her traveling dress, telling the story to us admiring neighbors who have come in to hear her adventures.

Did the others in the village remember her? Oh, sure; the old folks were all dead, of course, but plenty who played with her as a child were there and glad to see her. She visited all around, five villages up and down the railway. She was a sensation in that quiet Hessen-Darmstadt backwater. The little children followed her about the streets, this wonderful person from wonderful America. They called her Daler-Tante (Dollar-Aunt). Everyone wanted to go back with her to New York, especially the young girls.

Did they show no bitterness because of the war, Tante Barbara?

They spoke very sadly of the war, and so many young men dead and the others crippled, but they were not bitter. "Your President promised us a fair peace, and then you didn't help to get it," they said. But they knew that Tante Barbara couldn't help that, any more than they in Hessen-Darmstadt could help the foolish things done by that so-wicked Kaiser.

So-wicked, Tante Barbara? Don't they want him back, or another one?

Not in my village, says Tante Barbara. They say that's one good thing anyhow, that old Kaiser gone. We have a republic now, that's better. Times are hard—oh, terribly hard—but that's not the government's fault. It is doing all it can. Wicked France is to blame for the hard times. The village hates France. Before, they used French words—"adieu" or "achee" but now it is always "auf wiedersehen."

Next to France, they hate Siberia. Some of the boys from Hessen-Darmstadt were captured by the Russians and sent to Siberian prison camps, where their treatment was so awful that even Tante Barbara burns with second-hand indignation at the memory of it. There was a boy from her village who had his eyes gouged out, as a punishment for breaking some rule. He was shipped home at last, and when his mother saw him, she dropped dead. Well, she had a weak heart, it is true; but still you can't forget a thing like that, says Tante Barbara.

Who started the war? That old Kaiser, say most of the villagers. There is no monarchical

sentiment in Hessen-Darmstadt, that Tante Barbara could see. The only defenders of the Kaiser, she was told, are the German-Americans who came to the United States before the war and now write back reproaching their kinsfolk for their republicanism.

Most of the hatred of France is due to the acts of French troops in the occupied territory, and especially the colored troops, says Tante Barbara. She has seen the little mulatto babies playing in the streets, the children of German girls violated by Negro soldiers.

How many babies, Tante Barbara?

Well, not many; a few. But she has heard, too, of innumerable affronts put upon the people. There was the owner of a factory, the richest man in his village. He had such a beautiful home, grounds, gardens. They threw him out of his house when the troops first came, leaving him to find quarters for his family as best he might; and they have never given it back to him. Do they not pay him for the house? Tante Barbara does not know, but even if they do, it is his home. It is hard, when your home is taken away.

Yes, but Tante Barbara, think of the homes the German army took away, or destroyed altogether, in France and Belgium. Think of the Belgium atrocities.

That's true, says Tante Barbara, who is a good American with Liberty Bonds, and a Hoover food card still hanging in her kitchen. But those atrocities now—her village in Hessen-Darmstadt doesn't believe they were committed. "You know us Germans," says her nephew, who fought through the war as a private. "A German wouldn't do such things." The whole village echoes him.

And certainly, the village is paying for the war. You can't think how hard they work, says Tante Barbara. Every able-bodied man and woman goes into Worms on the train every morning and spends eight hours in the factories there. They come home on the train again, and drink a cup of malt coffee, and then go out into the fields and work until it is too dark to see. In summer, that means another eight hours' labor.

The village is surrounded by farms but there is not food enough for the people. When Tante Barbara walked in on her family, they were having the chief meal of the day—potatoes in their jackets and clabbered milk. The whole village lives mostly on soup, with wine and beer. The wine is fairly good; but they all grumble about the beer. Her sister makes soup from potato peelings, or bread crusts, or anything at all. For a family of ten she buys one-half a pound of meat a week. That's not enough, says Tante Barbara who serves steak

or roast or chops every night for her family's supper in the Bronx. Her sister is well-to-do, she has a cow. The authorities compel her, however, to sell a large part of the milk at a fixed price to the milk station where it is distributed to poor people with children. This is not a charity—the poor pay for their milk, and are glad to have the chance.

Tante Barbara couldn't eat their bread, at first. Rye bread in America is whiter than the white bread of Hessen-Darmstadt, she says. To buy at all, you must have a bread card from the government, and it only allows you about one-half as much as you need, with the children and all.

I kept making mistakes about the ages of my little nieces and nephews, says Tante Barbara. A child of six or seven looks to be only four. They have big bones, but there's no flesh on them. My sister, she is younger than I am. In the old days she was the prettiest little girl in the village. Now she looks a hundred years old, all wrinkled and shriveled up. Well, I'm no spring chicken myself, laughs Tante Barbara who knows very well that she is a fine, handsome woman and doesn't at all look as though she were approaching fifty.

What does the village do to amuse itself? Not much of anything. There are no automobiles save among the very wealthy; you will see perhaps three or four in the course of a day. A family will go to a café and spend the evening listening to the music. There is a movie theatre in the village—they showed the Dempsey-Carpentier fight this summer—but the price is so high that few can afford it. When Tante Barbara was there the admission was 75 marks, and 50 marks more for the government tax. Then they reduced the admission to 65 marks and raised the tax to 75—which didn't help much, she observed. One thing that she missed was American ice-cream, which is unknown. They serve water ices, but Tante Barbara found them a poor substitute. All in all, the village is a very quiet, hard-working place. Even the church bells which used to make such a clatter on Sunday morning are gone. They were all taken away during the war, and to replace them is, of course, out of the question.

When Tante Barbara was there, the mark was not sinking as fast as it is now. It was worth 1,000 to the dollar, but wages lagged a long way behind the alteration in purchasing power. It takes a girl six months, employed at housework, to earn the money for a pair of shoes. And things get worse all the time.

What's going to be the end, Tante Barbara? What's going to become of all of them?

"I don't know," says Tante Barbara, shaking her head.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

## Citizen Tom

MY first sight of President C— was in the telephone booth of a railway junction. "Hello, President C— speaking," he said. And then a moment later a tall, broad man in a blue serge suit with heavily padded shoulders, his hair red, his features large and decisive and full of a kind of foolish strength, emerged and stood looking up and down the station, large, firm, like a swelling piece of civic virtue. I knew the outlines of the president's career. He had been first a baseball player of renown, he had then entered the ministry, and now after several years of service had become the president of a New England college. In this state, I had been told, his athletic piety and direct manhood had made him adored. There were, as might be expected nowadays, some restless and reddish students who rebelled at President C—'s quality and influence; the majority of the college body took him for their ideal.

President C— and I became acquainted not long after this first sight I had of him. We sat together on a government educational commission, a left-over from the war. He never talked easily or was able to flow into simple human connections with other men, but he frequently conducted a monologue or crashed into debate. And so, in the course of things, I had a chance to learn his theory of education.

I am not sure that I ever understood it quite, but the gist of it, as I gathered when I stripped it of its eloquence and vigor, was this—The purpose of education is making men. A man among men. It makes leaders of men, however, also. The ideal education develops both mind and body, mens sana in corpore sano. Men learn to mix by being at college. Nothing teaches them to mix with their fellow men so well as athletics, as clean contest. Let us never forget the noble exercise of the mind! President C— himself might never have been able to mingle with men if it had not been for baseball. It had saved him. College men learn to be men not so much through book learning as through their freshman experiences, the rough and tumble of the dormitories. College connections are valuable in after-life. The purpose of education is to make of young men citizens.

These, as the world must know by now, for he has expanded them into many addresses, were President C—'s theories of education.

I have a friend, or rather a friend of the family, who sent her son last year to President C—'s college, partly because it is well known, partly to get him into the country and out of New York. Tom, the son, by some maternal engineering, by caresses and spans and bribes, had been got through preparatory schools, and rather miraculously past the test of college entrance requirements. That was last year.

A week or two ago I met President C— on the street; he is naturally on another commission and had run down to New York for the meeting. We talked as we walked along Park Avenue. Finally I asked,

"What about my friend Mrs. L—'s boy, President C—? He is at your college, isn't he?"

A look of disgust came over the president's face.

"L—" he said, "Oh, that chap? I think I remember him; I make an effort to keep our men individually in mind. I was gravely disappointed in the course he pursued in college. You can see he is a shy boy, with some ability, the dean tells me, if he would apply himself. But he made a total failure of it. He neglected his grades. He did not know how to mix with the men. He took