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VENTURES of a CONFEDERATE By Ove R. Nielsen

George Allen was a Confederate. At least he held with Governor Jackson in 1861 that Missouri must take her stand by the side of the slave-holding states in whatever they might decide to do.

But the popular sentiment in Missouri was no longer with Governor Jackson. In fact, the State Convention convened and declared the state executive offices and the seats of the members of the General Assembly vacant, filling the former with Convention appointees. Hamilton R. Gamble was named to succeed the honorable Jackson.

George Allen knew about things. That is, he knew as much as a Henry County farm boy of 17 would know. He did not like the decisions of the State Convention, and so he promptly had his horses shod and prepared to join the Southern army. But somehow the Union soldiers got in the way. They cut him off so that he could not join the Confederates.

He would not join the Union army. He wouldn't even be forced into it. If he couldn't fight with the Confederates, he wouldn't fight at all, so he sought out cousins who operated a freight run and got a job.

To an enraptured poet the rolling plains may unfold like a carpet from heaven's best weaving, but to George Allen they were wagon wheels in wagon tracks, day after day, week that followed week, with nothing that changed but the wind and nothing different but the angle of the shadows that lazied along with the caravan from morning until night.

Wheels clucked on their axles. They churned sun-charred earth into George Allen's weather-beaten face. Sweat-oiled reins smudged his calloused hands and left them cramped and sore. Through endless days he made vain efforts to spit caked mud from his cracked lips, before he moistened them again with a tobaccoed tongue.

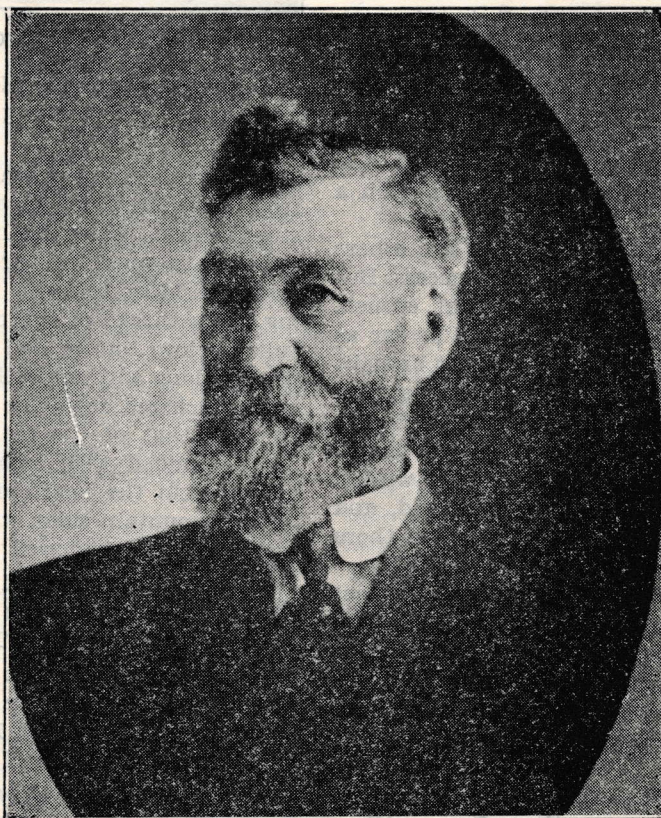
He whip-blistered his mules by day, talked to them tenderly and bragged about them by night. He was never going anywhere but there and back. Man's inherent desire for change was suppressed in him only by the soothing knowledge of security in his job.

But even the most placid soul may be stirred out of its inveteracy. It may be caught up suddenly and thrust into channels of action and purpose. And George Allen's was. That happened for him when the phenomenal story about Alder Gulch galed down from the north, six hundred miles as the crow flies. He left the freight outfit and got on the first wagon for Alder Gulch.

He had heard that one Bill Fairweather and five companions had left the newly formed Missoula County in Montana to go down and explore the enchanting Yellowstone country. While riding along one day, they had been surprised by a band of Crow

Indians, and had been made to exchange horses with the belly-braids, who also relieved them of most of their provisions before ordering them to return whence they had come.

During their rather shameful retreat astride the



scrawny riding stock left them by the Crows, they decided, on a pleasant afternoon of May in 1863, to defy the Indians and make a detour up the Madison River. Early that evening they made camp, and while one man built a camp fire, and four others went in search of fresh meat, Bill Fairweather nosed about camp. While wandering about, he noticed a peculiar rock formation near a creek bed. Mildly curious, he called to the man at the camp fire and asked him to bring a pan and a pick. Together they about half filled the pan. Its contents netted about \$2.40 in gold.

When, in early 1864, George Allen tossed his bedroll from the wagon in Alder Gulch, a new city dazzled the night. It's main street sprawled the better part of a mile. Some buildings were of wood. Others were made of whatever would hang together. There were general stores and groceries. There were hotels and rooming houses. There was a printing shop and there was a theater. There were three large dance halls. Every third building on the main street was a gambling house and the mushroomed city swarmed with drinking houses. And there were the curtained houses where robust men, estranged from normality, cooled their fevered passions in the sullied warmth of disordered femininity.

Murder was common. Among the populace could be found lawyers and doctors, judges and clergymen, many of them men of high principles and ideals, but with these subdued by the burning desire for quick wealth and constant exposure to a humanity maddened by lust and greed.

This was no longer Alder Gulch. It had become Virginia City. The numerous Confederate sympathizers had first named it Varina, after the wife of Jefferson Davis, but this had soon been changed to Virginia City. Within ninety days after the discovery by Bill Fairweather, the city had a population of four thousand persons, with a floating one as large.

George Allen, now twenty, cast his lot with the others of this teeming city. And he mined with fair success. But was also made to suffer the terrible winter that ensued. River boats could bring supplies on the Missouri as far as Fort Benton, but that meant these supplies must be brought three hundred miles across country before they reached the bustling city. Wagon trains were slow and few. Before spring, food was so scarce that flour cost \$145 per barrel. Other foods were nearly non-existent. During that winter, many men went mad from hunger. They had gold, and many had much gold, but even gold is useless when there is nothing it can purchase.

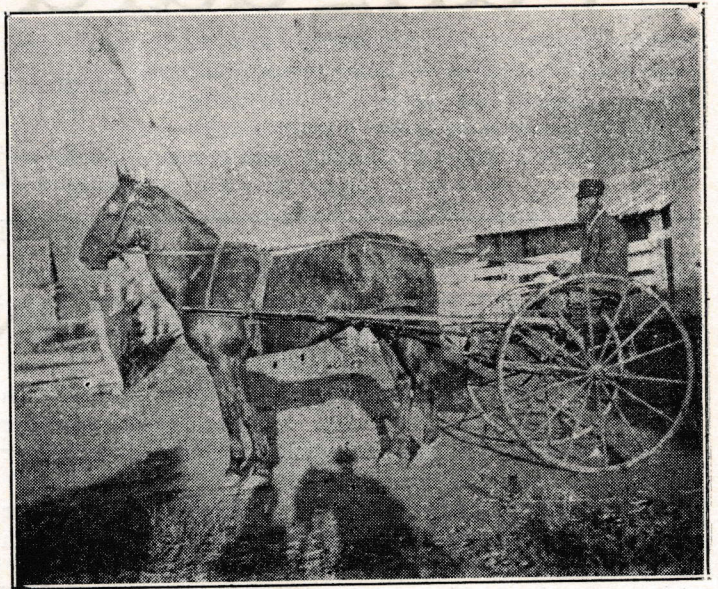
The following spring, gold was discovered in Last Chance Gulch, near the site of present Helena. George Allen went with the throng that stampeded for the new bonanza. But here he found no gold, and so, with the help of another man, proceeded to build a house. The house was half completed when news reached them that the war between the states had ended.

Nearly all of the men in Last Chance Gulch dropped their tools. Fifty-four of them, among them George Allen, made heels for Fort Benton where they built a fleet of flat bottom boats. Then, headed by one Captain Knox, they drifted the 2600 miles down to St. Joseph, Missouri. Some went as far as St. Louis.

By this time George Allen thought he had enough of adventure. He purchased the old home place in Henry County and prepared to make that his home. Eight years

later he married Elizabeth Jane Fisher. Her father owned the saw mill and the tanning yard in Fayette.

But somehow he was not satisfied in old Missouri. His experiences in the west kept returning to his thoughts, and very early in 1879, he sold the home place to a younger brother, hitched four horses to a wagon, led two behind,



"It could be said George Allen was a racer."

and started again for Montana. Elizabeth Jane remained in Missouri, where she gave birth to a son the following August.

It was late spring when he had driven up the long hill from Bozeman which separated that town from the Yellowstone valley. When he had crossed the summit by a few miles, he stopped the horses, so as to look at the sight before him. Miles below he saw the Yellowstone River, winding like a thread of silver through the grandeur of a green valley below. Nature had cradled its course so fast that it wound along with majestic mountains on either side. Small creeks bickered down the mountain sides to wed their purity with that of the magnificent silver thread. Pine and cedar, studded with trembling Aspen, moved like a long glance from the heart of the valley to courageously high on the mountain sides, while a motley host of wild flowers crowned their shadowed coolness.

George Allen nodded to himself and then exclaimed: "This is paradise enough for me!" From that day forward it has borne the name "Paradise Valley."

Descending at length to the floor of the valley, he bore right for a mile until he reached the Hathorne place. He had known Hathorne in Missouri. There he remained until he decided which part of this Eden should be his.

He chose Bullis Creek, so named after the man who first owned the land which bordered it, and from whom George Allen purchased. It was on the west of the Yellowstone that he selected to build. Below the building site was land that soon would yield alfalfa for winter feed, taller than even an alfalfa dream. From high above Bullis Creek gurgled forth from a mountain to supply water for livestock and irrigation for crops. Belly deep grass climbed high on the mountain.

Having found his paradise, George Allen journeyed that fall from Bozeman to Virginia City by stage coach, then from Virginia City to Salt Lake via the old Utah Northern, which by now had laid its narrow gauge tracks between the two cities. From Salt Lake he could get a regular train to Missouri and to Elizabeth Jane. With her, and their little son, he returned to Paradise Valley on Thanksgiving Day.

There was much work to be done and George Allen moved into it happily with good brain ruling his brawn. Hundreds of cedar trees must be felled from which he could fashion fence posts to enclose his new domain. Miles of barbed wire were to be strung. A multitude of long poles must be cut on the mountain side, then loaded on wagons and moved down the treacherous slope to the building site, to make the round pole corrals. There must be a barn for the horses, and a house for the family. And irrigation ditches must be hollowed out on the floor of the valley to provide water for hay crops.

But George Allen loved his work. He moved about with the keen alacrity of an athlete. He glorified in the rhythmic strokes of his ax as it bit hard into durable red cedar. With the pride of an Olympic champion, he managed the teams and the wagon brake as he moved great loads of logs down the perilous grades. George Allen had found his place to work, to live and to love.

Soon the lowing of cattle could be heard on the mountain sides. First these were scrubs, but as his wisdom was coupled with his increasing resources, he purchased low-slung Hereford bulls, and as the years moved on a fine herd sprang from the tall grass.

George Allen felt like a Caesar when he hitched a favorite team to a wagon, hurled sack upon sack of salt into the sturdy box, and then started up the mountain to salt the cattle. As he climbed the mountain with his load and then paused to rest the team, he would look back to Elizabeth Jane and to the magnificent valley. Each time he looked, it was as if the Creator had added new grandeur to the silvery river in the paradise below. When he reached the salting place, he would unload the vital mineral, and then, filling his lungs with the verdant air, he would call the cattle. And soon they would come in little bunches from everywhere. beautiful white faces, first cautiously, and then on the trot as they realized that salt was in the offering.

George Allen was proud of his cattle. First he wanted to raise the best cattle in the valley. But in time he wanted to raise the best cattle in the west. He had built the necessary corrals. He could ranch with good profit, but he wanted more than profit. In 1907 he hitched his horses again to the log wagon and went up into the mountain after poles, this time to build a special corral on Bullis Creek for his most select steers. He selected the steers carefully from his fine herd, and then placed them in the new corral for special care. When they were ready, he shipped them to South St. Paul where he received the Ribbon of Recognition for a fine pen of steers. But that was not enough. In 1908 he tried again. That year he won the coveted Silver Cup.

He loved fast horses. It could be said that George Allen was a racer. His horses must be able to outdistance any animal on the road. Not because he was in a hurry, but because he was proud.

There were twenty four apple trees on the Allen Ranch. It was shortly after Villard had completed the Northern Pacific Railway, through the help of the mysterious "Blind Pool," that George Allen rode into the Bozeman depot one day. Seeing a bundle of apple trees on the floor, he asked the agent about them. He was told that someone had ordered them, but had been afraid of being scorned by neighbors for trying to grow apples in Montana, and so had not claimed them. George Allen paid the freight charges, and packed the apple trees on his riding horse the twenty two miles to the ranch. Some years later, a tipsy cowboy, on his way past the Allen Ranch at sunset, demanded to know who had hung apples on those trees.

George Allen believed in education. He was a director of the public school in the valley. Both his son and a girl who was born in the valley, were educated in colleges. His keen interest in showmanship won him a seat on the Montana State Fair Board at its inception, and he continued in that function until he was incapacitated by ill health.

When he grew old, his face showed the character and strength of a man who had accepted the valley in good faith, and had left it clean and beautiful for new generations. The young Confederate from Henry County in Missouri became a firm rock in America's foundation. There were other giants in the valley, giants like George Allen. They remember him and respect him. He died in 1919. His daughter, Carrie Allen Anderson, still lives in the valley. You may visit her there as I have done or you may stop at the Armstrongs' or the Nesbitts' and hear more about George Allen.

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Potpourri - - - ?

HERLUF MADSEN, Palo Alto, Calif.

One who today attempts to arrive at a satisfactory understanding of, and the relation (if any) between, practical everyday life of the world's peoples—the developments of science—national governments (so-called) — church organizations—the struggle of the conscience of man for a voice in the affairs of the world—and myriad other factors bidding for power, political and economic, has, I submit to anyone that approaches the problem, to face difficulties and incongruities enough to chill the blood of an enthusiast. Yet I declare my faith here and now, that some day, somehow, there will be an integration, and that there is now growth of a sort which seeks the next step in our development. Throughout the ages this has been true, but the mind of man must learn to seek and to think and to work.

In ancient times man believed in many gods—and soon there was conflict between the gods; a bad thing, but there it was—a barrier to man while it lasted. Then came from several sources the concept of one God—a step toward integration. Still with us is the illusion of many nations—and a painful one it is too. One might argue that the tyrants of old compare favorably with the national governments of our day, considering net results. Yet I suppose millions of us connect God with such a debacle as the

last and first world war. In an attempt to look at such facts as are available to one of "the masses" it has to do with a struggle for power and profit, and not for progress. May be it is the necessary cost that we must pay to find out which is NOT the way . . . Maybe I am so ignorant that I do not understand it all—but it looks like stupidity on the part of governments, their representatives, and the pressure groups that pull the strings that make the heads of the gods nod approval.

Millions of words have been written in condemnation of the past and criticism of the present, and no good purpose can be served by repeating and enlarging on the "terror of the future". Why do we suddenly awaken to certain facts because of the A-bomb? What is the difference whether a man dies by it or in a fight with his neighbor arising out of greed, or from eating himself to death, or drinking, for that matter? Or being unable to resist the throttle of a fast car. What difference does it make, if there is no purpose to our life other than becoming the biggest and the bestest or the something-or-otherest?

There is a danger in thinking that we must get everything down to a system, any system. In the field of religion and churches it leads to dogmatism, ritual, voodoo and superficiality. In politics it leads to a rut! Sometimes it appears that the true scientists are the ones who have ^{an} ear open for what we call the eternal truth. And I am not referring to the gadgeteers who think they are men of science. Why can not all of us seek in our little way, in our own endeavor, and to our own needs? There may be hell poppin' tomorrow or the next day. I don't know—but I like to believe that if there ever was, there still is, a great spirit, and that I too can sense it and reach upward. That it is for me a wonderful mystery, and I have life. Other people have life. The world around me has life, manifest in many ways. Then I know that in the heart of man is something God put there and in time, and time, and through effort and seeking, that something will be made to appear in the world as a reality.

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The Rising Tide

HOLGER J. KOCH.

When wars are to be fought, we call on youth to fight them. We say their reflexes are more instantaneous, their endurance greater, their nervous system more stable. Old people declare wars; young people go out to fight them. If war is for youth, is peace not a thousand times more so? Life demands the same quick response, the same unreflective, impulsive action, the resilient nerves, the same loyalty and comradeship.

And life calls for those qualities which are characteristic of youth and which war denies: idealism, zest for constructive activity, joy of living. So if we give our youth war and death, must we not infinitely more give them the peace and life?

Youth of America, we give you the peace. We want you to be young in it. We want you to bring to it all the youthful qualities for which we picked you to fight the wars.

Not to destroy, but to build, for that is your instinct. Fall in love! You will, of course, fall in love with a boy or a girl. That's fine and you have our blessing! Fall in love with your country, its history, its ideals, its hills and valleys. Fall in love with all humanity. — Maybe you are disillusioned and don't think people are worth loving. Perhaps they are not; but that isn't the point. You see, love has to do with the person who loves, very little with the person who is loved. If we ever fulfill the commandment, "Love one another!" it will be for the simple reason that we have become loving; not because we have become lovable. What people do with your love is their business;—but you can't lose.

We want you to sing and play and dance happy dances; to glory in your strength and your exuberant vitality. And if you have any idealism, cling to it as you would to dear life! The reason the world is in such a sorry mess now isn't because life played those false who had ideals in their youth; but because they admitted defeat and accepted the status of Prisoners of War in soft complacency, rather than to face the rigors of battle. The first warless generation will be the one that follows the generation that sticks to its ideals.

Personally, we are losing faith in our official political leadership in national and international affairs. Not because we think these people necessarily have evil designs on us and our fellowmen in other countries. We are convinced that the majority of our leaders are decent and honorable and well-meaning. But they are men of divided loyalties. Righteousness and justice are "among" the things taken into consideration. And, really, how can we ask that our representatives stand fast on principles with which we play fast and loose in our every-day living at home? We have, perhaps, as good representatives outwardly as we can inwardly morally support.

So we have come to the conclusion, that the only effective solution is to build up the inner integrity and idealism of the people to the point where our foreign and domestic policies may be shaped along the lines of individual and corporate righteousness without fear of being given the lie by the dirty work going on at the American crossroads! Only then can we begin to redeem the American Promise to the world,—and in the meantime have a wonderful time establishing a life among ourselves.

Once more we must raise an army. An army with faith and ideals for weapons, spreading hope and life wherever it marches. Age is no barrier to service; but if, as seems to be the case, the older generation finds the going too strenuous for its moral stamina, then we must again turn to Youth.

The innumerable organizations with the purpose of serving the interests of individuals or groups, or the societies for exerting pressure on governments and lawmakers are of slight consequence in any real sense. Most people are in the habit of looking out for themselves without much encouragement, and Americans resent being pressured into any line of action, however good. It would be much more effective to reverse the process and make it a point to look after the interests of others and exert all possible pressure on ourselves to resist the temptation to compromise with our own faults and faithlessness. In fact, it may be that the only place where we can effectively deal with the ills of the world is in ourselves.

The prevalent attitude so far has been that unless we "play ball" with our own egotism and that of our fellows we just won't get anywhere; but we are beginning to discover, and accept the wisdom, that playing ball with egotism not only gets us nowhere in any moral sense, but in the long run breaks us as surely as does gambling against odds.

Many things are going the way they are—to pot—from inner necessity. Every unrighteousness, national or individual, begins to work out its own destruction with its inception. To say "What's the use?" may be neither defeatism or fatalism; it may be the most excellent sense. It applies properly to a terribly high percentage of "the best laid plans of mice and men", because they come into the world with the mark of death upon them, could we only see it.

Are we beginning to "get us a heart of wisdom"? We personally know of a number of ventures in social living which have determinedly cleared away the old treacherous foundations to build on more solid ground, that of accepting a common responsibility and a common obligation with all mankind in all things; claiming nothing for one's self, withholding nothing from one's fellows. In the words of Gene Debs, "While there is a lower class, I am in it; while there is a criminal element, I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

At the present low ebb in human affairs, these changing attitudes are as the slowly filling depressions in the beach, not significant in themselves, but presaging the return of the tide—with a mighty ocean behind it.

The participants in these movements are characterized by youthfulness, overwhelmingly in years, always in spirit. They see a hopeful future reflected in the eyes of children and youth. After all the moral defeats, is this, perhaps, the generation that will turn the tide of battle?

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The Last Semester Was the Best

MABEL HOYT, Sioux City, Iowa.

Can you recall the jingle children sang in their games:

"First the worst, second the same,
Last the best of all the game?"

I do know the last of my teaching was the best, but I can't remember after all the years are gone that there were any that were "worst". I began teaching while I was still in my "teens" with unquestioned courage and little education for what I was about to undertake, but I liked little children and they were in that school room the first day so we began to work together.

The first years were spent in a district where most of the patrons were Scandinavians, fine people who looked up to the teachers of their children. The parents spoke broken English and laughingly told how the children helped them.

I remember that we had an epidemic of scarlet fever that first year and when one child was absent in the morning I inquired anxiously about Harry—had the children seen him—was there a placard on the house—and at that

one boy volunteered the information that his mother said, "There stands no paper by the board."

The children from those families were obedient and well behaved—those who grew to be dependable American citizens.

We went through a siege of teaching half days in one of the years when the building was being enlarged, but we weathered it with no loss of time. One Fall I welcomed a new group of sixty-five and so the large room was divided by the sagging blue denim curtain strung on wire. When the other teacher had her music lesson we had writing or art. The coal stove stood midway and so we roasted or chilled as one or the other teacher felt inclined.

Still there was no "worst" about it. We completed the year and found it hadn't been wasted.

Later I went to a building in another district of our city where the so called Better Class were residents. Here I met a different childhood—those who had had everything my first groups had missed—books and abundant toys in their homes.

When I read stories I would immediately be interrupted with, "I know that story. My Mother read them all to me." Others less fortunate would ask to hear them so we had that problem to work out. We talked of books in their homes that were read over and over and it was suggested by one that the pastor in their church used the Bible all the time, so it was decided that we would all listen because there were times when we must listen to others, in church and later where they go to lectures. It wasn't as simple as that but it did eventually work out.

One of the big problems was that of Citizenship—patriotism—under the heading of obedience which they could understand. Such strange reactions to disobedience I heard, proving the lax condition or too drastic punishments. One six year old announced that his mother didn't wait for the green lights and the others promptly asked if she would like to have him killed. At the time of the first War, because of relations who were away from their homes, they came with tales of the Guard House. In a simple way it was proved that a good citizen was first obedient at home, in school, on the streets and at all times, and that if he did it the right way he might show others, and best of all they decided that they felt better if they made no trouble for others. It was just the seed planted in a six year old mind.

There were talks about the care of the flag, its uses and the occasions for its displaying. One morning a fine Jewish mother brought the small boy safely to our side of the street and he began to run when he heard the closing bell. She called to him to put on his hat because it was raining. He gave one quick glance to the school grounds where the older boys were raising the flag and called back, "I can't. The flag is going up"—a sure sign that he knew about what had been talked of.

All these years led to my last semester, for I was to be retired at the close of the year. I was teaching under a principal new to our building, a man much younger in both years and experience. I had often wondered what it would be like to teach with no restrictions nor obligations so I asked for the privilege of having my last semester as I wished, and he promised to keep hands off. I dispensed with the syllabics and all set programs, not even following a tentative set of rules.

If one suggested a story in the middle of the session

we had time for it taken at the moment of request. A game, if it was needed for relaxation, came along to change the routine.

It brought some unexpected crises, to say the least. We had an epidemic of gum chewing, and when Bobbie came to the Reading Class with his mouth full, I asked if he had forgotten to put his gum into the waste paper basket he asked, why couldn't he chew? It was explained by his class mates that it was only to be chewed after meals because it used up juice. We had tried to eliminate the habit in that way. I added that it wasn't polite to eat or chew by oneself and Bobbie promptly promised to bring some for everybody when he came in the afternoon. Knowing that the grandfather was agent for such commodities as candy bars and gum I knew he would be there with it, and there it was—a box with enough to go around. Then we had to decide on the time and place for our chewing. They decided it mustn't be in school, it might get on our books or papers. It came to recess time as the right time and so we all chewed for fifteen minutes and then deposited our treat in the waste basket, not on the grounds, lest the little kindergarten children might pick it up.

Thanksgiving and Christmas were such happy holidays that year—writing "Thank you's" to the parents and making their small gifts—not under the domination of the art supervisor,—their own creative bit of love in the gift.

The songs and poems made our days rich with the beauty of old and new. Homer had a beautiful clear voice and we had sung "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night" with his voice leading. One night just before we were ready to leave one child asked if Homer couldn't sing about the "Angels." They all added to the request about "hear the Angels sing" and they sat in stillness while he sang "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," and they filed out in silence with the beauty of it in their hearts.

The day before Christmas we had a visitor from a nearby small town who wanted to hear the children read. They were absorbed in reading at the library table, playing games on the floor, drawing at the blackboard, caring in their own way for themselves. I asked for some to volunteer to read for my friend and they came with chairs and books and chose the stories they wished. They read and chuckled, forgetting all but the fun in the story, stopping to say, "Wait till I get to the joke," and then the comments — "The old goat was mad, wasn't he?" "He just couldn't take it." Then he turned to Mary and asked her to read one she liked. She read a short selection and asked another friend and then asked to be excused so she could finish her picture. She took her chair and left the circle, stopping on her way to comment on something another friend was drawing.

We marched and danced to music of the phonograph. They gathered in groups to read to one another. They helped some who had been absent and needed words or numbers. Arithmetic had always been my Waterloo so I was determined these little people should get their "mournful numbers" without agony. It came in games and measures and it was all fun. When we finished our "store project," we served tomato juice and wafers to the children and our guests. One mother said she had never seen her little girl serve anything without spilling it. She was so shy she was easily upset by onlookers. so I told her of how the

child had overcome that shyness because of a criticism one of my former pupils had made of my action when she was a little girl. She was just out of college and had always remembered that I never let her pass any of the materials we used but that Olga passed water for painting and papers and pencils — — — Her shyness had so many accidents I thought I was sparing her but she said, "But I always wanted to do things." After that experience I never spared any case of shyness and we all took turns.

The children left to their own devices in working out their own projects grew in independence and learned interdependence, helping with wraps and even tugging at galoshes. They sang "Now the Day Is Over" and went out with smiles. If a teacher sends unhappy children home at the end of the day she is in the wrong place.

I have saved the highlight for the last, for it was the beginning of a brotherhood that must be in this world.

Our little Jewish Philip went to the blackboard and picked up the chalk, then came to me and asked if I didn't want him to explain the Honneka to me. So we sat while he drew the lights and the table and all it held and told it all in a beautiful reverent way.

Last winter when I sat in our synagoge and saw Jews, Gentiles, Catholics, Negroes at the speakers' table my mind turned to six year old Philip. The brotherhood of man is to be our salvation.

Now school is out for me.

I had disposed of all that other teachers might use and I went out and closed the door on me and my past, remembering the lines I had found long ago:

"No teacher ever knows the depths of her failure, nor the height of her success."

So with a prayer that those who had been under my care might be able to forget the mistakes and remember the happy hours I left for another path of life.

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Nothing

AAGE MØLLER, Solvang, Calif.

With three friends I drove through unfamiliar areas yesterday. Before we got there we saw Oceana which according to statistics has the world's most productive soil. Four miles and we were in the valleys between Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo. What a contrast. Some 50-60 years ago here was a flourishing farm life. There were substantial homes living on dairy products, vegetables, fruit and beef. At places the climate was so even that citrus fruit would grow. Here and there the palms and eucalyptus trees reminded of past glory. Now the whole area is blighted. Due to exploitation of the soil, erosion had washed the top soil away. What little is left will disappear with a few more rains. Opportunities for farming are nil. Agriculturally speaking there is nothing in the valleys.

Before going to Arroyo Grande I read Davenport's verses on The American Nothing. A very striking coincidence. The Valleys of Culture look like the blighted areas. We will not admit it, yet we know it is true. We try to preserve a bit of antique glory. We try to make ourselves believe that there still is something, but aside from money

and newspaper publicity there is nothing left in the ethnic groups.

The people within the group talk of great songs, but they do not sing them. They may talk about a folk school principle but they do not use it. They confess faith in the Fatherhood of God; but a prophetic voice is recognized only when it is of their own brand. Most of the people within the circle can see that the Emperor is naked, but they do not have nerve to say it. So they live on neutrality and seem to be complacent. They organize, but their heart is not in it, for they know it has no meaning.

The paradox is that the chance for life lies in the blighted area, in the nothingness. We search all over for a remainder of top soil. Finding it we start the game of depleting it. A few more decades of commercial farming and Oceana will be used up. We travel from town to town to see if there isn't as yet a bit of genuine folk-life, and we pretend to find it, but it is not there. Folk-life which calls for publicity is not there. There is only one chance and that is to go down where there is nothing and create new top-soil. The new synthesis will come into being where the old nucleuses are smashed.

We have our sanctuary like the Jews had it. The individual Jew did not venture to enter it. All the individual Jews added their bit of courage together until there was enough to send a representative into the sanctuary. There he encountered Nothing. There were no things, no symbols, no icons, no prestige, no profit. In that Nothingness was God, the creator, the unseen non-material reality. When the representatives came out of the sanctuary it was apparent that he had met God.

We cannot send the representative. That is not in the nature of things now. We must go individually into the sanctuary. I know people who do it. They dare to see through all cant and sham. They are the only ones who know how to live, how to sympathize with their neighbors and look ahead with hope. The people who realize that the atoms will be smashed are the ones who get a glimpse of non-material reality. The ones who frankly face the American Nothing are also the ones who realize the force of the creative spirit.

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A G. I.'s Journey

By HELGE STOTTRUP.

(Continued.)

Our first bed was on the floor of an old winery consisting of several adjacent buildings. On one side of the partition we lay, on the other a group of fifty horses belonging to the French Cavalry, and they were stomping or fighting all night it seemed.

Two weeks we spent here watching the people to whom we had been introduced. At meal time ragged beggars, little boys and girls mostly, perched beside the garbage can, squealing for left overs. We wondered at how little showing our handouts had in their gallon cans but soon saw that every dry morsel was quickly ducked inside one of the ragged folds of garments, and out would come once more an empty fist and a whimpering look.

I spent long days and nights at the docks. We were each given a ship to watch and were on the spot to recover any of our vehicles or equipment that came overboard before they became hidden in the mountain of other things. It was a happy moment when I saw my Jeep being lowered in its cable basket. Except for a bump on its nose it was in good physical condition.

One morning we saw a large liner coming in. She was listing badly to one side and someone said a torpedo hit it. When it came closer we saw it had a gash on one side from top to bottom. Behind came another ship with a flattened nose, and then we knew what had happened. We all laughed and jokingly said that the bloody Limeys can't run into any real trouble so they run into one another.

Oran was quite peaceful. No more snipers were heard of and one wouldn't know a war existed. That illusion was soon to be shattered and thus it happened. From the bay fifteen miles distant we were startled by an explosion. A large plume of smoke rose into the air. We learned that somehow a large ship had exploded and since its cargo was of an explosive nature it went down instantly. Perhaps we then realized better how fortunate we were to have made our journey safely.

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Time flew. We were destined to travel from Oran to Tebessa by land; a distance of approximately 850 miles.

North Africa is quite mountainous and with mountains come valleys—usually fertile valleys. Some times miles around and a good straight road to travel on. Then again, the scenery was rugged with winding roads and only little arable land. Wherever we went we saw the farmer out tilling with his ancient methods and crude implements. Hand made plows of wood for the most part, branches tied together and drawn across the soil served as a drag in breaking up the clods. For power the ox seemed a favorite but it was not uncommon to see for example: first a team of oxen with a span of horses or mules in front of that again. Another combination used was a single team consisting of an ox on one side and a mule or horse on the other, the yoke resting on the shoulders of the ox and behind the front legs on the horse. How they geared the two to work, we never will know. Camels are also used but rarely for they are used mostly to carry burdens and later we were to see plenty of that. To me, it was gratifying to see the ardor with which these people tilled even the less tillable earth high up on steep rocky mountain slopes. Here were the plowmen and their oxen. The one ox's feet were about level with the back of the one beside it making it appear as though the two were fairly lying on their sides. Yet a family was to be fed and so a crop must be raised even here where it seemed so impossible.

The next day we entered the city of Algiers. Our convoy was to halt here till we could receive further instructions. Captain Weese got into my jeep and said, "Let's go; I've got an address we have to find and it's not the address of an old girl friend either." Up and down, in and out, we rode and finally we located our address and the big shot we were hunting. In New York I marveled at the traffic and how the taxi drivers got around but here I would have changed places with any New York hack driver. Algiers is large and congested. Its streets are jammed with moving

objects of all sorts. People, carts, wheelbarrows, bicycles, donkeys, burrows, cars and what not.

Business in Algiers completed, we set out that afternoon in haste to reach Constantine before dark. It was dark before we got there so we had to drive in blackout which meant we were nearing the caution zone. We hadn't washed or undressed in days so the next forenoon I decided to soften up the crust a little. I was not dressed yet when word came that we were to leave in 15 minutes so rags flew and away we went. Sometime later I discovered my watch was missing and I knew immediately that it had never been put back on after my washing. What a loss, and watches are so useful and scarce over here.

Toward evening we settled down among pine trees in a lovely spot. We had come as far as we set out to go and from now on we could roll up our sleeves and function in the capacity for which we were designed. That evening the airport down the road was bombed, also a unit that was soon to become part of our organization. This unit had just settled down when word came via the underground grapevine that this place was in for an attack. Ten minutes after they had evacuated the area, bomb craters marked the spot from which they had moved.

Our pup tents aren't sufficient to house two people and their belongings so I decided to dig in and also add one end with whatever material we had on hand and this I did with considerable effort. Our shack was the best in the outfit but we stayed only one night in its furnished condition for the next day we moved. This time we moved 78 miles or about 35 miles beyond Tebessa. Camp was set up just below a mountain pass which about a month or so later was to be the turning point in a German breakthrough. Here I put up a better house, filling empty gas cans with dirt and using them for walls. I had a stove here but since I was busy it took a long time to build and it was no more than completed when we again moved; darn the luck anyway. From this camp we could easily see the airport at Thelete.

On the rock slopes of the mountain the Chaplain was having services. We sat in the open under a tree and listened. Scarcely over the tree-tops roars a big bomber. I suspected the Chaplain of welcoming this incident for it served as a giant key with which he could open the hearts of every fearing man and pour into it his message.

The mountains make road building a problem and as a result we have to drive on hazardous trails with steep hills and sharp curves; marked poorly, if at all, by warning signs. As a driver at this time I came into a great deal of excitement. A report had to be sent to Constantine each evening so with a shortage of drivers, it fell my turn almost each evening to make the 330 mile trip under blackout conditions.

I was first to go and I remember the trip well. I was alone and did not remember the road at all and often I sped along on unfamiliar roads not knowing whether I was heading for the German lines or our own. Occasionally I stopped and asked my way and finally made it.

My assignment finished, I prepared to go back but I was low on gas—170 miles is a lot and the speed I travels gas abnormally so I made up my mind to help myself to two five gallon cans sitting on a jeep near by. To make amends for my actions I wrote a note of explanation

and gratitude and then was off.

The next evening I went in again. This time I had a partner because they decided not to let anyone make the trip alone. Driving was unreasonably difficult at night and to make things worse we had to meet an armored convoy of tanks, half-tracks, scout cars and vehicles of all sorts. These convoys of combat troops were first now coming in and were spaced 50 yards apart extending perhaps twenty miles. Worst of all was negotiating these oversized monsters in the mountain passes which were bad enough without any other traffic. As we weaved and dodged I often mused to myself what a mess it would be if one of those 35 tonners and I should lock horns; I dare say the Jeep would get whipped, but that's all in the day's work, I guess. From here on our trip was normal, but better than last night for I was sure I was on the right road.

Another outfit moved in beside us. They have been farther up and have only half of their outfit left due to a severe mauling by "Jerry." Jerry seems to be too war-wise and foxy for us greenhorns. One boy says, "We sent a force up to demolish some Jerry tanks on the hill. They turn out to be dummies and we're getting a hell of a trouncing all around. My buddy's tank is hit and on fire like a big torch. He gets out of the hatch but falls in a heap on the ground with machine guns chattering all around; their bullets kicking up small geysers of dirt and dust. His partner," he goes on, "didn't get clear out of the hatch before he slumped forward thus plugging the only means of escape for the rest of the burning tank's crew. I hope the rest were dead so they didn't have to roast to death. Boy and did we ever dig those fox holes in a hurry. We regarded them as a nuisance but you go nuts when those Stukas come down spitting death and fire. When you come to your senses, you find yourself pawing at the dirt with your bare hands trying to get yourself a little deeper. Fingers aren't much against rocks and roots but you don't feel it because you are out of your head. Those 88's are deadly, too; you can't spot them easily, but once you're right on them, a slug from the tank's 75 MM cannon puts them right under and I mean quick too; but you have to find them first and that is a task you're lucky to return from. Our appetites are gone so we hardly eat. You forget about eating, I tell you. A couple of our boys went buggy, couldn't take it through no fault of their own. We aren't all built to take it, you know. Sure is pitiful to see them that way, talking wild and imagining things, even strolling right into the line of fire. They don't last long that way so for our sake, as well as theirs, they evacuate those fellows. Boy, it's hell to see your friends lying around all mangled. Certainly lost a lot of equipment too. When those Jerry buzzards come rarin' in we all tossed everything we had to lighten our load and away we went for safety because Jerry was coming in hard with more force than we could ever handle with what big stuff we had left. But we learned, and learned the hard way which is typical of us Americans, they say."

I went to bed that evening thankful that I had a bed and a number of blessings, far greater than I could ever calculate. Why can't we learn to appreciate our own privileges in the face of someone else's hardships. Tomorrow I'll try to be less critical and more thankful.

(To be continued.)