



By Harriet Plimpton

Unseen

Six times split with the axe of childbirth
To satisfy a man
Who knew but one light only, the full moon of desire,
Now she was a gibe for boys, -
Waddling like a sow.
To her sons she was all things—
Food, warmth, desire to learn,
And the power and will to attain.
She taught them work was more than any tide
And how to be was to become.
She never failed when they had need,
Knowing the powers of each one to endure
And seeing that they stood that much alone,
Except for her expectancy of what they could become.
They did not disappoint her, nor themselves,
But taught and preached and cured
Till men called their name great.
Waddling here and there about her house,
She walked triumphant where they were.

Hardness

I HAVE seen them, men and women,
Standing the things they had to—
Cold, heat, the failure of sun and rain,
And the walls about those they loved,
I have seen them standing the things they had to,
And growing harder, like iron drawn from the forge.
I have seen how men turn from them
To those who are soft as April after the winds go down.
But I say to you who pass by them, seeking a fleece for yourselves,
Theirs is the way of trumpets ringing across the hills,
Theirs is the way of stars on glittering winter nights,
Theirs is the way of men who have lasted down to to-day.



LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

FIRST SELECTIONS IN SCRIBNER'S PRIZE CONTEST FOR PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE OR OBSERVATION AT FIRST HAND CONCERNED
WITH AN ASPECT OF AMERICAN LIFE

To encourage the spirit of seeking what is true and valid in our own culture and in our own land, we conducted the contest. More than 3,000 manuscripts were submitted. All have not yet been read, but already the editors know that much unusual material is being unearthed. We are selecting the most interesting ones and shall publish as many as we can, beginning with the group which follows. As the series progresses, we hope that these records, many of them done by people who are not professional writers, will convey to our readers a sense of the variety and the uniqueness of life in the United States.

Corn Village

By MERIDEL LESUEUR

"From our low hills no Gods have taken flight."

LIKE many Americans, I will never recover from my sparse childhood in Kansas. The blackness, weight and terror of childhood in mid-America strike deep into the stem of life. Like desert flowers we learned to crouch near the earth, fearful that we would die before the rains, cunning, waiting the season of good growth. Those who survived without psychic mutilation have a life cunning, to keep the stem tight and spare, withholding the deep blossom, letting it sour rather than bloom and be blighted.

Looking for nourishment, we saw the dreary villages, the frail wooden houses, the prairies ravished, everything impermanent as if it were not meant to last the span of one man's life, a husk through which human life poured, leav-

ing nothing behind, not even memory, and every man going a lonely way in a kind of void, all shouting to each other and unheard, all frightfully alone and solitary.

And fear, fear everywhere on the streets in the gray winter of the land, and the curious death in the air, the bright surface activity of the pioneer town and the curious air dissipating powers of fear and hate.

The Middle West is all so familiar to me and yet it is always unfamiliar, a dream, an unreality. There are Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska. They were for a long time frontier States. Their villages are yet the waste and ashes of pioneering, and the people too waste and ash, with the inner fire left out. There is still the pioneer tension as if