

Again their words defeated me. My beloved died in the Argonne.

On Saturday I shopped in the rain and I saw the doctor. Sunday I was up at dawn to prepare an early breakfast for a fishing party. The cook didn't come and there were eighteen for dinner. The Southerner is sentimental. He loves the home of his ancestors and delights in gathering his children about him there. In the midst of the dinner I had a hemorrhage. Later I told them what the doctor had said.

"Tuberculosis."

I didn't add, "Overwork;" I didn't tell that his face had made it unnecessary for me to ask how far the disease had progressed.

Monday. I have packed two trunks to-day, my own and that of the youngest boy who is going to Europe for a year. I am going to Saranac to-morrow.

I heard the boy say this morning:

"Poor old Sis! We must get her off at once. Of course it will be hard on her—she has been such a stay-at-home. But she is a menace to all of us here."

The Southerner is very romantic. I'll be good material for another tradition—the little sister who lost her lover in the Great War and died of a broken heart. Perhaps the next baby will be named for me.

SECOND PRIZE

A TRAGEDY OF RACE

BY N. USAMI

I look out on life, as it were, with a double lens.

My father was born in Kyoto, Japan, of pure blood, the loyal subject of the Mikado. Trained in the University of Tokyo, he came early to America and settled in California.

My mother was daughter of a clergyman, was wooed by my father, and finally they became man and wife.

I was born in a beautiful valley of California, bounded on the west by the high coast range and thus protected from the trade winds.

The land of my father is very rich and brings forth fruit abundantly. Our crops are varied and profuse, from lemons to great acreage of potatoes.

Being the only child, my parents have taken much care of my education and showered their affection upon me. Both have much strength of character.

My life has been made up of a double idealism and a double patriotism.

The love of my father for the country of his birth is strong and abiding. When trouble would come between my parents, he would say in calm but strong speech that he thirsted for the day when he would go back to Kyoto, and he would recall the happy days of his life in the University of Tokyo. Then I would also feel as he felt and would so express myself. His country became my country and I was birth-proud.

My mother would make answer with much spirit, but not at all bitter, and

assert that America was God's own country, that on its soil she would live to the end, and that, when death overtook her, under its soil she would ever rest.

When she would thus speak, I would regret my feelings towards Nippon and, springing to the side of my mother, would take her part.

Those days, however, were few, for there was much deep love between them, and whatever sorrow came, and it was much, it came from another source.

Many times there were when I would discover my mother weeping in quiet corners of the home, and then I would nestle close to her and bring what comfort I could. But I did not dare to ask why she thus wept and mourned and looked so miserable and distressed.

But it happened one day that she told me the secrets of her heart and they opened my eyes to all her troubles.

Her father and mother had disowned her, and that is why she never mentioned their names in my presence. A feeling of great hatred to them entered my heart, and it is still there, fiercer than ever. Mother's God is a God of forgiveness, and I hope he will forgive the nursing of that feeling which I don't want to part with. Father's God is harder to understand, but if he can't forgive he is no God.

When mother took ill unto death, I hurried from the University of California to her side and was never out of her presence. To me she turned for her every want. Her religion was as sacred as a dram of radium and as silent and powerful in its working.

Once did she ask me to read to her words that were often on her lips, and I opened her Bible and read these words: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." She wished to bury that sorrow with her, but I took it from her as a great weight.

With her life has gone out the light of my life.

"Mine own people!" How hard for one to speak of that which one has not. My heart, my mind, my soul divided!

As I look in the mirror and note the slant of the eye, the jet black, coarse hair, the strange tinge of cheek, I feel as if I would take wings and rest in the land of Hirohito.

When I recall the great spirit of my mother, her holy passion, her god-like devotion to her only child, her loyalty to my father, I long to kneel in a quiet spot and pray to her.

Thus I am a man without a country.

The few men and women who first entered our lives seemed to fall away from us, one by one. The pride of mother would not allow her to call them back, and father looked on with a strange smile on his lips.

Almost alone I pursue my work in my University, and, while I love her as mother, we live alone.

Thus I am a man without friends.

The greatest kindness that has been ever bestowed upon me was the work of a young Hebrew in my college life. He

has done more to soften my heart than any power other than my own mother.

At times the appeal of Shintoism reaches me like a faint, far-off cry, then the God of the Hebrews is heard in the life of the young man who befriended me, and then the God of the Cross comes home, in the spirit life of my mother.

Thus I am a man without a personal God.

Yet life is sweet and beautiful, and the spirit of living things, of love, of kindness, of enthusiasm, sustains me.

I am what I am. Working within me has been a biological law beyond my control which has made me what I am.

THIRD PRIZE

THE ROBINS' MINUET

BY ARIES

MEDIOCRITY is the most diverting condition in life. My dog is not a neurotic prize-winner, but he is mine, and I love him. My father is not an indulgent millionaire; he is just "Father." And as for mother—well, words fail sometimes, don't they? Mother has self-manicured nails, does much of her own washing because the laundry is not properly reverential of our purple and fine linen, and reads intelligently whenever she gets the chance. The remaining member of our family is myself.

Once I intended, before sex intruded into my life, to be a pirate. At sixteen I wanted to be *une grande amoureuse*; and now I am just a high school teacher of English. Just! That is the way some people put it. But I glory in my life and its mediocrity. Confuse not mediocrity and stupidity, for the former has variety that mere genius could never attain.

Could you imagine any mere genius doing the following?

I rise at five o'clock to plant peas in a very private back yard, come indoors and get an exciting breakfast on a new electric stove, try out a new kind of inexpensive face powder, pack some home-made sandwiches for lunch and for economy, help mother with the dishes, walk six blocks to a remarkable car-line with novel service, wait patiently because three baby robins are dancing a minuet near by, and hopefully board the car when it arrives. Next I greet most of my eighty-two co-workers in our large high school, walk to my room (my very own domain, gay with priceless knick-knacks—priceless because most of them never cost a cent), instruct five classes of winsome adolescents in the gentle arts of debate, public speaking, and the literature of America; hover like a cautious guardian in a big study hall teeming with five hundred personalities—each one of which presents possibilities of conduct ranging from the angelic to the devilish. At the end of the last bell I hasten to the school library to attend a parent teachers' meeting, and meet Johnny's mother, who is troubled be-

cause Johnny prefers not to work his mind too much; from there I go back to my own room again to supervise a school debating society, place some work upon the blackboard for the next day, draw a few chalk cartoons to please the youngsters and oil the cogs and come away from school at five o'clock. I visit the meat shop and pick out with care three symmetrical pork chops; enter the grocer's and walk out with several un-

usual bargains. Home appears enveloped in *couleur de rose* after the ride in the remarkable trolley; it is the greatest little home in all the world. I help prepare supper, assist with the dishes, correct a few school papers—treasure-mines in hidden humor—play the piano a little and decide that I like my technique on the Sonora even better, tease the one and only dog whose God I am, retire about ten o'clock to

read under my glowing bed-light for an hour in my select night school, and then sleep!

Friends! Well, I would not be a school-teacher if I did not like my own people—the Common People. They are the salt of the earth. We both appreciate mediocrity, replete with thrills, crammed with opportunity, and rich with work. I am no Pollyanna; I am just sensible!

SIX LETTERS THAT RANKED HIGH IN "MINE OWN PEOPLE" CONTEST

MAIN STREET IS US
BY A WIDELY KNOWN WRITER
WHO CONCEALS HIS IDENTITY
AT THE COMMAND OF HIS WIFE

OURS is a college home town. What does that mean to you? Well, it depends upon where *you* have lived.

Our town is free from the foreign element that hurts many larger places. Our religion consists chiefly in church attendance. You must live among us a couple of years in order that you may later receive a social call from our elect. We are provincial, who imagine ourselves widely traveled. We applaud lightly lest the performer may not know that *we* have both went and saw. We take our titles seriously, for many of us have just reached the badge stage. Our club women prepare their papers from either the recent numbers of "The Survey," The Outlook, "Literary Digest," "Review of Reviews," or copy them bodily from the stern, scholastic prose of Britannica (early edition). Our children all are "taking vocal," or making the neighborhood miserable with the wail of violin or groan of horn. We tried to read "The Four Horsemen," but are doing better by Main Street—which is *us*. We decry sex fillums; but they pack the opory-house nevertheless with a rare combination of saint and sinner. "The Miracle Man" rather overstept us. Our elect are taught bridge by a crafty female from the Capital, who charges heavily for all the tricks known to our lower element that inhabit Poodle's Pool-room.

We have yearly revivals, from which we emerge to overcharge our customers who have not learned that prices at the Capital, twenty miles away, have long since come to nigh normal. To achieve fame, one must do something local; the exile who does his stint abroad in the land is forgotten. We all belong to lodges, and none of us attend. Our wealth is held by retired farmers, who have retired likewise from any civic obligations. We think of ourselves as cultured because nobody plays either croquet or horseshoes. Our girls now show just as much of their bodies as do the gentler (or is it bolder?) sex in our greater American cities. Our music is only a year behind New York.

Our schools are teaching everything—

and, therefore, nothing. We pay our teachers not so much in money, for we figure in the college atmosphere. We read two Capital dailies and our own little home-town sheet with an earnestness that is commendable. Some of us go to the Capital that our wide travel may reach the eyes of our friends and enemies. We applaud anything that savors of the flag; but the voting is light.

We ride in mortgaged automobiles of varying vintage. We profess disgust at the thought of county fairs; but we all attend later on.

All Gaul has nothing on us; we are divided into three parts: college folks, town folks, and North End. The latter is that part of our home town that hates sham. We call it "our *worser* element." But the North End feels just as exclusive as do our elect.

And yet we are good folk. Americans, *trying to find ourselves*, and not quite *knowing how*. The sufferer in our town learns he has neighbors. Out of our self-satisfaction, the growth of generations, we keep reaching out for God and truth. We follow the gleam in our blundering but hearty Mid-Western fashion. A great National call came, and we fairly sprang up to sacrifice. And to be fair, out from US have gone dozens who have thrilled, in a score of varied callings, tens of thousands by the quality of their service.

CONGENIAL CAPTIVITY

BY CADUCEUS

HERE speaks the Army, the United States Army, the old-timers in service, and the most congenial family in captivity. (Captivity, by the way, is the correct term. Outsiders motor through our posts with the awed and interested expressions of children at the zoo. They crane their necks and watch us with breathless interest. It is unimaginable how tiresome it becomes. It is like being an organ-grinder's monkey! Our attitude towards these curious ones is the same as yours towards the rubber-neck wagon of tourists—bored amusement; and we are reputed "standoffish" and snobbish by these same gazers.)

All real Army people are loyal to their corps and the Army, and they are very

scornful of upstarts—people who gain rank by other means than service or merit.

Neighbors may seem critical or undesirable in cities, but we appreciate our neighbors in the Army. They are so kind and willing in time of trouble. If there is a fire, if a member of your family is sick or has had an accident, you are overwhelmed with kind offers of help. Every one is more than willing and more than kind. Neighbors seem different after that.

At times we miss a real permanent home, and we find it hard to part with friends when we are ordered away; but there are many compensations. And then—we may come back some day.

There is a commonly heard statement which almost amounts to a proverb: "The Army takes care of its own." Nothing is truer. The Army gives us so many accommodations that civilians never dream of having. It gives the wholesale prices of the commissary, swimming-pools, tennis-courts, facilities for horseback riding, and it even takes the Army children to and from school. What city boy or girl who lives near an Army post does not envy the Army children their good times?

Traveling is a rich man's diversion. But not in the Army. This is another of our compensations. We see more strange things than our cousin, the marine, would credit, if he had not seen them himself. Few Army people but have been to the Philippines and Japan. And most of us have tried the Hawaiian surf.

There is more social activity in an Army post than even among the inner set of a big city. Every one is included and has a good time. The general's wife plays bridge with the captain's lady. "An officer and a gentleman" is the standard, and rank means nothing socially.

Army life spells opportunity. Traveling broadens the mind and adds to the education, and Army boys and girls win honors easily in their schools. They are bright and interested. They acquire their knowledge easily and have more experience to draw on.

We of the Army are more attached to our families than are civilians. They have homes and friends from childhood, and their neighborhood and homes mean almost as much to them as their fami-